

## False Friends

In Latin (and in any language) there are some words that remind us of English words. Often the words they remind us of are a good translation of the Latin word – for example *gloria* means “glory”. Sometimes the word is very close – so close that the similar English word would do although it might not be quite the best translation. *Ferox*, for instance, means “fierce” but “ferocious” would probably do in most instances as a translation of *ferox*. Often such a slight difference in shade of meaning is easy to detect from the context and you can adjust your translation accordingly. We can consider such Latin words as “friends” – they tell us what they mean and are easy to learn. However, there are other words where the obvious connection with an English word does not give us an accurate translation. *Ignavus* is a good example. It sounds as if it should be “ignorant” in English and it **is** a word with a very negative connotation that you could use to describe a person. However, “ignorant” would be a **wrong** translation; the word means “lazy”. Such words are “false friends”, they seem to signal their meaning but in fact we have been put off the scent by a resemblance that is not helpful. Again context can sometimes help us but the only way to avoid slipping up with a “false friend” on the exam paper is to learn the meanings in the vocabulary list and to learn the translation of your set book texts thoroughly.

If you are “guesslating”, as I sometimes encourage you to do, “false friends” are a real menace. The only way to avoid falling into their traps is by using a good dictionary, either a physical one or on-line such as Wiktionary which is a multilingual dictionary that is quite good for most Latin words. Just being aware that a Latin word is not necessarily what it looks like helps too.

There is a list of Latin False Friends on Quizlet: [https://quizlet.com/\\_1120bk?x=1jqt&i=2ds0qg](https://quizlet.com/_1120bk?x=1jqt&i=2ds0qg) although it is not geared to Cambridge IGCSE Latin.

Here is a list of a few False Friends I found on the IGCSE syllabus. Fill in the correct meaning:

*invenio* does not mean “I come in” \_\_\_\_\_

*labor* does not mean “I labour” \_\_\_\_\_

*liberi* does not have anything to do with “free” \_\_\_\_\_

*malo* does not mean “I curse” \_\_\_\_\_

*pareo* does not mean “I prepare” \_\_\_\_\_

*salus, salutis* does not mean “salutation” \_\_\_\_\_

*soleo* does not mean “I am alone” \_\_\_\_\_

*tandem* has nothing to do with “two” \_\_\_\_\_

*vallum* does not mean “valley or ditch” \_\_\_\_\_

*vereor* (see Year 2 Term 3 Week 4 Day 2) has nothing to do with “truth” \_\_\_\_\_

*copiae* does not mean “copies” \_\_\_\_\_

*crimen* does not mean “crime” \_\_\_\_\_

*excito* does not mean “I excite” \_\_\_\_\_

Bible example:

*Domine Deus **salutis** meae,*

*die clamavi et nocte coram te* Psalm 88:1

Translate the first line then begin with the verb in the second line.

*coram* means “before”