Stage 6 Latin Continuers (Preliminary) – the poetry of Catullus

This unit starter can be modified to suit the needs of your learners, including adding your own resources, modifying content or duration, and differentiating suggested activities. The learning, teaching and assessment strategies and assessment task are suggestions only.

# Overview

This unit starter explores the various stylistic features which occur most frequently in Latin poetry. Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate several poems of the first century BCE poet Gaius Valerius Catullus, and place his poetry in the context of both his era (late-republican Rome) and the literary tradition of which he formed a part (lyric poetry of the neoteric school).

# Duration

Approximately 10 weeks.

# Assessment as and for learning

Assessment activities designed to check student learning and inform future language learning are embedded throughout the unit. Sample assessment as learning activities are identified by (AaL) and sample assessment for learning activities are identified by (AfL). These are suggestions only – please modify these to suit your context, or identify different assessment as and for learning opportunities.

# Sample assessment of learning task

Literary commentary – students translate, analyse and answer short questions about an extract.

**Outcomes to be assessed:**

* **1.1** applies knowledge of vocabulary and grammar
* **1.3** translates into clear English using words appropriate to the context
* **2.1** identifies, explains and analyses grammatical features
* **2.2** identifies, explains and analyses stylistic features and their contribution to the literary effect achieved in the extract
* **2.5** identifies, explains and analyses the cultural, historical and religious references of an extract

Note – a sample task for Catullus poem (Catullus 50, 7-17) is located on the [Stage 6 Latin Continuers page](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/languages/s6/latin/latin-continuers). As this is in the public domain, it is provided as a sample only. Please develop your own task on a different Catullus poem, using the sample as a guide.

# Syllabus links

Students are required to identify, explain and analyse specific stylistic features and literary terms (listed 8.7 of the [Latin Stage 6 Continuers Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-languages/continuers/latin-continuers-syllabus) and to identify, explain and analyse grammatical features in the extracts (listed in 8.6.1).

## Outcomes

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| Outcome | A student: |
| 1.1 | applies knowledge of vocabulary and grammar |
| 1.2 | infers the meaning of words or phrases from common patterns of word formation and from context |
| 1.3 | translates into clear English using words appropriate to the context |
| 2.1 | identifies, explains and analyses grammatical features |
| 2.2 | identifies, explains and analyses stylistic features and their contribution to the literary effect achieved in the extract |
| 2.4 | identifies, explains and analyses the context of an extract |
| 2.5 | identifies, explains and analyses the cultural, historical and religious references of an extract |
| 3.1 | identifies and discusses Roman ideas, beliefs and arguments as revealed in the prescribed texts |
| 3.2 | identifies and discusses the structure and literary qualities of the prescribed texts |
| 3.3 | identifies and discusses specified thematic focus areas in the prescribed texts |

Outcomes from [Latin Continuers Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-languages/continuers/latin-continuers-syllabus) © 2015 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

# Suggested resources

* Student edition of the poems, for example Oxford Latin Reader
* <https://blogs.dickinson.edu/catullus/page/5/>
* [Benjamin Johnson’s Latin tutorial YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC30yV4OSzNd_uDJ9c1OFXBg) (teachers to advise students of relevant videos)
* Teacher reference books to introduce students to related metalanguage, for example:
  + K Quinn, ed: Catullus: The poems Macmillan
  + K Quinn, Approaches to Catullus, Cambridge
  + TP Wiseman: Catullus and his World, Cambridge

# Unit starter

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| Syllabus content and indicative hours | Suggested teaching, learning and assessment activities | Registration |
| Introduction  Approximately 1 hour (+ homework) | Introduce students to the world of literature by showing the 3-minute clip on [Understanding poetry – Dead Poets Society](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=LjHORRHXtyI) and brainstorm the following questions: What is poetry? What is the power of poetry? What is so special about poetry? What can we learn from poetry? Students make notes of key points.  Introduce students to the world of Gaius Valerius Catullus with the 3-minute clip [A thousand kisses – Catullus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=bDLfZgTNw1k). As a class, discuss why this poem has been translated so many times and transcends time. Is the theme universal? Who was Lesbia? Students make notes of key points.  At home, students conduct their own research: Who was Catullus? Who was he influenced by? What are some of his poems? What was his social background? What was his literary output? Share and discuss answers as a class. |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 1 (dedication to Cornelius)  Approximately 3 indicative hours (+ homework) | Read the poem Catullus 1 aloud to students, and then guide students through the structure of Catullus’ preferred hendecasyllabic metre, with an introduction to the distinction between short and long vowels and heavy and light syllables, and the general conventions of Latin scansion. Introduce students to the poetic convention of elision (*pumic(e) expolitum*) and its importance in scansion and poetic effects.  With a grammar and vocabulary scaffold, students explore the poem Catullus 1. Review the conventions of the Roman patron-client relationship through class discussion. Ask guided questions to ensure comprehension and to encourage appreciation of literary features evident in the poem, for example: How is the patron-client relationship reflected in the poem? How does Catullus describe his libellus? Why does he choose these adjectives?  Introduce students to the concept of diminutive nouns, and the example from the poem (*libellum*), and the role they play in Catullus’ poems.  In small groups, students take turns to read aloud different sections of the poem, developing their own beat to support the correct use of metre, for example a rap or tapping on the desk.  Students develop their own translation at home, for class discussion and teacher feedback (AaL/AfL).  Students listen to Scott Verna’s reading and translation of, and response to, Catullus 1 at <https://blogs.dickinson.edu/catullus/page/5/> and add any new learnings to their notes on the poem (AaL).  As a class, discuss the successful elements of Verna’s presentation and co-create a model for a short response to an exam-style analysis question. For example: Explain the effect of one of the sound effects in the poem.  Provide students with a range of questions which explore the literary features of the poem, for example: Quote an example of line framing. What effect does it have? In pairs, students exchange responses and provide each other with feedback (AaL). Discuss any challenges as a class. |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 13 (invitation to Fabullus)  Approximately 3 indicative hours (+ homework) | Show images of the Roman *cena* (for example [Culture: Meals in Ancient Rome](http://www.empirerome.com/wordpress/?page_id=599)) and ask the following discussion questions: What do you see? What surprises you? Why have these feasts been immortalised in books and films? What do you think was the role these feasts played in Roman society?  With a grammar and vocabulary scaffold, students explore the poem Catullus 13. Ask guided questions to ensure comprehension and encourage appreciation of literary features, for example: How does the invitation to dinner differ to a modern invitation? Who is the poem addressed to?  Scan the first line of the poem on the board to remind students of the hendecasyllabic metre. Provide each student with 1-2 lines from the poem. Students scan their line/s on the board, under the model, to demonstrate their understanding of the basics of scansion, with teacher feedback (AfL).  As a class, compare Catullus 1 and 13 – what are some of the common elements in lyric poetry? Create a shareable class list, for students to add to throughout their study of the poems in this unit.  Using <http://www.legonium.com/catullus-13/vn56a96emvl46bnnta4mhhv6w9ec0z>, students develop their own translation at home, then check against a teacher-provided translation (AaL).  Students read some modern adaptations of the poem, for example by William Morris and Frank Copley. As a class, discuss the elements of a good translation. In a think-pair-share activity, students discuss which of the adaptations more closely matches the mood and content of the original poem, with regard to word choice, register and metrical features.  Ask students: Which parts of the poem may make the addressee smile or wonder? Introduce students to the literary convention of the ‘unexpected ending’ (*paraprosdokian)* and its appearances in this poem (*cenam*, *aranearum*, *nasum*).  Provide students with a range of questions which explore the literary features of the poem, for example: Comment on the effect of repetition (clauses, individual words and the use of polysyndeton). In pairs, students exchange responses and provide each other feedback (AaL) then submit final responses for teacher feedback (AfL). |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 50 (lament to Licinius Calvus)  Approximately 4 indicative hours (+ homework) | Explain the political and literary life of Gaius Licinius Calvus, the probable addressee of this poem, in particular his role as one of the *novi poetae* of whom Catullus is the only poet with a substantial corpus still extant.  Guide students through the meaning of the poem, dealing with points of grammar, vocabulary and allusions (for example Nemesis) as they arise. Students make their own annotations on a copy of the poem.  At home, students listen to [Catullus 50 (with hendecasyllabic metre exaggerated) clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=0SJN3LIYvI4), then scan 3 lines of the poem and submit for feedback (AfL).  Provide each student with 1-2 (different) translations of Roman love poetry from Catullus, Ovid and Propertius, with questions to guide their understanding of the conventions, for example: How is love portrayed in the poem? How can love make you feel? What metaphors are used to convey the symptoms of love?  Introduce students to the subversions of these conventions in this poem, with particular reference to the imagery of fire (*incensus*), madness (*indomitus furore*), and illness/insomnia (*defessa, semimortua, dolorem*).  Provide students with a range of questions which explore the literary features of the poem, for example: How does the deliberate archaism *caveto* underscore the subversion of the concept of Nemesis? Students share their responses for class discussion and feedback (AaL and AfL), for example through [Google Jamboard](https://jamboard.google.com/).  (Note – a sample assessment of learning task for Catullus 50 is available on the [Stage 6 Latin Continuers](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/languages/s6/latin/latin-continuers) page. This could be provided to students as a practice task, with feedback, as assessment for learning. This would support students to build their examination techniques and practise their timing of responses.) |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 51 (adaptation of Sappho 31)  Approximately 4 indicative hours (+ homework) | Play [Catullus, carmen 51](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqDmkb5zu_0) and discuss the differences in metre between this poem and the previous poems studied. Introduce students to Sapphic metre and its division into stanzas.  Guide students through the meaning of the poem, dealing with vocabulary, key points of grammar and literary features as they arise, for example diction in stanza 2. Students make their own annotations on a copy of the poem.  Students compare a translation of Sappho 31 to this poem. As a class, discuss: How has Catullus played with Sappho 31, changing it in a number of significant ways? Which of his changes might reflect his society, his class or his poetic purposes?  Introduce students to the Latin convention of a literary pseudonym for the poet’s beloved, for example, Ovid’s Corinna and Propertius’ Cynthia.  Students examine the conventions of Roman love poetry as exemplified in the poem, with particular reference to the physical manifestations of being in love (stanza 3).  At home students research 2-3 modern adaptations of the poem and make notes about the changes they observe, for discussion in class. Students identify words and phrases which may inform their own translations.  Students finalise their own translation of the poem and analyse the poet’s use of diction throughout the poem, and submit for feedback (AfL). |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 5 (demand for kisses from Clodia)  Approximately 3 indicative hours (+ homework) | Students view [Morgan Freeman reads Catullus V](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR1Yiy6GSAf8W2TTZLB5G-NPwUdyEfUvD1MLMf173rqMPuqAXNe3AT7OP8k&v=Lp4g-CYjYnE&feature=youtu.be) (which includes a translation).  Guide students through the meaning of the poem, dealing with vocabulary, key points of grammar and literary features as they arise, for example imagery relating to banking/accounting. Students make their own annotations on a copy of the poem.  Show students an [ancient mosaic image](http://omeka.wustl.edu/omeka/files/original/f936ca2d72e06fa4a8622aa4f9e6857a.jpg) of the ‘evil eye’ and explain how it relates to Roman superstition. Ask students to identify other Roman values in the poem, for example the significance of a person’s reputation.  Students make a list of the subjunctive forms in the poem (*vivamus, sciamus, sciat* and so on), and identify which use of the subjunctive each one represents. As a class, discuss how the second exhortation (*amemus*) develops the idea in the first one (*vivamus*).  Students explore a modern variation of the poem, ["Kiss the Girl" in Latin – *Basia* (The Little Mermaid) Disney Songs in Latin](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okGVEdoLMo8), discussing vocabulary choices made for the lyrics.  Students develop their own translation at home, then check against a teacher-provided translation (AaL).  Students draft their response to teacher-developed questions about the poem in an online collaborative document, and then share their document with a classmate for feedback, for example [TAG feedback](https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/:p:/s/DLS/EVQGbTuQjJVPn34_eBthJ0kB_TGDAg0FheGb3DdU_LAhDw?e=rOmbtQ&clearCache=e6b44899-f431-8fab-b8bb-e11d2010ba46). (AaL)  To revise parts of speech and vocabulary in the context of Catullus, students complete a [mad lib activity](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/languages/stage-6/latin/mad-lib-valentine.docx) (AfL). |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 3 (lament for Clodia’s sparrow)  Approximately 3 indicative hours (+ homework) | Guide students through the meaning of the poem, dealing with vocabulary and key points of grammar only; students will explore literary features on their own in the game which follows. Read the poem aloud, with plenty of expression, to support students in the game. Students make their own annotations on a copy of the poem. Include references to Roman beliefs about, and attitudes towards, the underworld and pet animals.  To assess where students are up to in their learning, students play ‘Spot the literary feature’. Allow 5 minutes for students to find 3 literary features (for example exclamation, onomatopoeia, a diminutive and so on). After the 5 minutes is up, discuss responses as a class. Award 2 points for each feature identified by only one student and one point for each feature identified by 2 or more students (AfL).  Students make a list of the pronominal forms in the poem (*quem, ipsam, sese, vobis* and so on), and state the type of pronoun for each.  Students discuss the purpose of the poem in the context of the affair between Catullus and Clodia. For example: Are we meant to take the poem seriously, as a lament? At what stage of the relationship would the poem have been written? Was the poem meant to be private, or did Catullus intend it for a wider audience?  At home, students view [Catullus 3 Overview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=4XiV00U7qhE), adding additional annotations to their copy of the poem.  Students translate and analyse the literary and grammatical features of this poem and discuss as a class. For example: Identify one of the diminutives used in the poem and explain its effect. Explain how the poet uses his mythological allusion to Orcus in this poem. Citing examples from the whole poem, show how Catullus has carefully chosen words to evoke different aspects of the relationship between the puella and the passer. Students swap their translations and literary analyses with 2 other students and provide constructive [peer feedback, for example using 2 stars and a wish](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/549) (AaL). |  |
| Consolidation of learning – class-created revision tool  Approximately 1 hour (+ homework) | To support students to revise for the final assessment of learning task, students will create a class smash book, with a smash doodle for each poem – Google ‘smash doodle Latin’ to see a range of sample layouts and approaches. Prior to the lesson, create for students a sample smash doodle for Catullus 1. As a class explore the features you have included in your sample.  Divide the remaining poems studied evenly amongst students for them to create their own smash doodles – a maximum of one A4 page per poem. Students design their page, then the pages are collated into a class smash book and shared with the class, as a revision tool. For each poem, students include:   * the poem number, as a heading * their own evocative title for the poem, as a sub-heading * a short summary of the poem, including theme/s * an image which summarises the poem, or a link to a song/YouTube clip * 3 key vocabulary items in the poem, with a small image or phrase which acts as a mnemonic for each item * 3 key literary features featured in the poem, with a small image or short sentence which explains the impact of each feature * 2 reflective comments (for example ‘It surprised me that … ‘ or ‘I learned that … ‘ or write your own).   (Allow at least one hour of class time for students to work on their smash doodle, and then distribute the final product at least a week prior to the final assessment task.) |  |
| Students read, understand, analyse literary features and translate Catullus 11 (farewell to Clodia, via Furius and Aurelius)  Approximately 6 indicative hours (+ homework) | At home, students view [Roman Politics and Poetry: Cicero and Catullus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1-C5mbV9Lk) which provides an analysis of the cultural, historical and religious references in Catullus 11, to prepare them for a class discussion of the poem. Students write down 5 things they found interesting or which they learnt about Catullus in his society.  Guide students through the meaning of the poem, dealing with vocabulary, key points of grammar and literary features as they arise. While you are unpacking the poem as a class, display a map (preferably a topographical map) of Europe, the Middle East and India. As the students explore the poem, ask them to come up to the board and label the places or homelands of people referenced in the poem: Indos (the Indians), Hyrcanos (Hyrcanians), Arabes (Arabs), Sagas (Sacae), Parthos (Parthians), Nilus (Nile River), Alpes (Alps), Rhenum (Rhine River) and Britannos (Britons). Students make their own annotations on a copy of the poem.  Discuss the purpose of the poem in marking the end of the affair with Clodia, for example: Why does Catullus entrust the ‘message’ to Furius and Aurelius? Why does he feel unable to address Lesbia directly? What is the purpose of all the geographical references in the poem? What does the poem reveal about Catullus’ mood, and his plans for the future (if any)? Why has Catullus used the same Sapphic metre as was used in Poem 51?  Students translate and analyse the literary and grammatical features of this poem, answering a range of questions, for example: Identify words which emphasise the exceptional nature of people and places mentioned in the poem. How did your reading of the last stanza change how you interpreted the remainder of the poem? Explain your answer with reference to the text.  Students share their responses for class discussion and feedback (AaL and AfL), for example through [Google Jamboard](https://jamboard.google.com/).  As a class, view and discuss all of (or excerpts from) the DVD of a dress rehearsal of I, Clodia, from the CLTA Drama Festival 2002 (available via the [CLTA website).](https://www.cltainc.org/)  Students complete an assessment of learning task. |  |
| Coda  Approximately 1.5 indicative hours | As a class, view and discuss the YouTube clip (12:24 min) about [Clodia and Catullus in Forum Romanum: S20 Odi et Amo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj_x0GGOVYs) (with [script](http://nle.org/pdf/RomanForum/twenty.pdf)).  Provide students with a selection of Catullus’ other short poems to explore for pleasure, for example 70, 72, 85, 109 and/or 77. |  |