*Otium*

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[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Getty_Villa_exterior.jpg)

[Getty Villa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getty_Villa) representing life at otium (leisure) of an ancient Roman villa

*Otium*, a [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin" \o "Latin) abstract term, has a variety of meanings, including leisure time in which a person can enjoy eating, playing, resting, contemplation and academic endeavors. It sometimes, but not always, relates to a time in a person's [retirement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retirement" \o "Retirement) after previous service to the public or private sector, opposing "active public life". *Otium* can be a temporary time of leisure, that is sporadic. It can have intellectual, virtuous or immoral implications. It originally had the idea of withdrawing from one's daily business (*negotium*) or affairs to engage in activities that were considered to be artistically valuable or enlightening (*i.e.* speaking, writing, philosophy). It had particular meaning to businessmen, diplomats, philosophers and poets.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium" \l "cite_note-Petrarch_Otium-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-2)

## Etymology and origin

In ancient Roman culture *otium* was a military concept as its first Latin usage. This was in Ennius' *Iphigenia.*[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-3)

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| *Otio qui nescit uti* *plus negoti habet quam cum est negotium in negotio ;* *nam cui quod agat institutumst non ullo negotio* *id agit, id studet, ibi mentem atque animum delectat suum:* *otioso in otio animus nescit quid velit* *Hoc idem est ; em neque domi nunc nos nec militiae sumus;* *imus huc, hinc illuc; cum illuc ventum est, ire illinc lubet.* *Incerte errat animus, praeterpropter vitam vivitur.* [[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-4) | He who does not know how to use leisure has more of work than when there is work in work. For to whom a task has been set, he does the work, desires it, and delights his own mind and intellect: in leisure, a mind does not know what it wants. The same is true (of us); we are neither at home nor in the battlefield; we go here and there, and wherever there is a movement, we are there too. The mind wanders unsure, except in that life is lived.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-5) |

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_soldiers_at_rest.jpg)

Representation of ancient Roman soldiers at rest

According to historian Carl Deroux in his work "Studies in Latin literature and Roman history" *otium* appears for the first time in a chorus of Ennius' Iphigenia.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-6) Ennius' first use of the term *otium* around 190 BC showed the restlessness and boredom during a reprieve from war and was termed *otium negotiosum* (free time to do what one wanted) and *otium otiosum* (idle wasteless free time).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Langis2-7) [Aulus Gellius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aulus_Gellius), while discussing the word *praeterpropter* ("more or less") quotes a fragment of [Ennius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ennius)'s *Iphigenia*, which contrasts *otium* with *negotium* repeatedly.[[A]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-8) Ennius imagined the emotions of Agamemnon's soldiers at Aulus, that while in the field and not at war and not allowed to go home, as "more or less" living

## Synonyms

*Otium* carried with it many different meanings (including but not limited to time, chance, opportunity), depending on the time period or the philosophers involved in determining the concept.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)

### Positive sense- Synonyms of positive connotations are:

* *quies* - rest, repose, relief from toil.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *requies* - rest, repose, rest from labor, a hobby.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *tranquilitas* - tranquility, calm, quiet.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *peace* - as a state or condition of freedom from external enemies.[[90]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Maclardy195-96)
* *pax* - to pacify or appease, as the outcome of diplomatic conference and agreement with an enemy.[[90]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Maclardy195-96)

### Negative sense- Synonyms of negative connotations are:

* *inhonestum otium* - dishonorable leisure, idle self-indulgence leisure.[[82]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Balsdon47-87)
* *desidia* - slackness, idleness.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *inertia* - sloth, idleness, indolence.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *ignavia* - sloth, idleness, faint-heartedness.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-Sadlek33-11)
* *desidiosissimum otium* - a sluggard's free time, he that fears labor; a man careless to attend to his duty first.[[91]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otium#cite_note-97)