

MiniMax

Key Stage 1
age 5-7



Teacher Guide



MaximumClassics.com
Latin for Literacy

MiniMax: KS1 Latin

Teacher Guide – Introducing the MiniMax Materials

Welcome to MiniMax

MiniMax is Maximum Classics' KS1 Latin strand, designed to give children aged 5 and above their first taste of Latin through the words they already know. Rather than teaching Latin as an isolated subject, MiniMax roots every activity in the everyday English words that come from it so children start to see their own language differently from the very first lesson.

This guide explains what's in the pack, why it's built the way it is, and how to introduce it to your class with confidence, even if you've never taught Latin before.

What's in the Pack

MiniMax brings together six complementary resources, each designed to reinforce the same core vocabulary in a different way:

Resource	What it is	Suggested use
Video	Introduces the history of English and where its words come from, and teaches pupils how to associate Latin words and their English derivatives	Whole class, 10 minutes, IWB
Classroom labels	Everyday classroom objects labelled with their Latin root	Displayed around the room, ongoing reference
Topic vocabulary	Families, animals, actions and places, in Latin and English	Core word lists for each theme
Interactive games	Digital (PowerPoint) interactive listening and games	Whole class IWB
Flash cards	Printable Latin–English word cards for each theme	Starters, plenaries, quick recall, matching games
Colouring sheets	Themed illustrations with Latin word labels	Independent or take-home activity

The Four Vocabulary Themes

All topic vocabulary is organised around four themes that are meaningful and familiar to young children. Words recur across the video, games, flash cards and colouring sheets, so pupils meet the same core vocabulary repeatedly and in different contexts.

Theme	Latin words	English meaning
Families	mater, pater, frater, soror, avus, avia, amicus, amica	mother, father, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, friend (m), friend (f)
Animals	canis, felis, equus, porcus, mus, serpens, leo, tigris	dog, cat, horse, pig, mouse, snake, lion, tiger
Actions	ridere, ludere, spectare, scribere, audire, videre, lacrimare, ambulare, dicere, ferre	to laugh, to play, to watch, to write, to hear, to see, to cry, to walk, to say, to carry
Places	villa, schola, silva, urbs, rus, mare, flumen, via	house, school, forest, town, countryside, sea, river, street

Introducing MiniMax to Your Class

We recommend introducing the materials in the sequence below over the first week or two of teaching. Each step builds naturally on the last.

1. Start with the video

Begin with the introductory video. It's short (10 minutes) and pitched for KS1, giving children a simple, engaging account of where English came from and why so many of our everyday words have Latin roots. This sets the 'big idea' behind everything that follows: Latin isn't a dead language locked away in the past; instead, it's hiding inside words they use every day.

Teaching tip

After the video, ask children to spot one English word they think might come from Latin. There are no wrong answers at this stage — the aim is curiosity, not accuracy.

2. Put up the classroom labels

Display the classroom labels around the room before you begin teaching vocabulary directly. Children absorb the words passively at first, simply by seeing them daily on the door, the window, the table, the chair. This ambient exposure makes the explicit vocabulary teaching that follows feel familiar rather than new. There are some 'language detective' connections to

be made with these classroom, labels, too – not all KS1-level words, but more for the curiosity of you as a teacher!

Latin word	English meaning	Derivative word(s)
sella	seat	selle (French), settle
fenestra	window	defenestrate (throw out of a window!), fenster (German), fenêtre (French)
ianua	doorway	January (the 'doorway' to the new year), janitor
mensa	table	mesa (flat-topped mountain), commensal (sharing the same table)
librarium	bookcase	library
liber	book	library, libretto
tabula	writing board	table, tabulate, 'tabula rasa' – 'a clean slate' is used as an expression in English
latrina	toilet	Latrines (army term for toilets)
stylus	pen	We still use 'stylus' today
magistra (f), magistra (m)	teacher	magistrate
tapetum	carpet, rug	tapestry, tapis (French)
charta	piece of paper	chart, cartography
glutinum	glue	gluten (the 'gluey' stuff in flour)
horologium	clock	horology (the science of timekeeping)
ludi	games	this is where the game 'Ludo' gets its name, ludicrous, prelude
saccus	bag	sack
aqua	water	aquatic, aquarium, aqueduct
pigmenta	paints	pigment
murus	wall	mural
regula	ruler	regulate
cerulae	wax crayons	cire (French), sincere (honey 'without wax' so pure)
argilla	clay, modelling material	argile (French), argillous soil (clayey soil)

capsulae	boxes	capsule
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3. Teach one theme at a time

Introduce the four vocabulary themes (families, animals, actions and places) one at a time rather than all at once. For each theme:

1. Play the interactive game so children practise hearing, recognising and matching words.
2. Use the flash cards for a short, snappy starter to introduce or recap the words.
3. Use the colouring sheet as a follow-up activity, reinforcing the same words visually.
4. Return to the flash cards in a later plenary or the following lesson to check retention.

4. Build in regular revisiting

Latin vocabulary sticks best through frequent, low-stakes repetition rather than one-off lessons. Keep flash cards handy for two-minute starters throughout the term, and leave classroom labels up permanently as an ongoing point of reference, even once you've moved on to a new theme.

Suggested First Lesson Outline

Time	Activity
10 min	Show the introductory video.
5 min	Class discussion: what did we notice? Which English words might be hiding Latin?
10 min	Introduce the classroom labels together – walk around the room reading them aloud.
10 min	First theme flash cards: introduce 4–6 words (suggested start: Families).
10 min	Colouring sheet for the same theme, with words displayed for reference.
5 min	Plenary: children say one Latin word they've learned and its English meaning.

Tips for a Confident Start

- You don't need any prior Latin knowledge. Every word taught in MiniMax is provided with its pronunciation and meaning - you'll be learning alongside the children.
- Say Latin words aloud with confidence, even if you're not sure you've got the pronunciation exactly right. Children respond to enthusiasm, not perfection.

- Link words to English cousins whenever you can — for example, 'canis' and 'canine', or 'ambulare' and 'amble'. These connections are what make the learning memorable.
- Keep sessions short and frequent rather than long and occasional. Ten minutes twice a week beats one hour once a term.
- Let the games and colouring sheets do some of the teaching for you — they're designed for independent or paired use, so you can circulate and support rather than lead every moment.

A Note on Progression

MiniMax is the foundation stage of the Maximum Classics Latin pathway. The words and habits children build here (spotting roots, connecting Latin to English, enjoying the sound of the language) prepare them for more structured grammar and reading as they move through the primary years. There's no expectation of accuracy or grammatical understanding at this stage: the goal is familiarity, curiosity and, above all, enjoyment.