

Pronunciation Refresher for Playing Cards

Latin may be a dead language but it is very much alive when you read it and speak it. When playing cards in Latin, it is important to strive for accuracy in your pronunciation and accentuation. The following should serve as a brief refresher for those who are about to play cards using my guide sheet. For a more detailed treatment and audiofiles, please consult the official website for *Wheelock's Latin** at www.wheelockslatin.com or the front material in most Latin dictionaries.

VOWELS

LONG VOWEL	SHORT VOWEL
ā as in <i>father</i> : pālā'rum, ās, grā'tiās	a as in <i>Dinah</i> : quarter'niō, a'tra, char'ta
ē as in <i>they</i> : novē'niō, dēniō'nēs, habēs'ne	e as in <i>pet</i> : septē'niō, e'go, distri'bue
ī as in <i>machine</i> : trī'niō, bī'niō, quī'niō	i as in <i>pin</i> : i'terum, vic'tus, mis'cē, imā'ginēs
ō as in <i>clover</i> : sē'niō, octō'niō, iacō'bus	o as in <i>orb, off</i> : trifo'lia, rhom'bulī, cor'dium
ū as in <i>rude</i> : hūmā'na, lū'dus, ū'lōs, distribū'tor	u as in <i>put</i> : rhom'bulī, ru'bra, fasci'culus
DIPHTHONG (combinations of two vowel sounds collapsed together into a single syllable)	
ae as <i>ai</i> in <i>aisle</i> : ru'brae, a'trae, pā'lae	

CONSONANTS

Latin consonants had essentially the same sounds as the English consonants with the following *exceptions*:

c was always hard, as in **cor'dium, mis'cē, fasci'culus**

g was always hard, as in **rēgī'na, vīgin'tī**

i (as a consonant) usually had the sound of *y* as in English *yes*: **iacō'bus, ioculā'tor**

qu is always followed by **u** as in English: **quī'niō, quater'niō**

r was trilled; the Roman **lit'tera canī'na** (sound of a snarling dog): **rēx, rēgī'na, rhombulō'rum**

s was voiceless as in English *see*: **sē'niō, septē'niō, as'sēs**

t was always hard as in **octō'niō, septē'niō,**

v had the sound of *w* as in **vīgin'tī, vic'tor, vic'tus**

x had the sound of *ks* as in **rēx, sex, exspec'tā**

ch had the sound of *ckh* as in English *block head*: **chartā'rum**

SYLLABIFICATION

- Two vowels or a vowel and a diphthong are separated: **tri-fo-li-ō'rum, no-vē-ni-ō'nēs**
- A single consonant between two vowels goes with the second vowel: **qua-ter'ni-ō, rē-gī'nās**
- When two or more consonants stand between two vowels, generally only the last consonant goes with the second vowel: **sep-tē'ni-ō, vic'tor**. However, a stop (**p, b, t, d, c, g**) + a liquid (**l, r**) count as a *single* consonant: **ru'brae, dis-tr'bu-e**.

SYLLABLE QUANTITY

A syllable is **heavy** (long) *by nature* if it contains a long vowel or diphthong (**pā'lae, rhom-bu-lō'rum**); a syllable is **heavy** *by position* if it contains a short vowel followed by two or more consonants or by **x**, which is a double consonant (=ks) (**qua-ter'ni-ō, cor'di-um**). Otherwise the syllable is considered **light** (short).

ACCENT

You place the accents on Latin words following these simple rules:

- The accent is *never* on the last (ultimate) syllable.
- In a word of two syllables, the accent always falls on the first syllable: **ru'brae, a'trī, char'tae**.
- In a word of three or more syllables
 - the accent falls on the next to last (penultimate) syllable, if that syllable is heavy: **bī-ni-ō'nēs, rē-gī'nās, io-cu-lā'tor, ha-bēs'ne**
 - otherwise the accent falls on the syllable before that (the antepenultimate syllable): **ha'be-ō, fas-ci'culus, ūn'de-cim, cor'di-um**

* This pronunciation guide is based on material in *Wheelock's Latin*, edited by Richard A. LaFleur.