A Notebook for Vergil’s Aeneid

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Acknowledgments

There are many people without whose help and support these books would never have come into being; to them I offer my deepest thanks and gratitude.

Kristin Webster, of the Marymount School in Manhattan, who was the first to pilot the notebooks with her AP® students and offered from the start both encouragement and helpful suggestions;

Joy Hurd, of the Buckley School in New York City, who first started me upon experimenting with more student-friendly ways to lay out the text and who shared with me the system of grammatical annotation used in the student samples;

Nikil Saval, who, as always, gave his gracious assistance in improving the Introductions;

all the participants in the 2013 Jesuit Latin Colloquium for their thoughtful comments and suggestions, most especially Matt Sparapani for inviting me to present on the notebooks, Jim Broderick-King for sharing with me his own designs for a similar schema he had used with his students in the past, and Lynne West, Jay Wood, and Nick Young for volunteering to pilot the notebooks with their students and give their feedback;

all of my colleagues in the Fordham Prep Classics Department, who every day help me to be a better teacher;

my students in Fordham Prep's Latin 3 Advanced and AP® Latin course, whose hard work first provided the inspiration for these notebooks, and most especially Eben Anane '14, whose suggestions inspired the plot review and summary exercise, and Jonathan Calvello '14 and Anthony D'Addario '14, who allowed their work to be published in these volumes;

Philip Caliendo of Xavier High School and Elizabeth Scharffenberger and Katharina Volk of Columbia University, first great teachers, then mentors and friends;

Donald Sprague, my editor at Bolchazy-Carducci, who supported the project from the first and who really made this happen;

the whole Distinti-Daly-Clarke-Quinones clan, for more than can ever be said;

and Kathryn Sullivan, for her constant support and loving good cheer.
INTRODUCTIONS

To the Student

First off: congratulations! To have reached the point of doing AP®-level work in Latin is an extraordinary accomplishment: mastering the rules of Latin grammar and syntax and memorizing so much vocabulary is no small feat. You have come far in your study of the language, and you should be proud of your achievements.

But that said, AP® Latin will definitely be a challenge. AP® Latin is a college-level course, and whether you have read unadapted passages of Latin prose and poetry before, or even selections from Caesar and Vergil, this course will push you to work through the material at a pace and depth of understanding far greater than in your previous classes.

The AP® curriculum sets before you two challenging tasks, which you must balance at the same time. First, you’ll have to read and translate a substantial amount of Latin prose and poetry from two of Rome’s most celebrated writers: in one year, you will cover over 50 paragraphs of Caesar’s De Bello Gallico and almost 800 lines of Vergil’s Aeneid. And you have to be so thoroughly familiar with those passages, as well as others read in English, that by May, you’ll be able not only to translate selections from both works, but also to answer multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions on topics as varied as grammar, figures of speech, themes, and even historical background.

Second, you must develop and hone your skills at sight-reading: reading, analyzing, and comprehending Latin passages that you have never seen before, without the aid of notes or the dictionary. Over half of the multiple choice questions on the AP® exam—and thus about 30% of your exam score—are based on two such passages. Experience translating Caesar and Vergil will help you to be ready to tackle the sight passages, but unfortunately it won’t be enough. Sight passages are intended to test your overall familiarity with the Latin language—in other words, not just what you have done in class this year, but all that you’ve learned in your career studying Latin thus far! This is a very different kind of exercise from answering questions about passages you’ve studied before, and so requires practicing different skills and different strategies.

But there’s one area of study that is crucial to success with both the prepared and sight passages on the AP® exam—and that’s vocabulary.
More than grammar, forms, and even strange word order, it is vocabulary that will hold you back from reading the Latin language with fluency and comprehension. And so while translating Caesar and Vergil will be the primary focus of what you do in class, building your vocabulary set ought to be the focus of what you do at home. Having a strong Latin vocabulary is essential to getting through the AP® curriculum quickly and with ease, as well as to developing the skills and confidence you will need when faced with a passage you have never seen before.

The purpose of this book is to help you do just that. It is a tool, designed with two goals: one, to help you to stay organized; and two, to allow you to make the best use of your limited time and energy by ensuring that the work you do on translation will at the same time give you the resources you need to grow and expand your vocabulary.

So how does it work? When you open to any section of the book, you will find on the left-hand page a passage of Latin text (about 10 lines). On the right-hand page opposite the Latin you will see blank lines with numbers keyed to the text; this is where your translation will go, but more on that in a moment. Beneath the text itself there is space labeled for vocabulary notes. If you wish to use this notebook properly and get the most out of it, it is this section that you must pay the most attention to, and you are to use it as follows:

Every night, as you read through whatever passage your teacher has assigned, when you come across any words that you do not know, you must write them down, along with their definitions. Every single one!

There are many resources available to help you define the words quickly and easily, including your textbooks and internet resources like nodictionaries.com, but however you look them up, writing them down and keeping track of them is an essential step. Because we do not hear Latin spoken outside of class, we generally lack our most important tool for learning new vocabulary—our ears—which makes writing the words all the more imperative.

The extra time it takes to write out each of the words you do not know and their definitions, rather than just jumping straight to the translation, will help you to retain and recall those words later on. Writing slows you down and focuses your mind on the word itself, rather than only the question of how it fits into the context of the translation. By themselves, those few extra seconds it takes you to write down that word will be enough to greatly increase the likelihood that you will recognize it when it comes up again in a later passage. The physical act itself of moving your muscles to record something can also play an important role in building memories and is, for most people, a far more powerful aid to remembering a word than simply looking at it printed on the page. And most important of all, as you complete each section of the text, at the bottom of every page you’ll have made for yourself a study guide tailored to your individual needs, listing exactly—and only—those words that you need to focus your studying on.

Proceeding in this way will be time consuming, at least in the beginning. It also requires a great deal of intellectual honesty on your part: if you try to cut corners and choose not to write down words you think you recognize but do not really know, the lists will be less effective and you’ll be undercutting your own work. The more honest you are with yourself about what you do not know and the more time you take to write the words down, the more useful a tool your notebook will become.

What matters is that you and you alone are making, and are responsible for, the tools you need to build your vocabulary and thereby achieve success both in class and on the AP® exam. You’ll see that putting in the time to focus on vocabulary right from the start will very quickly produce immense payoffs. Both Caesar and Vergil each use a core of vocabulary words that appear consistently in their works again and again; though you might feel at first that you are writing the same words over and over again, more quickly than
you might think, those words will become first familiar, and then part of your active, working vocabulary. As the year goes on and your vocabulary continues to grow, you will see yourself able to translate longer and longer passages with greater ease and fluency, and needing less time to do so.

The same will be true of sight-reading. Working through sight passages is much like rock climbing: you look for those places where you can get a firm grip and footing, and you find a path through starting from these anchors, the places where you have the greatest strength and leverage. In sight passages, your anchors will most often be whatever vocabulary you recognize in the text. By focusing on vocabulary consistently as you work through Caesar and Vergil, you will simultaneously be improving your skills at sight passages as well.

After you have taken the time to work through and record whatever vocabulary you need, you will be ready to move on to the translation. As noted above, the right-hand page contains the lines where your translation should go. The lines are labeled and matched to the spacing of the Latin text, but for every line of Latin, there are two blank lines on the right. Your own translation that you prepare before class should be written on the first of the two lines; the second is there so that you have room to write down any corrections or revisions you need to make when you go over the passage in class. Underneath the space allotted for the translation are extra lines for any additional notes you need to take on matters such as plot, themes, rhetorical structure, etc. And of course, you can always make annotations on the Latin text itself, which has been triple-spaced to make it easier to do so if you wish.

Then, at the end of each book, there is space provided to give you an easy way to keep track of and review the major plot points of the passages that you have read in Latin and translated into English. Having a good sense of the plot structure of the texts, both of the individual books and of the works as a whole, is crucial to your preparation for the AP® exam: when you sit down to take the test, a thorough knowledge of the plot will allow you quickly to identify the passages in front of you, and thereby make you much more comfortable and confident as you attempt to answer the questions. One thing I have heard from many of my students is that they are often so worried about getting the translation right that they have a hard time keeping track of what’s actually happening in the story; this section is designed to help you do just that by dividing each book up into its main episodes and asking you to write a short summary of the events of the passage. Those larger sections are in turn broken down by chapter or short groupings of just a few lines each, so that you can also pay attention to the details of how Caesar or Vergil develops his narrative. In particular, you will want to pay special attention to the speeches and, in the case of Vergil, the similes, which are always given their own individual heading. You can complete this exercise as you go, filling it in right away every time you finish a large chunk of the text or a whole book, or at the end of the year as you review for the AP® exam. Either way, it will be a crucial help for you as you study for both in-class tests and the AP® exam.

In sum, this notebook is designed to help you keep organized by putting all of your work for the class in one place; and to give you the structure and guidance you need to build your vocabulary, which is so essential for your success in the course as well as on the AP® exam. Both Caesar and Vergil can be immensely rewarding authors to read, and I hope that this book makes that process easier and so more fulfilling for you. But remember, in the end, this is your book; right now, it is only an outline to the AP® curriculum, but if you are willing to put in the time and effort, it can be much more: your personal and individualized guide to triumph on the AP® exam. What it will become, how useful a tool it will be, is entirely up to you. Getting through the entire AP® curriculum will be no small accomplishment; writing your own student edition to Caesar and Vergil at the same time won’t be either! I hope the notebooks serve you well.
To the Teacher

Teachers of Advanced Placement® Latin face twin tasks that in practice can often be hard to balance. On the one hand, we want our students to perform well on the AP® exam, so we focus our time and energy on ensuring that students are thoroughly familiar with the prepared passages from the AP® syllabus and are able to render them into English translations that are “as literal as possible.” On the other hand, we also wish to prepare them to read, analyze, and translate passages of Latin they have not seen before, not merely for the sake of the sight passages on the AP®, but also (and perhaps more importantly) so that they will be ready for the challenges of the new authors and new texts they encounter in the courses (we hope) they will pursue in college.

If we as teachers have difficulty structuring our courses to address both goals adequately (and much to my relief, every AP® teacher I have ever spoken to has shared this problem), it seems to me that our students’ difficulties are greater still. Ask them to take notes on and translate a particular passage, and many will finish the assignment completely and on time; quiz them on that same passage a week later, and the majority will do well. Most students, in my experience, are fairly adept at figuring out what they must do to succeed in such situations: when faced with a finite and concrete task, they do it, recognizing how it applies to their eventual assessment.

But the next step in the process—figuring out how to apply those same notes and the knowledge gained from that passage to another text whose genre, style, and even vocabulary may be different—is something else entirely, and a far more challenging problem. The proof for this can be found in an experience I’m sure all who studied Classics share from college and graduate school: namely, that of looking around the seminar table and seeing that each member of the class had devised a different method of taking notes on the text. There was the person with a full written translation in hand; the one who had copied out the entire text into a notebook and wrote interlinear notes; the one who crammed vocabulary notes into the margins of the OCT text and drew arrows and lines all across the page; etc. Each of these different systems was an attempt to solve the problem we all faced as students ourselves: how can we take notes on a particular author and text in such a way that they help us to become better readers of Latin in general?

This book came out of my attempt to answer this question for my own students, with special attention given to the two areas in which they struggle most: organization and vocabulary. My goal has been to take the guesswork out of the note-taking process, so that each student would have a ready and easy way to keep his or her notes organized. Moreover, the format of the book is designed so that the students’ final product is not simply a translation, but also an individualized study guide laying out exactly what the student needs to study further. Simply put, the book aims to give them the notebook I always wished I had when I was a student.

Each page of the notebook presents the text itself along with space for annotations, vocabulary, notes, and the student’s translation, all in one place, so that the notebook becomes the only book they need to bring to class each day. In essence, the entire layout is designed to force the students to create their own individualized student edition, each according to his or her own needs. In doing so, they themselves take greater ownership of the class, since they have nothing to rely on to help them but the work they bring each day.

When students open the notebook, they will find the Latin text on the left-hand page, usually about 10 lines, with attention given, where possible, to avoid breaking sentences or clauses across pages. The text itself is triple-spaced so the students have whatever room they need to annotate the text without having

to cram everything in so small as to render their notes illegible; in addition, in the case of Vergil, this provides adequate room for practicing scansion on potentially every line.²

Beneath the text is space for the students to write any vocabulary from the passage that they do not know. The genesis of this section stems from a problem many teachers have observed in the classroom over the years: as indispensable as Clyde Pharr's famous Aeneid and books modeled after his approach have been, all too often students use them as a crutch. Textbook in hand, they can translate well in class with the aid of the running vocabulary notes, but they are no better at recognizing the same words in a different passage or decontextualized altogether. Moreover, this method of proceeding encourages the misconception that their translation is the final product and end goal of the class.

The vocabulary section of this book flips the model on its head by asking the students to create their own Pharr-style running vocabulary in the space allotted, with as many or as few words according to each individual student's needs.³ In so doing, the book puts vocabulary building squarely at the center of what students do each night to prepare for class. For every line of text, the students must honestly and critically assess what vocabulary they do not know, and then write out those words at least once beneath the text where they appear rather than simply incorporate the vocabulary into their translation.

By doing so, the students then have their own vocabulary lists that are keyed to the passage but can be used to study the words out of context. As an example of how to use these lists in teaching: in my classes, I give quizzes every day on the vocabulary of the passage assigned the previous night. The quiz consists of only one word selected randomly from the passage, and the students are allowed to use their notes. This is little more than a homework check, but it does count for credit, and the students learn very quickly that there is an incentive for them to err on the side of caution about what words they really have down cold and what words they merely recognize or think they recognize. The goal here is to give the students constant and immediate feedback so that they can assess whether they are really doing enough each night, not simply preparing the passage but actively working to improve their Latin. Some may find they need the vocabulary notes more than others, and of course the students' needs will change as the course progresses; the format of the notebook is designed to be simple and straightforward, but also flexible, in order to accommodate the different teaching and learning styles of teachers and students alike.⁴

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² In my own classes, students use a visual method of marking the kernel of the sentence (subject-verb-direct object, subordinate clauses, etc.) and the grammatical function of all other nouns, as well as any rhetorical or poetic devices, for which the triple-spacing is essential. An example of how this system works can be found in the included selection of student work following this introduction.

³ It is worth noting here that this book is not meant to supplant traditional textbooks such as those of Boyd or Mueller; rather, those texts serve as crucial complements to this one by facilitating the students' task of gathering vocabulary. In fact, the Latin selections in A Notebook for Caesar's De Bello Gallico are optimized to work with Mueller's text, by following his line breaks and numbering. The Latin selections in A Notebook for Vergil's Aeneid are taken from the Pharr text. However, the notebook uses the consonantal “i” where Pharr uses a “j.”

⁴ For example, though the AP® passages are here presented in book order, in my own class we alternate between one book of Vergil and one of Caesar, so that each author's work (not only in terms of the narrative, but also in terms of style, vocabulary, and themes) remains fresh in the students' minds right up to the AP® exam. But in order to make the thematic connections between the works clearer, I have rearranged the order of the readings, such that we move in order through the books of the Aeneid, but not so through those of the De Bello Gallico. Thus the order in our class is: introduction and the beginning of the conflict (Books 1 of both authors); betrayal, disaster, and heroism in the face of death (Vergil 2, Caesar 5); foreign peoples and foreign customs (Vergil 4, Caesar 6); and journeys to the ends of the Earth (Vergil 6, Caesar 4). By the end of the year, then (I hope!), my students should have a longer vocabulary set for Caesar 5, for example, than they do for Caesar 4 and 6. This order may of course not work for every teacher, but the notebooks are designed so that teachers are not tied down to following any one single approach.
As for the translation itself, the right-hand page contains blank lines labeled and spaced out to match the Latin text. For every one line of the Latin, there are two blank lines for translation: the top line is for the students’ own draft translation that they produce at home, the bottom for any corrections or rewrites that they may need to make in class the next day. Beneath the lines provided for translation, every page contains space allotted for additional notes that would be otherwise cumbersome to write on the text itself (rhetorical devices and structure, historical and literary background, themes, etc.).

Finally, at the end of each book’s readings, space is provided for students to summarize the content of the passages they have read in Latin. Our students spend so much of their time worrying about getting the right translation that they often forget that they are not just translating a text but reading a story. The purpose of this exercise is to help them focus on the narrative itself and the structure and development of the plot. As such, the passages are divided up into their major episodes grouped by line or chapter, each with its own heading, and just a few lines are given so that students have to really think about how they would describe or summarize the events of the passage in just a sentence or two; under each major heading, however, the passages are further broken down by chapter or groups of a few lines, allowing students to keep track of the individual details of each section as well. Particular care has been given to separate out speeches and, in the case of Vergil, similes, in order to draw the students’ attention to the imagery and rhetorical structure of these crucial passages. In my vision of it, this exercise can be done bit by bit, as the class finishes each book or even each episode, or can be done at the end of the year after all the readings have been completed, as part of review for the AP® exam.

In my own teaching, the benefits of this system of note-taking have been immense. In its ideal form, the AP® Latin course would be run as a seminar-style class, with the students taking the lead and directing the progress through the syllabus and class discussions. This notebook enables them to do just that: without the textbook to lean on, the students have to help them in class only those materials that they themselves prepare. And while space is allotted for the translation, the emphasis on vocabulary moves the students away from the habit of thinking that the translation itself is the sole goal of the class. At the same time as they are doing their normal nightly preparation, the students are simultaneously creating their own individualized vocabulary units to study, allowing them to break the cycle of only memorizing vocabulary in context and transforming every passage from the syllabus into a tool to help better prepare themselves to face and conquer passages they have not seen before, whether on the AP® exam or in college courses afterward. It may be time consuming at first, but if students use the system the way it is designed to work, as time goes on they should find themselves with more and more blank space on the page, having built up their vocabulary set so that they need to write down far fewer words.

The results thus far have been successful: in the words of one AP® teacher, Kristin Webster of the Marymount School, who has used this book in her classes, “my students love this method—they said it makes them work harder ahead of time and it helps them put vocabulary in the foreground.” My hope is that it will likewise prove fruitful for others. si hic libellus vobis discipulisque prodest, bene est.
Student Samples

The following examples of student work are provided here to give both students and teachers a sense of the possible ways these notebooks can be used to take notes, keep track of translation work, and even structure assignments. As pointed out in the introductions, these notebooks were designed with the goal of making them as flexible as possible for students and teachers alike to use them as they best see fit. So please look upon these samples as merely suggestions of how the notebooks might be used. Indeed, as you’ll see, even the two students whose work is shown below developed different ways of organizing their notes on the same material, and, though you can’t see it here, I can tell you that their own systems also changed and developed as the year went on. My strong suspicion is that the new students using these books will come up with their own ideas for how to use them, in ways that I and my students never even thought of!

One last note I’d like to mention here: you’ll see that my students make extensive annotations on the Latin text itself, underlining certain words, drawing arrows between others, and using different types of brackets to mark off prepositional phrases and different types of subordinate clauses. This system is based on one shown to me by my friend and former colleague, Mr. Joy Hurd, who in turn learned it from his Latin and Greek teacher at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, Ohio, the late Dr. Greg Knittel. At its core, the system allows students to easily mark out visually the kernel of each clause—subject (one line), verb (two lines), direct object (three lines); some of the other markings (curved arrows for noun-adjective pairs, straight arrows for other dependencies, tall brackets for indirect discourse, as well as the abbreviations of case functions written above nouns) represent my own modifications. I have found this system to be extremely helpful as a way of helping students see their way through complex sentences, as well as of pre-lecting any particularly difficult passages they might encounter. I wish to acknowledge my debt of gratitude for the great contribution these two men have made to my own teaching.
difficimus visu exsanguès. illi agmine certō

Cor petunt: et primum parva duōrum

corpora natōrum serpentès amplexus uterque

implevit et miserōs morsō dēspescitur artus:

ora post insimul triumphi subeunti ac tēla ferentem

corripiunt squire ἡ nōn ingentiis; et iam

Amphora

CV medium amplexi, ψεῦδος squamea circum

terra dat supérant capite et cervicibus altís.

ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodōs

perfusus sātiēs vītās ātrōque venēnō,

clamōns simul horrendōs ad sidera tollit:

Vocabulary Notes:

dēnōs, ore: scatter

visus, ūs, m.: sight

cērtum, a., m.: fixed, reliable

amplectēr, i., plu.: entangle, embrace

nātus, i., m.: son, child

implēciō, ore: entwine

mors, ūs, m.: song

āctus, ūs, m.: joint, limb

auxilium, i., n.: help, aid

subeō, ero: go under

bēna, f.: weapon, sword

cerciō, ore: seize, snatch up

spīra, a., f.: coil

līgō, ore: bind, coil

collum, i., n.: neck

squaēmus, a., m.: seedy

cērīx, ico, s.: neck

divellō, ore, ē, ūs: tear apart

nōdōs, ūs, i., m.: knot, fill, coil

podēmē, ore, ūsī: soak, drench

stīxēs, ēs, f.: blood

vītā, a., ē: life

ōrē triō, trōn: black, gloomy, deadly

venēnō, i., n.: poison, drug

horrēndus, ās, ārīs: horrifying
Line 212: Bloodless we scatter from sight. They with a

Line 213: attack Laoeoon; and first the small bodies of two children

Line 214: each embedding serpent serpent [embedding]

Line 215: entwines and feeds upon the wretched limbs with fangs;

Line 216: Afterwards, they snatch up Laoeoon himself, coming to help and carrying a weapons

Line 217: and they bind him with enormous coils; and now

Line 218: both entwined at the middle, both having placed their scaly backs

Line 219: to their necks, rise above with their heads and high necks around his neck]

Line 220: At the same time Laoeoon drives to tear apart with his hands the foils

Line 221: drenched with respect to a bands with blood and deadly poison

Line 222: at the same time he releases to the stors a horriying shout:

Additional Notes: On line 221 "drenched poison" refers to Laoeoon
Tempus erat quo prima quiets mortálibus aegris

in somnis maestissimus Hector

vitus adesse mini largosse offundere fluis

raptus bigis ut quondam, üterque cruentō

pulverisque pedes traecús longuissimi

resom. Recte PPP

Hectorque redit exuvias ingulis Achillī

vel Danaum Phrygiōs iaculatus pappibus ignis!

Vocabulary Notes:

268) aeger, a, um: sick

269) inquiēs, eīs, eī: quiet, rest, sleep

270) mortālis, is, m.: mortal

271) aegris, eīs, eī: sick

272) raptō, are: snatch, carry off

273) pulvēris, eīs, m.: dust

274) areō, are: red:en

275) Phrygiōs, a, um: Trojan

Explication of Themes:
Line 268: It was the time at which first sleep for the weary

Line 269: humans began and very pleasing it crawled as a gift of the gods.

Line 270: In sleep, behold before my eyes the very mournful Hector

Line 271: seemed to appear to me: and to pour out copious tears,

Line 272: as once before

(Line 272: corrected as once before)

Line 273: 

(Line 273: pulled apart works better)

Line 274: As for me, he was of what sort, how great transformed

Line 275: that man from Hector who returned dressed in the spoils of Achilles

Line 276: and having hurled Trojan fire to the ships of the

(Line 276: Greeks)

Additional Notes: *Aristotelian*: a type of scene in epic poetry in which a
classical experience ultimate glory and usually thereafter dies

*In lines 272-276, the order of events that occurred in Hector's

story are reversed

*In line, he was pulled apart by the chariot last*

Vocabulary Notes: tempus, one-time; quīs, who, which; mortālis, mortal, human; aègris, sick, unhealthy; in somnis, in dreams; exuvìas, garments; Danaum, Danaoi; Phrygiōs, Phrygians; puppibus, with fire.
Line 268: It was the time when first grateful rest begins for the sick humans
Line 269: and clothed on as modest as a gift for the gods
Line 270: Look into the dawn! by the eyes sad Hector
Line 271: seemed to appear and seemed to pour an abundance of tears to me
Line 272: as sullenly scratched by the horse chariot, and dark with bloody dust though his
Line 273: (and pierced across Hector’s swollen feet with the reins.)
Line 274: another, how he was, how much he was changed from that Hector
Line 275: who returned, clothed with the spoils of Achilles
Line 276: of the Danaans and having thrown the Trojan fire on the ships of the Greeks

Additional Notes: ___________________________