



Three Reasons Why We Study Latin

Latin is sometimes treated as an academic ornament, something impressive but unnecessary. But in classical Christian education, Latin is more than a decoration; it is training. It is a tool for sharpening the mind, strengthening language, and connecting students to the great conversation that shaped the church, law, literature, theology, science, and education for centuries.

Here are three reasons why we study Latin at Citadel Christian School:

1. Latin trains the mind in order, discipline, and precision.

Latin is a highly ordered language. Its grammar requires students to pay attention to endings, structure, agreement, tense, mood, case, and syntax. In English, word order often carries the meaning. In Latin, the student must learn to observe the form of the word itself.

That kind of study requires patience. It slows the student down. It teaches him to notice details, distinguish between similar things, and think in categories. Latin does not reward laziness or guesswork. It requires disciplined attention.

This is one reason Latin has long been central to classical education. It trains the student not merely to repeat information, but to think grammatically and logically. A child who learns Latin is learning how language works.

That matters because language is not incidental to thought. Clear words help form clear minds. Sloppy language often produces sloppy thinking. Latin helps students develop the habits of precision that serve them in every subject: English, history, theology, logic, rhetoric, and even mathematics.

2. Latin strengthens English and prepares students to read well.

A large portion of English vocabulary comes from Latin, either directly or through French. Words related to law, government, theology, science, medicine, literature, and education are often built from Latin roots.

When students learn Latin, they begin to see the architectural underpinnings of English. Words are no longer random sounds to memorize. They have roots, families, histories, and meanings. A student who understands the Latin roots of words like justice, virtue, liberty, doctrine, incarnation, sacrament, and civilization is better equipped to understand the ideas those words carry.

Latin also strengthens grammar. Many students today can speak English fluently but cannot explain how English works. Latin gives them categories for understanding subjects, objects, verbs, modifiers, clauses, and sentence structure. This helps them become better readers and better writers.

A student who has wrestled with Latin sentences is less likely to be intimidated by difficult English prose. He has learned to slow down, parse the sentence, follow the logic, and pay attention to what the author actually said. That is a rare and valuable skill in an age of skimming, scrolling, and constant distraction.

3. Latin connects students to the Christian and Western inheritance.

Latin was one of the great languages of the Christian church and the Western world. For centuries, pastors, theologians, scholars, jurists, scientists, poets, and statesmen wrote and thought in Latin. Much of what shaped Western civilization passed through Latin hands.

To study Latin is to give students access to that inheritance. It helps them understand the world that formed them. It introduces them to a tradition larger than the present moment and deeper than the assumptions of modern culture.

This is especially important for Christian education. Christianity is not a new movement recently invented. We belong to a faith once for all delivered to the saints. We stand downstream from the apostles, church fathers, Protestant Reformers, martyrs, missionaries, pastors, and teachers who came before us.

Studying Latin reminds students that they are heirs, not consumers. They have received a great inheritance, and they must learn how to steward it.

This does not mean we idolize the past. Christians do not worship tradition. We worship the living God. But faithful education teaches students to honor what is true, good, and beautiful wherever God's providence has preserved it. Latin helps students receive the riches of Christian and Western civilization with gratitude, judgment, and wisdom.

Latin is not merely about the past.

We study Latin because we are preparing students for the future.

A student trained in Latin is being trained to think carefully, read patiently, write clearly, and speak with precision. He is being taught that words matter, that truth requires discipline, and that wisdom is inherited before it is applied.

At Citadel Christian School, Latin is part of our larger aim: to form students who love God, love truth, and are equipped to serve faithfully in the world He has made.

We study Latin so our students can stand more firmly in the present.