

UK Spends \$5.5 Million for Latin Language Program

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. divide /dɪˈvaɪd/ a difference or separation
Example: The divide between the rich and the poor in this country is continuing to grow.
2. ridicule /ˈrɪd.ə.kjuːl/ to laugh at someone or something in an unkind way
Example: She rarely spoke her mind out of fear of being ridiculed.
3. gimmick /ˈɡɪm.ɪk/ something invented esp. for the purpose of attracting attention and that has no other purpose or value
Example: The proposal to cut taxes was nothing but a campaign gimmick.
4. practical application /ˈpræktək(ə)l ˌæpləˈkɑːʃ(ə)n/ the use of something for a reasonable purpose
Example: I prefer practical application than a long and boring lecture.
5. tomb /tuːm/ a large stone structure or underground room where someone, especially an important person, is buried
Example: They found treasure in the tomb.



The U.K. education secretary Gavin Williamson has announced a new \$5.5 million program to teach Latin at 40 schools across the country. Mr Williamson said the Latin Excellence Program aims to increase opportunities for students in some government-run schools.

Latin is a language that was spoken in the area around Rome over 2,000 years ago. It is taught in 49% of the UK's "upper class" private schools but only 2.7% of public schools. Williamson said: "Latin is believed to be only for the rich, but the subject can bring so many benefits to young people, so I want to put an end to that **divide**." He added: "Latin can help pupils with learning modern foreign languages."

The move started a heated discussion about the benefits of Latin. Many people have **ridiculed** the program as being nothing but a "poorly-funded **gimmick**". Politician Tim Farron wrote: "Latin is elite because only people who are guaranteed successful careers, thanks to

family connections, can afford to waste time on a subject whose only **practical application** is in understanding...the dialogue in [old] books."

Author Emma Kennedy questioned the use of a "dead" language. She uses Latin to "occasionally translate things on **tombs**". A teacher said money would be better spent on living languages like Chinese or Arabic that would enable children "to get ahead in and engage with the world," or on computer coding.

DISCUSSION

1. Is \$5.5 million on a nationwide language programme enough?
2. Why do students in the UK's elite schools learn Latin?
3. How can learning Latin help students learn foreign languages?
4. Should the money be spent on helping people to improve their English?
5. What do you think of getting jobs through family connections?
6. Why is Latin useful if all texts written in Latin have been translated?