

liber
libri

[LI bair, LI bree] book

library - place where books are kept

librarian - one in charge of a library

libretto - (Italian - booklet) - words to which opera music
has been written

librettist - one who writes a libretto

libel - written accusation

Teaching Notes:

Liber, the Latin word for “book”, originally meant the bark of a tree which was used by the Romans in very early days, as writing material. Liber gradually came to mean “book”, and the derivative words in our list come from liber, libri. The Latin word libellus was a diminutive form meaning “little book” or “pamphlet”. From about the time of Elizabeth I of England, pamphlets were used to write scurrilous political attacks on people, so the word libel came to mean the unpleasant contents of the libellus. We have laws against libel in the United States. When people write accusations or attacks against other people that are proven to be untrue, the writers can go to jail.

Liber in Latin also means “free” and we find it in such English derivatives as liberty, liberal, libertine, liberation, none of which have anything to do with books. You might argue that books, which make possible the free exchange of ideas, help the cause of liberty and freedom, but it is good to point out the difference in meaning of the two Latin words.

Don’t confuse either of these with the Latin word libra, which means “balance” or “scales”. The sign of the zodiac pictured as a pair of scales is called Libra. The Roman measure of weight, libra (about a pound) is seen every day in our modern abbreviation for pound, “lb.”. You might want to make separate red-bordered cards for each of these three words: liber - book, liber - free, and libra - scales and pound.

scio scitum

[SKI ō, SKEE toom] know

science - knowledge which results from study

scientific - kind of knowledge gained from careful study

conscience - (con - with, together) - knowledge of right and wrong

prescience - (prae - before) - foreknowledge

conscious - (con - with, together) - sharing knowledge; mentally awake or active

omniscience - (omnis - all) - knowing all

Teaching Notes:

It's useful to point out to children right away that we have kept the "sc-" spelling in science (and in all these other derivative words) even though we don't pronounce the "c" in English, because it helps us to see and recognize immediately the Latin word scio from which they all come. We know, therefore, that they all have something to do with "knowing". The letter "c" in Latin is always pronounced like "k". However, in English, "c" before "e", "i" or "y" is pronounced like "s". Therefore, the "c" sound in science disappears when spoken aloud.

Scientific knowledge is that which is gained from careful, impartial study where the student or scholar is looking only for what is true in his field of study, rather than attempting to find only evidence which will support his own prejudiced ideas. Real scientists search only for truth.

Conscience involves a sense of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions or character, together with an awareness of one's obligation to do or be that which is recognized as good. It also implies an awareness or feeling of guilt or remorse for doing wrong. Conscience is sometimes called the "still, small voice".

Omniscience is infinite knowledge. It is often used as a name for the omniscient (all-knowing) being, God. Omniscient can also refer to a very learned person. The derivatives which come from scio are words for some of the greatest and grandest ideas of our civilization. No child, however, is too young to be introduced to them by a loving and patient teacher.

discipulus

[Dis KI poo loos] student

disciple - a student

discipline - teaching; instruction, field of learning

disciplinary - pertaining to correction, ordered control or teaching

disciplinarian - one who enforces order

Teaching Notes:

In our society, the word discipline is used so often to mean "punishment" or "coercion" that we may lose sight of the real meaning which is "teaching" and "learning".

We think of disciples as primarily those men who were pupils and followers of Jesus Christ back in Biblical times. However, we should realize that students in general may be called disciples. In Latin classes everywhere, teachers begin the lessons with the words "Salvete, discipuli" (pronounced: Sal-WAY-tay, dis-SKEE-poo-lee) ("Good morning, students!") to which the students may reply, "Salve, magister!" ("g" as in gun) ("Good morning, teacher!") or, if the teacher is a woman, "Salve, magistra!"

Discipulus is another word like scio, in which the letter "c" is pronounced in Latin, but becomes silent in the English derivatives. Every now and then someone protests that if we are not going to pronounce a letter, we should drop it in order to simplify the English spelling. The Latin spelling is retained, however, in order to quickly recall the original meaning of the root word in sight reading. It is a vital clue to the meaning of all the derivatives. We NEED that "c"!

A disciplinarian is not necessarily a harsh or unkind person, but rather, ideally, is one who fairly and consistently enforces those rules of order or laws which make life secure and pleasant for all those who live in a school or community. It is one thing to pass laws, and quite another to follow through and see to it that they are observed and obeyed. Good discipline will involve making clear to everyone the reasons for rules and the advantages to the entire community when those rules or laws actually guide the actions of all the individuals within it.

Sauros

[SOW ross] lizard

dinosaur - (deinos - terrible) - terrible lizard

tyrannosaurus - (tyrannos - absolute ruler) - tyrant lizard
(ate anyone he wanted to eat)

allosaurus - (allos - leap) - leaping lizard

stegasaurus - (stego - roof) - lizard with a shell on his back

brontosaurus - (brontos - thunder) - thunder lizard

ankylosaurus - (ankylos - crooked, bent) - lizard with
bony plates sticking up from his neck

Teaching Notes:

The ancient word sauros is a great favorite with children. There are so many kinds of dinosaurs, you won't run out of them! The Greek-derived scientific names are all engagingly simple when translated. The generic term, dinosaur, terrible lizard, sums up the whole clan from our point of view. Tyrannosaurus seems to have been terrible even from the dinosaur's point of view since he was large enough and had the teeth to crunch anyone he cared to eat. Allosaurus must have been Little Orphan Annie's favorite since she was continually exclaiming, "Leaping Lizards!" Stegasaurus had a tough hard shell and may have given even Tyrannosaurus some dental problems! Brontosaurus was so huge, the earth shook when he lumbered onto the scene. The sound must have seemed like thunder.

Lack of Latin and Greek in the school background of many a science student has presented a huge obstacle to learning the hundreds of scientific terms for animals, plants, and parts of the body. You are giving your students an early and entertaining introduction to these terms. After all, these terms make it possible for scientists to communicate with each other all over the world without ambiguity. The terms were agreed upon many years ago and often show that scientists have good senses of humor! You may have encouraged some future scientists today!

amo
amatum

[AH mō, ah MAH toom] love

amateur - (French from L. amator - lover) - lover; one who enjoys an activity without doing it professionally

amiable - kindly, lovable, good-natured

amicable - friendly, peaceable, cordial

amorous - (-osus - full of) - full of love

amour - (French - love) - love affair

enamoured - (in - in) - charmed, captivated, in love

amity - friendship

enmity - (in - not + amity) - ill will; hostility

enemy - (in - not + amity) - hostile, unfriendly person

Teaching Notes:

The French word, amateur, carries a more complicated meaning than simply “lover”. We use it to mean a person who pursues an art, skill or sport for the love of the doing, love of the activity itself, rather than for any reward or payment arising from it. It implies a distinction between the leisure sports enthusiast and the professional athlete. The modern Olympic Games, which have been held every four years since 1896, have traditionally had strict rules barring professional athletes from competing. Athletes had to be very careful to protect their “amateur standing”, lest they be disqualified. However, the distinction has been abandoned in recent years. It is an interesting subject on which to debate.

Take a moment to turn to page 25 (jungo, junctum) and review the conjugation of the word we are considering here - amo, amatum. People who have studied Latin in years past may find they have forgotten some of the language over time, but they almost always remember the conjugation of amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant! It is one of the first verbs to be memorized and it is always pleasant to remember “love”.

This concludes our set of 100 Latin and Greek root words. We hope all your children have become Greek and Latin lovers!