

A TEN-DAY INTRODUCTION TO GREEK

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For ten days this past January, the students in Latin classes at Wahconah Regional High School in Dalton, Massachusetts, were given the opportunity to expand their exposure to the Classical world in an extended unit on Greek I was fortunate enough to be able to conduct under the direction of their teacher Charlie Bradshaw.

The unit was designed not only as a break from the usual cycle of the Latin classroom, but also as a source of enrichment for Charlie's 135 students, meant both to supplement and parallel their study of Latin itself. Because of the relatively short duration of the unit, which required a concise and rewarding end note, I found that a balanced approach to the language was needed. I drew vocabulary and distillations of grammatical concepts from many different texts such as *Greek: An Intensive Course*, by Hansen and Quinn, *Smyth's Greek Grammar*, and *Athenaze*, by Balme and Lawall. We also used Jane Gray Carter's *Little Studies in Greek*, of which Charlie has many copies, as a common source for vocabulary and paradigms. I then superimposed the language onto various cultural elements in a way that would lead students straight to the goal itself (a surprise until the very end), which was a reading of the first sections of *The Gospel According to John*, chosen for its ease of translation and high recognition value.

Along the way, as the alphabet and then roughly one basic grammatical concept per day were introduced, students made connections between the Latin with which they were already familiar and the new Greek grammar and vocabulary. Most lessons ended with SAT-oriented derivatives of the Greek vocabulary. Students also, among other things, composed and inscribed their own Greek curses, scanned and chanted a passage of the *Iliad* to the rhythm of music reconstructed from Ancient Greek sources, and played ὦ Ζεῦ, our own version of Greek *Bingo*. The finale was then a very able reading of the opening passage of *John*, for which the students had not realized they were preparing the entire time.

The program was initiated by Charlie Bradshaw nearly a year before its actual delivery. Charlie had been teaching his students elements of Greek for years in his Latin classes, but was unable to allot time for a more concentrated study until this year. He approached his Assistant Superintendent and collaborated with him on setting up a grant to have an outside teacher fresh from Greek studies come in to design and present the unit. Once the funding was secure, Charlie contacted the Classics Department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where as an MAT candidate I was selected for the position.

The unit as a whole was very successful, due in large part to the great enthusiasm of Wahconah Regional's students, administrators, and faculty, some of whom attended and observed lessons. Also of tremendous importance were Charlie Bradshaw's established teaching strategies, which foster a group-oriented, student-centered learning environment. Because of this, the students involved were comfortable with what they came to see as a valuable counterpart to their study of Latin. As a relatively new teacher myself, I personally was quite pleased and encouraged by the positive response the unit received, and I am grateful to everyone involved for this wonderful experience. ✨

Anyone wishing to learn more about the implementation or the curriculum of this unit may feel free to contact me at olkovikas@aol.com or Charlie Bradshaw at C_BRADSHAW@msn.com.