

The underhanded method by which land was snatched from the Native Americans was often very surreptitiously done.

Dictators often usurp power through forceful seizure and therefore possess it illegally.

- *rēctē* (from *regō, regere, rēxī, rēctus* = keep straight, guide, direct, rule) – rectify, rector, rectitude, rectum

The term rector can be applied to the heads of certain schools or to the clergymen in charge of parishes or congregations, all of whom are to guide the people whom they lead.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if moral rectitude, rather than selfishness or partisanship, guided our actions?

- *senēscō* – senescent, senescence

A senescent person is one growing old, and senescence is the time of old age.

- *tranquillus* – tranquil, tranquil(l)ity

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ANSWERS TO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Cicero's letters had been lost for a long time. Petrarch, after having found them at long last and read them, decided to write to Cicero.
2. Cicero talks too much, laments too much, changes his mind too much.
3. A quiet countryside life of literary leisure fit for a philosopher.
4. 1300–1400 years.



TEACHER BY THE WAY

The Avignon Papacy

The origins of the great schism in the western church go back to 1309 when a group of French cardinals elected a French pope who took up residence in Avignon, in southern France. In the period from 1309 to 1377, seven popes were elected, all of whom lived in Avignon. When the Roman cardinals finally elected a rival pope in 1378, the supporters of the French pope refused to accept him, and the whole of Europe came to be divided as one region supported one pope or another. This division continued until 1414, when the Council of Constance was convened, which was made up of representatives of the church hierarchy from all the main regions of Europe. The council lasted four years, and eventually won acceptance of its nominee Martin V as the sole legitimate pope, who would be henceforth always based at Rome. This great schism inevitably weakened the authority and sanctity of the papacy in the west, but it also sanctioned the important principle that, in the absence of its head, the entire body of western Christendom acting through a universal council could determine common action and decide on who the head should be.

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