

Yale Certamen Syllabus (2023)

Acknowledgements: Our sincerest thanks to Adam Williams, Howard Chang of Flint Hill School (Oakton, VA), Ben VanGelder (Yale '13), and Michael Kearney (Yale '20) for their hard work in creating and developing this syllabus.

This syllabus was originally created for the following reasons:

1. To align the difficulty of questions asked at the Yale Certamen with the knowledge of the Classics expected from students.
2. To serve as a study guide for all students attending the tournament.
3. To serve as an aid and guideline for question writers.

Though we believe the syllabus to have achieved those goals, we continue to seek improved content, clarity, and concision. This year sees the return of passage questions at all levels, reflecting the shift back to in-person Certamen. We will *not* be including questions on Egyptian mythology this year, but we are looking into expanding the study guide for a more robust offering at future Certamina. Any questions about changes may be directed to yale.certamen@gmail.com.

The topics and concepts covered by Yale Certamen questions should directly correlate with the knowledge that competitors have acquired both in the classroom and in their independent preparation for the tournament. However, it is nearly impossible to write questions that account for every student's preparation and program of study. Therefore, we highly recommend that each player review this syllabus in preparation for the tournament.

Should you have any questions about the syllabus or the tournament, please feel free to contact us at yale.certamen@gmail.com or directly at anya.aitsahlia@yale.edu, jinwoo.kim@yale.edu, joseph.laufer@yale.edu, and matthew.thomas.mjt58@yale.edu. We are continually working to improve this syllabus, so we deeply appreciate any constructive feedback you may have.

See you in November,

Anya AitSahlia, Jinwoo Kim, Joe Laufer, & Matt Thomas
Yale Certamen Tournament Directors

General Question Breakdown

Every round at the Yale Certamen will consist of 20 tossup questions, each with two bonus questions of the corresponding category. The general question distribution is as follows:

- **Novice and Intermediate:** 45% Language (9 questions), 25% Greco-Roman Mythology (5 questions), 25% Roman History (5 questions), 5% Roman Life/Geography (1 question)
- **Advanced:** 35% Language (7 questions), 20% Greco-Roman Mythology (4 questions), 20% Roman History (4 questions), 20% Literature (4 questions), 5% Roman Life/Geography (1 question)

Novice (Latin I) and Intermediate (Latin II) Levels:

- Language (9 questions)
 - “Quick Stuff” (3 questions) – Verb Flip, Noun-Adjective Agreement, Case Uses, Commands, Spoken/Oral Latin, etc.
 - Some rounds (particularly semifinals and finals) will have a passage question in lieu of a question of this type.
 - Sentence Translation (2 questions) – Latin to English, or vice versa
 - Vocabulary (2 questions)
 - Derivatives (1 question)
 - Phrases, Mottoes, Abbreviations, and Quotations (1 question)
- Greco-Roman Mythology (5 questions)
- Roman History (5 questions)
- Roman Life/Geography (1 question)
 - Each round will contain either a Roman life or geography question.

Advanced (Latin III+) Level:

- Language (7 questions)
 - “Quick Stuff” (2 questions) – Verb Flip, Noun-Adjective Agreement, Case Uses, Commands, Spoken/Oral Latin, **Literary Devices**, etc.
 - Some rounds (particularly semifinals and finals) will have a passage question in lieu of a question of this type.
 - Sentence Translation (2 questions) – Latin to English, or vice versa
 - Vocabulary (1 question)
 - Derivatives (1 question)
 - Phrases, Mottoes, Abbreviations, and Quotations (1 question)
- Greco-Roman Mythology (4 questions)
- Roman History (4 questions)
- Latin Literature (4 questions)
 - “Literature” encompasses questions on authors and their works, and literary devices are considered applications of language skills.
- Roman Life/Geography (1 question)
 - Each round will contain either a Roman life or geography question.

N.B.: [This document](#) may be helpful for beginning players, as it lists many (though not all) of the types of questions one may see in a Certamen round.

Language

Novice (Latin I) Level Language:

- Verbs (Active Voice Only)
 - Present, imperfect, future, and perfect tenses of the indicative
 - All conjugations and for the verbs *sum* and *do* (A&G §170, 202)
 - Perfect introduced primarily in semi-finals and finals
 - Present Imperative
 - All conjugations in sing. & pl., including irregular imperatives (A&G §182)
 - Negative Imperatives
 - Interrogative sentences with *-ne, nonne, num, quis, quid, cur, ubi, & quando*
- Nouns
 - All Cases (except locative)
 - 1st and 2nd declensions, singular and plural
 - Semi-finals and finals may begin to introduce 3rd declension.
 - Nominative: Subject, Predicate
 - Vocative: Direct Address
 - Accusative: Direct Object, Place to Which
 - Genitive: Possession, Partitive
 - Dative: Indirect Object, Possession, Special Verbs (common words from A&G §367)
 - Ablative: Place Where, Place from Which, Accompaniment, Means, Manner
- Adjectives and Adverbs
 - 1st and 2nd declension adjectives
 - Adverbs from 1st and 2nd declension adjectives
- Pronouns
 - *Ego, tu, nos, vos* — all cases except genitive
 - *Se* (accusative only)
- Additional Grammatical Constructions
 - Sentence formation with transitive and intransitive verbs
 - Semi-finals and finals may begin to introduce basic indirect statement constructions with present tense verbs.
- Vocabulary
 - Will be drawn from the NJCL Novice Vocabulary List (available [here](#)), with emphasis on the primary nouns, verbs, and adjectives

Intermediate (Latin II) Level Language:

- N.B.: All topics valid in Novice may also be tested in Intermediate.
- Verbs
 - All tenses and voices of the indicative
 - All conjugations, including irregular verbs and their compounds (*sum, volo, fero, do, eo, fio*)
 - Participles and infinitives
- Nouns
 - All declensions
 - Accusative: Duration (of Time), Extent (of Space)

- Genitive: Objective, Description, Material, Measure
- Dative: Special Adjectives, Agent (with Passive Periphrastic), Purpose, Reference
- Ablative: Time Expressions, Agent, Comparison, Description, Degree of Difference
- Locative
- Adjectives and Adverbs
 - All declensions
 - Formation of adverbs from adjectives
 - Comparative and superlative (including use of *quam* with each)
- Pronouns
 - Complete paradigms and usage of personal, possessive, demonstrative, and relative pronouns

Advanced (Latin III+) Level Language:

- Students in the Advanced level are expected to be omniscient (within reason). The questions will not attempt to stump students with obscure grammatical constructions, and all questions will be screened to make sure that the concepts covered are reasonable and fair for students at the high school level. However, grammarians should still have a strong familiarity with the Latin language. A partial list of topics is available below.
 - Verbs: All subjunctive forms, all uses of all moods, all imperative and irregular forms, impersonal verbs, conditional sentences, active periphrastic, all constructions of indirect statement
 - Substantives & Pronouns: All paradigms, cases, and uses (including poetic uses)

Sources (Language):

- Grammar and Syntax
 - *New Latin Grammar*, J. H. Allen & J. B. Greenough (A&G)
- Vocabulary
 - Novice: Will be drawn from the NJCL Novice Vocabulary List (available [here](#)), with emphasis on the primary nouns, verbs, and adjectives
 - Intermediate: Will be drawn from the NJCL Novice Vocabulary List, but with no limits
 - Advanced: *Basic Latin Vocabulary*, Donald Brunel, *New Latin Grammar*, J. H. Allen & J. B. Greenough, and *A Latin Dictionary*, Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short
- Derivatives
 - Derivatives in Novice and Intermediate will be drawn from each level's corresponding vocabulary (i.e. the NJCL Novice Vocabulary List), referencing the *Latin-English Derivative Dictionary*, Rudolf Schaeffer.
 - Derivatives in Advanced will be drawn primarily from the *Latin-English Derivative Dictionary*, Rudolf Schaeffer, and the Latin Derivatives Packet of James Greenwald.
- PMAQ (Phrases, Mottoes, Abbreviations, Quotations)
 - *Amo, Amas, Amat, and More*, Eugene Ehrlich
 - *Latin for the Illiterati*, Jon Stone
 - *Latin Everywhere, Everyday*, Elizabeth Heimbach
 - Any state or university motto may be asked within reason.
 - Though they are not sources, the FJCL PMAQ Study Guide (available [here](#)) and materials from the Certamen Starter Kit (available [here](#)) can help bridge the gap to the sourcebooks for beginning students.

Mythology

Unlike the other specialty categories (i.e. history and literature), the mythology sources are arranged in such a way that students naturally progress in their knowledge of the material. There are therefore no intermediate study guides offered, beyond those that can be found [here](#) on the Yale Certamen website. **Advanced** students are, as always, expected to be omniscient (within reason).

Sources (Greco-Roman Mythology):

- Novice
 - *Aeneid*, Virgil
 - *Iliad & Odyssey*, Homer
 - *Metamorphoses*, Ovid
 - *Mythology*, Edith Hamilton (up to Pomona and Vertumnus at p. 423, no Norse mythology)
 - Additional Sourcebook in Semifinals/Finals:
 - *Classical Mythology*, Morford and Lenardon (7th ed. or later)
- Intermediate
 - All above and *Classical Mythology*, Morford and Lenardon (7th ed. or later)
 - Additional Sourcebook in Semifinals/Finals:
 - *Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology*, Edward Tripp
- Advanced
 - All above and:
 - *Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology*, Edward Tripp
 - *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Jenny March

History/Life

At the **novice** level, students should be very familiar with the list of basic people and places in Roman history from 753-201 B.C. These people and places, as well as the stories surrounding them, may be found within the sourcebooks, which are listed below. Novice students should also be familiar with the periods of 201 B.C.-180 A.D and 180 A.D.- 476 A.D., though only the major figures of the latter period (e.g. Constantine and Theodosius) will appear. In the future, we hope to add a list of basic people and places from these periods, as well.

In the **intermediate** level, students should be familiar with all material eligible for the novice division and have a greater understanding of the stories surrounding relevant figures. **Advanced** students are expected to be omniscient (within reason) and should be very familiar with all the sources listed below.

Beginning students of all levels are encouraged to consult the NRCE Study Guides (available [here](#)), which encompass both history and Roman life, to bridge the gap to the sourcebooks.

Basic People, Places and Things in Roman History: 753 B.C. – 201 B.C. (courtesy of Adam Williams and Howard Chang)

7 Hills of Rome
Aegates Islands
Aequi
Alba Longa
Amulius
Ancus Marcius
Appius Claudius Caecus/Censor
Appius Claudius Decemvir
Ausculum
Beneventum
Brennus
C. Duilius
C. Flaminius
Camillus
Cannae
Carthage
Caudine Forks
Cincinnatus
Cloelia
Collatinus
Coriolanus
Corsica
Decius Mus
Drepanum
Ebro River
Etruria/Etruscans
Fabricius
Faustulus
Gauls/Senones
Hamilcar Barca
Hannibal
Hasdrubal
Heraclea
Horatii & Curiatii
L. Junius Brutus
Lake Regillus
Lake Trasimene
Lars Porsenna
Lex Licinia-Sextia
Lutatius Catulus
M. Claudius Marcellus
M. Furius Camillus
M. Junius Brutus

M. Manlius Capitolinus
Mamertines
Messana/Straits of Messana
Metaurus River
Mt. Algidus
Mucius Scaevola
Mylae
Numa Pompilius
Numitor
P. Claudius Pulcher
P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus
Pyrrhus
Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator
Q. Hortensius (dictator) / *Lex Hortensia*
Regulus
Remus
Rhea Silvia
Romulus
Saguntum
Samnites
Sardinia
Sentinum
Servius Tullius
Syphax
Syracuse
Tanaquil
Tarentum
Tarpeia
Tarquinius Priscus
Tarquinius Superbus
Teuta
Titus Tatius
Tullia
Tullus Hostilius
Veii
Verginia
Verginius
Volsci
Xanthippus
Zama

Sources (History):

- *A History of Rome*, Cary and Scullard
- *Ab Urbe Condita* Book I, Livy
- *History of the Roman People*, Ward, Heichelheim, and Yeo
- Additional Sourcebooks (for tossup lead-ins and boni only):
 - *Chronicle of the Roman Republic*, Matyszak
 - *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors*, Scarre

Sources (Life):

- *Private Life of the Romans*, Harold Whetstone Johnston (main source for all levels)
- *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*, Lesley and Roy A. Adkins

Literature

We will continue to use our “tier list” of Latin authors, ranking the primary authors of Latin Literature based on their perceived frequency and difficulty in Certamen. We hope that by learning the authors in “tiers,” the aspiring Literature player may grow in both knowledge and confidence without becoming overwhelmed.

Questions in preliminary rounds will be limited to these authors’ lives and works, with information drawn from the sourcebooks (available below). Questions in semi-finals and beyond may include, but are not limited to, these authors’ lives and works.

Tiers 1+2—“Prelims Authors”: These authors are usually found in “Prelims”, or Rounds 1-3 of a typical tournament. “Primary” authors occur more frequently than “Secondary” authors.

Tiers 3+4—“Prelims/Semi-Finals Authors”: These authors sometimes occur in “Prelims”, but are most commonly found in “Semi-Finals.”

Tier 1: Primary Prelims Authors

Caesar, Catullus, Cicero, Ennius, Horace, Juvenal, Livy, Lucretius, Martial, Naevius, Ovid, Plautus, Sallust, Tacitus, Terence, Vergil

Tier 2: Secondary Prelims Authors

Augustine, Cato the Elder, Jerome, Livius Andronicus, Lucan, Persius, Petronius, Pliny the Younger, Propertius, Seneca the Younger, Silius Italicus, Suetonius, Tibullus

Tier 3: Primary Prelims/Semi-Finals Authors

Accius, Ambrose, Apuleius, Caecilius Statius, Cornelius Gallus, Lactantius, Lucilius, Nepos, Pacuvius, (Papinius) Statius, Pliny the Elder, Quintilian, Tertullian

Tier 4: Secondary Prelims/Semi-Finals Authors

Ammianus Marcellinus, Frontinus, Gellius, Seneca the Elder, Varro Reatinus, Vitruvius

Sources (Literature):

- *Latin Literature: A History*, Gian Biagio Conte (transl. Joseph B. Solodow)
- *History of Latin Literature*, Moses Hadas

Although it is not a source, beginning students of literature are invited to make use of the FJCL Latin Literature Study Guide, which offers basic information on many of these authors. It is available [here](#).