

# Classis Latine – Cui bono?

*The secrets of a Latin cult at the GISW*

I only took Latin for 3 years, and yet I have heard people refer to Latin as a “dead language” over a hundred times. Usually my response to (in my opinion) such an ignorant remark is:

– but really,  
learning Latin goes beyond the discussion of its vitality.

I chose to take Latin instead of NWP (the combined sciences subject) in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, even though I knew it meant taking four exams a year and weekly vocabulary tests while the other classes had none. Why? What on earth could compel a 7<sup>th</sup> grader to voluntarily sign up for more tests? It was how I believed Latin would benefit me academically and socially, and how it did.

Latin is the mother of all Romanic languages like Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian. Latin words and roots even make up roughly 50% of the English language! Meaning the “terrible” Latin grammar I was warned about, was actually very easy – I had learned the same basic principles already in Spanish! Additionally, studying grammar rigorously helped immensely in German and English writing. And it was always a proud moment in religion, social sciences, biology, and history when a Latin term came up and I already knew what it meant.

However, Latin isn’t just important for all the academic virtues it provides but perhaps even more important than academics, I gained a special friend group.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, our Latin class was unusually large – much to my Latin teacher’s delight. However, throughout the school year, many students decided to switch to NWP. Within a blink of an eye, our once large Latin class became a nerdy

And here is where the cult portion comes in: we had our own Latin class merch! It was a white mug that had our/Cicero's motto on it and "Classis Latina" because it wouldn't be Latin class unless we embraced the idea of full immersion. As our Latin classes were almost always scheduled for the afternoon, we needed a caffeine "pick me up." Our thoughtful Latin teacher would "borrow" the coffee pot from the teacher's lounge and bring us coffee, milk and creamer (we were quite spoiled). Students took turns bringing in sweets or snacks – sometimes they were homemade cookies, sometimes donuts, and sometimes popcorn from the vending machine. But what really made the lesson sweet was all the insider jokes. Now what kind of a cult leader would I be if I exposed the multitude of said special jokes? So here are only a small handful of giggles from class:

;