

Medieval Latin Club, meeting 4c (1 hour)

I. Vocab/Etymology (15 minutes):

A. Latin root: magnus “big”

- magnify, magnification, magnifier, magnitude, magnificent, magnanimous, magnate, magniloquent, Magna Carta, magna cum laude
- Ask students to brainstorm derivatives.

B. Affixes in English words:

i. Review the definitions of prefix, suffix, and root as needed.

ii. Prefixes: ante-, post-

a) ante- : before, in front of

- Give students the following examples:

a) a small chamber room that precedes a main room →  
anteroom

b) anterior – preceding; situated in front of; coming before  
in time

c) antecedent – a thing or event that logically precedes  
another; pronouns have to refer back to an antecedent found  
earlier in the sentence

- Prompt students with the following questions:

a) If penult refers to the second-to-last syllable in a word,  
what word refers to the syllable immediately preceding it?

(antepenult)

b) If nuptial is an adjective referring to weddings, what  
adjective describes anything taking place before a wedding?

(antenuptial)

c) If diluvian means flood, what word refers to the time  
period before the great flood in Biblical mythology?

(antediluvian)

d) If mortem is Latin for death, what term refers to a body

before it has died? (antemortem)

e) If bellum is Latin for war, what word refers to the time period preceding the Civil War? (antebellum)

f) If meridiem is Latin for noon, what phrase refers to the hours preceding noon? (ante meridiem – a.m.)

b) post- : after, behind

- Give students the following examples:

a) P.S. – post script; writing that comes after the main body of a letter

b) postpone – arrange for something to take place at a time after the time originally scheduled

c) postgraduate – period of study occurring after college graduation

- Prompt students with the following questions:

a) If a.m., ante meridiem, means before noon, identify and explain the notation we use to mean ‘after noon’?

(PM – post meridiem)

b) Occurring in the time period right after a war?

(postwar)

c) Art period coming after the modern period?

(postmodern)

d) If mortem is Latin for death, what phrase means ‘after death’? (post mortem)

e) If nuptial refers to weddings, what adjective describes anything occurring after a wedding? (postnuptial)

iii. Ask students to come up with their own examples of words with the given affixes. Ask them to explain how the affix affects the meaning of the word.

C. Vocab review:

i. Spanish cognates list. Pass out table of Latin / Spanish / English equivalents.

Review some cognates.

ii. Puzzles with clues in Spanish and English.

II. Grammar (20 minutes):

A. Review grammar concepts from previous lesson:

i. Recreate the noun paradigm.

ii. Review number in English:

Pronouns: he/she/it → they

Verbs: reads → read

iii. Remind students of the basic verb rule to change from singular to plural: -t → -nt.

B. Exercise from the back of the book: 4.4, 4.5.

C. New grammar concepts:

i. The use of ille and illa: When the subject does not change from sentence to sentence in Latin, the subject is not repeated but omitted. When the subject changes, ille and illa are used to refer to a previously stated noun and make it the new subject. Ille is masculine singular nominative; illa is feminine singular nominative. Offer the plural nominative forms illi and illae.

III. Medieval World (20 minutes): Chameleons

The chameleon is a tiny little animal, speckled with a great variety of colors, whose body can change into various colors in what appears to be a very easy transition. No other animal is found whose little body is so susceptible of the changing opposite colors in this way, as Isidore [*Etymologia* 12.2] says at the same place.

**Word play:** Chameleon est bestiola parva, ...

If bestia means beast, what sort of suffix is -olus, -ola, -olum.  
Think about globule, as compared with globe.

**Fantasy Reigns for the Far Away:**

Reading Bartholomew's account of the chameleon is instructive in several ways. Clearly, he has not seen one. All his information comes second-hand and he lived too far north to have seen one himself. His sources include a number of interesting comparisons of the chameleon with other animals.

**Etymology Rules:** How does the inclusion of the word for lion, leo, (Chameleon)

**affect the image?**



**Classical Sources: Chameleon vs. Hawk? What?**

Europeans did not see chameleon's for themselves until the 16th century, so they relied on ancient accounts. Pliny (*Natural History*, book 28, chapter 8) says the chameleon is like a crocodile, but very timid. Pliny makes fun of Democritus for associating the chameleon with thunder storms. But then Pliny himself claim that chameleons snag hawks out of enmity and then feed them to other creatures which is just as silly and quite unbelievable, if you know how big a chameleon is, and then consider this description of its behavior -- clearly, Pliny was relying on second-hand information himself.

**Medieval Science: Myth has it that the chameleon lives on air.**

*Four live on the pure elements:*

*The chameleon, the mole, the sea herring, and the salamander.*

*Earth feeds the mole, flame the salamander.*

*The waves are food for the herring, and air for the chameleon.)*

What if instead of believing that everything was made from hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen etc., you believed that they were made of earth, water, air, and fire. Would you believe that earth, air, fire etc. were food for plants and animals?

Good sources for further reading: <http://bestlatin.net/zoo/chameleon.htm>

<http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/desbillons/esop/seite363.html>

IV. Conclusion (5 minutes)