

The Why, When, and How of the Graded Readers

**"Conubii decus egregium, lux alma parentum
eximiumque bonum corporis atque animi,
invidia fati rapitur Vincentia florens
et nunc ante patrem conditur Helionem.
Quin potius corpus: nam mens aeterna profecto
pro meritis potitur sedibus Elysiis"**

This inscription from the ancient tomb of a young Roman woman appears on page 164 of *Lectiones Secundae*, the second graded reader of the *Artes Latinae* series. Are you able to decipher it? As you incorporate the graded readers into your regular Latin study, you will begin to refine the skills needed to comprehend this inscription and other authentic Latin readings.

Our customers often ask how the graded readers fit into the program. These readers have two main roles: to provide practice in the skills the student has been acquiring and to enhance those skills through vocabulary building.

The readers can be considered challenge books. Because of the extensive new vocabulary, a variety of clues and supports are included to help students meet the challenge. These include: English derivatives (with their Latin elements highlighted) to alert students to familiar words that may help them unlock the meanings • story introductions providing a framework for better understanding of the stories • maps and illustrations providing additional contexts • a glossary, for when all else fails.

Although use of *Lectiones Primae*, the first graded reader, may begin after completion of Unit 4, its use may be delayed until the student feels more confident with his newly acquired Latin skills. Another alternative is for the student to do just a little bit from each lesson in the reader and return to the full reading when he has increased his vocabulary to a more comfortable level.

The guidance of a teacher/parent will help the student achieve a comfort level in the use of the reader. What the student needs is a healthy challenge and a sense of accomplishment without unnecessary stress or undue frustration. The teacher's manual provides answers and additional suggestions so the teacher/parent can better help the student meet the challenges of the reader.

If he spends too much time trying to decipher vocabulary, he may begin to view the material as drudgery and will then lose interest and motivation. Use of the graded readers is one of the few times in the *Artes Latinae* learning process when the judgement of a teacher/parent may be vital to the success of the student. The teacher/parent should regularly monitor the student's progress and assess the appropriateness of the readings. We also recommend that the student's work not be graded.

Each unit includes actual Latin readings from different periods of Latin literature ranging from classical to the Renaissance. Besides skills practice and vocabulary enhancement, these readings provide additional insight into the ancient world. Beginning with Unit 11, stories and readings with modern settings are added, allowing students to experience Latin alive and well in a modern context.

Students may become more engaged with the readings if they can work cooperatively with partners or in small groups. In a group setting, they can help each other discover word meanings and take turns looking up vocabulary in the glossary. Furthermore, the interaction among students is a great motivator.

Using the graded readers is an excellent way to have students apply and extend their Latin skills. Used appropriately, the readers will provide both challenge and enjoyment. We also hope that students will view them as a reward for having learned the programmed text.

(translation of the inscription from page 155 of the Teacher's Guide)

**"Outstanding adornment of a marriage,
the nourishing light of her parents,
and an extraordinary fineness of body and mind,
Vicentia in the flower of her youth
is taken away by the envy of fate
and now is buried before her father Helio.
No, rather her body is buried:
for her undying mind certainly
for its merits has possession of the Elysian home."**