CAESAR’S
ENGLISH I

Michael Clay Thompson
Myriam Borges Thompson
Once upon a time...far, far away....
Long ago, far from our New World, a great civilization lived and died. Throughout the ancient world, they built roads, made laws, and wrote literature. Today, most of their buildings have crumbled to ruins, but echoes of their words still reverberate because the English language (and others, such as Spanish) is filled with fragments of their language, Latin.

The vanished civilization was Rome, in Italy, and Rome rose to power more than 2,000 years ago, which is more than twenty centuries.

Only 500 years ago, astonished Europeans discovered that there was an inhabited New World on the back side of the planet, and after three centuries of early conflict and exploration, a new nation—as Abraham Lincoln put it in his Gettysburg Address—was conceived on the North American continent.

In the 150 years since Lincoln spoke, this new nation—the United States—has conceived a new English, which is a combination of Roman Latin, ancient Greek, German Anglo-Saxon, Spanish,
American Indian languages, and other tongues. Walt Whitman, the poet of *Leaves of Grass*, once wrote: “Thus far, impress’d by New England writers and schoolmasters, we tacitly abandon ourselves to the notion that the United States have been fashion’d from the British islands only, and essentially form a second England only—which is a very great mistake.... To that composite American identity of the future, Spanish character will supply some of the most needed parts.”

Even with all of these influences, Latin, the language of ancient Rome, is still the most important source of academic English. The further you advance in education, the more Latin you encounter in English vocabulary. This is true even though the foundation of English is Germanic, and English is not, like Spanish or French, a Romance (descended from Rome) language. When it comes to academic English, the Latin frosting is larger than the German cake.

**Latin Stems**: In *Caesar’s English* we will learn about our own language by learning about these Latin fragments hidden in it. Fragments? Yes. Many of our words are made of two or three fragments of Latin. We sometimes call these pieces *prefixes*, *suffixes*, *affixes*, *roots*, or *stems*, but to make our discussions simpler, we usually will call them *stems*.

You will find the stem *sub*, for example, in many English words. *Sub* usually means under, and we find *sub* in words such as *submarine*, *submerge*, and *subtract*. We also find *sub* in harder words, such as *subterranean*, *subordinate*, *substantial*, and even *subterfuge*.

Even though these Latin-based words seem hard at first, the truth is that they are not as hard as they look—if you know the Latin stems. The word *subterranean*, for example, is only a combination of *sub*, under, and *terr*, land. A cave is subterranean because it is under land. Most big words or hard words are not difficult if you know the Latin stems that are in them.
Each time you learn one important stem, you have learned a part of dozens of English words, so learning Latin stems is power-learning because you only have to study one small thing in order to learn dozens of things.

In this book you are going to learn many Latin stems. As you learn more and more, you will begin to notice them everywhere. You will find Latin stems in the words of newspapers, books, and news programs. You will hear educated adults use words that have Latin stems. You will sometimes hear a word for the very first time, but you will know what it means anyway because you know the Latin stems in it.

You now see why this book is the preparation for a vocabulary textbook series called *The Word Within the Word*—because our modern English words have these ancient Latin fragments inside them. There are ancient words inside our modern words, and we are going to find out what they are.

**Classic Words:** A second feature of this book is a series of words that are prominent in the classic books of American and British literature. These classic words are almost all of Latin origin (there are some from other sources), which is yet another indication of the powerful importance of Latin to modern English. In lessons that feature these great Latin-based words, you will see that they have been used by famous writers of English literature for centuries and have formed a central core of advanced literary language. The words you will learn are so central that you will find them in almost every good book you ever read.

The definitions you will learn of these classic English words are only a beginning. When you learn the word *exquisite* and the definition we use here (beautifully made), you must realize that, like most words, *exquisite* has other related meanings; it can also mean
intricate, delicate, flawless, and other similar things. Think flexibly.

The quizzes in this book are cumulative. In other words, the quiz on Lesson IV is really on Lessons I through IV. You must be a proud, disciplined student, reviewing all lists for all quizzes. Think in terms of permanence; the goal is to learn these stems and words now and to know them for the rest of your life. That is important because they are of such high quality that you will always need them.

We have taken pains in this book to frame our vocabulary study in the light of a vanished Roman culture. You will see images from Rome, read quotations from Roman philosophers, and learn Roman facts. Remember that this is not just imaginary; the language you speak and think is a collection of echoes from the ancient past—from Julius Caesar’s world.
Lesson I
Latin Stems

Latin Stem List

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>stem</th>
<th>meaning</th>
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<tr>
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<td>two</td>
<td>bicycle, biped, bilateral</td>
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<tr>
<td>sub</td>
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<td>pre</td>
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<td>predict, prepare, prelude</td>
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<td>super</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>supervise, superior, superb</td>
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Latin Stem Talk

**BI** means two. A *bicycle* has two wheels, a *biped* (like you) has two feet, *bilateral* means two-sided, and a *bimonthly* magazine comes out every two months.

**SUB** means under. A *submarine* goes under the sea, to *submerge* is to pull something under the surface, and to *subtract* is arithmetic in which you take away (*tract*, pull; *sub*, under) one number from another.

**DE** means down. To *descend* is to go down, to *deposit* is to put down, and to *deduce* is to think your way down from a big truth.

**PRE** means before. To *predict* is to announce something before it happens, to *prepare* is to get ready before an event, a *preschool* is an early school before first grade, and a *prelude* is the music before a performance.

**SUPER** means over. To *supervise* is to watch over people, a *superman* is someone with powers over and above the norm, *superior* means over others in quality, and so does *superb*. Notice that *super* and *sub* are opposites.
Caesar’s Analogies

An analogy is a set of words in which the relationships in pairs of things resemble each other. For example, a *lighthouse* is *tall* as a *mountain* is *high*. In each case, the adjective describes the height of the noun. We express an analogy this way:

**TALL : LIGHTHOUSE ::**

- a. tire : car
- b. window : house
- c. high : mountain
- d. red : sunset

The answer:

**TALL : LIGHTHOUSE :: HIGH : MOUNTAIN**

*TALL* is to *LIGHTHOUSE* as *HIGH* is to *MOUNTAIN*

Notice that only one of the four answers is best: high/mountain. Red is not the height of the sunset; it is the color of it. Tire is not the height of a car; it is a part of it. Sometimes a relationship is like *tall* and *lighthouse*; one word is a characteristic of the other. Sometimes the relationship is of opposites: *up* is to *down* as *full* is to *empty*. Sometimes the relationship is of part and whole: *dial* is to *radio* as *handle* is to *drawer*. Sometimes the relationship is of synonyms: *dark* is to *obscure* as *bright* is to *luminous*. There are many different kinds of relationships, but we are looking for two terms that have the same relationship to each other that the first pair has.

Sometimes it helps to put the relationship into a sentence so that you can clarify the meaning. For example, for the terms *student* and *class*, you might say, “The student is a member of the class.” That way, if you saw the terms *musician* and *band*, you could say, “The musician is a member of the band.”
It is important to realize that the relationship in the second pair must be in the same direction as the relationship in the first pair. For example, if we use the part-to-whole relationship, we might have *chimney is a part of a house as fender is a part of a car*. So *chimney : house :: fender : car* works. But if it were switched to *chimney : house :: car : fender*, it would be false. See if you can solve the following analogy:

**DESCEND : ASCEND ::**
- a. bicycle : tricycle
- b. submerge : emerge
- c. man : superman
- d. school : preschool

**Advanced Word: Superfluous**

From the Latin *superfluus*, the English adjective *superfluous* (soo-PURR-flew-us; stress the second syllable, not the third) contains the stems *super* (over) and *flu* (flow). It means overflowing, excessive, lots and lots, too much. *Superfluous* is an adjective; it can modify either a noun or a pronoun, so you could have superfluous wealth or superfluous curls on your head. A foolish person will sometimes make superfluous comments: the talker has made all the comments that can be endured, and now the superfluous comments begin to overflow! I hope this explanation was not superfluous. More on this word later.

**Who Is That Writer?**

James M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, was born in Kirriemuir, Scotland, in 1860. He wrote plays and novels and viewed life as a great adventure. He wrote *Peter Pan* in 1904 when he was living in London. The classic story of Never Never Land stresses the theme of childlike innocence. Barrie died in 1937.
Caesar’s Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stem</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>English / Spanish examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
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<td>sub</td>
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<tr>
<td>super</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>supersonic / supersónico</td>
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</table>

Look closely at each pair of cognates (words that are relatives in each language), and notice that English and Spanish both descend from ancient Roman Latin. By the time you finish this book, you will see that many Spanish words are almost the same as English words, and this is because they are made from the same thing: an ancient Roman word. This makes Spanish a good language to learn.
A Roman Fact
When the Roman emperor Vespasian was shown a hoisting machine that would reduce the need for workmen in construction, he refused to use it. He explained, “I must feed my poor.”

Julius Caesar, from his Commentaries on the Gallic Wars:

Gaul consists of three areas, inhabited by the Belgae, the Aquitani, and people who call themselves Celts, though we call them the Gauls. These people all have different languages, customs, and laws.
Caesar’s Word Search

In the box below, find the Latin-based English words. They might be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Circle each word that you find.

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P R E L U D E P Q Z S P B G
P F B W O C D R Y B T B F N
J R B I P E D E Z F C N R S
S S S P B D E D O T T Z P L U
U V U T I E B I R O N Q P B
P B P L L D I C U Z S E O M
E M E N A U C T U P S I G E
R A R N T C Y J N I Y D T R
B R I L E E C J V A K X G G
I I O M R N L R M G U P G E
G N R P A B E N U W E J J Q
U E F Y L P D E S C E N D Z
A X Q S U B T R A C T K P O
A D Z S D S P R E P A R E V
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__BICYCLE__ __SUBMARINE__ __DESCEND__ __PREDICT__
__SUPERVISE__ __BIPED__ __SUBMERGE__ __DEPOSIT__
__PREPARE__ __SUPERIOR__ __BILATERAL__ __SUBTRACT__
__DEDUCE__ __PRELUDE__ __SUPERB__

Real Latin

Filius patris simillus.
The son is exactly like his father.
Many a time,...
from a
bad beginning
great friendships
have sprung up.

– Terence
185-159 B.C.
Lesson II
Classic Words

countenance: facial expression
profound: deep
manifest: obvious
prodigious: huge
languor: weakness

COUNTENANCE

The English noun countenance refers to the contents of the face. A person’s countenance can be cheerful, stormy, or melancholy. You might see a smiling countenance or a morose (sad and gloomy) countenance. There could be a look of disappointment on the countenance. James M. Barrie wrote in Peter Pan that “This ill-luck had given a gentle melancholy to his countenance.” In Robert Louis Stevenson’s book Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, there is a man of “rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile” and a “grave countenance.” James Fenimore Cooper used countenance in his 1826 novel The Last of the Mohicans: “The countenance of Hawk-eye was haggard and careworn, and his air dejected.”

Countenance is an old English word. Coming from the Latin continentia, it was even used by Geoffrey Chaucer in his 1385 poem The Canterbury Tales: “As I may best, I wol my wo endure, ne make no contenance of hevinesse.” As you see, English spelling has changed in 600 years. It will change again in the coming centuries.

PROFOUND

The adjective profound, from the Latin profundus, means deep, and in a related way, it can also mean complete or even absolute. An ocean can be profound, but so can an idea, as in profound philosophy.
There can be profound differences between people. Richard Wright wrote about a profound silence. In James M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*, Captain Hook was “profoundly dejected,” which meant that he was deeply sad. Sylvia Plath described “the profound void of an empty stomach,” and in *The Double Helix*, James Watson described “the heart of a profound insight into the nature of life itself.” In *Why We Can’t Wait*, Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote, “What silenced me was a profound sense of awe.” In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare described Hamlet’s odd behavior this way: “He raised a sigh so piteous and profound as it did seem to shatter all his bulk and end his being.”

Could a countenance be profound?

What do you think Jonathan Swift meant in his 1726 book *Gulliver’s Travels* when he described “profound learning”? In what way can learning be profound?

**MANIFEST**

The English adjective *manifest* comes from the Latin *manifestus* and means obvious. When something is manifest, it is completely apparent and open to view. The noun form of *manifest* is *manifestation*, and there is even a verb form: something can manifest itself, meaning make itself obvious or clear. In George Orwell’s 1945 book *Animal Farm*, Orwell wrote that the pigs were “manifestly cleverer than the other animals.” In his American philosophical classic *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau wrote that “the squirrels manifest no concern whether the woods will bear chestnuts this year or not.” Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote that “The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself.”

Could confidence be manifest on your countenance?

What did Jack London mean when he wrote in *The Call of the Wild* that “To Buck’s surprise these dogs manifested no jealousy toward him”?
PRODIGIOUS

The English adjective *prodigious*, from the Latin *prodigiosus*, means huge or marvelous. Things that are prodigious are amazing. Rachel Carson wrote in *Silent Spring* that in the wild, microscopic mites and other insects are present in “prodigious numbers.” *Silent Spring* was a science book that helped warn the world of the dangers of DDT and other toxic pesticides. In *The Yearling*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote that “The effort needed to move the dead weight was prodigious.” In his play *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller wrote, “There is a prodigious stench in this place.” Robert Louis Stevenson wrote about prodigious numbers of seagulls and of a “prodigious valley, strewn with rocks and where ran a foaming river.”

Exactly what did Stevenson mean in *Treasure Island* when he wrote, “The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him”?

LANGUOR

Languor is weakness, either of body or of mind. The noun *languor* comes from the Latin verb *languere*, to languish. If you are weak, weary, tired, or droopy, you are in a state of languor. The noun *languor* can transform and appear as the adjectives *languid* and *languorous* or as the verb *languish*. When we feel languor, our gestures and movements can be languid or languorous, such as the weak wave of the hand we make when we are tired. We also can speak in a tired, weak, languid way. The Irish writer James Joyce once wrote that “a languorous weariness passed over him.” If it gets very hot, we might feel languid; in *The Secret Garden*, Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote, “In India she had always felt hot and too languid to care much about anything.” In Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*, the lazy Toad replies languidly. We can even describe things in nature this way: Joseph Conrad referred to the “oily and languid sea” in his novel *Heart of Darkness*. One of the best sentences comes from H.G. Wells, who
described a Martian invasion in his novel *The War of the Worlds*. We never learn the name of the main character who narrates the book, but at one point he says, “My movements were languid, my plans of the vaguest.”

Could it be manifest that you were profoundly languorous? Could you have a languid countenance?

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**Who Is That Writer?**

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the author of *The Yearling*, was born in Washington, D.C., in 1896. She began writing when she was six years old and earned a degree in English from the University of Wisconsin. Rawlings fell in love with Florida during a visit to her brother-in-law in 1926 and returned in 1928 to buy seventy-two acres at Cross Creek, near Gainesville. In 1939 *The Yearling* won the Pulitzer Prize. Rawlings died in 1953 at the age of fifty-seven.

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**Caesar’s Spanish**

Everywhere we turn, language reveals to us that modern English and modern Spanish are both descendants of ancient Latin:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>profundus</td>
<td>profundo</td>
<td>profound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manifestus</td>
<td>manifesto</td>
<td>manifest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prodigiosus</td>
<td>prodigioso</td>
<td>prodigious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languidus</td>
<td>lánguido</td>
<td>languid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Is This Writer Saying?
Discuss the meaning of the **bold** word in each of the following sentences:

From George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: “Napoleon appeared to change **countenance**.”

From James M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*: “His eyes were of the blue of the forget-me-not, and of a **profound** melancholy.”

From James Watson’s *The Double Helix*: “The combination of his **prodigious** mind and his infectious grin was unbeatable.”

From Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*: “Toxins may sleep long in the body, to become **manifest** months or years later in an obscure disorder almost impossible to trace to its origins.”

From Frederick Douglass’s *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*: “My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect **languished**, the disposition to read departed.”
Caesar’s Synonyms

Here are words that are similar to the words in our list, but are they exactly the same in meaning, or are they slightly different? For each word on our list, look up any synonym that you do not know; then pick one, and carefully explain the difference between it and our word.

- **countenance**: visage, expression, physiognomy, look, aspect, presence, mien, air, lineament, appearance
- **profound**: deep, far-reaching, absolute, thorough, penetrating, unqualified, enlightened, wise, sapient, sagacious, judicious
- **manifest**: obvious, apparent, illustrate, evince, typify, embody, personify, distinct, conspicuous, evident, noticeable, observable, palpable, unmistakable, plain
- **prodigious**: great, enormous, marvelous, extraordinary, large, powerful, vast
- **languor**: dreaminess, laziness, listlessness, quiet, stillness, inertia, lassitude, inaction, idleness, dormancy, stupor, torpidity, sluggishness, stagnation, drowsiness, somnolence

Caesar’s Antonyms

For each of the words in this lesson, think of a word that means the opposite. A word that means the opposite is known as an *antonym*.

1. **countenance**
2. **profound**
3. **manifest**
4. **prodigious**
5. **languor**

Are there any words in this list that have no antonyms? Are there any for which it is difficult to think of an antonym? Why?
Caesar’s Rewrites
Here are some sentences from famous books. In each case, rewrite the sentence into ordinary words. Example from Marjorie Rawlings’s *The Yearling*: “A languor crept over him.” The rewrite: Little by little, he began to feel lazy.

From James Barrie’s *Peter Pan*: “This ill-luck had given a gentle melancholy to his countenance.”

From Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild*: “To Buck’s surprise these dogs manifested no jealousy toward him.”
From Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden*: “In India she had always felt hot and too languid to care much about anything.”

From Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*: “The middle-aged man turned out to be a prodigious personage—no less than the county judge.”

From Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*: “I felt profoundly sad, as though winter had fallen during the hour.”

Real Latin

*Vestis virum facit.*
Clothes make the man.
Caesar’s Analogies

Analogies are about relationships. Find a second pair of words that has the same relationship to each other as the first pair has. Remember that it sometimes helps to put the two words into a sentence that makes the relationship clear.

**MANIFEST : OBSERVABLE ::**

a. acute : pain  
b. odious : lovable  
c. languor : weakness  
d. condescend : admire

**WISDOM : PROFOUND ::**

a. acute : blunt  
b. prodigious : microscopic  
c. countenance : expression  
d. languor : weak

Review for Cumulative Quiz

bi       two  
sub      under  
de       down  
pre      before  
super    over  
countenance facial expression  
profound deep  
manifest obvious  
prodigious huge  
languor  weakness
countenance

facial expression

Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance?

– William Shakespeare

King Lear