

CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience

at

Community Homes & Services

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Dear Juliet

with Darnell

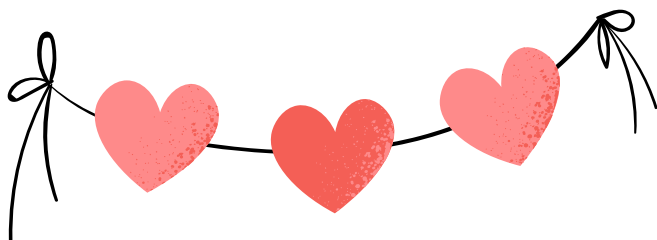


When it comes to the celebration of love, nothing tops Valentine's Day for some people. Others, however, are not such big fans. Who hasn't had their heart broken at least once in their life? Whether it's unrequited love (love that isn't returned) or lost love (maybe they moved away or were swept up by someone else), it's a universal experience.

As Shakespeare said: "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." While some people might want to punch you for saying that—especially if the loss was recent—most of us can agree that we don't regret having loved or being loved.

So, what can you do if you don't have a mate right now or have lost your mate?

One option is to write to Juliet—the very same Juliet who loved Romeo. A landmark known as "Juliet's Tomb" is located in Verona, Italy, and every year, "Juliet" receives around 6,000 letters from people all over the world, confessing their love and heartbreak.



Romeo and Juliet

Here's an example of a letter from India:

Dear Juliet,

I am in love with a beautiful girl, and she loves me too. I would love to marry her! But alas, she is from a different caste than I am, and her parents won't allow it. There is no one else I want. I think about her constantly. I am hoping you can give me the strength to carry on. It has been so difficult.

An amazing group of volunteers reads these letters, which come in nearly every language from almost anywhere in the world. These volunteers call themselves "Secretaries." They always respond, and if they come across a particularly tough letter, they discuss it with each other until they come up with an answer.

In an interview with NPR, one Secretary shared:

"People start the letters often saying, 'Juliet, you are the one who can understand how I feel,' which is nice in a way but very sad in another way because they don't feel they can talk to the person next to them," says club manager Giovanna Tamassia.

It is sad that sometimes people feel so lonely, even when they're with someone. So, it's heartening that there's a place where they can express their feelings to people who genuinely care.

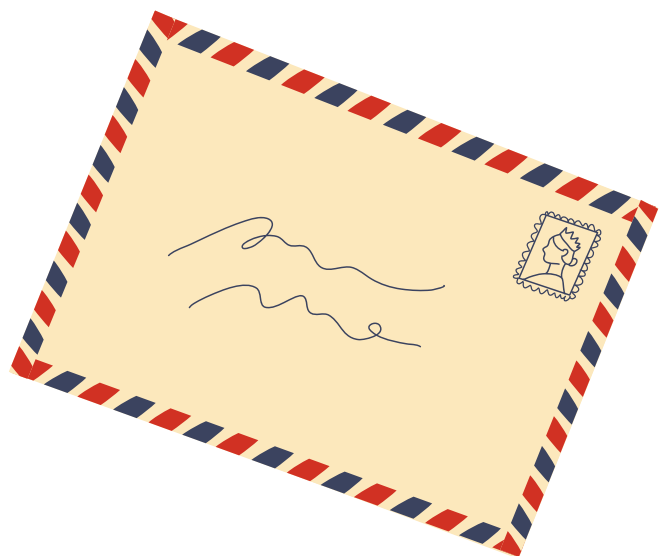
I asked some of our students and staff what they might like to ask or say to Juliet. It's comforting to know that some people offer advice instead of questions! Maybe the Secretaries can even use some of our feedback on love.

Dear Juliet:

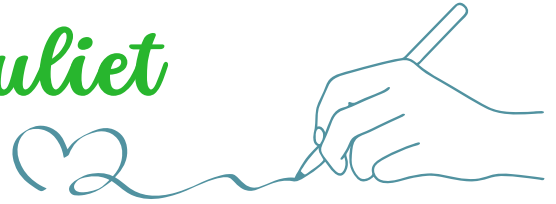
I like a girl that moved away. Can you find me another girl who is tall, has dark hair, grey eyes and glasses, and is also a nice person?

Thank you.

Nino



Letters to Juliet



Dear Juliet:

I wanted to tell you about my boyfriend Sean. He is nice. I am happy.

Shirley

Dear Juliet:

I want a guy that's just like my dad. He is the handsomest.

Adara

Dear Juliet:

My parents have been married for a LONG time. I think the secret is that they are kind to each other. Mom helps Dad with his outfits, and Dad does the BBQ ing.

Rose

Dear Juliet:

My parents had 14 kids! They have been married for more than 60 years. Dad is a retired construction worker, Mom is a homemaker. I think that's love.

James

Dear Juliet:

My fiance is Matthew. He takes me out to dinner and we play cards. We spent my birthday together.

Meredith

Dear Juliet:

I'd like to ask you, what attracted you to Romeo?

I think the secret to a long marriage is compromise. Keep em well fed and well loved. You have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find a prince.

Carolyn

Dear Juliet:

I'd like to meet a man who is short, has strawberry blond hair, blue eyes and nice biker legs. He should also be nice. Can you tell me how?

Pam

Dear Juliet:

Is it true that you should take a relationship real slow?

I'd like to meet a man who is truthful, kind and considerate, likes sports and would never hurt me. He should have short hair, be clean cut, athletic and have brown eyes. Please give me some advice.

Suzie



Write to Juliet



Dear Juliet:

I enjoy being a free man. But if I had a girlfriend, we would see movies like The Lion King, and I'd buy all the stuff. We would go bowling and I would win. One girl at Cedars had the hots for me.

Donald

Dear Juliet:

What was it that convinced you that you were in love with Romeo?

Chris

Dear Juliet:

Please find me a Power Puff girl!

Jake

Dear Juliet:

I am a loving guy. If Rachel Ray were single, she would be my girl. I would have to meet her first though.

David

Finally, there is no rule that says you have to spend your love on a mate only.

There are some other options. You can decide that the love you are celebrating is a love of nature, love of mankind, maybe love of dogs. How about a universal love of all things living? Even a yucky spider is worthy of that kind of love. You don't have to touch it to love it.

A book, *Letters to Juliet*, was written in 2006. It inspired the 2010 film rom-com *Letters to Juliet* which starred Amanda Seyfried.



You can write to Juliet by addressing your letter simply to:

Club di Giuletta
via Galilei 3 - 37133 Verona ITALY



Romance Novels

with Amy and Thea



Amy is a big reader and her favorite genre is the romance novel. Amy is not alone; according to recent data, the romance novel industry generates over \$1.44 billion in revenue annually. In fact, 19 million printed units of romance novels were sold in the past year.

Amy found it hard to narrow down her favorite romance novel, so she narrowed her choice down to a series (of 6 books) she recommends for Valentine's Day:

Amy loved the Wallflowers Series by Lisa Kleypas. "I love those books, I thought she did

really well on them," said Amy. Thea liked the vivid descriptions of the environment and the amusing banter of the main characters in the book she read.

"I like the way she described their gowns," said Amy. "The wallflowers are supposed to be dancing, but they never get asked to dance, so they try to find husbands for each other." Author Lisa Kleypas is a renowned author whose writing is often described as rich and indulgent, weaving intricate emotions, vivid settings, and memorable characters that captivate readers. The book in this series that Amy likes best (at the time of this writing) is...

A Wallflower Christmas by Lisa Kleypas.

In a nutshell, Lady Natalie Blandford is initially presented as the ideal match for Rafe Bowman due to her beauty, social status, and the expectations of their families. However, as the story progresses, it becomes clear that Natalie is not into Rafe.

After Rafe falls for Hannah Appleton, Natalie's companion. Lady Natalie is not hurt and steps aside gracefully. Lady Natalie remains dignified and unaffected, serving as a contrast to the fiery and passionate relationship between Rafe and Hannah.

A Theme of Love

What exactly constitutes a romance novel?

According to the Romance Writers of America (RWA), a romance novel is:

- A work of extended fiction with a theme of love.
- The central focus must be on the development of a romantic relationship between two people.

Here are some examples of famous romance novels:

- *Gone With the Wind* (Margaret Mitchell): Set during the American Civil War, this story follows Scarlett O'Hara, a determined young woman, as she faces love, loss, and survival.
- *The Notebook* (Nicholas Sparks): A heartwarming and emotional love story about Noah and Allie, whose romance spans decades.
- *The Duke and I* (Julia Quinn): This Regency romance kicks off the Bridgerton series with Daphne Bridgerton's love story with Simon, the Duke of Hastings. It inspired the popular Bridgerton TV series.
- *Fifty Shades of Grey* (E.L. James): A modern romance about Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey, whose passionate and complex relationship delves into themes of love and desire. It redefined the genre of erotic romance.



Have you read any of these books or watched the movies or TV series made from them?

VALENTINE CUT OUTS



Valentine



FEBRUARY 2025 NATIONAL DAYS

Black History Month, Cancer Prevention Month, Bird Feeding Month

- 2/1 - Serpent Day, Dark Chocolate Day
- 2/2 - Groundhog Day, National Tater Tot Day
- 2/3 - Carrot Cake Day, Day the Music Died Day
- 2/4 - World Cancer Day, Homemade Soup Day, Thank a Mail Carrier Day
- 2/6 - National Chopsticks Day
- 2/7 - Send a Card to a Friend Day, Periodic Table Day
- 2/8 - Global Movie Day, Kite Flying Day
- 2/9 - National Pizza Day
- 2/10 - Umbrella Day
- 2/11 - Super Bowl Sunday, Inventors' Day
- 2/13 - Galentine's Day, Cheddar Day
- 2/14 - Valentine's Day, Ferris Wheel Day
- 2/15 - Singles Awareness Day
- 2/16 - World Whale Day
- 2/17 - **Presidents Day HOLIDAY** Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 2/19 - Chocolate Mint Day
- 2/20 - Comfy Day, Muffin Day
- 2/22 - California Day, Cook a Sweet Potato Day, Margarita Day
- 2/23 - Banana Bread Day
- 2/24 - Tortilla Chip Day
- 2/25 - Clam Chowder Day, Chocolate Covered Nut Day
- 2/26 - Set a Good Example Day
- 2/27 - International Polar Bear Day, Retro Day
- 2/28 - National Floral Design Day



What's Happening in the Project Center?

Making a Football Board Game

with Joe and James

It's no secret that James is a big fan of sports games. Vintage handheld sports games, old timey wooden sports games, actual sports games, you name it! When he asked me if we could make a big version of the classic board/peg/dice game he's so fond of I said "sure!" - not knowing if we'd be able to come up with something that was up to his standards.

We started by selecting the piece of wood that would serve as the field. James actually provided the wood, but we immediately ran into a problem: this was going to take some math. First we had to measure the original football game he'd brought in and compare the length/width. This gave us what's called a *ratio*. We looked at that number and, starting with



the width of the board, figured out where we'd have to cut. The math is lost to the whiteboard eraser now, but we all agreed that it came out looking pretty good.

The next step was to paint the board. We went with dark green acrylic paint for the top, and light green for the bottom and sides. We had to do several coats to get it smooth and free of brush strokes, but we got there eventually.

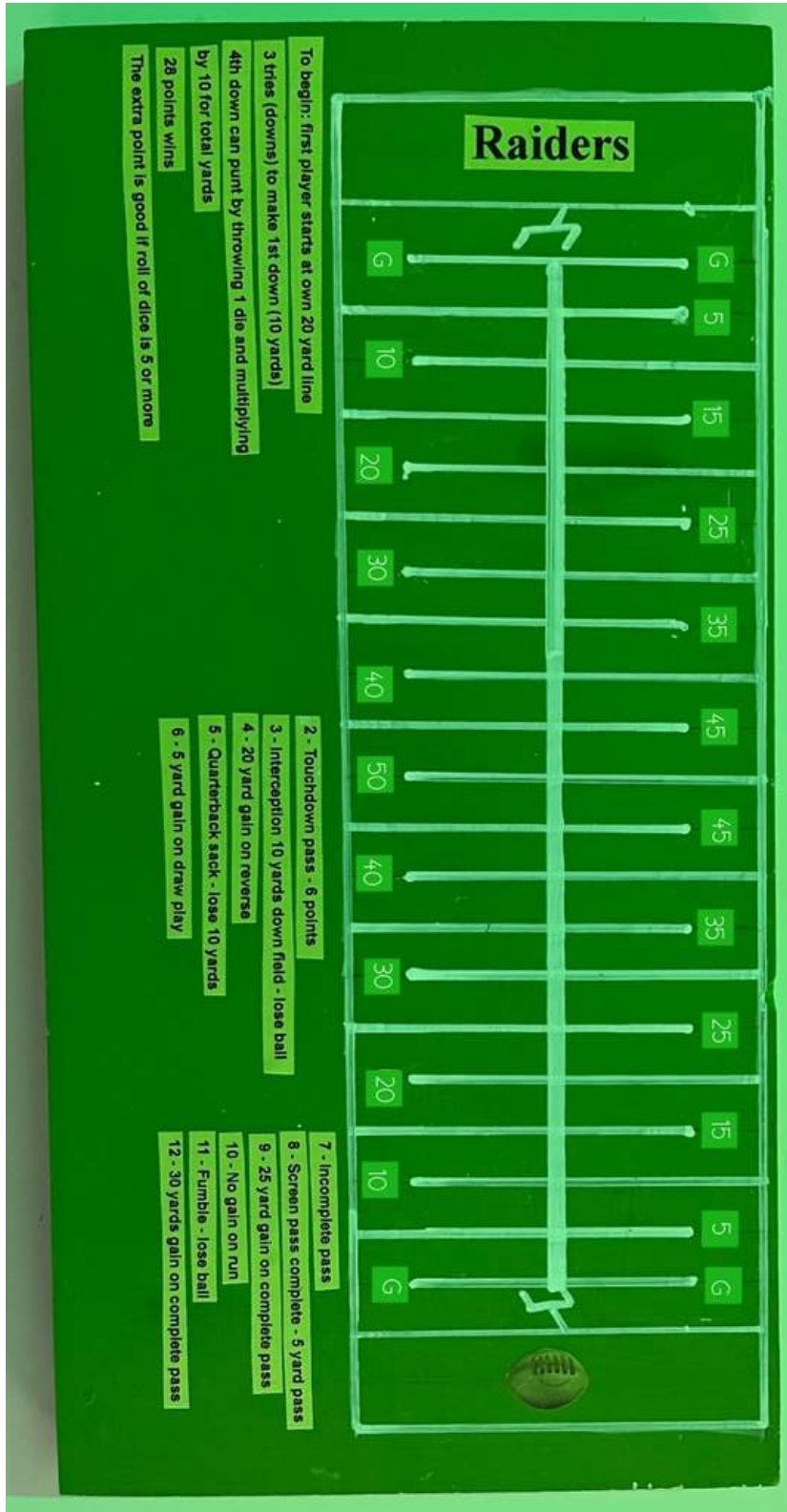
Then it was time to draw in the field and oh no...math again. This time we simply freehanded a rectangle and used division to put down the 23 yard/end zone lines. It took a steadyhand to draw the lines straight without smearing the paint pen, but we prevailed.



From there it was just a matter of printing out the instructions, picking out the decals, and drilling the holes for the pegs (not pictured). The most anxiety-inducing moment for me was when James told me the goal posts were non negotiable. I held my breath and drew them in freehand to his specifications, and he approved.

What's Happening in the Project Center?

James Makes a Football Game



We think it came out great! If you'd like to play the game yourself you can give it a try using our board. You'll need some dice and something to represent the football (Monopoly game pieces, coins, Skittles, whatever!)



Andrew's Corner

Movie Review

Wallace and Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl



February 11 is National Inventors' Day. The first inventor that came to my mind was Wallace from Wallace and Gromit. He is always coming up with interesting inventions. The newest Wallace and Gromit movie is called Vengeance Most Fowl. It is about the villain from a previous movie, The Wrong Trousers, Feathers McGraw. He frames Wallace by taking over one of his inventions. I have been a fan of Wallace and Gromit since I was a kid. My favorite character is Wallace because he is very funny. I recommend this movie to Matthew because he likes Wallace and Gromit, too. If you are interested in more of Wallace's inventions, I recommend a series called Wallace and Gromit's Cracking Contraptions, where they test out different inventions.

Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 25 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, exploring new places with his mom.... and babies. He is an authority in all things Star Wars, Star Trek and great places to go in the Bay Area. He is currently learning Mandarin and loves to research and learn new things.

Math Problems



Celebrate the Year of the Snake with an Excerpt from our “Snakes in a Class”

Knowledge/Cultural Literacy course put together by Cat, Martha, Nino, Jennifer, Andrew, and Connor.



Snakes in a Class/Facts & Talking Points

*Let's Talk Snake Facts: How many legs do snakes have? (Trick question!) There are a whopping 3,000 species of snakes on earth. Snakes come in all sizes: the smallest snake in the world is the Barbados thread snake, which is about 4 inches, smaller than a nightcrawler. The largest snake is the reticulated python, which can grow up to 20 feet! The heaviest snake is the green anaconda, which can weigh up to 550 pounds! That's a heavy snake.

*Snake Snacks: Snakes eat their prey whole, which means they swallow the whole thing without chewing. They can separate their jaws, so they can consume prey up to three times larger than their head. Why do they flick their forked tongues? That's how they smell what's around them.

*Snake Snoozing: Most snakes are nocturnal, so they sleep during the day and are active at night. Snakes are cold-blooded, so they can't create their own body heat. Instead, they sun themselves to regulate their body temperature. Snakes love themselves a nice warm rock!

*Staring Contest Champions: Snakes don't have eyelids! Snakes can't blink or close their eyes. Since snakes spend much of their time close to the ground, with leaves, grit,

sand, and dirt, they need eye protection. So how do their eyes stay safe and not dry out? Snake's answer to the eyelid is a clear scale over each eye, so they can see even when covering their eyes.

*All snakes can swim, so don't go thinking you can escape a snake by jumping into a river.



Snakes in a Class



Exercise Ideas & Discussion Stimulants

*Share your experiences with snakes. Have you ever seen a snake in the wild? Besides in a zoo or a pet store, where have you seen a snake? Were you scared? (Fear of snakes is called *ophidiophobia*.)

*How many types of snakes can you think of? (asp, anaconda, boa, cobra, copperhead, garter, gopher, grass, mamba)

*Snake Sayings and Idioms: If it was a snake, it would have bitten you! He's a real snake in the grass.

*If you roll the dice in Vegas and you get snake eyes, what does that mean you rolled? Is it lucky or unlucky?

*What's a snake oil salesman?

*A plumber uses a snake to unclog a drain. What species of snake does he use to get all that nasty gunky hair out?

*Snakes and Ladders (turned into the less-snakey Chutes and Ladders)



Cultural References/Related Topics

*Across religions and cultures, snakes have been used as a symbol for evil, medicine, and fertility.

*Movies with Snakes: Anaconda, Snakes on a Plane, The Jungle Book, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret, Raiders of the Lost Ark (and then all of the rest of the Indiana Jones movies), Romancing the Stone, The Craft, City Slickers II: Curly's Gold, Crocodile Dundee, Gone in 60 Seconds, Holes, King Kong, The Lost World: Jurassic Park, The Mummy Returns, Pee Wee's Big Adventure

*Movies where someone (or someTHING) turns INTO a snake: Aladdin, Conan the Barbarian, Beetlejuice, Labyrinth

Why'd it Have to be Snakes?

*Medusa has snakes for hair! So does Cecilia in Monsters Inc. Let's talk about how you would style your hair if it was made out of snakes. (Snake mohawk, snake pigtails, snake bun, snake ponytail, snake braid, etc.)

Related Vocabulary

- *Serpent
- *Slither
- *Scales
- *Reticulated
- *Antivenom
- *Venom
- *Constricting
- *Herpetarium
- *Vivarium
- *Ecotherm



Katie charms a boa at reptile camp



Crafty paper towel roll snakes with googly eyes

Guess the Snake Movie Quote

- "Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?" --Indiana Jones
- "There's a snake in my boot!" --Toy Story
- "I'm tired of these #@%\$^ snakes on this #@%\$^ plane!" --Snakes on a Plane



Snakes by Iris Linssen

Our student, Iris, is quite the artist and her art often centers around the snakes of Africa (common boomslangs, green mambas, and cobras).



Nino makes a friend at the East Bay Vivarium

Moving Advice

with Darnell and Amy



As everyone knows, moving can be a stressful experience. Darnell said, “having moved many times myself, I can honestly say, I’ve never thought, ‘That was fun! Let’s do it again soon!’”

Darnell has stayed in her last two homes for ten years or more—so she is not a move expert, and that’s where Amy comes in! Amy recently moved to a new home after living in her previous apartment for many years. They reflected on what made Amy’s move easier and what made it harder.

Here are some practical tips to make your next move as stress-free as possible.

Declutter First

If you don’t need it or cherish it, let it go. Moving is the perfect time to reevaluate what you truly want to keep. Often, we don’t realize how much we’ve accumulated until we start packing. It might feel sentimental to hold on to a café receipt from a trip to Paris, but if you let it go, will you really forget the trip entirely? Probably not. Amy decided to get rid of some things, but kept her baby book (with pictures of her when she was a baby) and her yearbooks, and of course things that her mom made before she passed away.

Clothing is often the biggest culprit. A good rule of thumb: if you haven’t worn it in a year or more, donate it so someone else can use it. And books—Amy is an avid reader—can take up significant space and weight. Consider letting go of books you’ve read and loved or those you’ll likely never get around to reading. Pass them on so others can enjoy them. Where can you donate these books? Check out our Little Free Library at 837 Sweetser Street, Novato.

Label Boxes Clearly

This step is critical. Label at least two sides and the top of each box with the room it belongs to and a general idea of its contents. For example, “Kitchen: mixing bowls and measuring cups.” Amy even cleaned out old flour and containers before packing them, ensuring a fresh start at her new home. She also packed and labeled her own boxes, which made unpacking much easier.



Advice for a Smooth Move

with Darnell and Amyl

Stay Organized

As tempting as it may be to stack boxes randomly wherever they fit, try to keep boxes from the same room together. Grouping boxes by room—bedroom items with bedroom items, kitchen supplies with kitchen supplies—will save you from headaches during unpacking.



Start Early

As soon as you know that you're going to move, begin planning, purging, and organizing. Start packing items you want to keep but don't use daily.

Use Up Groceries

As moving day nears, focus on using up the groceries in your refrigerator and freezer so you will have less to pack and move.

Get Creative with Packing Materials

Wrap fragile items in towels, pillowcases, or t-shirts. It might seem unconventional, but it saves space and reduces waste.



A Funny Side Note

Darnell tells a story about one of her early moves with her husband. "Unlike me, he'd lived in the same house his entire life and didn't have much experience packing. For our first move together, he mixed everything—tools with linens, knick-knacks with kitchen supplies—it was chaos! Unpacking took months to sort through. Let's just say, we learned a lot from that experience, and our next move went much smoother."

With these tips, moving doesn't have to be a nightmare. A little planning and organization go a long way in making the process manageable—and maybe even enjoyable.

Darnell: How do you like your new home?

Amyl: I like it, my roommate's cat keeps trying to sneak into my room. He hid under my bed, but I could see his tail.





Happy February Birthday!

2/17 - Andrew M.

2/18 - Linda



Groundhog Day Jokes

Why is it annoying to watch TV with a groundhog?

They hog the remote.

What does Punxsutawney Phil use to clean his laundry?

Hogwash.



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The Chauffered Courier

The world of delivery has come a long way, from ancient empires to modern apps—and now some of our students spend time working on our very own special delivery team!

Couriers of Ancient Egypt and Persia

In ancient times, couriers were used by rulers and governments to send important messages. (Right) Egyptians used runners to carry written messages on papyrus between cities.

Papyrus (below left) is a plant that was pounded into paper (below right) long before we could just run over to Staples to get more paper.



It's likely that our student couriers would not enjoy delivering documents on foot so instructor Dylan drives our couriers (Andrew Nagel and Nino Gaetani) between delivery points. That is right, we are a chauffeured courier service! How classy is that???

Couriers



In ancient Persia, a system of couriers on horseback called the *angarium* was created under King Cyrus the Great around 500 BCE. This network was one of the earliest organized delivery systems.

Herodotus, a Greek historian who wrote *The Histories*, once wrote about the Persian couriers, saying, "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Wait a minute, isn't that the "motto" of the

US Post Office? Yes, it is, according to their website—they call it a "motto" because it's not their *official motto*.

What is a motto?

A motto is short phrase that expresses the core beliefs or values of a person, family, or group. For instance, the Boy Scouts have a motto "Be Prepared."

Fast-Forward to Us!

Currently, we have two enthusiastic couriers! Unlike ancient runners, they don't need to dodge wild animals or cross deserts. Instead, they deliver documents, cards, small packages, or treats, they bring their energy and excitement to every delivery.

A Legacy of Service with a Personal Twist

From ancient horseback riders to modern-day gig workers, delivery people (like Nino and Dylan to the right) have always connected communities.

Our couriers deliver not just goods but heart, laughter, and an extra sprinkle of personality. So next time you see one of our special couriers, know you're witnessing a modern twist on a tradition as old as time.





RANDALL MARTINI

CH&S STUDENT PPP

If you need a job done right, Randall can help!

If there's going to be a party, you want Randall to be there!

If you are taking a trip, you certainly want to bring Randall!

If you have a problem, you know you can talk to Randall!

And even when nothing is going on or there is nothing to say,

Randall is so easy to hang with!

Randall is honest and caring and funny and loyal.

He really is a perfect friend!

Randall loves a lot of things and he does a lot of things. For that matter,

Randall IS a lot of things:

Responsible

Independent

Devoted to a Wonderful Family

Charming & Charismatic

Friendly, Kind & Giving

Active and Involved in his Community

Insightful & Fascinating

A Great Listener

A Great Appreciator

Greatly Appreciated

What a Guy!

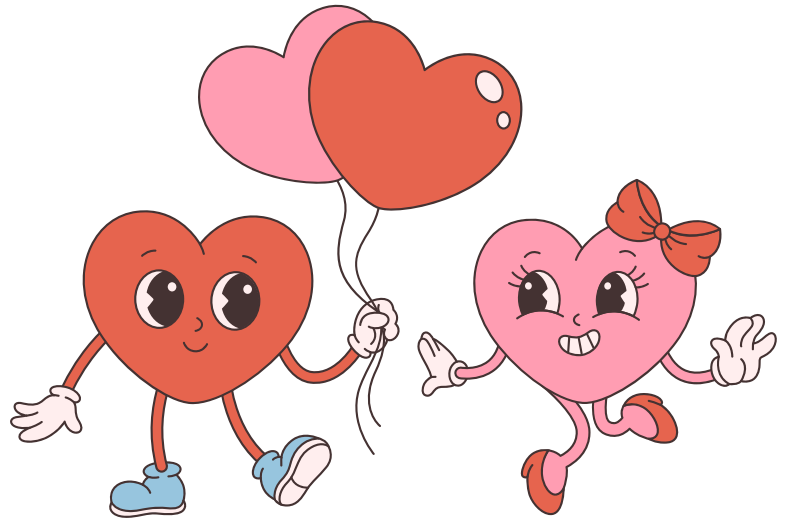


Watch Randall's PPP video on
our Instagram account
[https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7R5V_4pcY9/?
utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7R5V_4pcY9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)



Randall has a Corgi named Archie

VALENTINE CUT OUTS



Why Study Latin?



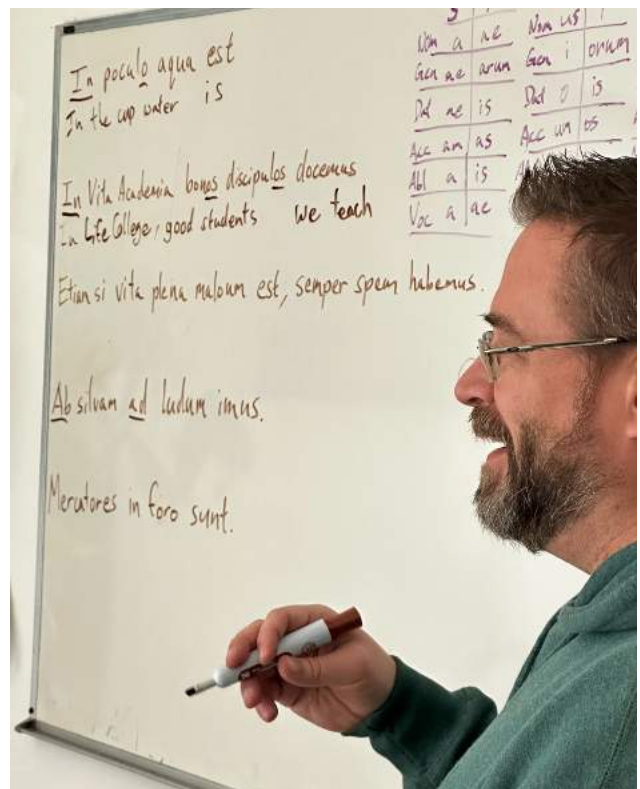
Did you know that we have Latin classes? Yes, we do! Instructor Matthew teaches Latin to some of our students.

So why study Latin?

Latin might seem like a "dead language," but its benefits are very much alive! Here's why studying Latin is worthwhile:

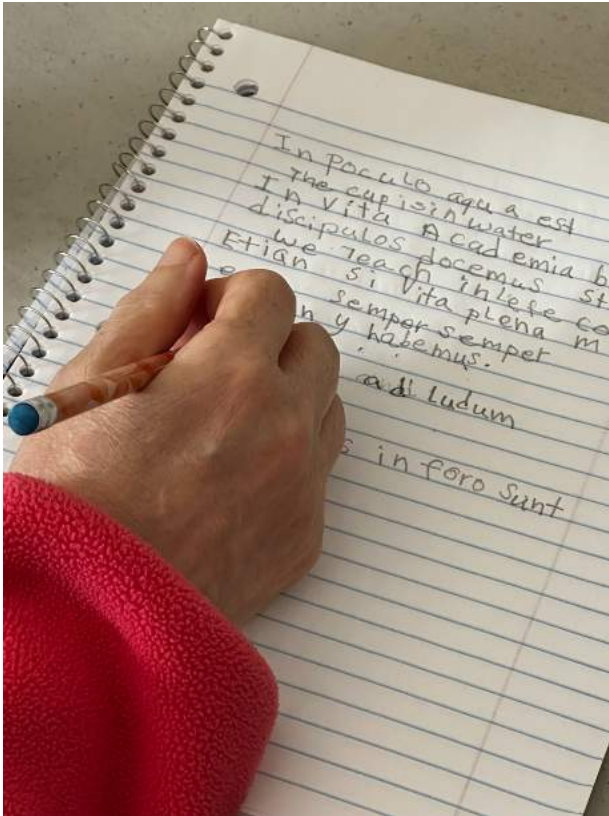
- **Improves English Skills:** About 60% of English words come from Latin. Learning Latin helps you understand the meaning of words, expand your vocabulary, and improve grammar.
- **Boosts Critical Thinking:** Latin requires logical problem-solving skills, sharpening your mind and improving focus.
- **Connects You to History:** Latin was the language of ancient Rome. Learning it gives insight into Western history, literature, and culture.

Though ancient, Latin remains relevant, offering many rewards for those who study it!



Nom	a	ae	Nom	us	i
Gen	ae	arum	Gen	i	orum
Del	ae	is	Del	o	is
Acc	am	as	Acc	um	os
Abl	a	is	Abl	o	is
Voc	a	ae	Voc	o	o

Cogito Ergo Sum



(Left) Check out Martha's neat notetaking!

So now it's your turn to *carpe diem* and learn a few Latin words and phrases:

Alter ego

This phrase is so commonly used in everyday English that you may be surprised to learn it's Latin. It translates to "the other I" and today means someone's secondary or alternate personality.

Bona fide

Here's another one that many people probably don't realize is Latin. It translates to "in good faith," and means either "real" or "genuine"—such as a "bona fide expert"—or without fraud—such as a "bona fide real estate deal."

Pro bono

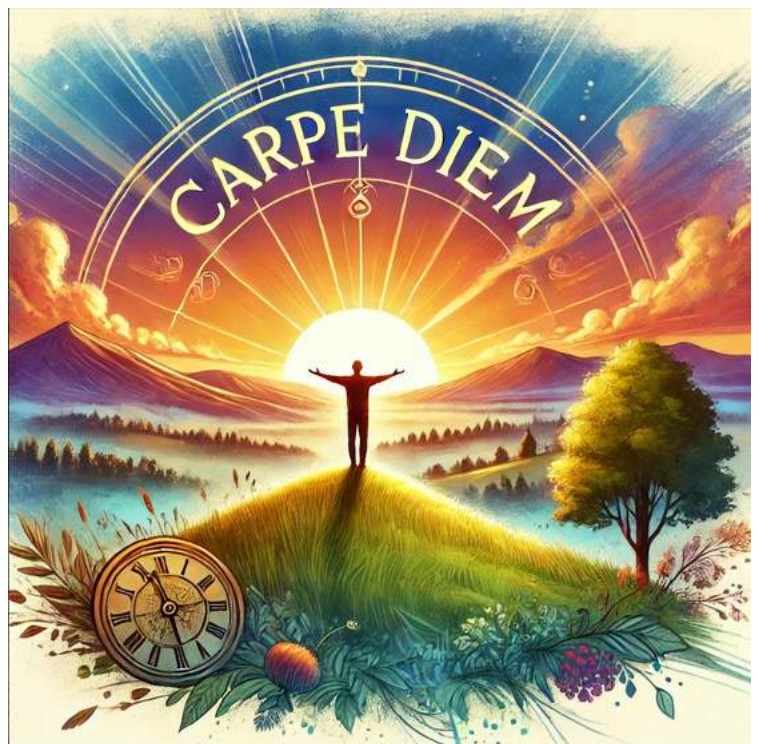
It's not surprising that this abbreviated Latin phrase is used to describe a deed or action done without charge. The full phrase, "pro bono publico," translates to "for the public good."

Ad lib

To ad-lib is to talk without preparation, or "off the cuff," so to speak. It comes from the Latin phrase "ad libitum," which translates to "at one's pleasure."

Carpe diem

This phrase was used by the Roman poet Horace to express the idea that one should enjoy life while one can—it means "seize the day."



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Connection Magazine

