

Royal Fireworks Language Arts by Michael Clay Thompson

BUILDING LANGUAGE

Third Edition

Compatible with Building Language Student Book Second Edition

Instructor Manual

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INSTRUCTOR SECTION

A FOCUSED GOAL

The goal of this book is, in the most profound way, to give elementary students the right vocabulary start. We want children to know, from their earliest thinking, that their world is not new and that they did not come from nowhere. The English they speak, though it has a variety of sources, is in great part a linguistic ruin of Latin. Our minds were born, more than we realize, in Rome. It is the Latin-based words that are the nucleus of successful professional English, and it is the Latin-based words that dominate the classic words of English-language literature. These thousands of Latin-based English words, as if by a miracle, are built primarily with a few dozen easily learned stems and reused in myriad combinations, like children's blocks. By learning the stems, students discover a clicking vocabulary construction set that shows them how thousands of words are just recombinations of dozens of stems. And beyond just learning what words mean, students discover that spellings are usually logical and that there is a secret poetry inside English words that is only visible if you know the stems. Stems let students begin their intellectual lives with the intellectual truth. Young children can start out as language insiders. Latin stems are power learning at its most beneficial.

The goal: to ground student vocabulary learning in its historical context of Rome and to introduce ten Latin stems that are fundamental in English vocabulary.

TWO-PART DESIGN

In essence, *Building Language* has two parts: the historical background and the stem lessons. The first provides information about ancient Rome, focusing on Roman architecture and especially the arch, which is beautiful and intellectually enchanting and which serves as a metaphor of how words are made of smaller pieces called stems. The book is even set in Roman type fonts, with Times Roman as the text and Trajan as the headline font, enhancing the aesthetic clarity. This is not, though, a history book, and it does not attempt to provide even a summary of Roman history. It introduces Rome as a backdrop to English vocabulary.

The second part provides ten lessons built around ten important Latin stems. In these lessons, a sense of play is enhanced with poetry and stories, and the lessons extend the interest in Rome and the arch through examples and references.

In the stem lessons, the close language relationship between English and Spanish is especially emphasized; Spanish has never been more important than it is today, and its kinship with English is woefully underappreciated. Since the stems that build English also build Spanish, this is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the connected greatness of our two modern languages and to provide knowledge that informs the study of both languages simultaneously.



ROME, ROCKS, WORDS

Two thousand years ago,
before Europeans discovered
the back of the world and its people,
ancient Rome ruled the lands
surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.


📖 First, a historical discussion that provides a basis for our vocabulary study. Talk with students about how the New World was the undiscovered back of the world from the European point of view. Use a globe!

Let
students
find Italy on
the previous
page.

Today, the ruins of the
ancient capital of Rome are
in the modern city of Rome, Italy,
and the remains of the great buildings and
roads that the Romans built can be found
from England, to Africa, to Spain.



Italy is shaped
like a boot.

 This is a good time
for a brief geography
lesson, showing
students Italy's
relationship to other
places in the world.



In these silent ruins, we still see
one of Rome's greatest gifts
to human civilization, the **arch**.

👉 Point out the arches among these ruins. Have students think about the long time that has passed as these buildings have fallen into ruin.

THE ARCH

The **arch**, with its graceful curve of hand-shaped stones, gave Roman buildings strength and beauty and was important to ancient construction.

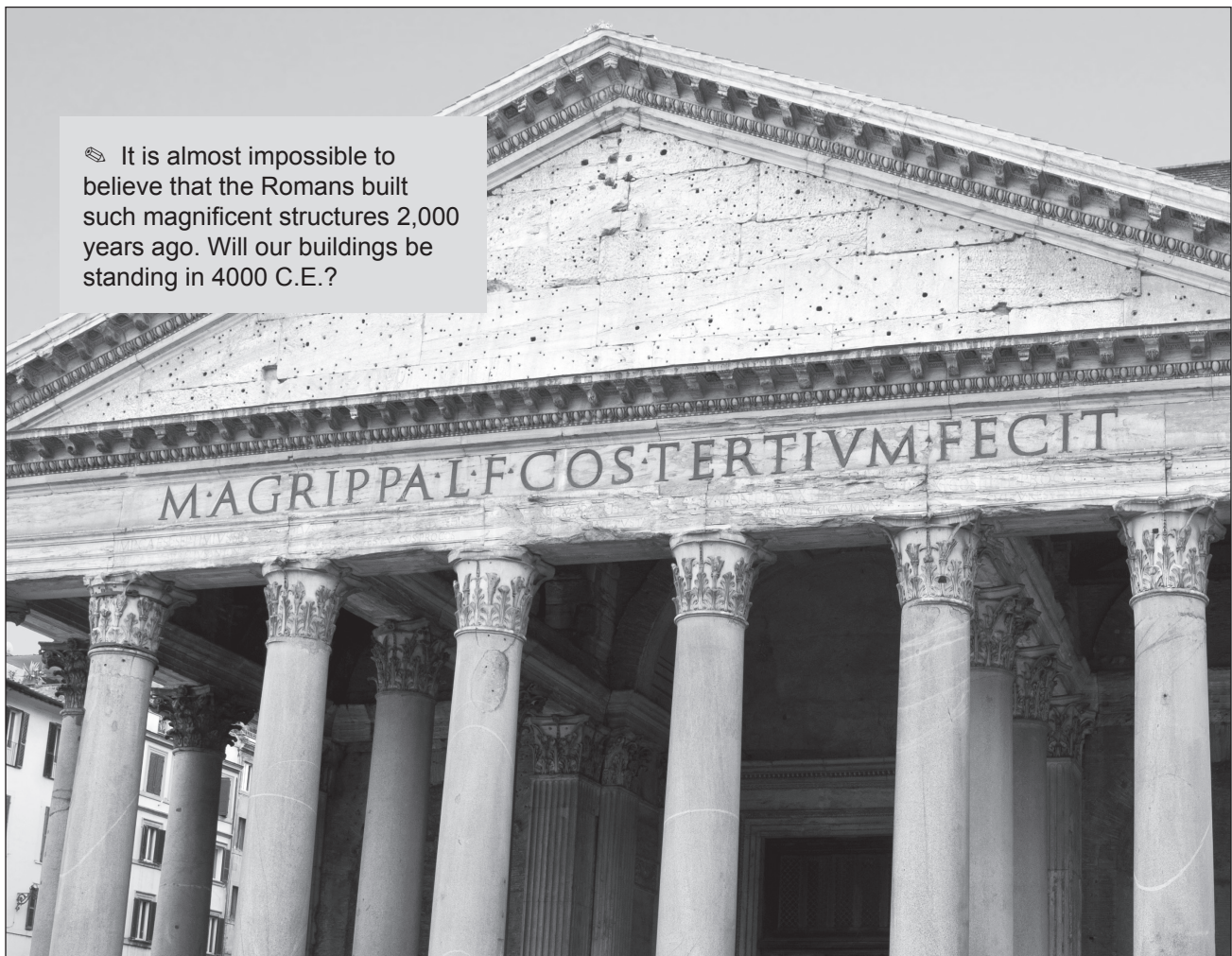
📖 The aesthetic side of knowledge is important. Emphasize the beauty of the arch. Often, perfect forms are beautiful.



👉 Have students examine this beautiful arch to see how one big thing is made of many smaller things (like words made of stems).

But the gifts of Rome
to modern civilization include more than
the arch or Roman architecture.

From the Romans we also received
important ideas about law
and government, classics of literature,
and perhaps most important,
language.



It is almost impossible to believe that the Romans built such magnificent structures 2,000 years ago. Will our buildings be standing in 4000 C.E.?

ROMAN ROCKS, ROMAN WORDS

Just as many arches that the Romans built more than 2,000 years ago still stand, so many of the words and parts of words that the Romans spoke are still spoken. Even today, we can see familiar words carved in ancient Roman stones.



📖 The Romans borrowed the word *amphitheater* from the Greeks. *Amphi* means both; an amphitheater curves around both sides of the stage.

LATIN › A BRIDGE TO THE PAST

Latin, the language of the Romans, is the rock that many modern languages—including English, Spanish, and others—are built on. In part, English and Spanish are made of Latin, and so they are a word-bridge to the distant past.




👉 You could almost say that Rome used the arch to conquer the world. Look at this massive, long bridge. How impressive!

STEMS AND STONES

Just as the Romans put stones
together to make an arch,
so they put parts of words together
to make words.

These word parts, which we call **stems**,
join together to make words.

For example, if we add the stem **pre**,
which means before, to the stem **dict**,
we get the word **predict**.

 Here is the guiding
metaphor of this book:
stems make words
like stones make
arches. Things are
made of pieces.


STEM LESSON I

RE

AGAIN

Re means again.

We find Rome's **re** in English words, we do,
such as **repeat**, **return**, **reverse**, **review**,
revise, **reflect**, **recall**, **redo**,
rehearse, **respect**, and even **renew**.

 Always linger over the first page of each lesson, discussing how the stem works in some of the words and asking the students to think of other examples.



When the arches fall to ruin,
we **rebuild** them by **renewing**
them again.

📖 Much of the text is poetic or semipoetic, just to make it more fun. This page extends the exposure to example words. Discuss meanings.

Once upon a time,
there was a small stem named Re.
Re saw Sub crouching under an arch,
and Sub said, “Hi!”
“Hi, hi, hi!” said Re.
Sub laughed in his low voice;
then Re laughed and laughed and laughed.
Sub asked Re,
“Do you remember why
arches are strong, or should I review?”
“I recall,” said Re. “I recall.”
“Good,” said Sub, with new respect.
Then they looked up
at the keystone.


📖 The story in each list personifies the stems and gives them characters that deepen their meanings. Always discuss why each stem behaves as it does.

A RE CLOSEUP

RESPECT

RE › SPEC

Respect, to admire, is a wonderful word,
containing **re**, again, and **spec**, look.
When we learn to **respect** someone,
we look at that person again
in a new way!

 The closeup puts one example word in the spotlight. Combine this with looking up the word in the dictionary, and thoroughly discuss the word.

RE IN SPANISH


Just as **re** is an important stem in English,
it is also important in Spanish.

Here is a Spanish **re** word:

repetir, to repeat

Yo quiero repetir la palabra.


I want to repeat the word.


 The key here is the stem and the idea that it inhabits BOTH languages and means the same in both. English and Spanish are connected.

A RE POEM

When Flea saw Skin again,
his feelings were **re**newed.
He stalled, **re**viewed, **re**called
it all, and **re**turned to his food!

See if you can write
a poem of four lines
using lots of **re** words
and even some rhymes.
It is okay if your poem is funny!

 The poem activity teaches poetic technique and gives students experience using stem words. They will have to think about the words.

 The simile activity teaches students about similes, encourages synthesis via comparison, and immerses students in example words.

A RE SIMILE

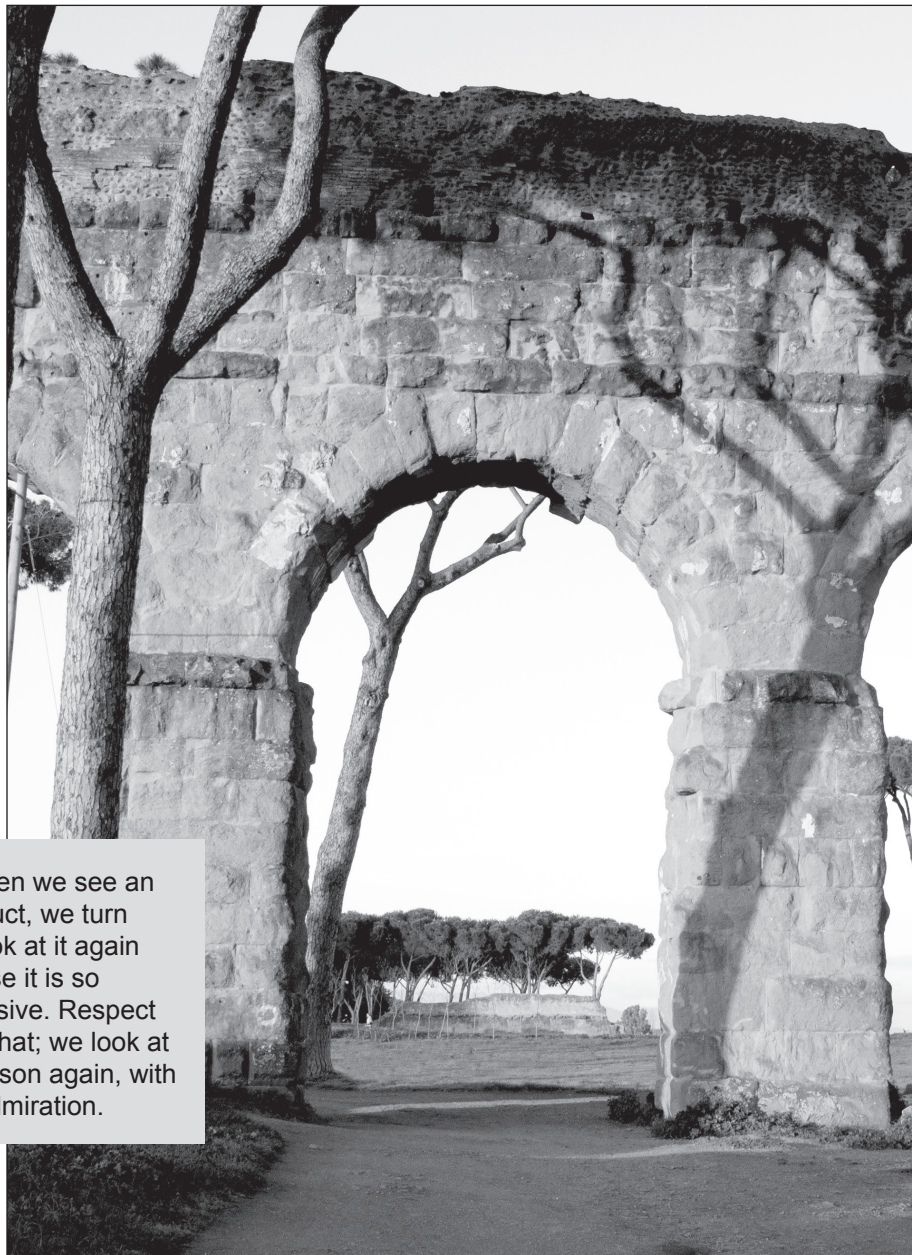
Here is something fun to do.
Pick a **re** word, and then
compare it to something very different.

A memory IS LIKE a return.

This kind of comparison
is called a *simile* (SIM ih lee).
Write your own simile, and explain it!

When we
remember,
we return in
our minds!

An
aqueduct
is
like
respect.



✍ When we see an aqueduct, we turn and look at it again because it is so impressive. Respect is like that; we look at the person again, with new admiration.