

AI-Assisted Latin Reading

Discipline: Classics (Latin)

Focus: Undergraduate, Language learning, Custom tool

Overview

Novice readers tend to read Latin word by word using English habits, while meaning in Latin depends on morphology and syntax. A custom AI reading tool gives targeted feedback and strategy hints on students' own paraphrases instead of supplying translations.

How it works

1. Students read leveled Latin sentences.
2. They propose a translation or paraphrase.
3. AI evaluates the attempt and offers strategy hints and vocabulary support.
4. Students answer a "How I Did It" prompt explaining their reasoning.
5. Students rate their confidence.

Research basis

Self-explanation (Chi, 1994), immediate feedback (Epstein, 2001), morphological awareness (Meaux, 2020), and metacognitive practice (Fiorella, 2016).

Tools

Custom web app

What the instructor observed

Designing effective AI interactions is difficult. Small changes in prompt wording changed the quality and direction of responses considerably. When students simply ask for answers, their thinking stops quickly.

Advice for colleagues

- Decide first what students should do intellectually, then decide AI's role.
- Start small.
- You do not need to build an app. Prompts and structured classroom tasks can do much of this. Building one required learning scripting and web hosting; pairing with a technical collaborator may help.
- Start the IRB process early.

Adapting it

A prompt that says "evaluate my attempt and give one strategy hint, but do not give the answer" can approximate this in any language, problem-solving, or close-reading course.