Latin Comprehension Stories

Two Reading Lessons from early Roman historical legend

I *The Boys and the Wolf*

Suitable for Beginning Students.

(*Students unfamiliar with perfect tense can be told to look in the vocabulary list for third principal parts of verbs, which are past tense. I don't put a great deal of stress on this, but I find it is much better to let them experience the perfect tense informally now, than to teach and then 'unteach' the imperfect as simple past. The vocabulary is simply to be used for understanding, though derivative work with the unfamiliar words has two benefits – helping the students work with the Latin passage and increasing their English vocabulary.*)

1) As this lesson is very early in Latin I, I first read the story aloud, telling the students that they will be expected to read it aloud later. This announcement makes them pay closer attention. I encourage each person to read slowly and not to be discouraged if he or she has to re-pronounce a word.

2) After the first reading, we take a couple of minutes to pronounce the vocabulary together and separately, giving English derivatives for the vocabulary words. We read through Exercise I, the English comprehension questions. We don't answer them at this point – we are just gleaning a bit of information about the content of the paragraph.

3) Now we read the story together, after which I shall call on individuals to read aloud one sentence at a time.

This triple oral reading engenders a bit of understanding. Not too much, as this point, but some. It also helps them learn a rhythm for Latin speech.

4) We answer the comprehension questions in Exercise I and the filling in questions in Exercise II, looking back and forth at the text. (can be done various ways)

4 b) *We can also ask simple Latin questions after giving the students the words "quis" "quid" and "ubi"*

Quis est Ascanius? filius Aeneae. Quid Ascanius aedificavit? Albam Longam. Ubi Romulus Remusque cibum petivit? In silva

5) We answer the derivative questions in Exercise III and do the crossword puzzle in Exercise IV.

At this point we can go over the story in English, making an oral translation, or make a written translation, or simply discuss the story.

The Boys and the Wolf (English)

After the death of Aeneas, Ascanius built a city named Alba Longa. One of his descendants was Amulius, who drove his older brother Numitor from the throne. Amulius then put his nephews, the twin brothers Romulus and Remus, into the Tiber River in a basket, but they were saved by a shepherd and restored their grandfather to the throne.Later Romulus founded the city of Rome.

Pueri et Lupa (Latin)

Ascānius, fīlius Aeneāe, oppidum Albam Longam aedificāvit. Post multōs annōs Amūlius superbus frātrem Numitōrem, rēgem Albae Longae, ex oppidō expulit. Amūlius fīliōs Numitōris necāvit; Rōmulum Remumque, nepōtēs Numitōris, in flūmine Tiberī posuit. Lupa puerōs parvōs servāvit, et pastor Faustulus puerōs ēducāvit. Rōmulus Remusque auxilium Faustulō dabant et cibum in silvā petēbant. Cum latrōnibus in silvīs pugnābant; praedam in pastōrēs dīvidēbant. Multī iuvenēs sē cum Rōmulō Remōque iunxērunt. Faustulus historiam puerōrum narrāvit. Rōmulus et Remus et aliī iuvenēs Amūlium necāvērunt et Numitōrem rēgem appellāvērunt. Posteā Rōmulus erat prīmus rēx Rōmae.

Vocabulary

cib·us -ī *m* food

frā·ter -tris *m* brother

iuven·is -is *m* young man

latr·ō -ōnis *m* robber, bandit

lup· a –ae *f* she-wolf

nep·ōs -ōtis *m* grandson; male descendant

past·or -ōris *m* shepherd

praed·a –ae *f* spoils, plunder

pu·er –erī *m* boy

Tiber·is –is *m* Tiber river

ali·us –a –ud other

*appell·ō –āre – āvī -- ātus to name *(officially)*

ēduc·ō 1 to bring up, raise

ex·pellō -pellere –pulī –pulsus to drive out

iun·gō –gere –xī –ctus to join; **sē iungere** (with **cum** + *abl*) to join *(someone)*

pet·ō -ere –īvī -ītus to search for; to obtain

pōnō pōnere posuī positus to put, place

serv·ō 1 to save, preserve

in *prep* (+ *acc*) into; (*with verbs of distributing*) among

* all regular 1ˢᵗ conjugation verbs have the same endings, so after one example 1ˢᵗ conjugation verbs are designated by 1.

Pueri et Lupa Exercise I

Answer these questions from the story.

1. What happened to King Numitor?

2. What happened to the infants Romulus and Remus?

3. Who were the two saviors of Romulus and Remus?

4. How long did Faustulus wait to tell Romulus and Remus the truth?

5. What did they do?

Pueri et Lupa Exercise II

Copy these sentences and fill in the blanks with words from the story.

1. Faustulus _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Remumque, nepōtēs Numitōris, ēducāvit.

2. Rōmulus et Remus cibum in _ _ _ _ _ petīvērunt.

3. Numitor erat rēx _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Pueri et Lupa Exercise III

Circle the meaning of these English words based on parent Latin words in the vocabulary

1. Your appellation is your a) disease; b) name; c) job

2. To preserve something is a) to like it; b) to sweeten it; c) to save it

3. A fraternity is a group of a) brothers; b) businessmen; c) golfers

4. Juvenile activities are performed by a) professionals; b) singers; c) young people

Pueri et Lupa Exercise IV

Use the *Pueri et Lupa* vocabulary and the clues below to fill in the crossword puzzle.
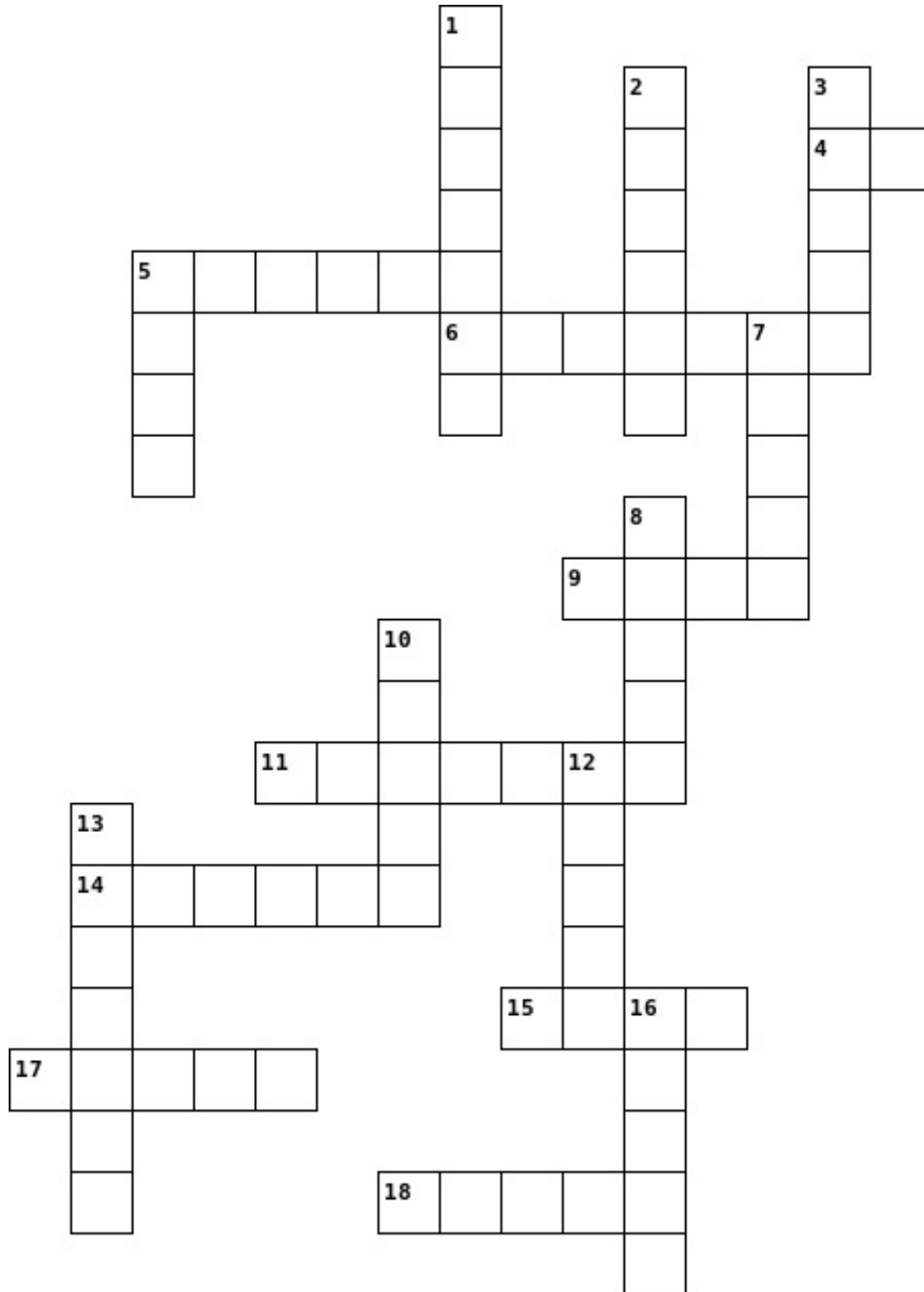
Across

4. prep (+ acc) into; (with verbs of distributing) among
5. -ōris m shepherd
6. -is m young man
9. -ere –īvī -ītus to search for; to obtain
11. -pellere –pulī –pulsus to drive out
14. –ae f spoils, plunder
15. pōnere posuī positus to put, place
17. –a –ud other
18. 1 to bring up, raise

Down

1. –is m Tiber river
2. -tris m brother
3. -ī m food
5. –erī m boy
7. –gere –xī –ctus to join; sē iungere (with cum + abl) to join (someone)
8. 1 to save, preserve
10. –ae f she-wolf
12. -ōnis m robber, bandit
13. –āre – āvī -- ātus to name (officially)
16. -ōtis m grandson; male descendant

II Reading Lesson suitable for Beginning Second Level Students

Grammar included (*if teachers do not want to deal grammatically with any of these at the moment, they can simply give students a translation for the phrase*)

- 5 declensions

- future tense

- perfect and pluperfect tense active and passive

- present participle and gerundive

- relative clause with imperfect subjunctive

1) Teacher first reads the story aloud.

2) Pronounce the vocabulary list, giving English derivatives for the vocabulary words.

3) After going over vocabulary, next the teacher calls on individuals to read aloud one sentence or one section of a long sentence at a time. Encourage each person to read slowly and not to be discouraged if he or she has to re-pronounce a word.

This double oral reading engenders a bit of understanding.

4) At this point read over the Latin and English questions, not answering them, but using them for a bit more grasp of the story's meaning. Now the teacher re-reads the story, giving students substitute words or phrases for some of the hard ones. (N. B. I have done this for a long time—when I first started, I often had a personal copy of the story double-spaced with alternate words written above the ones with which I knew my students would be unfamiliar.)

5) Answer the Latin questions, which have been chosen to highlight parts of the story for understanding.

They can usually be answered by locating the sentence they match and lifting a few words.

6) Answer the comprehension questions at the end of the lesson.

Brutus — *Triumph and Treachery* (English)

(*Some love the privilege of the few rather than the liberty of the many. Lucius Junius Brutus, the **pater patriae** of Rome, found such an attitude in his own family and faced a dilemma concerning **pietas**).*

Lucius Junius Brutus

Brutus — *Victoria et Perfidia* (Latin)

Lūcius Tarquinius, septimus rēx Rōmānōrum, Superbus cognōmine, crūdēlis et iniūstus erat. Multōs cīvēs Rōmānōs hīc rēx expulit aut interfēcit. Lūcius Iūnius Brūtus, quī paene ā rēge interfectus erat, Rōmānōs incitāvit: "Audīte mē! Tarquinium Superbum ex urbe Rōmā agēmus. Numquam iterum Rōmam reget." Brūtus dux populī factus est, et rēx ē Rōmā expulsus est. Quod Brūtus populum Rōmānum ē dominātiōne Tarquiniī līberāverat, "pater patriae" vocātus est. Rōmānī Lūcium Iūnium Brūtum et Tarquinium Collātīnum duōs cōnsulēs creāvērunt, quī imperārent ūnum annum ūna cum senātū et comitiīs centuriātīs populī Rōmānī. Paucī Rōmānī, cupidī pecūniae et benevolentiae rēgis Tarquinium rēgem esse iterum cupīvērunt. In eīs erant duo fīliī Brūtī. Cōnsilium sēcrētum ad rēgem in urbem Rōmam redūcendum audītum est ā servō, quī Brūtō cōnsilium nārrāvit. Brūtus iussit omnēs cīvēs quī cōnsilium contrā patriam cēpissent gladiō interficī. Prīmō diē Brūtus spem habuit fīliōs in coniūrātīs nōn esse, sed tandem eōs vīdit. "Mihi fīliī meī carī sunt," inquit, "sed lībertās patriae cārior est." Secundum lēgēs līctōrēs, ab cōnsulibus iussī, prōditōrēs, ad pālum ligātōs, virgīs pūblicē verberāvērunt et necāvērunt. Brūtus cōnsul dolēns lēgem exsecūtus est. Mox bellum contrā Tarquinium gestum est, et Brūtus cōnsul, quī nōn iam vīvere cupīvit, in prīmam aciem bellī prōcessit et in impetū interfectus est

Vocabulary

aciēs, aciēī *f* line of battle; sharp edge

benevolentia –ae *f* good will

cognōmen, cognōminis *n* surname, honorary name

comitia centuriāta, –ōrum *n pl* popular assembly; elections

coniūrātus -ī *m* conspirātor (one bound by an oath)

dominātiō –ōnis *f* tyranny, despotism

expellō, expellere, expulī, expulsum to drive out

exsequor, exsequī, exsecūtus sum *dep* to perform, execute, carry out

iniūstus –ā –um unfair, unjust

iterum *adv* again

līctor, līctōris *m* lictor (attendant and bodyguard of a magistrate)

lig·ō 1 to tie, bind

nōn iam no longer

pālus –ī *m* stake, post

prōditor, prōditōris *m* traitor, betrayer

pūblicus –ā –um public, national, belonging to the people

spēs, speī *f* hope

verber·ō 1 to flog, beat

virga –ae *f* switch, rod

Brutus — *Triumph and Treachery* Latin Questions to Answer

1. Quālis rēx erat Tarquinius Superbus?

2. Quid ēgit (fēcit)?

3. Quid Brūtus agere (facere) cupīvit?

4. Post rēx expulsus est, quid erat Brūtus?

5. Quid nōmen Rōmānī Brūtō dedit?

6. Quid paucī Rōmānī amāvērunt?

7. Cūr Brūtus nōn vīvere cupīvit?

8. Quid ēgit?

Brutus — *Triumph and Treachery* Comprehension Questions (*some flexibility in answering these questions is acceptable*)

1. What did Lucius Junius Brutus do to free the Roman people?

2. What office did he hold under the new government?

3. Why did some people want the king back?

4. What was the punishment for this?

5. Who were among the punished?

6. What dilemma did Lucius Junius Brutus face?

7. How did he solve it?

8. What was his fate?