

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210802-latin.html>

The U.K. education secretary Gavin Williamson has announced a new \$5.5 million programme to teach Latin at 40 schools across the country. Mr Williamson said the Latin Excellence Programme aims to "level up" opportunities for students in some government-run schools. Latin is a language that was spoken in the area around Rome over 2,000 years ago. It is taught in 49% of the UK's "elite" private schools but only 2.7% of state schools. Williamson said: "Latin has a reputation as an elitist subject, which is reserved for the privileged few, but the subject can bring so many benefits to young people, so I want to put an end to that divide." He added: "Latin can help pupils with learning modern foreign languages."

The initiative has sparked a heated debate about the benefits of Latin. Many people have ridiculed the programme as being nothing but a "poorly-funded gimmick". Politician Tim Farron wrote: "Latin is elite because only people who are guaranteed successful careers, thanks to family connections, can afford to waste time on a subject whose only practical application is in understanding...the dialogue in [ancient] books." Author Emma Kennedy questioned the use of a "dead" language. She uses Latin to "occasionally translate things on tombs". A teacher said money would be better spent on living languages like Chinese or Arabic that would enable children "to get ahead in and engage with the world," or on computer coding.

Sources: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-students-to-learn-ancient-and-modern-languages>
<https://www.rt.com/uk/530785-uk-debates-usefulness-latin/>
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9846015/Latin-taught-state-schools-bid-make-language-elitist.html>

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. announced | a. Of, provided by, or concerned with the government of a country. |
| 2. level up | b. Having special rights, advantages, or immunities. |
| 3. elite | c. Made a public and typically formal declaration about a fact, occurrence, or intention. |
| 4. state | d. A group or class of people seen as having the greatest power and influence within a society, especially because of their wealth or privilege. |
| 5. reputation | e. Further improve or develop something to a higher stage or step. |
| 6. reserved | f. The beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something. |
| 7. privileged | g. Kept for a particular purpose or person. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 8. initiative | h. Provided the stimulus for a dramatic event or process. |
| 9. sparked | i. Inflamed with passion. |
| 10. heated | j. Belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence. |
| 11. ridiculed | k. An act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something. |
| 12. gimmick | l. A large box, typically an underground one, for burying the dead. |
| 13. ancient | m. A trick or device intended to attract attention, publicity, or business. |
| 14. tomb | n. Subjected someone or something to disrespectful and dismissive language or behavior. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210802-latin.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The UK's new Latin programme will cost \$55 million. **T / F**
2. The UK education secretary said students had to level up to learn Latin. **T / F**
3. Latin is taught in 2.7% of the UK's elite private schools. **T / F**
4. The UK education secretary said Latin is beneficial for young people. **T / F**
5. Many people have called the Latin programme a gimmick. **T / F**
6. A politician said Latin is only useful for reading ancient books. **T / F**
7. A writer said she only uses Latin to translate things in museums. **T / F**
8. A teacher said learning coding is preferable to Latin. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. announced | a. best |
| 2. opportunities | b. conversation |
| 3. area | c. scheme |
| 4. elite | d. chances |
| 5. benefits | e. become involved |
| 6. initiative | f. notified |
| 7. guaranteed | g. assured of |
| 8. dialogue | h. allow |
| 9. enable | i. region |
| 10. engage | j. advantages |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The U.K. education | a. an elitist subject |
| 2. students in some government- | b. get ahead |
| 3. Latin has a reputation as | c. foreign languages |
| 4. I want to put an end | d. funded gimmick |
| 5. help pupils with learning modern | e. run schools |
| 6. The initiative has sparked | f. in ancient books |
| 7. nothing but a poorly- | g. secretary |
| 8. understanding the dialogue | h. "dead" language |
| 9. questioned the use of a | i. to that divide |
| 10. enable children to | j. a heated debate |

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2108/210802-latin.html>

- 1) How much will the UK government spend on the Latin programme?
 - a) \$55 million
 - b) \$5.5 million
 - c) \$5 million
 - d) \$55.5 million
- 2) Where does the education secretary hope students will level up?
 - a) in state-run universities
 - b) at home
 - c) in private universities
 - d) some government-run schools
- 3) How many elite UK private schools is Latin taught in?
 - a) 49%
 - b) 2.7%
 - c) 27%
 - d) 4.9%
- 4) What did the education secretary say Latin has a reputation for being?
 - a) too full of declensions
 - b) difficult
 - c) elitist
 - d) old
- 5) What did the education secretary say Latin could help pupils with?
 - a) learning about the Roman Empire
 - b) learning modern foreign languages
 - c) English literature
 - d) life
- 6) What kind of debate has the Latin programme started?
 - a) a heated debate
 - b) an intellectual debate
 - c) a gentle debate
 - d) an online debate
- 7) What have people ridiculed the programme as being?
 - a) an anachronism
 - b) a smokescreen
 - c) a poorly-funded gimmick
 - d) a waste of taxpayers' money
- 8) What did a politician say can help the elite get a successful career?
 - a) family connections
 - b) the working class
 - c) the Queen
 - d) money
- 9) What did an author say she used Latin to translate?
 - a) things on tombs
 - b) ancient poems
 - c) medical books
 - d) books on botany
- 10) What two living languages did a teacher say are more preferable?
 - a) Chinese and Spanish
 - b) French and Spanish
 - c) German and Esperanto
 - d) Chinese and Arabic

LATIN DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'Latin'?
3. What do you know about Latin?
4. Should all schools teach Latin?
5. What is the use of Latin in today's world?
6. Is \$5.5 million on a nationwide language programme enough?
7. Why do students in the UK's elite schools learn Latin?
8. How can learning Latin help students learn foreign languages?
9. Should the money be spent on helping people to improve their English?
10. What 'benefits' can Latin bring to young people?

More U.K. schools to teach Latin – 2nd August, 2021
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LATIN DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'school'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of Latin?
15. Do you think the Latin programme is a 'poorly-funded gimmick'?
16. What do you think of getting jobs through family connections?
17. Why is Latin useful if all texts written in Latin have been translated?
18. Why learn Latin when you can learn Chinese, Arabic or coding?
19. Would you like to learn Latin?
20. What questions would you like to ask the education secretary?