

More U.K. schools to teach Latin

2nd August, 2021



The U.K. education secretary Gavin Williamson has announced a new \$5.5 million programme to teach Latin at 40 schools across the country. Mr Williamson said the Latin Excellence Programme aims to "level up" opportunities for students

in some government-run schools. Latin is a language that was spoken in the area around Rome over 2,000 years ago. It is taught in 49% of the UK's "elite" private schools but only 2.7% of state schools. Williamson said: "Latin has a reputation as an elitist subject, which is reserved for the privileged few, but the subject can bring so many benefits to young people, so I want to put an end to that divide." He added: "Latin can help pupils with learning modern foreign languages."

The initiative has sparked a heated debate about the benefits of Latin. Many people have ridiculed the programme as being nothing but a "poorly-funded gimmick". Politician Tim Farron wrote: "Latin is elite because only people who are guaranteed successful careers, thanks to family connections, can afford to waste time on a subject whose only practical application is in understanding...the dialogue in [ancient] books." Author Emma Kennedy questioned the use of a "dead" language. She uses Latin to "occasionally translate things on tombs". A teacher said money would be better spent on living languages like Chinese or Arabic that would enable children "to get ahead in and engage with the world," or on computer coding.

Sources: gov.uk / rt.com / dailymail.com

Writing

Latin is a very useful language to learn. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

education / Latin / programme / opportunities / level up / elite / subject / privileged / initiative / debate / gimmick / successful / career / waste time / translate / coding

True / False

- 1) The UK's new Latin programme will cost \$55 million. T / F
- 2) The UK education secretary said students had to level up to learn Latin. T / F
- 3) Latin is taught in 2.7% of the UK's elite private schools. T / F
- 4) The UK education secretary said Latin is beneficial for young people. T / F
- 5) Many people have called the Latin programme a gimmick. T / F
- 6) A politician said Latin is only useful for reading ancient books. T / F
- 7) A writer said she only uses Latin to translate things in museums. T / F
- 8) A teacher said learning coding is preferable to Latin. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. announced | a. best |
| 2. opportunities | b. conversation |
| 3. area | c. scheme |
| 4. elite | d. chances |
| 5. benefits | e. become involved |
| 6. initiative | f. notified |
| 7. guaranteed | g. assured of |
| 8. dialogue | h. allow |
| 9. enable | i. region |
| 10. engage | j. advantages |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Latin?
- b) Should all schools teach Latin?
- c) What is the use of Latin in today's world?
- d) Is \$5.5 million on a nationwide language programme enough?
- e) Why do students in the UK's elite schools learn Latin?
- f) How can learning Latin help students learn foreign languages?
- g) Should the money be spent on helping people to improve their English?
- h) What 'benefits' can Latin bring to young people?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The U.K. education | a. an elitist subject |
| 2. students in some government- | b. get ahead |
| 3. Latin has a reputation as | c. foreign languages |
| 4. I want to put an end | d. funded gimmick |
| 5. help pupils with learning modern | e. run schools |
| 6. The initiative has sparked | f. in ancient books |
| 7. nothing but a poorly- | g. secretary |
| 8. understanding the dialogue | h. "dead" language |
| 9. questioned the use of a | i. to that divide |
| 10. enable children to | j. a heated debate |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of Latin?
- Do you think the Latin programme is a 'poorly-funded gimmick'?
- What do you think of getting jobs through family connections?
- Why is Latin useful if all texts written in Latin have been translated?
- Why learn Latin when you can learn Chinese, Arabic or coding?
- Would you like to learn Latin?
- What questions would you like to ask the education secretary?

Spelling

- The U.K. education tcresaye
- nunnaedco a new \$5.5 million programme
- Latin has a tenatuorpi
- an elitist subject, which is edrvsree
- for the ldivpgeeir few
- Latin can help uplsip
- The itiaieitnv has sparked a heated debate
- people have riliduedc the programme
- a poorly-funded gmiickm
- understanding the iagodule
- tecnian books
- oilycasnlcoa translate things

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. a	5. j
6. c	7. g	8. b	9. h	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Latin

You think Latin is the best language to learn. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their languages. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): coding, sign language or Chinese.

Role B – Coding

You think coding is the best language to learn. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their languages. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): Latin, sign language or Chinese.

Role C – Sign Language

You think sign language is the best language to learn. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their languages. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): coding, Latin or Chinese.

Role D – Chinese

You think Chinese is the best language to learn. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their languages. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): coding, sign language or Latin.

Speaking – Languages

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • English | • Coding |
| • Arabic | • Body language |
| • Sign language | • Chinese |
| • Spanish | • Esperanto |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.