

WHY LATIN?

WHY THE GREAT BOOKS?



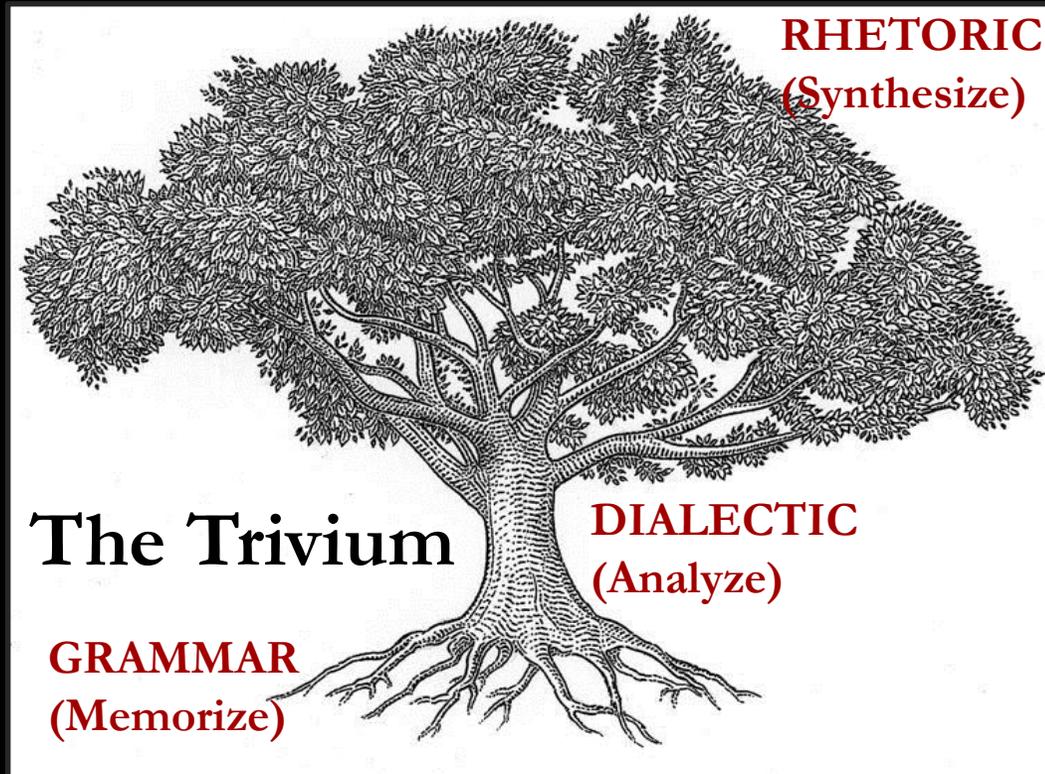
THE
COVENANT
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL

EST. 1993

WHY UNIFORMS?

WHY HARKNESS?

CLASSICAL EDUCATION SUMMARY



Classical education provides age-appropriate teaching based on a student's natural progression and cognitive development

Grammar Stage (Grades K-4) focuses on mastering the foundations for all subjects ("concrete thought")

Dialectic/Logic Stage (Grades 5-8) emphasizes students analytical ability as they start questioning the world around them ("analytical thought")

Rhetoric Stage (Grades 9-12) focuses on teaching students to analyze and synthesize information and then clearly articulate their thoughts and ideas

WHY LATIN?

- ▶ Helps students better master the English language
 - Between 60% of English words are derived from Latin
 - Over 80-90% of English polysyllabic words are derived from Latin
 - Students who take Latin score 160-175 points higher on the SAT (1600 SAT)
 - Helps students become better spellers and have more advanced vocabularies
 - Study in Philadelphia showed that elementary school students in 4th, 5th and 6th who studied Latin were almost one year higher on the state vocabulary test than those who had not studied Latin [The Latin Advantage]
 - Since so many words are derived from Latin, it better prepares students for certain professions like law, medicine, science, music, etc.
- ▶ Enhances students mastery of English grammar
 - Teaches students to understand the importance of accuracy and precision due to the structure of the language (declensions, conjugations, word's ending, etc.) so students read and write with better clarity in English

WHY LATIN?

▶ Enhances students mastery of English grammar

- “the study of Latin does foster precision in the use of words. Since one reads Latin closely and carefully, often word by word, this focuses the student’s mind on individual words and their usage. It has been noticed that people who have studied Latin in school usually write quite good English prose.” - William Harris Professor at Middlebury College
- Study in District of Columbia revealed that elementary school students who studied Latin were 5 months ahead of those who had no foreign language in reading skills [The Latin Advantage]

▶ Latin requires analytical and critical thinking skills which students then apply to other subjects, improving mental acuity

- Study in Indianapolis revealed that 6th grade students who studied Latin were 9 months ahead of those who had not studied Latin in their math problem solving abilities [The Latin Advantage]
- The study of Latin helps to decrease the effort needed in other subjects

WHY LATIN?

- ▶ Improves students ability to learn other foreign languages
 - Latin is the foundation for all other Romance languages (i.e., Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian)
- ▶ Assists students in understanding the foundation and history of Western civilization
 - Studying Latin does not occur in isolation but rather by learning the culture
 - Allows students to read ancient Western literature in its original language and to better understand Western civilization
 - Latin was the language of the academics and thinkers of the west so many great texts are written in Latin even after the Roman empire fell

WHY UNIFORMS?

- ▶ Reduces distractions and increases learning by creating common ground for all students
 - Students can concentrate on their academic subjects instead of focusing on fashion trends and what other students are wearing
 - “When all students are wearing the same outfit, they are less concerned about how they look and how they fit in with their peers; thus, they can concentrate on their schoolwork.” [National Association of Secondary School Principals]
 - Ohio study of 64 schools revealed improved attendance, graduation and proficiency rates in schools whose students wore uniforms
 - Study by University of Houston showed that girls’ language scores increased by 3% after uniforms were implemented
- ▶ Encourages other ways to express oneself
 - Rather than suppressing individuality, uniforms actually enhance it
 - Instead of self-expression based on what students wear, students can better demonstrate their identity through their personality and creative talents

WHY UNIFORMS?

▶ Improve our culture and school spirit

- Helps unify our student community and foster school spirit since students wear school colors
- Study of 1,000 Texas middle school students revealed that “students in uniform reported significantly more positive perceptions of belonging in their school community than reported by students in the standard dress group.”
- Removes the competition out of dress, which tends to diminish bullying based on clothing and appearance

▶ Enhances security in the school

- Long Beach Unified School District (1994) - decrease in the number of assaults (34%), assault with a weapon (50%), fights (50%), sex offenses (74%), robbery (65%), weapons (52%), possession of drugs (69%)
- Statistics corroborated by many other schools who have changed to uniforms
- Helps identify intruders in the school, keep track of students on field trips, and prevent students from concealing items through baggy clothing

WHY UNIFORMS?

▶ Other

- Simplifies morning routines and morning arguments
- Improves punctuality to school
- Reduces clothing costs

WHY THE GREAT BOOKS?

▶ Mastering the Masters

- Declared “great” by a consensus of informed critics over a long period of time
- Enduring value, proven over time
- They are “great” because they contain great ideas that have given birth to a great and ongoing conversation about what is beautiful, good, and true
- Often called The Classics

▶ *Ad fontes* - Classical, Christian schools value original sources in their entirety rather than textbooks

- Prevents students from reading “scrubbed” works that have already been interpreted by modern scholars, guarding against the re-writing of history
- Also challenges students who do not just have the “simplified” versions of books, improving their mental acuity

WHY THE GREAT BOOKS?

- ▶ Rich in content and discussion allowing students to better understand what shapes their thoughts and beliefs
 - Many of our belief systems are based on society, so should they change if society changes?
 - Examples - our belief in truth, love, democracy, evil
 - Strengthens our values whether we agree or disagree with the classic and helps develop character in our students
 - Keeps the spirit of inquiry and curiosity alive
 - “To put an end to the spirit of inquiry that has characterized the West, it is not necessary to burn the books. All we have to do is leave them unread for a few generations.”

WHY THE GREAT BOOKS?

- ▶ Provides valuable insight into the past, present, and future
 - Brings the great ideas of history alive
 - Allows students to see the themes that endure and those that change so that we can learn from our pasts
 - By studying the past, we better understand the present
 - Allows students to interact directly with some of the greatest minds that have lived
 - So students gain wisdom that has been passed down through generations
 - Also challenges students intellectually because they are having to engage with the past

WHY CERTAIN TEACHING METHODS?

THE HARKNESS METHOD

- ▶ To make learning more engaging, Covenant uses the Harkness Method
- ▶ Originated in 1931 at The Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire
 - Brain child of Edward Harkness who wanted to change the way students were taught
 - Utilizes an oval table so that a teacher has eye contact with all the students
- ▶ The teacher and student engage in Socratic dialogue, developing an in-depth understanding of the subject
 - Utilizes the “Harkness Table” as a means to foster collaborative learning in students, compelling all students to participate
 - Intentional, guided process of directed dialogue and careful listening

WHY CERTAIN TEACHING METHODS?

THE HARKNESS METHOD

- ▶ Ensures mastery of concepts by actively engaging students throughout the class time
 - Encourages active learning among students since students cannot remain passive in class
 - Emphasizes the mastery of skills versus mere memorization of facts and data, which allows students to better synthesize material versus memorization
 - Helps our students to not only learn facts, but to think well and articulate their thoughts in a gracious, cohesive manner
 - Fared Zakaria, international affairs expert, believes that America's edge in education derives from students thinking about facts and not merely memorizing them

WHY CERTAIN TEACHING METHODS?

THE THAYER METHOD

- ▶ To ensure mastery of mathematical concepts, Covenant uses the Thayer Method
- ▶ Originated at West Point in 1817
- ▶ Involves students presenting problems on white boards and explaining the problems to their peers

WHY CERTAIN TEACHING METHODS?

THE THAYER METHOD

- ▶ Ensures mastery of core mathematic concepts by actively engaging students throughout the class time
 - Keeps students engaged because they are actively participating in learning versus passively sitting in class and listening
 - Allows teachers to gain insight into students' thought processes
 - Develops effective communications skills as students have to explain how they arrived at a solution
 - Enhances students' leadership abilities as they may be asked to help a classmate
 - Fosters cooperation/team work in the classroom as students learn from one another
 - Ensures students gain true conceptual understanding of mathematics

QUESTIONS?

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