

WHY TAKE GREEK OR LATIN WITH THE LUKEION PROJECT?



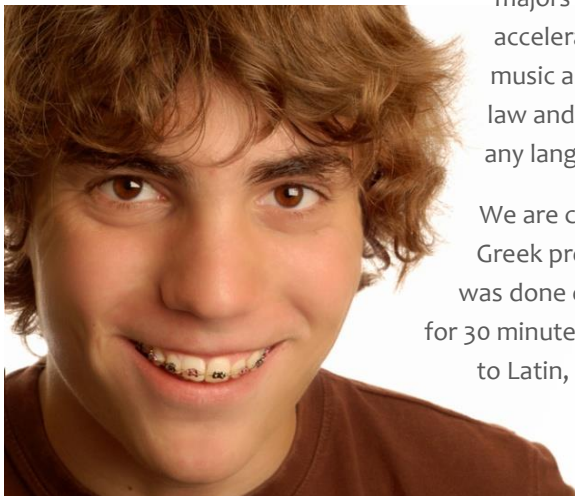
“Classical languages on a transcript indicate seriousness of purpose and true devotion to a rigorous program of study.”

Fred Zuker, Vice President and
Dean of Student Services,
University of Dallas

Learning Latin or Greek is well worth the effort. Studies conducted by the Educational Testing Service show that Latin students consistently outperform all other students on the verbal portion of the SAT based on data from the past decade.¹ Latin learners even outperform other language students by a large margin. Classics

majors tend to have a higher GPA at the college level and have accelerated performance in nearly all other subjects such as math, music and history.² This makes them appealing as first choices for law and medical schools. While there are advantages to taking any language, Classical languages pay the highest dividends.

We are constantly hearing from parents who believe that Latin or Greek provided them a lifelong advantage in all subjects. A study was done of sixth-grade students in Indianapolis who studied Latin for 30 minutes each day for five months. Even with that small exposure to Latin, those students advanced nine months in their math problem solving abilities, eight months in world knowledge, one year in reading, thirteen months in language, four months in spelling, five months in



¹ 1999-2005 Taken from Table 6 in College-Bound Seniors — A Profile of SAT Program Test Takers. 2007 data taken from 2007 College-Bound Seniors-Total Group Profile Report.

² Why study Latin:

<http://ancienthistory.about.com/cs/whystudyclassics/a/whystudylatin.htm>

"I've been meaning to write ... to let you know that [my daughter], as an 8th grader, took the ACT and scored in the 99% for her verbal component. This is directly attributable to her having participated in Amy's rigorous Latin class and Regan's Barbarian Diagrammarians. I so appreciate your wonderful courses and the academic challenge that you offer in such a very humorous but educational format. The cost for your course, when weighed against the scholarship offers that have flooded in since her results, is more than compensated. The return on investment is astronomical."

~Lynn L.

science, and seven months in social studies.³

Successfully completing three or four years of Classical language is a promising sign that an entering first year student will succeed at college. Those who do well in a Classical language are detail oriented, analytical and self-managed.

LUKEION STUDENTS LEARN THE REAL THING

There are many language products on the market targeting home educators. Most of these are designed for teachers who have little experience with a Classical language and no time to master one. While this sounds like an appealing feature, the result is often years of busy work with no appreciable gains in language skills. After hours of drills, chants and worksheets, many students have no idea how to use a dative, subjunctive or participle, much less how to translate real, undiluted Latin or Greek.

We offer placement exams that are adjusted versions of second semester final exams. Based on incoming student performance on these placement exams compared with their reported experience, two or three years in these drill-type programs often provide learners no more than a couple of month's head start over peers who have had no Latin at all.

The benefits of Latin and Greek are measurable only when a student internalizes vocabulary, grammar and syntax enough to analyze and translate accurately because they understand the mechanics of the language. Exercises are profitable only if a learner is constantly moving toward the goal of reading the language.

While there is no harm in introducing Latin at a young age, the real work must begin when a learner can handle the logic and analysis necessary to make measurable progress. That is why older students and adults tend to do very well with these logic-dependent Classical languages and why we welcome them into our courses.

³ Ibid

At **The Lukeion Project** we use college level textbooks, *Wheelock's Latin* and Oxford's *Athenaze Classical Greek*, at half the college pace. At the end of two years, a successful student can make an educated translation of any passage presented from Homer to Paul, from Plautus to Augustine.

LUKEION STUDENTS LEARN CLASSICAL LANGUAGES



One of the most common questions we get at conferences is “what *KIND* of Latin or Greek do you teach?” Most of the language programs that target home educators offer the simplest possible approach by adapting late or Medieval Latin or *koine* Greek. They also want to attract families with a Biblical focus by promoting curricula that offer only “Christian” Latin and Greek. They do so by simplifying New Testament or medieval sources which offer an appealing selection of Christian topics. Once again, all of this sounds good until you consider a number of issues.

Choosing “Christian” Latin or Greek instead of Classical is not like choosing an ice cream flavor in which the results are equally sweet and rewarding though one flavor is preferred over another. Greek enjoyed its Classical period during the fifth century BC and featured authors like Herodotus and Thucydides; playwrights Sophocles and Euripides, and philosophers Aristotle and Plato. Greek then continued to become simplified over the centuries until *koine* Greek was employed as the best way to communicate the New Testament message at a level basic enough to reach most literate people. Latin follows a similar

path in which its richest period is during a Classical Golden age (1st century BC), a Classical Silver age (1st century and a half AD), the Patristic period (late 2nd-5th centuries), and Medieval age (6th – 14th centuries) in which Latin developed into various Romance languages. The Latin Golden age features notable authors like Catullus, Horace, Cicero, Virgil, Livy and Ovid. The Silver age features authors like Seneca, Pliny and Tacitus. Both the Patristic and Medieval period relied on ‘vulgar’ Latin (*vulgus*, crowd) in which the primary concern was to meet the common, uneducated person with the Christian message.

The very basic, simplified approach of Late Latin or *koine* Greek is highly attractive to those who are nervous about teaching a subject about which they know almost nothing. But this highly simplified Latin or Greek will not pass muster on the National Latin Exam, the National Greek Exam, the AP Vergil Exam, or CLEP, nor will it suffice if a student wishes to pass directly into second year language at the college level. Success on these exams can mean improved admission rates to college, scholarships and hundreds of dollars saved by testing out of college language courses. All national

“This year, I was particularly impressed by a student with average test scores and grades who had taken Latin throughout middle and high school. We ended up offering the student admission, and I think it is fair to say that it was his commitment to Latin that tipped the scales.”

Andrea Thomas, Assistant Dean of Admission, Hamilton College

and college exams are based on the Classical languages, not on later and medieval forms.

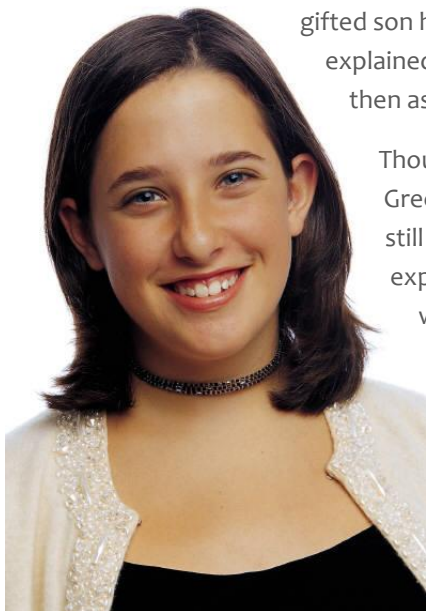
Students who master Classical Latin or Greek enjoy reading all periods of literature, including the Patristic and Medieval authors for Latin, or, for Greek, the New Testament in *koine*. In fact, these later forms of Latin and Greek are so easy for a Classically trained language student that they are used as an introduction to upper level languages.

If a student is educated to read the best Classical works, he or she will appreciate the full width and breadth of literature—including classics in our own language that rely on the history and culture of Greece and Rome. A student may also comfortably pick up texts of great Christian importance since their Classical studies have more than prepared them for this step. Students who learn the Classical languages get two for the price of one.

If a student learns only the basics that Late Latin or Greek offers, he or she is confined to read only the basics and to go no further until he or she takes up the Classical languages again from the beginning, doubling time and effort on the same subject.

LUKEION STUDENTS GET ALL THE BENEFITS OF A LIVE CLASS

While speaking to a woman at a recent conference I learned that her son had enrolled in an online Latin program that neither required homework nor offered regular quizzes. She explained that she wasn't surprised that her normally gifted son hadn't learned anything. “He thought it was a complete joke,” she explained, “because the teacher didn't expect anything from the students and then assigned them a high grade.”



Though there are considerably more options for ‘online’ classes on Latin and Greek than there were when we opened our virtual doors in 2005, there are still major differences in what an ‘online’ class means as a learning experience. It is remarkable that many classes are still simply chat rooms where a student arrives to ask questions. The beginning student rarely knows where to start asking questions and seldom feels at ease to do so without some rapport.

Lukeion courses use the best webinar classroom available. Students hear the instructor's voice and watch a screen filled with examples and memorable images as points of grammar are explained with plenty of graphic aids. Since the class is live and fully interactive, students are asked questions to review old material. This keeps students engaged

for the full hour and lets the instructor quickly diagnose who needs a bit more explanation for particularly difficult concepts. Since *only* the instructor can see student answers, everyone gets a chance to respond, not just the fastest kid in the group.

Any Greek or Latin student at the Lukeion project will tell you that homework and a quiz are due every week on a drop-dead deadline because we've learned something that makes all the difference when promoting excellence in language learning: when you expect a lot from students they will almost always give you a lot right back.

This past year 91% of Lukeion Latin students earned honors on the National Latin Exam and only a few percentage points fewer for Lukeion Greek students on the National Greek Exam. When you earn a gold or silver medal in a competition with 150,000 people you feel a sense of accomplishment and a craving for more academic excellence. College admissions boards will agree with you. No dean of admission is likely to question the value of a high placement on the NLE or the NGE.

LATIN OR GREEK WILL BOOST YOUR LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

We admit that this additional benefit is not exclusively available at The Lukeion Project. What we do offer is the optimal environment for gaining this benefit:

challenging and dynamic courses taught live by experienced instructors

using time tested and highly regarded Classical textbooks. Latin and Greek studied with our approach promote qualities such as being observant, accurate, analytic and logical. Classics majors are hired in fields that need people to define and identify problems, think on their feet, and arrive at sound and creative solutions.

Students of Classical languages must read word by word with careful analysis. This will impact the quality of a person's writing and thought for the rest of his or her life.

