



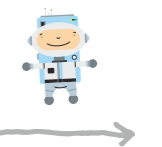
# INTRODUCTION

**LATIN: INTRO (TOWARDS THE INSIDE) + DUCERE (TO LEAD)**

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This is a book of stories about words: how they were formed, and how they came to mean what they mean today. Did you know that pants have something to do with puppets and Venice? That your breakfast cereal is related to Greek and Roman gods? That calendars come from shouting? Words have a fascinating history, and often very funny stories.

We would love to share this with you, or rather to lead you **(-duce)** inside **(intro-)** the world of words. We'll start at the beginning, with a word that contains everything!



# UNIVERSE

LATIN: UNI (ONE) + VERSUS (TO TURN)

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When we say “universe”, we mean something that contains all that is out there, everything we can observe and more. People have been thinking about this **everything** since ancient times. They saw it as one very very big thing, so about 2500 years ago the Romans named it **universus** in their Latin language. It means to turn (**versus**) everything into one (**uni**). To learn more about the **universe**, some of us go to the **university**. Others peek into it with all kinds of instruments to understand it, and maybe find other worlds and other beings, which will definitely be alien!





# ALIEN

LATIN: ALIENUS (DIFFERENT FROM, FOREIGN)

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Something we look forward to finding in the universe are aliens. We don't know how different from us they will be, but we expect them to be interesting and strange. And that is where *alien* comes from -- a Latin word which literally means *foreign*, or something *different* from what we are used to. Maybe someday we'll see an alien if we look hard enough up in the sky.





# SKY

**OLD ENGLISH: SKEU (COVER)**

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When you look up at the sky, do you sometimes imagine that it is a cover? It can be dark blue and starry at night, and it resembles a fluffy duvet on a cloudy day. That is how it got the name *sceo* about 800 years ago, from an Old English word *skeu*, which at that time actually meant *cover*. In time *sceo* changed to *sky*. Now we look up and see the *sky*, truly meaning cover, whether it is sunny or cloudy.





# CLOUD

**OLD ENGLISH: CLUD (HILL)**

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Clouds often have funny or unusual shapes. When you watch them, you can imagine all sorts of things. Before clouds had a name, people who lived in Old England (where it rained a lot) saw dark, round shapes in the sky that brought rain, and thought that they looked just like the hills. In those days, about 800 years ago, hills were called *cluds*. So people called the dark round shapes in the sky *clouds*. We still call them clouds, and not only when they look dark and angry. They are often so white and fluffy that you feel you could just jump up and down on them.



# DOWN

**OLD ENGLISH: DOWN (HILL)**

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In the days when hills were called cluds, they were also called dunes or **downs**. When you go up a hill, or a **down**, you must later come off it, or go off-**down**. It seems that people talked a lot about coming off **downs**, because this expression got shortened to just down. This is how we got the word down as we know it, forgetting that it used to mean hill. Well, if we kept that meaning and tried to say that we wanted to go downhill, would we be going downdown?!  
Anyhow, we could end up in a field.



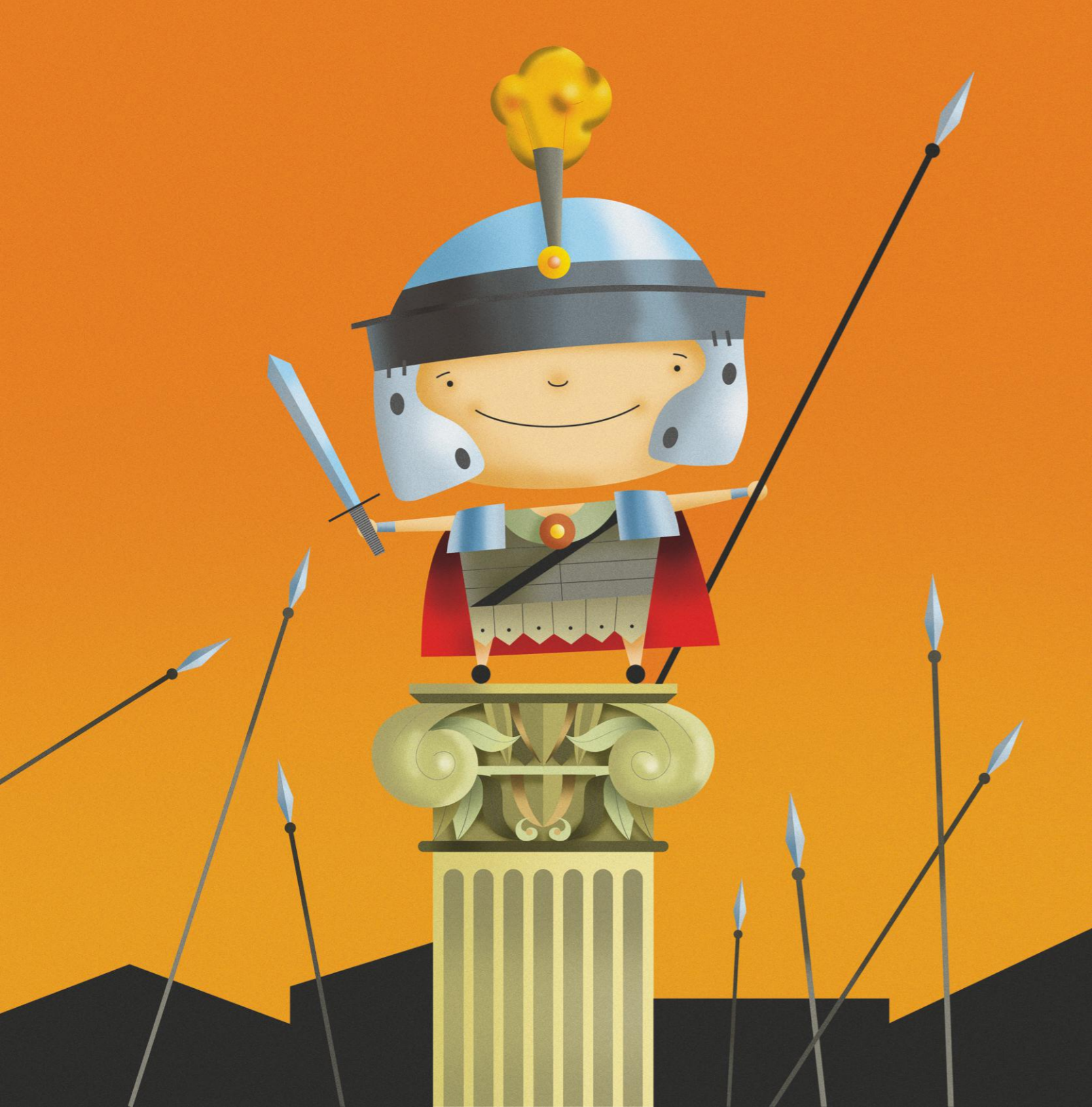
# CAMPING

**LATIN: CAMPUS (FIELD)**

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About 2000 years before you were born, the Roman Empire covered a big part of Europe and part of the Middle East. To build and grow this empire, the Roman armies would go to fight other people. To get to them, the armies would travel many days. When they had to stop for the night or to rest, they would put up their tents in a field. In their Latin language, a field was called a **campus**. So setting up your tent, like the ancient Romans did, means you are “fielding”, that is to say, camping.





# CHAMPION

**LATIN: CAMPUS (FIELD)**

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After traveling many days, the Romans armies would eventually find and fight whomever they wanted to conquer. These battles usually happened on a field, which we now know Romans called *campus*. The best fighters on this field of battle were *campiones*. That has become *champions* in English, and it is now a word we use for the best in many activities, especially sports.





# CALCULATION

LATIN: CALCULUS (PEBBLE)

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The Romans often needed more than their ten fingers to count. They used pebbles then, and a pebble was called *calculus* in Latin. So when you are calculating something, you are actually playing with little pebbles -- or that's what Romans would have done. If you want to play with large stones instead, you better have some serious muscles.



# MUSCLE

**LATIN: MUSCULUS (MOUSE)**

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Whether we like mice or not, they have been around for ages. They were not always called *mice* though: in Latin, a mouse was called *musculus*. Around that time, somebody (maybe in Ancient Rome) noticed that when we move, for example our upper arms, there seems to be something under our skin that moves just like a mouse. This is how we got a new meaning for *musculus* -- the muscles that move under our skin. Believe it or not, muscles and mice are drawn from the same old Latin word!



# CONCLUSION

**LATIN: COM (TOGETHER) + CLAUDERE (TO CLOSE)**

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It is time to put an *end* to the story. *End* is also quite an old word, with very ancient roots in a Proto-Indo-European word *anta* meaning boundary, or opposite side. So since we are now at the opposite side of the beginning, let us conclude. That is to say, we close (*-claudere*) together (*com-*) our little wanderings among words. We hope that you liked their stories, and that this book will, in the end, become just an *introduction* to a lifelong love for words and the languages of the world.





# THANK YOU

**PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN: TONG (THINK)**

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Thank you for picking up our book! *Thank* comes from the very very old word *tong*, which meant *to think*. In time, this came to refer to good thoughts in particular, and to gratitude. And we have very good thoughts for you, the reader, and we hope you will enjoy -- or have already enjoyed -- these stories of words!

## REFERENCES

LATIN: RE (BACK) + FERRE (TO CARRY)

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Here are the things we refer to, or on which we base our stories,  
the points they lead or carry (in Latin **ferre**) us back (**re**) to:

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