



TEACHING TIP

Ask the students at what school-related event they might have seen the outer garment Petrarch is wearing in the fresco. Tease the answer “graduation” out of them and explain that the graduation robe or academic gown is what a student and a professor used to wear to classes. Note that at Cambridge and Oxford students don their academic garb to take their exams and for Sunday chapel and dinner. Ask students what wearing an academic gown suggests about Petrarch. Ask students to note the Latin label in the frame of the painting.

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Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2



TEACHER BY THE WAY

Because Petrarch had taken clerical orders in the church, he could not, according to canon law, marry. Nevertheless he had two children from relationships with women whose identities are not now certain. His son, Giovanni, was born in 1337, and his daughter, Francesca, in 1343.



TEACHER BY THE WAY

Petrarch

Until very recently Petrarch was most famous for his poems in the Italian vernacular, and he is still regarded as one of the fathers of Italian literature. Petrarch’s Italian sonnets inspired many of Shakespeare’s English sonnets. But Petrarch’s output in Italian, though famous today, was tiny compared to his voluminous writings in Latin, the language he used most of the time. He himself called his Italian works *nūgae* or “trifles.”

Latin works by Petrarch which stayed in circulation for many centuries after his death include an unfinished poem about Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal, entitled *Africa*; prose works such as *Rerum memorandarum libri* (*Books on Things Worth Pointing Out*), a treatise on virtues and moral philosophy, and *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (*Remedies for Good and Bad Fortune*), a work whose title suffices to explain its theme; *De viris illustribus* (*On Famous Men*), a series of moral biographies; and *De vita solitaria*, (*On the Solitary Life*), which discusses a life devoted to contemplation. Many other Latin texts also came from the pen of Petrarch, including a substantial collection of letters.

TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN PASSAGE

Francis Says Greetings to His Cicero.

I read very eagerly your letters which have been eagerly sought for a long time, and <were> found, when I did not expect <them to be found>. I hardly believed, Marcus Tullius, how many things you were saying, how many tears you were pouring, how often you were changing your mind. I already knew what kind of teacher you had been to the others; now I understand at last who you have been to yourself. Wherever you are, listen to this complaint—not advice—which one of <your> descendants, exceedingly fond of your name, pours out, not without tears. Oh, old man anxious and uneasy always, why did you want to participate in so many fights and useless rivalries? Where did you leave the free time which was becoming to your age, to your profession, to your fortune? What false splendor of glory involved you, an old man, in wars of young men, and snatched you to a death unworthy of a philosopher? Alas, you held the light for others, you showed the way, so that they might walk correctly; but you yourself fell. Why did this happen? What

madness impelled you against so many enemies? Love for the Republic, <I> believe. But if you were stirred only by faith and freedom, what drew you to the more powerful men? Why were you always speaking very ornate words about virtues, if you did not want to hear yourself? If only you had been able to grow old in the quiet countryside as a real philosopher, if only you had not thought so much of honors, if only you had not had Catilines in your mind! Goodbye forever, my Cicero!

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While English derivatives from the asterisked words (i.e., the Vocabulary to Learn) are the topic of Exercise 2, there are some interesting derivatives from the non-asterisked words and some of these show how words change through the years. The teacher may choose to discuss these derivatives with the students.

- *anxius* – anxious, anxiety
- *avidē* (*avidus* = eager, covetous, greedy) – avarice, avaricious, avid, avidity, avidin
- *cōntentiō* (*cum* = together, completely; *tendō* = stretch, spread, aim, shoot) – contend, contention, contentious
- *conveniō* (meet, combine, agree, suit) – convene, convenience, convenient, conveniently, convention, conventional, convent, covenant, conventicle

A conventicle is a secret or unauthorized meeting where people come together, especially for religious worship.

A convent today consists of women who come together under a mother superior to maintain a religious life usually under the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

The Covenant of the League of Nations was signed by representatives of nations who came together at Versailles in 1920 and agreed to international cooperation on world peace.

A convenience store is situated in a location suitable for serving the neighborhood.

- *impingō* (*in* = into, against; *pangō* = drive in, fasten) – impact, impinge
- In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson fastened upon the arguments of the colonists against the King of England's impingement on their rights.
- An impact occurs when one object collides with another.
- *intersum* (to be between, be present at; the impersonal form *interest* = to be of concern) – interest, interesting, interested
- *posterī* – posterity
- *rapiō* (tear, snatch, plunder, hurry, seize quickly) – rapture, rapacious, rape, rapid, rapids, rapt, ravage, ravine, ravish, surreptitious (from *sub* = under; *rapiō* = to seize), usurp from (*ūtor* = to use; *rapiō* = to seize), usurpation, usurper

The boat was seized by the rapids and carried quickly to the waterfall.

The rapture on the faces of the audience was indicative of how strongly the music had seized them.