

Read Latin Better with Rhythm

Roma Parva



Reading aloud is easier if we have a concept of the rhythm of the language. Often we speak of a “foreign accent” when we mean the speaking rhythm which a person’s native language has given him or her. Examining the chief poetic or metrical pattern of a language often yields clues to that language’s rhythm. The “natural” or most prominent, rhythm of English is iambic —one short syllable followed by one long. English syllables below marked long are emphasized, or stressed; the other syllables are not.

˘ – ˘ – ˘ – – ˘ – ˘ –

“When I/ see wil/ lows ben/ding in/ the breeze”

In Latin, long syllables are literally held longer than short ones. The most prominent rhythm of Latin is arguably dactylic— one long followed by two shorts, with in-line variations:

– ˘ ˘ – ˘ ˘ – – – – – ˘ ˘ – –

“Arma vi/rumque ca/nō Tro/iae quī /prīmus ab/ ōrīs”

Your teacher or selected students should read the following sentences aloud carefully. Pay attention to syllables which have long vowels or which are followed by two consonants. Either of these will make the syllable long, or in English terms, stressed. The slashes indicate a slight pause between sections to help with clear pronunciation.

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The people who founded the city of Rome were very few. Everybody worked together to build the little city.

Ölim Rōma parvum oppidum Ītalīae erat.

Omnēs Rōmānī oppidum condere labōrāvērunt.

Populus Rōmānī fortis oppidum amāvērunt.

Saepe oppidum mūnīvērunt/ et arma cēpērunt/ et patriam dēfendere parāvērunt.

Victōriīs magnīs patriam dēfendērunt et auxērunt.

Deīs multīs grātiās ēgērunt/ et templa magna aedificāvērunt.

Multās patriās cēpērunt; magnum numerum colōnōrum in multīs terrīs mīsērunt. Multās terrās in prōvinciās fēcērunt,/ et multōs annōs bene rēxērunt.

Terrae multae linguam Latīnam et modōs Rōmānōs accēpērunt.

Orbis terrārum Rōmānus factus erat.

Your teacher or a chosen reader will now dictate the above passage aloud please write it out in Latin. Mark vowels long or short as they write.

Exercise

After you and your class have read the Latin these answers these questions. Your answers should be in Latin.

Your teacher may ask you to answer outloud or to write the answers in the space provided. Your teacher will provide an answer key and the English translation after you have completed the exercise.

Respondē in Latīnā

Quid erat Rōmā ōlim? _____

Cuius oppidum erat? _____

Quālis populus erat Rōmānī? _____

Quae Rōmānī saepe cēpērunt? _____

Cūr? _____

Quibus patriam dēfendērunt? _____

Quibus grātiās ēgērunt? _____

Quod in multīs terrīs mīsērunt? _____
