

Certamen for Beginners Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Questions

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1. What is the long mark over a vowel called in Latin?
 - A. Accent
 - B. Diacritic
 - C. Macron
 - D. Breve

2. What was the term used for a master's study in a Roman household?
 - A. Tablinum
 - B. Exedra
 - C. Triclinium
 - D. Oratorium

3. Which four words cause the "ali" to drop from aliquis/aliquid?
 - A. si, nisi, quod, cum
 - B. si, nisi, num, ne
 - C. ali, duo, si, ne
 - D. nisi, num, ut, cum

4. What is the Latin term for a person who enjoys literature?
 - A. Poeta
 - B. Literatus
 - C. Scriptor
 - D. Philosophus

5. Who were the original six Olympians?
 - A. Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hestia, Demeter, Hera
 - B. Ares, Hephaestus, Hermes, Dionysus
 - C. Hades, Hermes, Hera, Persephone
 - D. Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Athena

6. What term describes the first day of every month in ancient Rome?
- A. Nonae
 - B. Kalends
 - C. Ides
 - D. Decima
7. Which case is used to express the indirect object in Latin?
- A. Nominative
 - B. Accusative
 - C. Dative
 - D. Genitive
8. In which context would the word "bellum" be used?
- A. Peace
 - B. War
 - C. Love
 - D. Honor
9. What were the ludi circenses?
- A. Religious festivals
 - B. Chariot races
 - C. Public speeches
 - D. Musical performances
10. What is the Latin and English translation for the abbreviation N.B.?
- A. Nova Bellum, New War
 - B. Nota Bene, Note well
 - C. Num quod, Not which
 - D. Nemo Bonum, No Good

Answers

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1. C
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What is the long mark over a vowel called in Latin?

- A. Accent
- B. Diacritic
- C. Macron
- D. Breve

The long mark over a vowel in Latin is known as a macron. This diacritical mark signifies that the vowel it accompanies is pronounced with a longer duration than a short vowel, which is typically indicated by the absence of a mark or a different symbol called a breve. The macron plays a significant role in Latin pronunciation and poetry, as the length of a vowel can affect the meaning of words and the rhythm of verses. Knowing when to apply a macron can also assist learners in the correct pronunciation and understanding of Latin texts.

2. What was the term used for a master's study in a Roman household?

- A. Tablinum
- B. Exedra
- C. Triclinium
- D. Oratorium

The term "tablinum" refers specifically to a room within a Roman house that served as a study or office for the master of the house. It was typically situated close to the entrance and was often connected to the atrium, allowing the master to manage household affairs and conduct business within the same space. The tablinum was an important area where the owner could showcase family documents and important artifacts, emphasizing the social status and wealth of the household. In contrast, the other terms describe different parts of a Roman household or specific concepts. The "exedra" was a room used for conversation or discussion, usually featuring seating and sometimes adorned with decorative elements. "Triclinium" refers to the dining room in a Roman house, characterized by its three couches arranged around a table, specifically for reclining during meals. "Oratorium" denotes a prayer room, a space designated for religious activities. Each of these serves distinct purposes that do not encapsulate the idea of a master's dedicated study like the tablinum does.

3. Which four words cause the "ali" to drop from aliquis/aliquid?

- A. si, nisi, quod, cum
- B. si, nisi, num, ne
- C. ali, duo, si, ne
- D. nisi, num, ut, cum

When dealing with Latin words, "aliquis" and "aliquid" mean "someone" and "something," respectively. The use of certain conjunctions can influence the way these words are formed within a sentence. The conjunctions "si" (if), "nisi" (unless), "num" (whether), and "ne" (that not) have a special syntactical effect on the pronouns "aliquis" and "aliquid," causing the "ali" prefix to drop. This happens because these conjunctions introduce conditions or negations that allow for a more streamlined expression of uncertainty or hypotheticals, ultimately leading to a more concise form of the pronouns used. The other options do not include the correct set of conjunctions that drop the "ali" prefix. While they may contain valid Latin conjunctions, they do not all influence the form of "aliquis" and "aliquid" in the same way. The understanding of which conjunctions affect these words is essential when constructing sentences or translating Latin, particularly for expressing conditional statements or general questions.

4. What is the Latin term for a person who enjoys literature?

- A. Poeta
- B. Literatus
- C. Scriptor
- D. Philosophus

The term "literatus" in Latin refers specifically to a person who is educated, learned, or someone who enjoys literature. This term encompasses not just the enjoyment of literature but also implies a certain level of literacy and intellectual engagement with texts, making it the most fitting choice for someone who appreciates literary works. The other options, while related to literature in some way, do not convey the same specific meaning. For example, "poeta" refers to a poet, someone who creates poetry. "Scriptor" means a writer, which is a broader term that doesn't necessarily indicate enjoyment of literature itself. "Philosophus" translates to philosopher, indicating someone who studies or engages with philosophical concepts rather than literature directly. Thus, "literatus" stands out as the most appropriate choice for someone who enjoys literature.

5. Who were the original six Olympians?

- A. Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hestia, Demeter, Hera
- B. Ares, Hephaestus, Hermes, Dionysus
- C. Hades, Hermes, Hera, Persephone
- D. Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Athena

The original six Olympians refer to the principal deities of the Greek pantheon who were the first generation of gods to inhabit Mount Olympus. The correct group consists of Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera. Each of these figures played a crucial role in Greek mythology and governance of the world. Zeus, as the king of the gods, was associated with the sky and thunder. Poseidon ruled over the sea, and Hades governed the underworld. Hestia, the goddess of the hearth and home, along with Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and fertility, also held significant importance in both public worship and domestic life. Hera, the queen of the gods and goddess of marriage, completed this group of Olympians. The other options listed pertain to various gods and heroes but do not form the complete set of the original six Olympians, which is specifically defined as the deities mentioned in the first choice.

6. What term describes the first day of every month in ancient Rome?

- A. Nonae
- B. Kalends
- C. Ides
- D. Decima

The term that describes the first day of every month in ancient Rome is "Kalends." In the Roman calendar, the Kalends always referred to the first day of each month and was significant in Roman religious and civil life. It marked the beginning of the month and was used for both financial and agricultural purposes. The other terms have specific meanings as well: the Ides typically refers to the middle of the month (the 13th or 15th, depending on the month) and were often associated with the full moon. The Nonae, which means the ninth day before the Ides, usually occurs on the 5th day of the month (or the 7th in March, May, July, and October). Decima is not a recognized term in Roman calendrical contexts and does not pertain to days of the month. Thus, Kalends is the correct term for the first day of every month, reflecting its importance in the organization and culture of ancient Rome.

7. Which case is used to express the indirect object in Latin?

- A. Nominative
- B. Accusative
- C. Dative
- D. Genitive

The dative case is used in Latin to express the indirect object of a sentence. An indirect object typically receives the direct object or benefits from the action of the verb. In a sentence such as "I give the book to the student," "the student" is the indirect object because they are the recipient of the book, which is the direct object. In Latin, the direct object would be in the accusative case (as it is the thing being given), while the recipient would be in the dative case. To further illustrate, consider the verb "dare," which means "to give." When you construct a sentence with this verb, the subject takes the nominative case, the direct object takes the accusative case, and the recipient takes the dative case. Therefore, the use of the dative case is essential in Latin to clearly identify who is affected by the action performed in the sentence.

8. In which context would the word "bellum" be used?

- A. Peace
- B. War
- C. Love
- D. Honor

The word "bellum" is a Latin term that specifically translates to "war" in English. It is commonly used in discussions about military conflict, historical battles, or any scenario where warfare is a central theme. In classical texts, bellum often appears in various contexts to denote not just the physical aspects of war but also the political, social, and psychological implications of conflict. Other options such as "peace," "love," and "honor" do not relate to the meaning of "bellum." For instance, "peace" would be represented by the term "pax" in Latin, while "love" is conveyed with words like "amor." Similarly, "honor" translates to "honor" as well in Latin. Thus, the correct context for the use of "bellum" distinctly aligns with the concept of war.

9. What were the ludi circenses?

- A. Religious festivals
- B. Chariot races
- C. Public speeches
- D. Musical performances

Ludi circenses refers specifically to the popular public games in ancient Rome that were primarily characterized by chariot racing. These events were held in circuses, with the Circus Maximus being the most famous venue. The races typically featured teams of horses and their chariots competing for speed and skill, and they were a major source of entertainment for the Roman populace, often accompanied by a festive atmosphere. While ludi could include various types of games and performances, the particular association of ludi circenses with chariot races makes this the correct answer. Religious festivals, public speeches, and musical performances comprised other aspects of Roman culture and events, but they do not describe the essence of ludi circenses.

10. What is the Latin and English translation for the abbreviation N.B.?

- A. Nova Bellum, New War
- B. Nota Bene, Note well
- C. Num quod, Not which
- D. Nemo Bonum, No Good

The abbreviation N.B. stands for "Nota Bene," which translates to "Note well" in English. This phrase is commonly used to draw attention to something particularly important or noteworthy that the reader should focus on. It originates from Latin, where "nota" means "note" and "bene" means "well." This expression is often found in academic, legal, and formal writing to highlight critical information or instructions that require careful consideration. In contrast, the other options do not accurately define the abbreviation N.B. "Nova Bellum," for instance, translates to "New War," a phrase that lacks relevance in this context. "Num quod" means "Not which," which doesn't correspond to the function of N.B. Lastly, "Nemo Bonum" translates to "No Good," which is unrelated to the notion of emphasizing important information. These distinctions highlight why "Nota Bene, Note well" is the correct interpretation of N.B.