

HAMILTON COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS  
LATIN PLACEMENT EXAMINATION

Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Initial

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of Latin have you taken?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were your grades?

\_\_\_\_\_

Where (your school and its location) did you study Latin?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who were your teachers?

\_\_\_\_\_

Hamilton College  
Department of Classics  
Latin Placement Examination

General Directions:

The purpose of this exam is to find the ideal fit for you among the Latin courses at Hamilton College. There are two parts to this examination. Please be sure to complete both parts. Partially completed examinations cannot be used for placement. Please be sure to fill out the general information sheet (page 1).

Part I: Translation

In part I, you will be asked to translate **as literally as possible** a short passage of Latin. Choose the passage based upon the number of years you have studied Latin in high school.

When asked to translate **as literally as possible**, you will need to pay close attention to verb tenses, verbal voices and moods, cases of nouns and adjectives. Vocabulary help is provided.

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED 1 OR 2 YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL LATIN, TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE PASSAGE “GAMMA” ONLY.

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED 2 OR 3 YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL LATIN, TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE PASSAGE “BETA” ONLY.

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED 4 OR MORE YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL LATIN, TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE PASSAGE “BETA” **AND** PASSAGE “ALPHA.”

PASSAGE GAMMA : 1 OR 2 YEARS OF LATIN  
TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE:

My Grandmother's Chair

Avia mea mē valdē amābat et ego eam; saepe, in sellā suā sedēns, mē dēlectissimum nepōtem vocābat.

Itaque postquam avia dēcessit, maestissimus eram; magnum lēgātum tamen spērābam, quod fēmina dīvitissima erat.

- 5 Omnēs nepōtēs eius, ubi nūntium mortis accēpērunt, ad villam festīnāvērunt, lēgāta spērantēs. Deinde vīlicus eius testāmentum lēgit. Omnibus aliīs nepōtibus avia magna lēgāta scripserat, mihi autem nihil nisi sellam cum pulvīnīs in quā vīva sēderat.

Tum etiam maestior eram.

- 10 Aliī nepōtēs mihi sellam illam obiciēbant; mē dēridētēs dīcēbant: "Nunc nōs sumus dīvitēs, tū pauper. Hicne est amor aviae nostrae, quem tū iactābās? Sāne avia valdē tē amābat, quoniam sellam tibi lēgāvit!"

- 15 Deinde, ab omnibus dērīsus, irātissimus eram. Sellam illam et pulvīnōs tōtā vī pulsāvī. Ecce! unum ē pulvīnīs perrūperam, et ē pulvīnō ruptō nōn plūmae sed aureī ruēbant. Avia mea multōs aureōs in pulvīnō cēlāverat. Nunc dīvitissimus eram omnium nepōtum.

<i>dēlectissimus</i>	most favorite, most loved
<i>maestus, a, um</i>	sad
<i>lēgātum</i>	legacy, inheritance
<i>lēgō, legere,</i>	read out
<i>lēg.</i>	
<i>lēgo, lēgāre,</i>	leave in a will( From this you can understand why <i>lēgātum</i>
<i>lēgāvī</i>	and its plural, <i>lēgāta</i> mean "legacy (ies), inheritance(s)."
<i>nīs,</i>	except
<i>pulvīnus, -ī, m.</i>	cushion

<i>obiciō, -ere</i>	tease about
<i>laetō, -āre</i>	boast about
<i>Sāne</i>	evidently (in a sarcastic sense)
<i>quoniam</i>	since
<i>tōtā v.</i>	with all one's [my, here] force
<i>perrumpō, -ere, perrūpī, -</i>	burst ( <i>rumpo</i> means much the same)
<i>ruptus</i>	
<i>ruō, ruere</i>	rush pour

PASSAGE BETA: 2 OR 3 YEARS OF LATIN; 4 OR MORE \*

\* must also complete Passage Alpha

TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE:

Arria

Arria was famous in the Roman World for her remarkable courage. Here, in a letter to his friend, Nepos, Pliny recounts two lesser known stories about her which he thinks are even more heroic than the story which made her famous.

C. Plīnius Nepōtī suō S.

Aegrōtābat Caecina Paetus, marītus Arriāe; aegrōtābat et  
fīlius, uterque gravissimē, ut vidēbātur, Fīlius mortuus est,  
iuvenis pulcherrimus et verēcundus et parentibus cārus.

5 Huic Arria ita fūnus parāvit, ita dūxit exsequiās, ut ignārus  
esset marītus; quīn immō quotiēns cubiculum eius intrāret,  
vīvere fīlium atque etiam commodiōrem esse simulābat, ac  
persaepe marītō rogantī, quid ageret puer, respondēbat:  
"bene dormīvit, libenter cibum cōsūmpsit."

10 Deinde, cum lacrimae diū cohibitae eam vincerent prōrumpereque,  
ēgrediēbātur; tum sē dolōrī dabat; satiāta siccīs oculīs  
compositō vultū in cubiculum redībat, tamquam orbitātem forīs  
reliquisset.

C = Gaius

Nepōtī: Nepōs, m.: Nepos (friend of Pliny)

suō: suus his (friend)

S = salutem (dicit, sends greetings to

aegrōtābat: aegrōtāre be ill

et: also

uterque: both

verēcundus: modest

commodiōrem: commodus here = strong  
(in health)

simulābat: simulāre pretend

persaepe: very often

quid ageret puer: how the boy was getting  
on

cohibitae: cohibere hold back

vincerent: vincere overcome, get the  
better of

prōrumpere: prōrumpere break out

10 satiāta: satiātus having had her fill (of  
tears)

*fūnus*, n.: funeral

*exsequiās*: *exsequiæ*, f. pl. funeral

procession, funeral

5 *quā immo*: indeed

*quotiens*: whenever

*siccus*: *siccus* dry

*orbītātem*: *orbītās*, f.: bereavement

*foris*: outside

PASSAGE ALPHA: 4 OR MORE YEARS OF LATIN\*

\*must also complete Passage Beta

TRANSLATE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE

*A country spring*

ō fōns Bandusiae splendor vitrō,  
dulcī digna merō nōn sine flōribus,  
crās dōnāberis haedō,

cui frōns turgida cornibus,

5 Frīmīs et venerem et proelia dēstinat.

Frūstrā: nam gelidōs inficiet tibi

rubrō sanguine rīvōs

lascīvī subolēs gregis.

*Bandusiae: Bandusia*, f. Bandusia

*splendor: splendidus* brilliant

*vitro: vitrum*, n. glass

*digne: dignus* + **ablative** worthy of

*mero: merum*, n. wine

*non sine floribus*: and flowers too; **lit.** not without flowers

*donaberis: donare* present

*frons*, f. forehead

*cui frons* whose forehead

*turgida: turgidus* swollen

*cornibus: cornu*, n. horn

5 *primis: primus* **here** = newly growing

*venerem: venus*, f. love

*destinat: destinare* predict

*gelidos: gelidus* cold, cool

*inficiet: inficere* stain

*rubro: rubeus* red

*rivos: rivus*, m. stream

*lascivi: lascivus* playful

*suboles*, f. offspring

*gregis: grex*, m. f. flock

## PART II: READING COMPREHENSION: All levels of Latin must complete.

General Directions: Here are two passages by Curtius taken from his *Historiae Alexandri* (*History of Alexander*). Read both passages carefully; vocabulary help follows each passage. DO NOT SUBMIT A WRITTEN TRANSLATION.

Answer the questions which follow each passage in a short paragraph. Support your answer with clear references to the Latin text and make every effort to demonstrate that you have understood the passages. Submit these answers.

## 1. The Geography of India:

In illa plaga mundus statas temporum vices adeo mutat, ut, cum alia fervore solis exaestuant, Indiam nives obruant. Terra lini ferax; inde plerisque sunt vestes. Libri arborum teneri, haud secus quam chartae litterarum notas capiunt. Aves ad imitandum humanae vocis sonum dociles sunt. Elephantorum maior est vis quam quos in Africa domitant, et viribus magnitudo respondet. Aurum flumina vehunt. Gemmas margaritasque mare litoribus infundit.

In interioribus Indiae silvae erant prope in immensum spatium diffusae et in eximiam altitudinem editis arboribus umbrosae. Plerique rami instar ingentium stipitum flexi in humum, rursus qua se curvaverant erigebantur, adeo ut species esset non rami resurgentis, sed arboris ex sua radice generatae. Caeli temperies salubris; quippe et vim solis umbrae levant et aquae large manant e fontibus. Ceterum hic quoque serpentium magna vis erat, squamis fulgorem auri reddentibus. Virus haud ullum magis noxium est; quippe et morsum praesens mors sequebatur donec ab incolis remedium oblatum est.

1. Does Curtius hint at a possible reason for Alexander's invasion of India? Explain your answer.
2. What method of measurement does Curtius use to describe the size of a strange tree in India?
3. What indications in the passage suggest that Curtius was more interested in providing the reader with an exaggerated, entertaining description than in giving an accurate description of India?



Vocabulary for "The Geography of India"

*plaga*, ae, f: **quarter, region**

*mundus*, i, m: **earth**

*statas...mutat*: Translate as "so alters the regular changes of seasons"

*fervor*, oris, m: **boiling heat**

*exaestuo*, are: **bake, swelter**

*nix*, nivis, f: **snow**

*obruo*, ere: **cover**

*linum*, i, n: **flax**

*ferax*, acis + **genitive**: **abounding in**

*plerisque*: Translate as "for most of the inhabitants"

*liber*, libri, m: **inner bark**: from this use of the inner bark, "*liber*" came to mean book

*tener*, tenera, tenerum **soft**

5 *haud...capiunt*: Translate as "takes written characters just as papyrus does"

*docilis*, e: **easily taught** (i.e. parrots)

*domito*, are: **tame**

*respondeo*, ere: **correspond, match**

*margarita*, ae, f: **pearl**

*litus*, oris, n: **shore**

10 *diffusus*, a, um: **spread out**

*eximius*, a, um: **remarkable**

*editus*, a, um: **lofty, towering**

*arboribus*: (i.e., banyan, and Indian fig-bearing tree whose branches send down aerial roots that develop into new trunks, producing a shady grove that could shelter fifty horsemen)

*umbrosus*, a, um: **giving shade**

*ramus*, i, m: **branch**

*stipes*, itis, m: **trunk**

*qua*: Translate as "from where"

*erigebantur*: Translate as. "would shoot up straight"

*species*, ei, f: **appearance**

15 *radix*, icis, f: **root**

*generatus*, a, us: **sprung**

*caeli temperies salubris*: Translate as. "the healthy temperature of the air"

*quippe* = *nam*, *enim*

*levo*, are: **temper, alleviate, lessen**

*serpentium...vis*: Translate as "number of serpents"

*squama*, ae, f: **scale**

*fulgor*, oris, m: **gleam, glitter**

*virus*, i, n: **poison, venom**

20 *morsus*, us, m: **bite**

*praesens*, entis: **instant, immediate**

*donec*: **until**

2. THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

Ingenia hominum, sicut ubique, apud illos locorum  
quoque situs format. Corpora usque pedes carbaso  
velant, soleis pedes, capita linteis vinciunt, lapilli ex  
auribus pendent. Capillum pectunt saepius quam ton-  
dent; mentum semper intonsum est, reliquam oris  
cutem ad speciem levitatis exaequant. Regum luxuria,  
quam ipsi magnificentiam appellant, super omnium  
gentium vitia. Rex aurea lectica margaritis circumpen-  
dentibus recubat; distincta sunt auro et purpura car-  
basa quae indutus est.

Unum agreste genus est, quod sapientes vocant. Apud  
hos occupare fati diem pulchrum, et vivos se cremari  
iubent quibus aut segnis aetas aut incommoda  
valetudo est. Illi siderum motus scite spectare dicun-  
tur et futura praedicere. Deos putant quidquid colere  
coeperunt, arbores maxime, quas violare capital est.

Curtius, *Historiae Alexandri* VIII.ix.20-35

1. What Latin words and phrases depict the wealthy Indians?
2. Is Curtius just describing or is he making an editorial comment when he uses the words *agrestis* and *horridus* to describe the wise men?

Vocabulary for “The People of India”

*ingenium, ii, n*: natural ability

*situs, us, m*: arrangement, position

*carbasus, i, f*: linen cloth

*solea, ae, f*: sandal

*lintheum, i, n*: linen cloth (here, “turban”)

*lapillus, i, m*: precious stone, gem

*pecto, ere*: comb

*tondeo, ere*: trim

*5 mentum, i, n*: chin

*intonsus, a, um*: unshorn

*cutis, is, f*: skin

*ad speciem levitates*: Translate as “so that it looks smooth”

*exaequo, are* shave close

*vitium, ii, n* vice

*lectica, ae, f* litter, sedan-chair

*recubo, are* lie back, recline

*carbasa, orum, n* linen clothes

10 *quae indutus est*: Translate as. “which he has put on”

*agrestis, e*: uncivilized, uncouth

*sapientes*: Tr. “wise men”: Curtius may have read or heard something about Brahmans, members of the highest or priestly caste among the Hindus

*fatum, i, n*: death

*occupo, are*: lit., seize (here, “anticipate”)

*pulchrum (est)*: it is noble

*cremo, are*: burn

*quibus segnis aetas*: Translate as. “whose time of life is past activity”

*incommodus, a, um*: impaired

*valetudo, inis, f*: health

*sidus, eris, n*: star

*scite*: skillfully

*futura*: the wise men’s prophecies dealt with weather, crops, and politics

*capital, is, n*: a capital offence