

- I. **The Alphabet:** The Latin alphabet has only 23 letters, as opposed to the English alphabet which has 26. The letters “missing” in the Latin alphabet are **j**, **w**, and capital **U**/small **v** (see below, under **Sounds of Semivowels**). In your textbook, however, you will find both **v** and **u**, and **U**.
- II. **The Sounds of Consonants:** The sounds of the Latin consonants are exactly like their English counterparts with the following exceptions:
- c** is **never** soft, even after **e** and **i**; it **always** has the sound of **k**.
- g** is **never** soft, even after **e** and **i**; it **always** has the sound of **g** in **get**.
- q** never stands alone; it always has a **u** with it, and the two letters make one sound (**qu** = **kw**).
- r** should be lightly trilled (as in Spanish) or flapped; it is acceptable, however, to pronounce it as the English **r**.
- s** never has the **z** sound it sometimes has in English.
- v** is **always** pronounced like the English **w**, **never** as the English **v**.
- x** is pronounced as though it were **ks** (as in English **weeks**).
- z** is pronounced as though it were **dz** (as in English **adze**).
- th**, **ph**, and **ch**, sounds which Latin borrowed from Greek, were probably pronounced as strong **t**, strong **p**, and guttural **c**, but it is acceptable to pronounce them as modern English **th**, **ph**, and **k**, respectively.
- III. **The Sounds of Vowels:** The sounds of the Latin vowels are very different from their counterparts in modern English. They never have variations, nor do they have gliding sounds attached to them.
- | | |
|--|--|
| a always as the a in English tall | ā as in the second part of aha |
| e always as the e in English get | ē as the English a in gate |
| i always as the i in English in | ī as the i in English machine |
| o always as the o in English off | ō as the oa in English coat |
| u always as the u in English put | ū as the oo in English boot |
| y as in the y in English rhythm ,
but more rounded | ȳ like the French u or German ü |
- IV. **The sounds of Diphthongs:** A diphthong is a single sound produced by two vowels. In Latin, there are six diphthongs:
- | | |
|--|--|
| ae like ai in English aisle | eu not found in English; listen to your teacher |
| au like ow in English how | oe like oi in English oil |
| ei like ei in English reign | ui like wi in English wick |
- V. **The Sounds of Semivowels:** In Latin, there are two semivowels, **i** and **u/v**. When these begin words or occur between two vowels, they have the value of a consonant.
- Semivowel **i** is pronounced as **y** in English **yes**.
- Semivowel **u** is pronounced as **w** in English **was** (in your textbook, however, this semivowel is written with the letter **v**).

- VI. **Syllabification:** Every Latin word has as many syllables as it has vowels or diphthongs. In dividing words into syllables, a consonant after a vowel goes with the following syllable:

mūtam = mū / tam

tamen = ta / men

When a vowel or diphthong is followed by two or more consonants, the first consonant goes with the first syllable, the remainder with the next syllable. (Later you will learn some exceptions to this rule.)

fortūna = for / tū / na

adloquerer = ad / lo / que / rer
(Note that **u** after **q** is not a vowel.)

Examples: **fortūna**, 3 syllables
atque, 2 syllables (WHY?)
mūtam, 2 syllables
tamen, 2 syllables
īferiās, 4 syllables

mānantia, 4 syllables
nunc, 1 syllable
cinerem, 3 syllables
postrēmō, 3 syllables
autem, 2 syllables (WHY?)

- VII.

Accentuation: Every Latin word of more than one syllable has one syllable which is slightly stressed over the others. In order to illustrate the rule by which accentuation is determined, it will be necessary to present some terms:

ultima (*syllaba ultima* = “last syllable”) - the last syllable in a word
penult (*syllaba paene ultima* = “the almost before the last syllable”) - the second syllable from the end
antepenult (*syllaba ante paene ultima* = “the almost before the last syllable”) - the third syllable from the end

The only two syllables in a Latin word of more than one syllable which may receive the accent are the penult and antepenult. Accent is determined by applying what is called the PENULTIMATE LAW:

IN WORDS OF TWO SYLLABLES, THE PENULT RECEIVES THE ACCENT:

multās gentēs vectus augur porta rosa

IN WORDS OF MORE THAN TWO SYLLABLES, THE PENULT RECEIVES THE ACCENT IF IT IS LONG; IF THE PENULT IS SHORT, THE ACCENT IS PLACED ON THE ANTEPENULT. A syllable can be long in one of two ways:

1. **Length by Nature:** If the syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong, it is said to be long by nature.
2. **Length by Position:** If a syllable contains a short vowel which is followed by two or more consecutive consonants, it is said to be long by position.

Examples of the Penultimate Law:

1. Stress on the penult:

postrēmō (the vowel of the penult is long by nature)

↓

parentum (the vowel of the penult is long by position)

2. Stress on the antepenult:

↓
aequora (the vowel of the penult is short)

↓
accipe (the vowel of the penult is short)

Latin I

Pronunciation of Latin
Exercises

- A. Using the pronunciation guides in sections I-IV on pages one and two of the Pronunciation Handout, say the following Latin words aloud:

Cicerō	haec	deinde	poena	vīvere
arx	gelū	quoque	rosa	aura
hīc	zephyrus	levis	hūc	iuxtā
hic	optō	lēvis	huic	unde

- B. Using the guides for syllabification in section VI above, write the words below in syllables in the spaces provided:

ecce _____ / _____

Rōmānī _____ / _____ / _____

magister _____ / _____ / _____

tantus _____ / _____

circumdedērunt _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

vīvere _____ / _____ / _____

parentum _____ / _____ / _____

accipe _____ / _____ / _____

īferiās _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

aestāte _____ / _____ / _____

PLEDGED: _____