

CONNECTION TO LANGUAGE ARTS**● Latin and Science**

Latin was originally spoken only in the city of Rome. Later, as Rome expanded into an empire, the language of Latin was carried to many different areas. After the fall of Rome, the Latin spoken in various parts of the Roman empire evolved into a number of different languages. Some of the more well known *romance languages*—languages that developed from Latin—are French, Spanish, and Italian.

Latin's Widespread Influence

Though English is not a romance language, English language has been strongly influenced by Latin. Many English words have Latin roots. Latin is the official language of the Roman Catholic Church, which conducted its services in Latin until the middle of this century. And, perhaps because Latin has had such a strong influence on literature and vocabulary, some people choose to learn Latin as part of their education.

In fact, Latin has often been associated with scholarship and with science. Many of the early scientific texts in the Middle Ages were written in Latin. Some doctors learn Latin as a part of their medical training. One reason for this is that many parts of the body, such as the bones, have Latin names. Knowing Latin can help doctors remember Latin-related medical terms more easily.

Latin in Biology

Latin is still used in scientific fields to some extent. In biology, for example, the division of animals and plants into kingdom, phyla, and so on, relies on the use of Latin words to indicate important relationships. The basis for this system of classification was developed by Carolus Linnaeus over 200 years ago.

Your Turn to Think

1. What do French, Spanish, and Italian have in common?
2. Describe one way in which Latin is associated with science.
3. Latin is a “dead language”—it is no longer spoken. Given that no one speaks Latin anymore, why would someone other than a doctor or a scientist want to learn it?