



CLASSICAL PRONUNCIATION

The term ‘classical pronunciation’ refers to modern scholarship’s best guess at how Latin may have been pronounced by the educated elite in the late Republic.

Vowels

Vowels are either long or short. Long vowels have a different sound from short vowels and are held slightly longer.

<u>long</u>	<u>as in</u>	<u>example</u>	<u>short</u>	<u>as in</u>	<u>example</u>
â	father	frâter	a*	again	mensa
ê	late	sêdês	e	let	et
î	seen	amîcus	i	sit	cibus
ô	open	nômen	o	offer	novem
û	food	lûna	u	foot	sum

* When short a is in a stressed (accented) syllable, it is pronounced like long â, but shorter: amo.

Vowel length is important for determining accent and for distinguishing certain grammatical forms.

Diphthongs are long. Their sounds are:

<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>as in</u>	<u>example</u>
ae	bite	caelum
oe	boil	proelium
au	cow	laudo

Consonants

Consonants are pronounced more or less as in English, with the following considerations.

c	always hard: <i>cat</i>	voco, cibus
g	always hard: <i>go</i>	fuga, tergi
sc	always hard: <i>escape</i>	scribo, discipulus
gn	always hard: <i>ignite</i>	ignis
h	always pronounced <i>h</i> except in transliteration of Greek letters (th, ch, ph)	hora, mihi /t/: theatrum, /c/: chorus, /f/: phalanx
j	as <i>y</i> in <i>yet</i>	judico (‘j’ is often written as ‘i’: iudico)
qu	as in <i>quit</i>	equus, qui
s	as <i>sing</i> (never as <i>z</i>)	mensa, misi
t	as in <i>test</i>	nuntius
v	as <i>w</i> in <i>west</i>	verbum (‘v’ is often written as ‘u’: uerbum)