

AP LATIN: VERGIL'S *AENEID*

Course Description

Advanced Placement Vergil's *Aeneid* introduces students to one of the masterpieces of world literature, Vergil's epic poem on the origin of Rome. Besides reading approximately a fifth of Vergil's epic in the original Latin, students will read the remainder in translation. Grammar, vocabulary, history, and culture will be keyed to our study of Vergil. As in all such courses at this level, the basic objective is to progress in reading, translating, understanding, analyzing, and interpreting Latin in the original.

Details AP Vergil Examination and the Class

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The examination will test some or all of the following abilities:

1. to write a literal English translation of a Latin passage on the syllabus;
2. to identify the context and significance of short excerpts from the required books;
3. to identify and analyze characteristic or noteworthy features of the poet's mode of expression, including his use of word choice and placement, imagery, figures of speech, sound, and metrical effects, as seen in specific passages;
4. to discuss particular motifs or general themes not only suggested by specific passages but also relevant to the poem as a whole;
5. to analyze characters or situations as portrayed in specific passages.

Additionally, students will receive extensive practice in scanning dactylic hexameter and in sight reading and the art of literal translation.

Translation

The instructions for the translation questions, "translate as literally as possible," call for a translation that is accurate and precise. In some cases an idiom may be translated in a way that makes sense in English but is rather loose compared to the Latin construction. In general, however, students should remember that:

- the tense, voice, number, and mood of verbs need to be translated literally;
- subject-verb agreement must be correct; participles should be rendered precisely with regard to tense and voice;
- ablative absolutes may be rendered literally or as subordinate clauses; however, the tense and number of the participle must be rendered accurately;
- historical present is acceptable as long as it is used consistently throughout the passage.

Practice with Literal Translation

Students have learned literal translation beginning in Latin 1. For example, when rules for translating perfect passive participles appear in the ***Ecce Romani*** series that allow such participles to be rendered as perfect active participles, I stress that this is unacceptable according to the AP guidelines.

Indeed, literal translation is the daily goal of every session of every class in the entire Latin sequence. In the AP courses, students are required to write out the translations for every line on the syllabus, according to the schedule on the one-page syllabus that concludes this syllabus. We then go over the entire corpus of syllabus lines to make sure at each point that the students have literal renderings that they can explain. This is not to say that there is no room for discussion or variety. The joy of the ***Aeneid*** is in teasing out shades of meaning, from something as simple as ***animis caelestibus*** of the proem: ablative or dative? We work unceasingly on effective and acceptable ways to translate participles into English. We focus

extensively on aspect, or nuances of tenses. Such discussion shades into the analyses required for essay writing.

Students will be trained in "chunking," and translation testing will at times be graded by chunking, by a more traditional point system, or, most informatively, by both so that students can learn how important precision and association of elements become for the AP examination.

Format of the AP Vergil Examination

50 multiple-choice questions in 60 minutes

4 passages: 3 sight passages, at least 1 poetry and at least 1 prose

1 syllabus-based passage

(Vergil booklets will contain a Vergil passage. . . .)

The questions on the Vergil . . . passages will test knowledge of grammar and syntax, reference, context, meter, and figures of speech as well as background knowledge. (5)

Multiple Choice Practice

Every test requires work with multiple choice items in the AP style, which may come from old exams, the National Latin Exam, or Latin teachers around the country, as well as myself. Beyond the larger examinations listed on the syllabus page, I have a current repertoire of approximately forty short MC quizzes on the syllabus lines. For about half of these, there is a make up option available, so that students who have difficulty with sight reading even of familiar passages have the opportunity to review, ask questions, and then test again. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the online AP materials available at the recommended sites on the AP Latin Web Guide at AP Central:

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/155475.html

Free-Response Section

The time allotted for this section includes a 15-minute reading period and one hour and 45 minutes of testing time. The format is as follows:

Question V1: a 10-minute translation

Question V2: a 10-minute translation

Question V3: one 45-minute long essay

Question V4: one 20-minute short essay

Question V5: one 20-minute short essay based on the parts of the *Aeneid* read in English, and, when appropriate, on the selections read in Latin. (23)

The translation passages tested in V1 and V2 are usually between four and ten lines in length. The questions asked in V3, V4, and V5 are similar to the previous long and short essay questions on the AP Latin: Vergil Exam since 1999. The increased time allotted to V3 and V4 is intended to provide students with more time to plan their essays; they are not required to write longer essays. More recently, the V5 short essay has provided the students with a list of episodes or events from which to choose to the subject of their essay. (23)

Writing Free-Response Essays

Some questions in the free-response section instruct students to write either a short essay or a long essay that is "well developed." In both instances, students may be asked to

- interpret the text;
- analyze critical statements about the text;
- compare and contrast different aspects of form, structure, or content of the text;
- evaluate some issues of importance relevant to the text.

Essays receiving the highest marks are analytical and interpretive rather than merely descriptive or narrative. In both types of essays, the students must refer specifically to the Latin throughout the poem to

support their statements. When students are asked to refer specifically to the Latin to support their answers, they must write out the Latin and/or cite line numbers. They must also translate, accurately paraphrase, or otherwise make clear in their discussion that they understand the Latin. **The responsibility rests with the student to convince the reader that the student is drawing conclusions or support from the Latin text and not from a general recall of the passage.**

When writing their essays, students should

- use the Latin appropriate to their argument and cite it properly (for longer passages, the use of line numbers or **word . . . word** via ellipsis is acceptable);
- understand that using "Latin throughout" means that they should, at a minimum, use material from the beginning, middle, and end of the passage;
- connect the cited Latin to the point they are making and explain the connection (don't leave it to the reader to guess your line of reasoning)
- omit information they have learned (e.g., figures of speech, meter, historical background) when it is not relevant to the specific question (but they should make such analyses when asked to do so);
- avoid making figures of speech, scansion, or sound effect the basis of their essays;
- refer to other passages by the same author only when there is a strong connection that strengthens the point they are making. (21)

Scansion and Figures of Speech

Students should know how to scan dactylic hexameter. Scansion includes indicating elision and the metrical qualities of syllables. The AP exam does not indicate macrons; students must figure out vowel quantities for themselves; our quizzes and exams will give students the opportunity to develop this skill by using unmarked texts. Students should also be familiar with the figures of speech commonly used by Vergil in the *Aeneid*. (22)

All students who have begun Latin in our program have learned scansion in Latin 2, in conjunction with chapter 34 of the *Ecce Romani* series. This topic is periodically reviewed in Latin 3, and scansion will be reviewed in the first week of the AP class and practiced in almost every session thereafter.

Practice Writing Essays

I believe firmly that students should focus on essay writing skills mainly in the second semester, particularly in the review and preparation for the AP examination. Many of the essay questions, especially the V3 and V5 items, ask for comprehensive analysis of the epic as a whole by comparing two scenes from, say, books one and twelve. It is impossible for students struggling with the first few hundred lines of the book one selections to comment on something they have not yet read. We will, in fact, write our first essay collectively, to think about the requirements described above and how to fulfill them.

Nonetheless, each test will include an essay or essay-like components. Essays may be drawn from old exams or be teacher creations. These will tend to focus on the smaller scenes at hand, more in the nature of the V4 questions. The essay-like components target specific elements of a passage: how does meter reinforce the message of the excerpt? what does the figure of speech reveal about the scene?

Preparation for essay writing will begin at once. The teacher will show students how to work in a two-column system of note taking, so that one side contains the written translation of the entire AP syllabus, the other side contains notes on figures of speech or meter and their effects on the passage, references to allusions made, interesting word choices that help create a mood or set the tone for a passage, e.g.,

- what words in Juno's initial soliloquy convey her frustration?
- how does Vergil enhance the death of Laocoon with sound effects?
- how does Juno's appeal to Aeolus differ from her appeal to Venus?
- what does it mean when Venus says to Jupiter *solabar* (*Aen.* 1.239) both in terms of voice and aspect?

Every class period will include these teacher-led discussion points to help students think critically about what Vergil is trying to do at any given point in the epic and how he is accomplishing his goals. Students come quickly to make such connections themselves. Student notes will also include summaries both of syllabus passages and of excerpts read only in English. Effectively, then, the students will be preparing their V3, V4, and V5 essays all year long, even though the bulk of their essay writing will occur in second semester.

Specifics of the Vergil Class

The accompanying syllabus is adapted from one by Patsy Ricks, of Jackson Preparatory School, Mississippi, for the Vergil exam prior to 1999. It appears in the College Board's booklet ***Teacher's Guide to Advanced Placement Courses in Latin*** (48-49, 1995 ed.). I have simply inserted the 1999 changes to the Vergil syllabus to replace the deletions from Book 4. All AP Vergil students worldwide cover this same material. Additionally, to accommodate a schedule that varies in length from 37-39 weeks. I have developed schedules of varying lengths that distribute the same workload accordingly.

Our first week begins with the background to the ***Aeneid***. After teacher introductions to these topics, students will select or be assigned a topic for further research. The topics will be presented and referred to throughout the year. The topics may include, but are not limited to

- Rome after the Punic Wars,
- the Gracchi brothers,
- Marius and Sulla,
- the ***optimates*** and ***populares***,
- Julius Caesar,
- the First Triumvirate,
- the Second Triumvirate,
- Augustus and the ***Pax Romana***,
- the circle of Maecenas,
- the life and works of Vergil
- a short history of Latin poetry,
- epic tradition,
- Homer vs. Vergil,
- the ***Nachleben Vergils***.

Our syllabus includes a list of some secondary literature commonly read during the course of the year. From time to time, and based on student interest, other additions to this reading list may be made to address issues of the epic tradition (broached in Knox), the Pax Romana (implicit in C. S. Lewis), the European vs. "Harvard" readings of the epic (starting with Knox and adding Parry as time allows). Excerpts from Lessing's ***Laocoon*** connect the epic with other artistic traditions of antiquity, and, if Lessing's theory is correct, provide an introduction to the ***Nachleben Vergils***. Other articles, such as Charles Saylor's "Toy Troy," help us to understand the events of books read only in English (in this case, book three), much as Parry's article gives us information about book seven. For a purely allegorical reading of the epic that connects even phrases to historical events, Ronald Syme's ***Roman Revolution*** is used. Students are encouraged to develop their own reading of the epic based on the following two questions, which we track across the year:

1. Is Aeneas ultimately a positive or negative hero?
2. What is, finally, the message of the ***Aeneid***?

Aeneid in English

The one-page syllabus notes the schedule according to which students will read the entire ***Aeneid*** in English translation.

Sight Reading

Sight reading included on the one-page syllabus is not the only sight reading done in the course. Those passages include segments of high interest that further our understanding of Vergil's epic, e.g.,

- the first meeting of Dido and Aeneas,
- the bard's little astronomy course at the banquet that sets up the Apollo-sun-Aeneas, Diana-moon-Dido connection,
- further information on Aeneas's attempts at suicidal heroism on the last night of the city,
- the death of Androgeos and the snake in the brambles simile,
- the participation of the gods in the destruction of Troy.

Beyond the epic itself, our end-of-the-year review includes as much sight reading in possible in the following works/authors:

1. Julius Caesar's ***De bello gallico***, which helps students strengthen their skills reading prose after a year of intensive concentration on dactylic hexameter and epic. Caesar selections include battle scenes, which helps reinforce the less familiar vocabulary of books 10 and 12, with their martial emphasis.
2. Catullus's ***Carmina***, which remind students that there are other kinds of poetry than Vergil. Catullus, as a forerunner of Vergil, helps students understand the development of the poetic tradition in Roman culture and the importance of poetry in elite society. For students who may have a chance to do the Latin Literature syllabus, this reading can even bridge the courses.
3. Baebius Italicus's ***Ilias Latina*** and Ekkehard's ***Waltharii Poesis*** have in common that they are epics indebted to Vergil's ***Aeneid*** and give further evidence of Vergil's ***Nachleben***. They are further rich in veritable pastiches that sound like Vergil, but are not, and offer rich opportunities for reading at sight of speeches of the gods (Thetis and Jupiter) and combats (Walther versus everyone).

On a daily, weekly or, at most, bi-weekly basis, however, students will participate in sight reading in the following two ways:

1. they will (re)read at sight passages that they have translated in advance;
2. they will take AP style quizzes drawn from released exams, the National Latin Exam, ***Excelability in Latin, A Vergil Workbook***, or other sources. These quizzes will include both prose and poetry that students will **not** have seen before.

The regularly scheduled exams will also test sight reading, often of syllabus-based passages, in a multiple choice format compatible with the AP exam.

Bibliography

Besides resources in our school library, such as multiple translations of the ***Aeneid***, commentaries on select books, Latin dictionaries, and extensive reference works, every student will have access to the following texts:

Pharr, Clyde. ***Vergil's Aeneid: Books I-VI***. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy, 1997. (Note: this is the revised edition with additional vocabulary reference charts).

Boyd, Barbara Weiden. ***Vergil's Aeneid: 10 & 12, Pallas and Turnus***. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy, 1998. (Note: this is the supplement to Pharr's edition and includes all the lines from the 1999 changes to the syllabus from books ten and twelve.)

LaFleur, Rick and Alexander McKay. ***Song of War: Readings in Vergil's Aeneid***. Prentice Hall, 2004.

All students have all three texts and are encouraged to explore them both and decide which one/s best meet/s their needs.

For review and practice purposes, all students have access to the following resources:

Bradley, Katherine and Barbara Weiden Boyd. ***A Vergil Workbook***. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy, 2006.

Colakis Marianthe. ***Excelability in Advanced Latin: A Workbook for Students***. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy, 2003.

Palma, Ronald B. ***AP Latin Vergil & Literature***. Piscataway, NJ: Research & Education Association, 2007.

Students will use these reference and practice resources throughout the year, focusing on the Palma book with its four practice exams during the review period before the AP exam itself.

Students are encouraged to get their own English translations of the ***Aeneid***. I prefer that we have a wide range of translations into both prose and poetry available for consultation and discussion in class. We even use them as a source of essays by having students compare translations of a specific passage by various authors. Our library has had copies of all the standard translations, such as Fitzgerald and Mandelbaum, available for checkout, so every student is guaranteed access to the English text.

Week	Translation Assignments, Sight Reading , Reading Assignments, TESTS , Other	# Lines
1	Introduction to Aeneid; Grammar and Scansion Review ; Book 1.1-45	45
2	Book 1.46-123; TEST 1: 1.1-101	78
3	Book 1.124-207	84
4	Book 1.208-74	67
5	TEST 2: 1.102-253 ; Book 1.275-324	50
6	Book 1.325-401	77
7	Book 1.402-65; Read Book 1 in English if needed. TEST 3: 1.254-401	64
8	Book 1.466-519; Sight reading: Book 1.561-74; 1.586-612; Finish Book 1 if needed.	54 (+41)
9	TEST 4: 1.402-519 ; Sight reading: Book 1.613-30; 1.740B-56 ; Book 2.1-56; Read Book 2 in English. (1Q ends on 10-10)	(34.5+) 56
10	Sight reading: Book 2.57-66a; Knox: "The Serpent and the Flame" ; Book 2.199-264	(9+) 66
11	Lessing: Excerpts from Laocoon ; Book 2.265-97; Sight reading: Book 2.318-35; 2.348-54; 2.370-82 ; Book 2.469-505	70 (+38)
12	TEST 5: 2.1-56, 2.199-297 ; Book 2.506-66	61
13	Sight reading: Book 2.601-33 ; Book 2.735-804	(33+) 70
14	Read Books 3-4 in English: Saylor: "Toy Troy" ; Book 4.1-89	89
15	Read Book 4 in English if needed; TEST 6: 2.469-566, 2.735-804 ; Book 4.90-159	70
16	Book 4.160-90 (Thanksgiving Break)	31
17	Book 4.191-258	68
18	Book 4.259-304	46
19	Catch up as needed. Review; TEST 7: 4.1-205 (SEMESTER TEST)	0
Winter Break, but not for Latin students: Reread Book 4: Read Books 5-6 in English.		
20	Book 4.305-61; TEST 8: 4.206-361	57
21	Book 4.362-448 (449 at sight)	87 (+1)
22	TEST 9: 4.362-449 ; Read Book 6 in English if needed ; Book 4.642-705	64
23	Book 6.1-76; Lewis: "Virgil and the Subject of Secondary Epic" ; Sight Reading: Ovid, Ars amatoria 2.21-32; Metamorphoses 8.195B-216; Ars amatoria 2.83-96; Metamorphoses 8.223-35 (readings from Daedalus and Icarus)	76 (+60.5)
24	TEST 10: 4.642-705 ; Book 6.77-139	63
25	Book 6.140-211; Read Book Book 7 in English.	72
26	Book 6.450-476; Book 6.847-901; Read Books 8-9 in English.	82
27	TEST 11: 6.1-211 ; Read Book 10 in English ; Book 10.420-73	54
28	Read Books 11-12 in English ; Book 10.474-509; Book 12.791-828	74
29	TEST 12: 6.450-76, 847-901 ; Book 12.829-42; Book 12.887-902 (3Q ends on 3-12)	30
Spring Break: Finish the Aeneid in English if needed. Project due Mon., Mar. 23.		
30	Book 12.903-52; Clausen: "An Interpretation of the Aeneid" ; TEST 13: BOOKS 10 AND 12 EXCERPTS	50
31	Catch up as needed ; Review 1.1-313; Sight reading: Julius Caesar, De Bello Gallico	313
32	Catch up as needed ; Review 1.1-314-519, 2.1-56, 2.199-249; 1994 AP EXAM	313
33	Review 2.250-97, 2.469-566, 2.735-804, 4.1-104; Sight reading: Catullus, Carmina	320
34	Review 4.105-415; 1999 AP EXAM ; Sight reading: Baebius Italicus, Ilias Latina	311
35	Review 4.416-48, 4.642-705, 6.1-211; Sight reading: Ekkehard, Walthari Poesis	308
36	Review 6.450-76, 6.847-901, 10.420-509, 12.791-842, 12.887-952; 2005 AP EXAM	290
37	AP LATIN EXAM: FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 15, 2009	
38	Review! SENIOR FINAL FOR ANYONE NOT TAKING AP EXAM	
39	FINALS WEEK FOR OTHER STUDENTS	