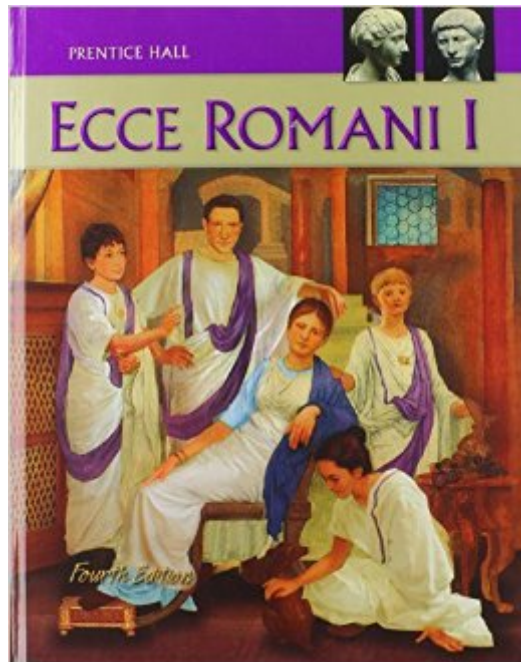# Ecce Romani, Vol. 1: A Latin Reading Program, 4th Edition

Synopsis

This hardcover edition contains Chapters 1 through 27 of the storyline, plus outstanding support for Word Study, Roman Life, Frontier Life, History, and Mythology. View the Ecce Romani Interactive Textbook

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (13 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I understand that the book was written for 9th graders. However, the story-line is more appropriate for 5th and 6th graders.Aside from this... Although there is grammar in the text, it is located after the readings, and sometimes several chapters later. Such is the "inductive" approach to learning a language - learn by doing, and then figure out why later. Having used this text in addition to several others, I've found that is just does not work very well. Students (unconsciously or not) learn to find "crutches" in the readings (e.g. similarity to English, understanding by context, and reading the glosses). They show all the outward signs of textual comprehension without real understanding of what is going on. When they reach more advanced Latin, they have not yet learned the art of grammatical analysis, and they crash into a glass ceiling. Hard! Frustrated, they give up on Latin because it is "too difficult". Of course, I spent the better part of my time trying to offset these natural tendencies of the textbook with more intensive formation in grammar and vocabulary.But why not just use a text that is more logical and age-appropriate in the first place? The series is not bad for a supplementary reader at the 5th to 8th grade levels, but hardly an appropriate choice for a high school. I've never understood why this seems to be the preferred series for high school Latin

programs. The best I can figure is that the explicit multiculturalism in the textbook matches the philosophy that reigns in educational circles, and that the text doesn't make serious demands on the students. I think, however, that there are better ways to make Latin relevant and interesting to the student - without pandering or coddling.

This is a terrible book. I have also taught Latin students using books by Wheelock, Jenney, and Shelmerdine. All those books have their strengths and shortcomings, but each is far superior to Ecce Romani. One of the great rewards of learning Latin is acquiring familiarity with the concept of grammar, English as well as Latin. This book eschews grammar, in favor of rote imitation of word groups used in the series of readings that introduce each chapter. Unfortunately the result, which I have witnessed with my own eyes more than once, is that students are left hopelessly confused about what they are doing. For instance, a noun might appear in the genitive case in one of the readings. Fine, except that this is all the explanation the unlucky student will be getting from the authors. The English meaning, as used in that instance, might be given in a footnote to the reading, but from that limited exposure the student is expected to recognize the word in other contexts, with different case endings, without ever having been exposed to the concept of case or to the various case endings. In other words, students are expected to imitate, with no understanding of what they are doing or why. When I have worked with students who were required to use this book, I have seen how eagerly they welcomed supplementary use of a more traditional text, because they were finally given some intellectual framework for what they were doing, and could use that framework to understand the use of other Latin words as they were presented. The ongoing story about the experience of a fictional Roman family is cute, in fact one almost say cutesy-pie, and only resinforces the impression that the authors have no regard for the intelligence of their student readers, and nothing but disdain for the mission of training their minds.

The entire binding was pretty chappy on my purchase. The front cover was not held in place or glued to the spine of the bound pages. There wasn't much writing on the pages. But the binding is really inconvenient. I have to be call careful putting the textbook in my backpack.

The Ecce Romani series uses a more modern approach to language acquisition - the inductive method. Students are exposed right away to vocabulary in the context of a story and are expected to use the associated picture, the vocabulary glossed below and the questions below the story to immerse themselves in the language. This allows students to comprehend a story even on the first

day. Grammar is then introduced/explained to the student after they have used it in context. Reading comprehension is the goal. This method is more in line with how a modern language is introduced. When I was trained in this method in graduate school, we were encouraged to use dramatic readings of the stories as well to enhance comprehension. This method works well with students. They enjoy learning a language in a manner that is similar to their friends in Spanish. The stories help us move quickly because the students become invested in the lives of the characters as they travel from their summer home to Rome and encounter authentic Roman daily life (slavery, shopping, games at the Colosseum, marriage and a funeral). My students miss the characters when they enter Latin 3 and start reading the authentic Latin of Caesar, Augustus and Cicero. This text allows the teacher to be creative and innovative, yet supports the students with clear grammar instruction, online grammar/vocabulary resources and noun and verb charts at the end of the text. I use the level 1 text in 8th grade, level 2 in 9th grade, level 3 in 10th grade, and an AP latin reader in 11th grade. Students who use the Ecce Romani series do very well on the AP Latin exam.

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