





# LATIN MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

An Introduction

by

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# Introduction

# Organizing Information

Take a look at the following pile of information:

*Rome, Giving, Girl, Book, Reading, Boy, Shop, Yesterday, Funny.*

Encountered in this form, the individual words are recognizable, but their relation remains unclear. We cannot tell who is acting, who is affected, what is being given to whom, or how elements such as place and time come together. Was there a boy in Rome yesterday, giving a funny book to read to a girl in a shop? Or perhaps there was a Roman boy in a shop who was given a book by a funny girl that she had just read yesterday.

This is where syntax (from Greek σύνταξις, “arrangement” or “putting together”) comes into play. Syntax is the system by which languages organize words into structured expressions and thereby make relations between elements intelligible. Even the simplest sentence involves the coordination of multiple elements: we need to identify participants, establish relations, locate events in time or space, and so on.

Every language could form a sentence that brings the information above into a meaningful connection. They differ in how they accomplish this task (some, like English, rely heavily on word order and particles, others, like Latin, more on inflection), but the underlying problem is the same: how to make relations between participants, actions, and circumstances intelligible to others. In order to understand how syntax achieves this, it is useful to distinguish and name the different elements of a sentence and the roles they play. By breaking sentences down into their constituent parts, we can see how languages assign functions to words and how these functions interact to produce coherent meaning. The following is a brief overview of some core elements of a well-formed (that is: grammatically correct) sentence:

## The Elements of a Sentence

It is actually surprisingly difficult to define what a “sentence” is from a linguistic perspective. Many grammars count every complete unit of communication as a sentence. If you asked me what I had for lunch, I could just answer “Salad.” and that would be a sentence. This is not very helpful for grammatical analyses. We will therefore mostly use the term “clause” instead.

### Clause

A clause is defined as an expression that contains a main verb (called “Predicate”).<sup>1</sup> Most clauses also contain some other words or phrases. Those other elements are either required by the verb (those we call “Arguments”) or they are just additional things that could also be left out (those we call Satellites).

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<sup>1</sup> In this introduction, we will only look at clauses with finite verb-forms, for constructions with non-finite verbs, see the respective chapter.

## Predicate

A grammatical clause is organized around a predicate, usually expressed by a finite verb, which establishes what is being asserted. The predicate determines which other elements are required for the sentence to be complete. These required elements are called the arguments of the verb.

## Arguments

### Subject

Most predicates have at least one argument, the subject, the noun or pronoun with which the verb agrees and from which the statement is made. Some predicates express a complete meaning with only a subject (e.g., *puella currit*, "the girl runs"). Here, nothing further is needed to complete the statement. In Latin, the subject can also simply be implied by the verb itself (or rather be indicated by the verbs morphology).

### Objects

Other predicates describe a relation that extends beyond the subject and therefore require additional arguments to complete their meaning. Such predicates are called transitive (from Latin *transire*, "to go/pass over"), because their meaning "passes over" from the subject to another element in the sentence. E.g., *puer librum legit*, "the boy reads the book." Here, the boy is the first argument (the subject), but his action is not just any reading, but it specifically "goes over" to something else, namely the book. This additional argument is called an object. Without the object, such a predicate would be incomplete or would at least express a different meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Different verbs have different numbers and types of objects in different contexts. Some involve only a single object, while others involve two distinct participants in addition to the subject. These participants do not all stand in the same relation to the predicate. Often Latin distinguishes between direct and indirect objects, assigning them different case forms according to their function in the sentence (usually accusative case for direct objects and dative case for indirect objects). The property of how many and what kind of arguments a verb takes is called its "valency."

As a general guideline, the direct object denotes the entity most immediately implicated in the relation expressed by the verb (in *puella librum legit*, "the girl reads the book," "the book" is the direct object of the action of "reading"). The indirect object typically denotes a recipient, beneficiary, addressee, or goal (in *puella puerō librum dat*, "the girl gives the boy a book," "the book" is still the thing directly affected by the action of "giving", while "the boy" is now indirectly affected; he is not the one given, but he is still part of the whole action, as a recipient).

English often expresses relations corresponding to Latin indirect objects by means of prepositional phrases rather than by grammatical case (e.g. "to someone" or "for someone"). In the example above, we could also say "the girl gives the book to the boy."

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<sup>2</sup> The term "object" is somewhat intuitive, but can be misleading since it does not necessarily have to be a "thing." On the other hand, not everything that is an actual "object" in the real world would be a grammatical object in a clause (e.g. "the hammer" in "I put a nail into the wall with a hammer" is not an object).

Latin, by contrast, commonly marks these relations directly through case endings, without the use of a preposition. However, we can still see some relics of this in English pronouns. In a sentence like "the girl gives him the book", the indirect object is now marked ("him" instead of "he"). The same is true for the direct object: "the girl sees him."

Because languages differ in how they structure these relations, Latin and English do not always align. Verbs such as *persuādēre* (*alicui*) or *appropinquāre* (*alicui*) involve an indirect object in Latin, even though English commonly expresses the same idea with a direct object ("to persuade someone," "to approach someone"). In such cases, the difference lies not in meaning, but in how the relation is grammatically expressed by different verbs with different valencies. A technical term for "wanting" a certain case or a certain other construction in a certain situation is "to govern." One can say "the verb *appropinquare* governs the dative." Often, when our English feeling would lead us astray, the valency of Latin verbs has to be simply memorized.

While the distinction between direct and indirect objects is most commonly realized through the accusative and dative, Latin also has verbs that govern objects in other cases. Certain predicates take an ablative or, more rarely, a genitive object.

These required parts (the predicates and its arguments) together form a fully functioning clause in and of themselves. We can call this core part a "nucleus." Everything else is optional.

## Satellites

Beyond these core elements, clauses often include additional components that modify or further specify the statement without being required by the verb itself. These include adverbial expressions of time (*heri*, "yesterday"), place (*Romae*, "in Rome"), manner (*celeriter*, "quickly"), cause, or purpose. Such elements situate the action of the clause more precisely but can usually be omitted without making the sentence ungrammatical or changing the meaning of the verb. This is why we will call them "satellites": they are not an integral part of the nucleus of the sentence but just float around it and add to its character.

## Attributes

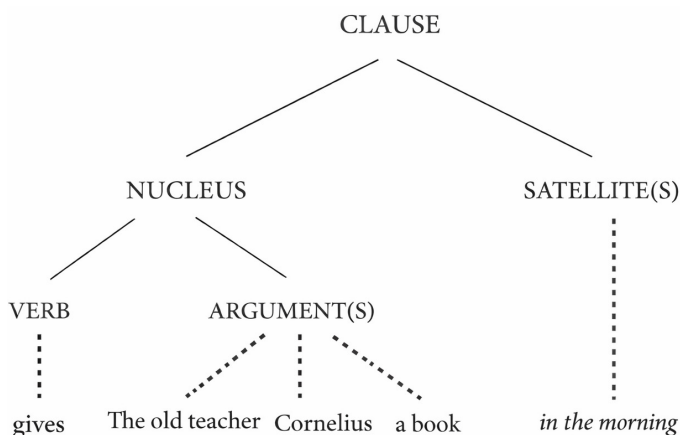
All nouns may be further specified by attributes, such as adjectives, genitives, or appositions, which modify a noun by describing, delimiting, or identifying it (like *vir fortis* – "a strong man," *liber poetae* – "the poet's book," or *Cicero consul* – "The consul Cicero"). Attributes can be used for all nouns, be it in the nucleus or the satellites.

## Phrase

Another term you will often hear in this grammar is "phrase." A phrase is a combination of at least two words that function together as a unit. A very common type of phrase is the noun phrase. It consists of a noun and something that modifies or specifies it, for example an attribute such as a possessive pronoun. Take the phrase "my friend." It is one unit and the whole thing can be used in different syntactical functions: "my friend is great" (subject), "I see my friend" (direct object), "I give something to my friend" (indirect object).

We could therefore theoretically also call this an “object phrase” or a “subject phrase,” but the important part is that we want to keep the elements of a phrase together when we analyze the syntax of a sentence. Otherwise, we will have dangling parts left over at the end.

We can exemplify what we have so far with a diagram. Take the sentence “The old teacher gives Cornelius a book in the morning.” It could look like this:



We have the nucleus with the necessary elements the( predicate and its arguments): one subject (“the teacher”) and two objects (“the book” as the direct, and “Cornelius” as the indirect object). And we have a satellite: in this case, a description of time (“in the morning”). One of the arguments is further described by an attribute (“old”). The words “The old teacher” form a phrase, which, as a whole, functions as the subject.

## Dependent/Subordinate Clauses

So far, we have tacitly limited our description to main clauses. These are clauses that can, in principle, form a complete grammatical unit on their own. However, such clauses can also be expanded by adding different types of subordinate clauses. Subordinate clauses largely share the same internal structure as main clauses: they are built around a predicate and can contain their own arguments as well as optional satellites. The difference is that they are grammatically integrated into another clause (or into one of its elements) rather than standing independently.

Take a sentence like:

“I turned the lights on when it got dark outside.”

The first clause is the main clause. “I turned the lights on” is a complete clause on its own. The second clause is subordinate to it: “when it got dark outside” is grammatically dependent and does not usually appear as a complete sentence in isolation.

The same is true for something like:

“I saw the dog, that had big ears.”

The first part is the main clause and can stand on its own, whereas the subordinate clause “that had big ears” cannot.

This is a practical first categorization. This is a practical first categorization. However, it can become less straightforward once we consider the different syntactic roles subordinate clauses can take. A temporal clause such as “when it got dark outside” is an optional satellite. A relative clause such as “that had big ears” functions as an attribute.

Many subordinate clauses as a whole, however, function as arguments required by the predicate of the main clause. Consider the following two:

“That you are coming tomorrow is great.” (subject)

“I know that you are coming tomorrow.” (object)

In such cases, the subordinate clause is not merely an additional satellite or modifier but fills a structural slot in the main clause. Technically, the main clauses in these examples cannot stand alone (or at least not without changing the meaning of the predicate frame).

For that reason, this grammar will usually not use the words “main” and “subordinate”, but rather “independent” and “dependent” clauses. In all examples above, the subordinate clause was “dependent” on the main clause (or a noun phrase within it), while the main clause was not dependent on the subordinate clauses.

Non-finite verb forms can also form clause-like structures, and some grammars therefore describe them as (embedded) clauses as well. In this grammar, however, non-finite units will be referred to as constructions (e.g. infinitive constructions, participial constructions), in order to keep the term clause reserved for finite structures.

Latin indicates many of these relationships not by word order, but by case, agreement, and verbal morphology. Understanding how the elements of a sentence relate to one another therefore requires close attention to their grammatical form as well as to the meaning of the predicate that governs them.

This grammar follows the common practice of giving the entire Latin morphology first, and then demonstrating how this works in practice.

# **Latin Morphology**



# The Noun

Latin nouns change their form depending on case and number. Each noun has six cases and two numbers, which in principle yields a paradigm of twelve distinct forms (though the actual forms can sometimes overlap). In addition, every noun has a fixed grammatical gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter), which determines how it agrees with other words (especially adjectives).

Nouns do not all form their paradigms in the same way. Instead, they fall into several groups called declensions, each with its own characteristic set of endings and patterns. For this reason, the following charts are organized by declension: each chart shows the twelve forms that nouns of that group can take.

How to find out which declension a noun belongs to:

To find out which declension a noun belongs to you have to look at the genitive singular. This is the only form that is distinct in every declension! So, if you know that form you also know the declension:

- ae** for 1. declension
- ī** for 2. declension
- is** for 3. declension
- ūs** for 4. declension
- eī** for 5. declension

The paradigms in this grammar do not list the vocative separately. In most nouns, the vocative is identical to the nominative; only a small number of forms differ (most notably second-declension masculine nouns in *-us*, which have a vocative in *-e*, and a few in *-ius*, which have a vocative in *-i*).

## First Declension (Gen. Sg. in *-ae*)

In the first declension, most words end in *-a* and are feminine (exceptions are *poeta*, *-ae*, m. *incola*, *ae*, m., *agricola*, *-ae*, m., as well as some proper names in *-a*).

porta, -ae, f.

|      | Singular | Plural    |
|------|----------|-----------|
| Nom. | port-a   | port-ae   |
| Gen. | port-ae  | port-ārum |
| Dat. | port-ae  | port-īs   |
| Acc. | port-am  | port-ās   |
| Abl. | port-ā   | port-īs   |

## Second Declension (Gen. Sg. -ī)

The second declension is somewhat more complex. It comprises masculine and neuter words.

### Masculine:

The masculine nouns mostly end in -us or in a consonantal stem:

hortus, -ī, m.

|      | Singular | Plural    |
|------|----------|-----------|
| Nom. | hort-us  | hort-ī    |
| Gen. | hort-ī   | hort-ōrum |
| Dat. | hort-ō   | hort-īs   |
| Acc. | hort-um  | hort-ōs   |
| Abl. | hort-ō   | hort-īs   |

ager, agrī, m.

|      | Singular | Plural   |
|------|----------|----------|
| Nom. | ager     | agr-ī    |
| Gen. | agr-ī    | agr-ōrum |
| Dat. | agr-ō    | agr-īs   |
| Acc. | agr-um   | agr-ōs   |
| Abl. | agr-ō    | agr-īs   |

### Neuter:

The neuter nouns end in -um. In neuter nouns, the nominative and the accusative always look the same and the plural of those two cases always ends in -a!

templum, -ī, n.

|      | Singular | Plural     |
|------|----------|------------|
| Nom. | templ-um | templ-a    |
| Gen. | templ-ī  | templ-ōrum |
| Dat. | templ-ō  | templ-īs   |
| Acc. | templ-um | templ-a    |
| Abl. | templ-ō  | templ-īs   |

## Third Declension (Gen. Sg. in *-is*)

The 3. declension comprises nouns of all genders. There are a lot of different stems and they are not necessarily apparent from the nominative. It is therefore particularly important to learn the basic form and the genitive singular when learning vocabulary.

### Masculine and Feminine:

Masculine & Feminine nouns have the same endings in the 3rd declension

rex, regis, m.

|      | Singular | Plural   |
|------|----------|----------|
| Nom. | rēx      | rēg-ēs   |
| Gen. | rēg-is   | rēg-um   |
| Dat. | rēg-ī    | rēg-ibus |
| Acc. | rēg-em   | rēg-ēs   |
| Abl. | rēg-e    | rēg-ibus |

oratio, orationis, f.

|      | Singular   | Plural       |
|------|------------|--------------|
| Nom. | ōrātiō     | ōrātiōn-ēs   |
| Gen. | ōrātiōn-is | ōrātiōn-um   |
| Dat. | ōrātiōn-ī  | ōrātiōn-ibus |
| Acc. | ōrātiōn-em | ōrātiōn-ēs   |
| Abl. | ōrātiōn-e  | ōrātiōn-ibus |

### Neuter:

In neuter nouns, the nominative and the accusative always look the same and the plural of those two cases always ends in *-a*!

caput, capitis, n.

|      | Singular | Plural     |
|------|----------|------------|
| Nom. | caput    | capit-a    |
| Gen. | capit-is | capit-um   |
| Dat. | capit-ī  | capit-ibus |
| Acc. | caput    | capit-a    |
| Abl. | capit-e  | capit-ibus |

The 3. Declension, *-i*-stems

Some nouns of the third declension belong to the so-called *i*-stems. Those words have stems with *-i* which stays visible in various forms.

This overview will not provide a full overview, but as a rule of thumb, you can keep in mind that they are usually "equisyllabic" (i.e., their nominative and genitive singulars have the same number of syllables, unlike *rex* [1] and *regis* [2]).

They all form their Genitive Plural in *-ium* instead of *-um*.

ovīs, -is, f.

|      | Singular | Plural  |
|------|----------|---------|
| Nom. | ovīs     | ov-ēs   |
| Gen. | ov-is    | ov-ium  |
| Dat. | ov-ī     | ov-ibus |
| Acc. | ov-em    | ov-ēs   |
| Abl. | ov-e     | ov-ibus |

In some nouns, that *-i*-stem also comes through in other cases<sup>1</sup>:

- Acc. Sg.: *-em* ⇒ *-im*
- Acc. Pl.: *-es* ⇒ *īs*
- Abl. Sg.: *-e* ⇒ *-ī*

This group also contains most neuter nouns in *-e*, *-al*, and *-ar* (though the accusative simply looks like the nominative as in all neuter nouns)

turrīs, turrīs, f.

|      | Singular | Plural    |
|------|----------|-----------|
| Nom. | turrīs   | turr-ēs   |
| Gen. | turr-is  | turr-ium  |
| Dat. | turr-ī   | turr-ibus |
| Acc. | turr-im  | turr-īs   |
| Abl. | turr-ī   | turr-ibus |

animāl, animālīs, n.

|      | Singular  | Plural      |
|------|-----------|-------------|
| Nom. | animāl    | animāl-ia   |
| Gen. | animāl-is | animāl-ium  |
| Dat. | animāl-ī  | animāl-ibus |
| Acc. | animāl    | animāl-ia   |
| Abl. | animāl-ī  | animāl-ibus |

<sup>1</sup> This group basically only contains the words *turrīs*, *febris*, *puppis*, *securis*, *sitis*, and the names *Tiberis* and *Neapolis*.

## Fourth Declension (Gen. Sg. in *-ūs*)

Nouns in the 4. declension are mostly masculine. Feminine and neuter nouns are rare. Feminine and masculine nouns decline in the same way

### Masculine (& Feminine)

*cāsus, cāsūs, m.*

|      | Singular      | Plural          |
|------|---------------|-----------------|
| Nom. | <i>cāsus</i>  | <i>cās-ūs</i>   |
| Gen. | <i>cās-ūs</i> | <i>cās-uum</i>  |
| Dat. | <i>cās-uī</i> | <i>cās-ibus</i> |
| Acc. | <i>cās-um</i> | <i>cās-ūs</i>   |
| Abl. | <i>cās-ū</i>  | <i>cās-ibus</i> |

### Neuter

Again: In neuter nouns, the nominative and the accusative always look the same and the plural of those two cases always ends in *-a*!

*cornū, cornūs, n.*

|      | Singular       | Plural           |
|------|----------------|------------------|
| Nom. | <i>cornū</i>   | <i>corn-ua</i>   |
| Gen. | <i>corn-ūs</i> | <i>corn-uum</i>  |
| Dat. | <i>corn-ū</i>  | <i>corn-ibus</i> |
| Acc. | <i>cornū</i>   | <i>corn-ua</i>   |
| Abl. | <i>corn-ū</i>  | <i>corn-ibus</i> |

Fifth Declension (Gen. Sg. in *-eī*)

Nouns in the 5. declension are always feminine (exceptions are only *dies, diei*, m. and *meridies, -iei*, m.)

*rēs, reī, f.*

|      | Singular    | Plural        |
|------|-------------|---------------|
| Nom. | <i>rēs</i>  | <i>r-ēs</i>   |
| Gen. | <i>r-eī</i> | <i>r-ērum</i> |
| Dat. | <i>r-eī</i> | <i>r-ēbus</i> |
| Acc. | <i>r-em</i> | <i>r-ēs</i>   |
| Abl. | <i>r-ē</i>  | <i>r-ēbus</i> |

# The Adjective

There are two groups of adjectives in Latin. Those that decline following rules of the 1. and 2. declension and those that decline following rules of the 3. declension.

## Adjectives of the 1. & 2. Declension

These adjectives use the 1. declension for the feminine forms and the 2. declension for the masculine and neuter forms. As with the nouns, there are some adjectives that end in *-us (-a, -um)*, e.g., *bonus, bona, bonum*, and some with consonantal stems, e.g., *pulcher, pulchra, pulchrum*. Except their nominative singular, they decline in the same way.

bonus, -a, -um

|      | Singular |        |        | Plural   |          |          |
|------|----------|--------|--------|----------|----------|----------|
|      | masc.    | fem.   | neut.  | masc.    | fem.     | neut.    |
| Nom. | bon-us   | bon-a  | bon-um | bon-ī    | bon-ae   | bon-a    |
| Gen. | bon-ī    | bon-ae | bon-ī  | bon-ōrum | bon-ārum | bon-ōrum |
| Dat. | bon-ō    | bon-ae | bon-ō  | bon-īs   | bon-īs   | bon-īs   |
| Acc. | bon-um   | bon-am | bon-um | bon-ōs   | bon-ās   | bon-a    |
| Abl. | bon-ō    | bon-ā  | bon-ō  | bon-īs   | bon-īs   | bon-īs   |

## Adjectives of the 3. Declension

These adjectives follow the 3. declension in masculine, feminine, and neuter whereas masculine and feminine look the same (just as with nouns of this declension) and the neuter differs in having nominative and accusative looking the same and the plural of those two cases ending in *-a*.

Adjectives are declined mostly like *-i*-stems!

### **Nominative Termination:**

The nominative singular of these adjectives can come in various forms. There are adjectives that have three different endings (one for each gender, e.g., *acer, acris, acre*), some that have two different endings (one for masculine & feminine and one for neuter, e.g., *brevis, breve*), and some that only have one ending (one shared by all genders, e.g., *felix*).

It is therefore important to not only memorize the genitive singular (to know the stem) but also all three genders in the nominative singular. You will get a sense of regularity very quickly.

*brevis, brevis, breve*

|      | Singular |         |         | Plural    |           |           |
|------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|      | masc.    | fem.    | neut.   | masc.     | fem.      | neut.     |
| Nom. | brev-is  | brev-is | brev-e  | brev-ēs   | brev-ēs   | brev-ia   |
| Gen. | brev-is  | brev-is | brev-is | brev-ium  | brev-ium  | brev-ium  |
| Dat. | brev-ī   | brev-ī  | brev-ī  | brev-ibus | brev-ibus | brev-ibus |
| Acc. | brev-em  | brev-em | brev-e  | brev-ēs   | brev-ēs   | brev-ia   |
| Abl. | brev-ī   | brev-ī  | brev-ī  | brev-ibus | brev-ibus | brev-ibus |

# The Adverb

Adverbs are similar to adjectives. As opposed to adjectives, however, adverbs describe the action of a verb or, more rarely, other adjectives. They do not have Cases, Numbers, or Genders, but simply one form. They are indeclinable.

There are two different categories of adverbs in Latin:

The first category are those adverbs that are not derived from adjectives. Those are words like *nunc* ("now"), or *olim* ("once").

The second category are those adverbs that are derived from adjectives. Just like in English they are formed by adding a special ending to the root of an adjective.

In English, this ending is -ly:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Homer is quick.  | Adjective describing the noun "Homer"     |
| He runs quickly. | Adverb describing the action of "running" |

Since there are two morphologic groups of adjectives, there are two different morphologic groups of adverbs: those corresponding to adjectives of the 1. and 2. declension and those corresponding to adjectives of the 3. declension.

Adjectives of 1. & 2. declension: add *-e* to the stem

Adjectives of the 3. declension: add *-(i)ter* to the stem

## **Examples:**

*malus* → *malē*  
*brevis* → *breviter*

There are a lot of adjectives that form their corresponding adverbs irregularly (like *bonus* → *bene*). Those forms will be given in the vocabulary.

# Comparison

## Comparison of Adjectives

Just like in English, every adjective can come in three degrees: the positive (basic form), the comparative, and the superlative.

### The Comparative

The comparative forms add *-ior-* as a sign between stem and case ending. The case endings follow the regular (non *-i-*stem) 3. declension.

Note the different form in the neuter nominative and accusative!

brevis, brevis, breve

|      | Singular    |             |             | Plural        |               |               |
|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|      | masc.       | fem.        | neut.       | masc.         | fem.          | neut.         |
| Nom. | brev-ior    | brev-ior    | brev-ius    | brev-iōr-ēs   | brev-iōr-ēs   | brev-iōr-a    |
| Gen. | brev-iōr-is | brev-iōr-is | brev-iōr-is | brev-iōr-um   | brev-iōr-um   | brev-iōr-um   |
| Dat. | brev-iōr-ī  | brev-iōr-ī  | brev-iōr-ī  | brev-iōr-ibus | brev-iōr-ibus | brev-iōr-ibus |
| Acc. | brev-iōr-em | brev-iōr-em | brev-ius    | brev-iōr-ēs   | brev-iōr-ēs   | brev-iōr-a    |
| Abl. | brev-iōr-e  | brev-iōr-e  | brev-iōr-e  | brev-iōr-ibus | brev-iōr-ibus | brev-iōr-ibus |

### The Superlative

The superlative forms add *-issim-* as a sign between stem and case ending. The case endings follow the 1. & 2. declension.

brevis, brevis, breve

|      | Singular      |               |               | Plural          |                 |                 |
|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|      | masc.         | fem.          | neut.         | masc.           | fem.            | neut.           |
| Nom. | brev-issim-us | brev-issim-a  | brev-issim-um | brev-issim-ī    | brev-issim-ae   | brev-issim-a    |
| Gen. | brev-issim-ī  | brev-issim-ae | brev-issim-ī  | brev-issim-ōrum | brev-issim-ārum | brev-issim-ōrum |
| Dat. | brev-issim-ō  | brev-issim-ae | brev-issim-ō  | brev-issim-īs   | brev-issim-īs   | brev-issim-īs   |
| Acc. | brev-issim-um | brev-issim-am | brev-issim-um | brev-issim-ōs   | brev-issim-ās   | brev-issim-a    |
| Abl. | brev-issim-ō  | brev-issim-ā  | brev-issim-ō  | brev-issim-īs   | brev-issim-īs   | brev-issim-īs   |

## Adjectives with liquid stems:

Adjectives with stems ending in a liquid ("r" or "l") form the superlative with *-rimus* and *-limus-* instead of *-issimus*.

*facilis* → *facillimus*  
*miser* → *miserrimus*

## Irregular Adjectives:

There are only a few adjectives in Latin that have irregular forms. As in most languages, this affects especially the most frequently used words:

|           |                 |                        |                   |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| good      | bonus, -a, -um  | melior, melior, melius | optimus, -a, -um  |
| bad       | malus, -a, -um  | peior, peior, peius    | pessimus, -a, -um |
| big       | magnus, -a, -um | maior, maior, maius    | maximus, -a, -um  |
| small     | parvus, -a, -um | minor, minor, minus    | minimus, -a, -um  |
| many/much | multi, ae, -a   | plures, plures, plura  | plurimi, -ae, -a  |

## Additions to Comparison

Comparison with *magis/maxime*:

Just like in English, longer adjectives (typically three syllables and above) tend to form their comparative and superlative by adding “more” (*magis*) or “most” (*maxime*) instead of adding a sign to their stem.

E.g.: *idoneus, magis idoneus, maxime idoneus*

Ablative of comparison and comparison with *quam*:

The person or thing someone or something is compared to is either introduced by *quam* or is in the ablative.

*Marcus clārior est quam Titus./Marcus clārior est Titō*      “Marcus is more famous than Titus.”

Extended comparison:

Also like in English, each comparison can be expanded by words like “a little”, “much”, “even”, “by far” etc.

1. with the comparative: *paulō, multō, etiam celerior*      “a little, much, even faster”

2. with the superlative: *quam, longē, vel celerrimus*      “as fast as possible, the fastest by far, even the fastest”

## Comparison of Adverbs

Like adjectives, adverbs exist in three different degrees of comparison. The comparative adds *-ius-* to the stem, the superlative adds *-issime* ( or *-lime/-rime* for liquid stems):

| Positive | Comparative | Superlative |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| longe    | longius     | longissime  |
| breviter | brevius     | brevissime  |
| misere   | miserius    | miserime    |
| facile   | facilius    | facillime   |

The comparative and superlative degree of adverbs that correspond to irregular adjectives is mostly formed in the same irregular way (*melior* → *melius*; *optimus* → *optime*).

# The Pronoun

There is a multitude of different pronouns in Latin. Most of them exist also in English. In a sentence, they function as a substitute for a noun or noun phrase (*pro nomine* = "instead of a noun"). The following is an overview of all the different pronouns and their declension.

## Personal Pronoun

In Latin, the personal pronoun is almost exclusively used in the oblique cases. In the nominative it is usually left out since the personal ending of the verb is sufficient to indicate what grammatical person the subject is. It is only used for special emphasis.

|      | Singular | Plural         |
|------|----------|----------------|
| Nom. | egō      | nōs            |
| Gen. | meī      | nostrī/nostrum |
| Dat. | mihi     | nōbis          |
| Acc. | mē       | nōs            |
| Abl. | mē       | nōbis          |

|      | Singular | Plural         |
|------|----------|----------------|
| Nom. | tū       | vōs            |
| Gen. | tuī      | vestrī/vestrum |
| Dat. | tibi     | vōbis          |
| Acc. | tē       | vōs            |
| Abl. | tē       | vōbis          |

Latin does not have a personal Pronoun for the 3. person. In the oblique cases, it is replaced by a demonstrative pronoun.

## Possessive Pronoun

The possessive pronouns indicate possession and function like adjectives of the 1./2. declension. Just like adjectives, they always have to agree with the noun they belong to.

|           | Singular        | Plural                  |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Person | meus, mea, meum | noster, nostra, nostrum |
| 2. Person | tuus, tua, tuum | vester, vestra, vestrum |
| 3. Person | suus, sua, suum | suus, sua, suum         |

The possessive pronoun of the 3. person is always reflexive. For a non-reflexive meaning, it gets replaced by the genitive of the demonstrative pronoun:

*Marcus domum suam vidit.*

"Marcus sees his own house."

*Marcus domum eius vidit*

"Marcus sees his (=someone else's) house."

## Reflexive Pronoun

Like English, Latin has a specific set of reflexive pronouns to express that a pronoun refers back to the subject of an action. In English, reflexive pronouns are those ending in "-self/-selves".

Reflexive pronouns only exist in the oblique cases. Only the 3. person has distinct reflexive pronouns, the 1. and 2. person use the personal pronoun to express reflexiveness. The singular and plural are identical.

|      | Singular | Plural |
|------|----------|--------|
| Gen. | sui      | sui    |
| Dat. | sibi     | sibi   |
| Acc. | se       | se     |
| Abl. | se       | se     |

## Demonstrative Pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun is used to point at something or someone. There are various different demonstrative pronouns in Latin that all differ slightly in their meaning.

In their forms, demonstrative pronouns mostly follow the 1st and 2nd declension. All of them, however, have a very distinct genitive and dative singular.

is, ea, id – (mostly) “he, she, it”

|      | Singular |      |       | Plural  |         |         |
|------|----------|------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
|      | masc.    | fem. | neut. | masc.   | fem.    | neut.   |
| Nom. | is       | ea   | id    | iī      | eae     | ea      |
| Gen. | eius     | eius | eius  | eōrum   | eārum   | eōrum   |
| Dat. | eī       | eī   | eī    | eīs/iīs | eis/iīs | eis/iīs |
| Acc. | eum      | eam  | id    | eōs     | eās     | ea      |
| Abl. | eō       | eā   | eō    | eīs/iīs | eis/iīs | eīs/iīs |

hic, haec, hoc – “this”/“he, she, it”

|      | Singular |       |       | Plural |       |       |
|------|----------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
|      | masc.    | fem.  | neut. | masc.  | fem.  | neut. |
| Nom. | hīc      | haec  | hoc   | hī     | hae   | haec  |
| Gen. | huius    | huius | huius | hōrum  | hārum | hōrum |
| Dat. | huic     | huic  | huic  | hīs    | hīs   | hīs   |
| Acc. | hunc     | hanc  | hoc   | hōs    | hās   | haec  |
| Abl. | hōc      | hāc   | hōc   | hīs    | hīs   | hīs   |

ille, illae, illud – “that/those”

|      | Singular |        |        | Plural  |         |         |
|------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
|      | masc.    | fem.   | neut.  | masc.   | fem.    | neut.   |
| Nom. | ille     | illa   | illud  | illī    | illae   | illa    |
| Gen. | illīus   | illīus | illīus | illōrum | illārum | illōrum |
| Dat. | illī     | illī   | illī   | illīs   | illīs   | illīs   |
| Acc. | illum    | illam  | illud  | illōs   | illās   | illa    |
| Abl. | illō     | illā   | illō   | illīs   | illīs   | illīs   |

ipse, ipsa, ipsum – “he himself, she herself, it itself”

|      | Singular |        |        | Plural  |         |         |
|------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
|      | masc.    | fem.   | neut.  | masc.   | fem.    | neut.   |
| Nom. | ipse     | ipsa   | ipsum  | ipsi    | ipsae   | ipsa    |
| Gen. | ipsius   | ipsius | ipsius | ipsorum | ipsarum | ipsorum |
| Dat. | ipsi     | ipsi   | ipsi   | ipsis   | ipsis   | ipsis   |
| Acc. | ipsum    | ipsam  | ipsum  | ipsos   | ipsas   | ipsos   |
| Abl. | ipso     | ipsa   | ipso   | ipsis   | ipsis   | ipsis   |

īdem, eadem, idem – “the same”

|      | Singular |         |         | Plural      |             |             |
|------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|      | masc.    | fem.    | neut.   | masc.       | fem.        | neut.       |
| Nom. | īdem     | eadem   | idem    | īdem/eīdem  | eaedem      | eadem       |
| Gen. | eiusdem  | eiusdem | eiusdem | eōrundem    | eārundem    | eōrundem    |
| Dat. | eīdem    | eīdem   | eīdem   | eīs/iīs-dem | eīs/iīs-dem | eīs/iīs-dem |
| Acc. | eundem   | eandem  | idem    | eōsdem      | eāsdem      | eādem       |
| Abl. | eōdem    | eādem   | eōdem   | eīs/iīs-dem | eīs/iīs-dem | eīs/iīs-dem |

## Relative Pronoun

The Relative Pronoun introduces a relative sentence or phrase. They mostly follow the 1st and 2nd with the standard exception of the Gen. and Dat. Sg. The Dat. and Abl. Pl. that follow the 3rd declension. Also note the Nom. & Acc. in the neuter that looks slightly different.

|      | Singular |       |       | Plural |        |        |
|------|----------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
|      | masc.    | fem.  | neut. | masc.  | fem.   | neut.  |
| Nom. | quī      | quae  | quod  | quī    | quae   | quae   |
| Gen. | cuius    | cuius | cuius | quōrum | quārum | quōrum |
| Dat. | cūī      | cūī   | cūī   | quibus | quibus | quibus |
| Acc. | quem     | quam  | quod  | quōs   | quās   | quae   |
| Abl. | quō      | quā   | quō   | quibus | quibus | quibus |

## Indefinite Pronoun

Indefinite Pronouns stand in for a noun that is not defined. There are various different indefinite pronouns that have very similar meanings but are all used in different context. This aspect becomes more important for the translation into Latin. See the appendix for an explanation.

*aliqui(s), aliquae, aliquod* – “someone, some”

|      | Singular                |                 |                          | Plural           |                  |                  |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|      | masc.                   | fem.            | neut.                    | masc.            | fem.             | neut.            |
| Nom. | <i>aliquis (aliqui)</i> | <i>aliquae</i>  | <i>aliquid (aliquod)</i> | <i>aliqui</i>    | <i>aliquae</i>   | <i>aliqua</i>    |
| Gen. | <i>alicuius</i>         | <i>alicuius</i> | <i>alicuius</i>          | <i>aliquorum</i> | <i>aliquarum</i> | <i>aliquorum</i> |
| Dat. | <i>alicui</i>           | <i>alicui</i>   | <i>alicui</i>            | <i>aliquibus</i> | <i>aliquibus</i> | <i>aliquibus</i> |
| Acc. | <i>aliquem</i>          | <i>aliquam</i>  | <i>aliquid (aliquod)</i> | <i>aliquos</i>   | <i>aliquas</i>   | <i>aliqua</i>    |
| Abl. | <i>aliquo</i>           | <i>aliqua</i>   | <i>aliquo</i>            | <i>aliquibus</i> | <i>aliquibus</i> | <i>aliquibus</i> |

N.B.: These Indefinite Pronoun can be used as a substantive and as an adjective. The only differ from each other in form in three instances. In those instances, the adjective form is given in brackets.

N.B.: After *si, nisi, nē, num, ubi, quantō, quō* & relatives these Indefinite Pronouns drop the *ali-*.

*ūllus, -a, -um* – “anyone, any”

|      | Singular      |               |               | Plural         |                |                |
|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|      | masc.         | fem.          | neut.         | masc.          | fem.           | neut.          |
| Nom. | <i>ūllus</i>  | <i>ūlla</i>   | <i>ūllum</i>  | <i>ūllī</i>    | <i>ūllae</i>   | <i>ūlla</i>    |
| Gen. | <i>ūllīus</i> | <i>ūllīus</i> | <i>ūllīus</i> | <i>ūllōrum</i> | <i>ūllārum</i> | <i>ūllōrum</i> |
| Dat. | <i>ūllī</i>   | <i>ūllī</i>   | <i>ūllī</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   |
| Acc. | <i>ūllum</i>  | <i>ūllam</i>  | <i>ūllum</i>  | <i>ūllōs</i>   | <i>ūllās</i>   | <i>ūlla</i>    |
| Abl. | <i>ūllō</i>   | <i>ūllā</i>   | <i>ūllō</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   | <i>ūllīs</i>   |

quisquam, quicquam – “anyone, any”

|      | masc./fem.        | neut.     |
|------|-------------------|-----------|
| Nom. | quisquam          | quicquam  |
| Gen. | cuiusquam         | cuiusquam |
| Dat. | cuīquam           | cuīquam   |
| Acc. | quemquam/quemquam | quicquam  |
| Abl. | quōquam/quāquam   | quōquam   |

## Interrogative Pronoun

The Interrogative Pronoun introduces a question (direct or indirect).

quis, quid – “who, what”

|      | Singular  | Plural |
|------|-----------|--------|
| Nom. | quis      | quid   |
| Gen. | cuius     | cuius  |
| Dat. | cuī       | cuī    |
| Acc. | quem/quam | quid   |
| Abl. | quō/quā   | quō    |

## Context of Indefinite Pronouns

The following table is an overview of the specific contexts the different indefinite pronouns are used. Similar to English, the Latin language distinguishes between positive and negative sentences. In English, you use the indefinite pronoun “some” for positive statements, and the indefinite pronoun “any” for negative statements. Latin also distinguishes between the use of the pronoun as substantive or adjective.

|  | Substantive |                     | Adjective |         |         |
|--|-------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Positive   | aliquis     | aliquid             | aliquī    | aliqua  | aliquod |
|  | alicuius    |                     | alicuius  |         |         |
|  | alicuī      |                     | alicuī    |         |         |
|  | aliquem     | aliquid             | aliquem   | aliquam | aliquod |
|  | aliquō      |                     | aliquō    | aliquā  | aliquō  |
| Positive (after si, nisi, ne, num, quo, quanto, ubi, cum, and other relatives) | quis        | quid                | quī       | qua(e)  | quod    |
|  | cuius       |                     | cuius     |         |         |
|  | cuī         |                     | cuī       |         |         |
|  | quem        | quid                | quem      | quam    | quod    |
|  | quō         |                     | quō       | quā     | quō     |
| Negative (e.g. after non, ne, neque, sine, vix)                                | quisquam    | quicquam (quidquam) | ūllus     | ūlla    | ūllum   |
|  | cuiusquam   |                     | ūllius    |         |         |
|  | cuīquam     |                     | ūllī      |         |         |
|  | quemquam    | quicquam (quidquam) | ūllum     | ūllam   | ūllum   |
|  | quōquam     |                     | ūllō      | ūllā    | ūllō    |

Sample sentences on next page

Examples:Positive, Substantive

|                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>aliquis dicit</i>            | "someone says"               |
| <i>aliquid puerum delectāte</i> | "something delights the boy" |

Positive, Substantive, after *si*

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>sī quis venit</i> | "if somebody comes" |
|----------------------|---------------------|

Positive, Adjective

|                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>aliquī nuntius venit</i> | "some messenger comes" |
| <i>aliquam spem habēre</i>  | "to have some hope"    |

Negative, Substantive

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>neque quisquam eum</i> | "and nobody saw him (= not anybody" |
| <i>vidit</i>              |                                     |
| <i>vix quisquam</i>       | "barely anybody"                    |

Negative, Adjective

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>sine ūlla spē</i> | "without any hope" |
|----------------------|--------------------|



# The Verb

Latin finite verbs express several grammatical dimensions at the same time. A finite verb is inflected for person (first, second, third) and number (singular, plural), and it also marks tense and mood. In addition, Latin verbs can express different voices (active and passive). Because of this, verb paradigms are necessarily much larger than noun paradigms.

Every finite verb follows a certain scheme of construction. Except for compound forms (the passive of the Perfect stem tenses – see below), every finite verb uses a certain stem (either Present or Perfect), followed by a tense or subjunctive sign, and ends in a personal ending.

## Construction Scheme of Latin Finite Verbs

| Stem                         | + Tense Sign  | + Personal Ending  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Present Stem or Perfect Stem | Subjunctive uses Subjunctive sign instead of tense sign | Regular Endings:<br><i>-o, -s, -t, -mus, -tis, -nt</i><br><br>Endings for Perfect Tense<br><i>-i, -isti, -t, -imus, -istis, -erunt</i> |

The passive voice replaces personal endings with passive personal endings in the present stem tenses and uses a completely different scheme for perfect stem tenses.

## Overview of Tense and Subjunctive Signs

| Verbal Stem  | Sign                              |                                   |                                | Passive   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
|              | Present                           | Imperfect                         | Future                         |   |
| Present Stem | no sign                           | <i>ba</i>                         | <i>b/a,e,e,e,e,e</i>           | Passive Endings instead of regular personal endings<br><br><i>-or, -ris, -tur, -mur, -mini, -ntur</i> |
|              | <b>Subjunctive</b><br><i>a/e</i>  | <b>Subjunctive</b><br><i>re</i>   | <b>Subjunctive</b><br><i>-</i> |   |
| Perfect Stem | no sign                           | <i>era</i>                        | <i>eri</i>                     | Compound Form (see below):<br><br>Participle + Form of <i>esse</i>                                    |
|              | <b>Subjunctive:</b><br><i>eri</i> | <b>Subjunctive</b><br><i>isse</i> | <b>Subjunctive</b><br><i>-</i> |   |

## Construction of Compound Forms

The Passive of tenses that use a Perfect Stem (i.e. Perfect, Pluperfect, and Future Perfect) does not follow the common scheme of Stem + Sign + Ending but instead uses compound forms consisting of the Perfect Passive Participle (PPP) and a form of *esse*.

| Mood        | Perfect |   | Pluperfect |   | Future Perfect |  |
|-------------|---------|---|------------|---|----------------|--|
| Indicative  | PPP +   | sum<br>es<br>est<br>sumus<br>estis<br>sunt  | PPP +      | eram<br>eras<br>erat<br>erāmus<br>erātis<br>erant       | PPP +          | ero<br>eris<br>erit<br>erimus<br>eritis<br>erunt |
| Subjunctive | PPP +   | sim<br>sis<br>sit<br>sīmus<br>sītis<br>sint | PPP +      | essem<br>esses<br>esset<br>essēmus<br>essētis<br>essent | -              |  |

## Conjugation of the Verb

Latin verbs are also grouped into morphological classes, comparable to noun declensions. Unlike declensions, however, conjugations do not introduce entirely new sets of endings, but mainly involve predictable stem- and vowel-patterns that affect how those endings attach.

Every Latin verb belongs to one of four conjugations. They either end in *-āre* (1st), *-ēre* (2nd), *-ĕre* (3rd), or *-īre* (4th).

The following pages provide an overview of all forms of regular verbs.

1st Conjugation (ā-Stems)

|            | Active  |   | Passive  |  |
|------------|---|---|--|--|
|            | Indicative  | Subjunctive   | Indicative   | Subjunctive  |
| Present    | laudō<br>laudā-s<br>lauda-t<br>laudā-mus<br>laudā-tis<br>lauda-nt<br><br>Inf. laudā-re<br>Part. laudā-ns<br>Imp. laudā<br>laudā-te          | laude-m<br>laudē-s<br>laudē-t<br>laudē-mus<br>laudē-tis<br>laude-nt                                     | laudō-r<br>laudā-ris<br>laudā-tur<br>laudā-mur<br>laudā-mini<br>lauda-ntur<br><br>Inf. laudā-rī<br>Part. –                           | laudē-r<br>laudē-ris<br>laudē-tur<br>laudē-mur<br>laudē-mini<br>laude-ntur                   |
| Imperfect  | laudā-ba-m<br>laudā-bā-s<br>laudā-ba-t<br>laudā-bā-mus<br>laudā-bā-tis<br>laudā-ba-nt   | laudā-re-m<br>laudā-rē-s<br>laudā-re-t<br>laudā-rē-mus<br>laudā-rē-tis<br>laudā-re-nt                   | laudā-ba-r<br>laudā-bā-ris<br>laudā-bā-tur<br>laudā-bā-mur<br>laudā-bā-mini<br>laudā-ba-ntur   | laudā-re-r<br>laudā-rē-ris<br>laudā-rē-tur<br>laudā-rē-mur<br>laudā-rē-mini<br>laudā-re-ntur |
| Future     | laudā-b-ō<br>laudā-bi-s<br>laudā-bi-t<br>laudā-bi-mus<br>laudā-bi-tis<br>laudā-bu-nt<br><br>Inf. laudātūrum esse<br>Part. laudātūrus, a, um |   | laudā-b-or<br>laudā-be-ris<br>laudā-bi-tur<br>laudā-bi-mur<br>laudā-bi-mini<br>laudā-bu-ntur   |  |
| Perfect    | laudāv-ī<br>laudāv-istī<br>laudāv-it<br>laudāv-imus<br>laudāv-istis<br>laudāv-ērunt<br><br>Inf. laudāv-isse<br>Part. –                      | laudāv-eri-m<br>laudāv-eri-s<br>laudāv-eri-t<br>laudāv-eri-mus<br>laudāv-eri-tis<br>laudāv-eri-nt       | laudātus, a, um<br>sum<br>es<br>est<br>laudātī, ae, a<br>sumus<br>estis<br>sunt<br><br>Inf. laudātum esse<br>Part. laudātus, -a, -um | laudātus, a, um<br>sim<br>sīs<br>sit<br>laudātī, ae, a<br>sīmus<br>sītis<br>sint             |
| Pluperfect | laudāv-era-m<br>laudāv-erā-s<br>laudāv-era-t<br>laudāv-erā-mus<br>laudāv-erā-tis<br>laudāv-era-nt   | laudāv-isse-m<br>laudāv-isse-s<br>laudāv-isse-t<br>laudāv-isse-mus<br>laudāv-isse-tis<br>laudāv-isse-nt | laudātus, a, um<br>eram<br>erās<br>erat<br>laudātī, ae, a<br>erāmus<br>erātis<br>erant   | laudātus, a, um<br>essem<br>essēs<br>esset<br>laudātī, ae, a<br>essēmus<br>essētis<br>essent |
| F. Perfect | laudāv-erō<br>laudāv-eris<br>laudāv-erit<br>laudāv-erimus<br>laudāv-eritis<br>laudāv-erint  |   | laudātus, a, um<br>erō<br>eris<br>erit<br>laudātī, ae, a<br>erimus<br>eritis<br>erunt  |  |

## 2nd Conjugation (ē-Stems)

|            | Active  |   | Passive  |  |
|------------|---|---|--|--|
|            | Indicative  | Subjunctive   | Indicative   | Subjunctive  |
| Present    | moneō<br>monē-s<br>mone-t<br>monē-mus<br>monē-tis<br>mone-nt<br><br>Inf. monē-re<br>Part. monē-ns<br>Imp. monē<br>monē-te           | mone-a-m<br>mone-ā-s<br>mone-a-t<br>mone-ā-mus<br>mone-ā-tis<br>mone-a-nt                   | mone-or<br>monē-ris<br>monē-tur<br>monē-mur<br>monē-mini<br>mone-ntur<br><br>Inf. monē-rī<br>Part. –                       | mone-a-r<br>mone-ā-ris<br>mone-ā-tur<br>mone-ā-mur<br>mone-ā-mini<br>mone-a-ntur       |
| Imperfect  | monē-ba-m<br>monē-bā-s<br>monē-ba-t<br>monē-bā-mus<br>monē-bā-tis<br>monē-ba-nt   | monē-re-m<br>monē-rē-s<br>monē-re-t<br>monē-rē-mus<br>monē-rē-tis<br>monē-re-nt             | monē-ba-r<br>monē-bā-ris<br>monē-bā-tur<br>monē-bā-mur<br>monē-bā-mini<br>monē-ba-ntur                                     | monē-re-r<br>monē-rē-ris<br>monē-rē-tur<br>monē-rē-mur<br>monē-rē-mini<br>monē-re-ntur |
| Future     | monē-b-ō<br>monē-bi-s<br>monē-bi-t<br>monē-bi-mus<br>monē-bi-tis<br>monē-bu-nt<br><br>Inf. monētūrum esse<br>Part. monētūrus, a, um |   | monē-b-or<br>monē-be-ris<br>monē-bi-tur<br>monē-bi-mur<br>monē-bi-mini<br>monē-bu-ntur                                     |  |
| Perfect    | monu-ī<br>monu-istī<br>monu-it<br>monu-imus<br>monu-istis<br>monu-ērunt<br><br>Inf. monu-isse<br>Part. –                            | monu-eri-m<br>monu-eri-s<br>monu-eri-t<br>monu-eri-mus<br>monu-eri-tis<br>monu-eri-nt       | monitus, a, um sum<br>es<br>est<br>monitī, ae, a sumus<br>estis<br>sunt<br><br>Inf. monitum esse<br>Part. monitus, -a, -um | monitus, a, um sim<br>sīs<br>sit<br>monitī, ae, a simus<br>sītis<br>sint               |
| Pluperfect | monu-era-m<br>monu-erā-s<br>monu-era-t<br>monu-erā-mus<br>monu-erā-tis<br>monu-era-nt   | monu-isse-m<br>monu-isse-s<br>monu-isse-t<br>monu-isse-mus<br>monu-isse-tis<br>monu-isse-nt | monitus, a, um eram<br>erās<br>erat<br>monitī, ae, a erāmus<br>erātis<br>erant   | monitus, a, um essem<br>essēs<br>esset<br>monitī, ae, a essēmus<br>essētis<br>essent   |
| F. Perfect | monu-erō<br>monu-eris<br>monu-erit<br>monu-erimus<br>monu-eritis<br>monu-erint  |   | monitus, a, um erō<br>eris<br>erit<br>monitī, ae, a erimus<br>eritis<br>erunt  |  |

3rd Conjugation (ĕ-Stems)

|            | Active  |   | Passive  |  |
|------------|---|---|--|--|
|            | Indicative  | Subjunctive   | Indicative   | Subjunctive  |
| Present    | agō<br>ag-i-s<br>ag-i-t<br>ag-i-mus<br>ag-i-tis<br>ag-u-nt<br><br>Inf. age-re<br>Part. ag-ēns<br>Imp. ag-e<br>ag-i-te | ag-a-m<br>ag-ā-s<br>ag-a-t<br>ag-ā-mus<br>ag-ā-tis<br>ag-a-nt                   | ag-or<br>ag-e-ris<br>ag-i-tur<br>ag-i-mur<br>ag-i-mini<br>ag-u-ntur<br><br>Inf. ag-ī<br>Part. –                            | ag-a-r<br>ag-ā-ris<br>ag-ā-tur<br>ag-ā-mur<br>ag-ā-mini<br>ag-a-ntur                     |
| Imperfect  | ag-ēba-m<br>ag-ēbā-s<br>ag-ēba-t<br>ag-ēbā-mus<br>ag-ēbā-tis<br>ag-ēba-nt   | age-re-m<br>age-rē-s<br>age-re-t<br>age-rē-mus<br>age-rē-tis<br>age-re-nt       | ag-ēba-r<br>ag-ēbā-ris<br>ag-ēbā-tur<br>ag-ēbā-mur<br>ag-ēbā-mini<br>ag-ēba-ntur   | age-re-r<br>age-rē-ris<br>age-rē-tur<br>age-rē-mur<br>age-rē-mini<br>age-re-ntur         |
| Future     | ag-a-m<br>ag-ē-s<br>ag-e-t<br>ag-ē-mus<br>ag-ē-tis<br>ag-e-nt<br><br>Inf. āctūrum esse<br>Part. āctūrus, a, um        |   | ag-a-r<br>ag-ē-ris<br>ag-ē-tur<br>ag-ē-mur<br>ag-ē-mini<br>ag-e-ntur   |  |
| Perfect    | ēg-ī<br>ēg-istī<br>ēg-it<br>ēg-imus<br>ēg-istis<br>ēg-ērunt<br><br>Inf. ēg-isse<br>Part. –                            | ēg-eri-m<br>ēg-eri-s<br>ēg-eri-t<br>ēg-eri-mus<br>ēg-eri-tis<br>ēg-eri-nt       | āctus, a, um    sum<br>es<br>est<br>āctī, ae, a      sumus<br>estis<br>sunt<br><br>Inf. āctum esse<br>Part. āctus, -a, -um | āctus, a, um    sim<br>sis<br>sit<br>āctī, ae, a      simus<br>sitis<br>sint             |
| Pluperfect | ēg-era-m<br>ēg-erā-s<br>ēg-era-t<br>ēg-erā-mus<br>ēg-erā-tis<br>ēg-era-nt   | ēg-isse-m<br>ēg-isse-s<br>ēg-isse-t<br>ēg-isse-mus<br>ēg-isse-tis<br>ēg-isse-nt | āctus, a, um    eram<br>erās<br>erat<br>āctī, ae, a      erāmus<br>erātis<br>erant   | āctus, a, um    essem<br>essēs<br>esset<br>āctī, ae, a      essēmus<br>essētis<br>essent |
| F. Perfect | ēg-erō<br>ēg-eris<br>ēg-erit<br>ēg-erimus<br>ēg-eritis<br>ēg-erint  |   | āctus, a, um    erō<br>eris<br>erit<br>āctī, ae, a      erimus<br>eritis<br>erunt  |  |

4th Conjugation (*ī*-Stems)

|            | Active   |   | Passive  |  |
|------------|--|---|--|--|
|            | Indicative   | Subjunctive   | Indicative   | Subjunctive  |
| Present    | audiō<br>audī-s<br>audī-t<br>audī-mus<br>audī-tis<br>audī-u-nt<br><br>Inf. audī-re<br>Part. audī-ēns<br>Imp. audī<br>audī-te   | audi-a-m<br>audi-ā-s<br>audi-a-t<br>audi-ā-mus<br>audi-ā-tis<br>audi-a-nt                         | audi-or<br>audī-ris<br>audī-tur<br>audī-mur<br>audī-mini<br>audī-ntur<br><br>Inf. audī-rī<br>Part. –                             | audi-a-r<br>audi-ā-ris<br>audi-ā-tur<br>audi-ā-mur<br>audi-ā-mini<br>audi-a-ntur           |
| Imperfect  | audi-ēba-m<br>audi-ēbā-s<br>audi-ēba-t<br>audi-ēbā-mus<br>audi-ēbā-tis<br>audi-ēba-nt  | audī-re-m<br>audī-rē-s<br>audī-re-t<br>audī-rē-mus<br>audī-rē-tis<br>audī-re-nt                   | audi-ēba-r<br>audi-ēbā-ris<br>audi-ēbā-tur<br>audi-ēbā-mur<br>audi-ēbā-mini<br>audi-ēba-ntur                                     | audī-re-r<br>audī-rē-ris<br>audī-rē-tur<br>audī-rē-mur<br>audī-rē-mini<br>audī-re-ntur     |
| Future     | audi-a-m<br>audī-ē-s<br>audi-e-t<br>audī-ē-mus<br>audi-ē-tis<br>audi-e-nt<br><br>Inf. audītūrum esse<br>Part. audītūrus, a, um |   | audi-a-r<br>audī-ē-ris<br>audi-ē-tur<br>audī-ē-mur<br>audi-ē-mini<br>audi-e-ntur   |  |
| Perfect    | audīv-ī<br>audīv-istī<br>audīv-it<br>audīv-imus<br>audīv-istis<br>audīv-ērunt<br><br>Inf. audīv-isse<br>Part. –                | audīv-eri-m<br>audīv-eri-s<br>audīv-eri-t<br>audīv-eri-mus<br>audīv-eri-tis<br>audīv-eri-nt       | audītus, a, um    sum<br>es<br>est<br>audītī, ae, a    sumus<br>estis<br>sunt<br><br>Inf. audītum esse<br>Part. audītus, -a, -um | audītus, a, um    sim<br>sīs<br>sīt<br>audītī, ae, a    sīmus<br>sītis<br>sint             |
| Pluperfect | audīv-era-m<br>audīv-erā-s<br>audīv-era-t<br>audīv-erā-mus<br>audīv-erā-tis<br>audīv-era-nt                                    | audīv-isse-m<br>audīv-isse-s<br>audīv-isse-t<br>audīv-isse-mus<br>audīv-isse-tis<br>audīv-isse-nt | audītus, a, um    eram<br>erās<br>erat<br>audītī, ae, a    erāmus<br>erātis<br>erant   | audītus, a, um    essem<br>essēs<br>esset<br>audītī, ae, a    essēmus<br>essētis<br>essent |
| F. Perfect | audīv-erō<br>audīv-eris<br>audīv-erit<br>audīv-erimus<br>audīv-eritis<br>audīv-erint   |   | audītus, a, um    erō<br>eris<br>erit<br>audītī, ae, a    erimus<br>eritis<br>erunt  |  |

3rd Conjugation (ĭ-Stems)

|     |    | Present    |             | Imperfect    |             | Future     |
|-----|----|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
|     |    | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative   | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. | 1. | capiō      | capi-a-m    | capi-ēba-m   | cape-re-m   | capi-a-m   |
|     | 2. | capis      | capi-ā-s    | capi-ēbā-s   | cape-rē-s   | capi-ē-s   |
|     | 3. | capit      | capi-a-t    | capi-ēba-t   | cape-re-t   | capi-e-t   |
| Pl. | 1. | capimus    | capi-ā-mus  | capi-ēbā-mus | cape-rē-mus | capi-ē-mus |
|     | 2. | capitis    | capi-ā-tis  | capi-ēbā-tis | cape-rē-tis | capi-ē-tis |
|     | 3. | capiant    | capi-a-nt   | capi-ēba-nt  | cape-re-nt  | capi-e-nt  |

Some verbs of the 3rd declension add a short -ĭ- to their present stem that is visible in most tenses with that stem. You will recognize them when you learn the principal parts, because the -ĭ- appears in the first person singular of the present tense.

## Irregular Verbs

The Latin language has comparatively few fully irregular verbs (though there are lots of principal parts that needs to be memorized). The following is an overview of the most frequent ones.

The tables only show the forms using the present stem. All the other tenses are built regular from the perfect stem. If there is no passive voice given, it does not exist.

esse, sum, fui, –

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | sum        | sim         | eram       | essem       | erō        |
| 2.     | es         | sīs         | erās       | essēs       | eris       |
| 3.     | est        | sit         | erat       | esset       | erit       |
| Pl. 1. | sumus      | sīmus       | erāmus     | essēmus     | erimus     |
| 2.     | estis      | sītis       | erātis     | essētis     | eritis     |
| 3.     | sunt       | sint        | erant      | essent      | erunt      |

posse, possum, potui, –

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | possum     | possim      | poteram    | possem      | poterō     |
| 2.     | potes      | possīs      | poterās    | possēs      | poteris    |
| 3.     | potest     | possit      | poterat    | posset      | poterit    |
| Pl. 1. | possumus   | possīmus    | poterāmus  | possēmus    | poterimus  |
| 2.     | potestis   | possītis    | poterātis  | possētis    | poteritis  |
| 3.     | possunt    | possīmus    | poterant   | possent     | poterunt   |

īre, eō, iī, ītum

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | eō         | eam         | ībam       | īrem        | ībō        |
| 2.     | īs         | eās         | ībās       | īres        | ībit       |
| 3.     | it         | eat         | ībat       | īret        | ībitis     |
| Pl. 1. | īmus       | eāmus       | ībāmus     | īrēmus      | ībimus     |
| 2.     | ītis       | eātis       | ībātis     | īrētis      | ībitis     |
| 3.     | eunt       | eant        | ībant      | īrent       | ībunt      |

feri, fiō, factus sum

|     |    | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|-----|----|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|     |    | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. | 1. | fiō        | fīam        | fiēbam     | fierem      | fiam       |
|     | 2. | fīs        | fīās        | fiēbās     | fierēs      | fiēs       |
|     | 3. | fit        | fiat        | fiēbat     | fieret      | fiet       |
| Pl. | 1. | fīmus      | fīāmus      | fiēbāmus   | fierēmus    | fīēmus     |
|     | 2. | fītis      | fīātis      | fiēbātis   | fierētis    | fīētis     |
|     | 3. | fīunt      | fīant       | fiēbant    | fierent     | fient      |

ferre, ferō, tuli, lātum

|     |    | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|-----|----|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|     |    | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. | 1. | ferō       | feram       | ferēbam    | ferrem      | feram      |
|     | 2. | fers       | ferās       | ferēbās    | ferrēs      | ferēs      |
|     | 3. | fert       | ferat       | ferēbat    | ferret      | feret      |
| Pl. | 1. | ferimus    | ferāmus     | ferēbāmus  | ferrēmus    | ferēmus    |
|     | 2. | fertis     | ferātis     | ferēbātis  | ferrētis    | ferētis    |
|     | 3. | ferunt     | ferant      | ferēbant   | ferrent     | ferent     |

ferri, feror, lātus sum (Passive)

|     |    | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|-----|----|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|     |    | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. | 1. | feror      | ferar       | ferēbar    | ferrer      | ferar      |
|     | 2. | ferris     | ferāris     | ferēbāris  | ferrēris    | ferēris    |
|     | 3. | fertur     | ferātur     | ferēbatur  | ferrētur    | ferētur    |
| Pl. | 1. | ferimur    | ferāmur     | ferēbāmur  | ferrēmur    | ferēmur    |
|     | 2. | ferimini   | ferāmini    | ferēbāmini | ferrēmini   | ferētmini  |
|     | 3. | feruntur   | ferantur    | ferēbantur | ferrentur   | ferentur   |

velle, volō, voluī

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | volō       | velim       | volēbam    | vellem      | volam      |
| 2.     | vīs        | velīs       | volēbās    | vellēs      | volēs      |
| 3.     | vult       | velit       | volēbat    | vellet      | volet      |
| Pl. 1. | volumus    | velīmus     | volēbāmus  | vellēmus    | volēmus    |
| 2.     | vultis     | velītis     | volēbātis  | vellētis    | volētis    |
| 3.     | volunt     | velint      | volēbant   | vellent     | volent     |

nōllo, nōlo, nōluī

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | nōlō       | nōlim       | nōlēbam    | nōllem      | nōlam      |
| 2.     | nōn vīs    | nōlīs       | nōlēbās    | nōllēs      | nōlēs      |
| 3.     | nōn vult   | nōlit       | nōlēbat    | nōllet      | nōlet      |
| Pl. 1. | nōlumus    | nōlīmus     | nōlēbāmus  | nōllēmus    | nōlēmus    |
| 2.     | nōn vultis | nōlītis     | nōlēbātis  | nōllētis    | nōlētis    |
| 3.     | nōlunt     | nōlint      | nōlēbant   | nōllent     | nōlent     |

mālle, mālō, māluī

|        | Present    |             | Imperfect  |             | Future     |
|--------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|        | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative | Subjunctive | Indicative |
| Sg. 1. | mālō       | mālim       | mālēbam    | māllem      | mālam      |
| 2.     | māvīs      | mālīs       | mālēbās    | māllēs      | mālēs      |
| 3.     | māvult     | mālit       | mālēbat    | māllet      | mālet      |
| Pl. 1. | mālumus    | mālīmus     | mālēbāmus  | māllēmus    | mālēmus    |
| 2.     | māvultis   | mālītis     | mālēbātis  | māllētis    | mālētis    |
| 3.     | mālunt     | mālint      | mālēbant   | māllent     | mālent     |

## Deponent Verbs

The Latin language has some verbs with active meaning that only exist in passive forms. They are called 'Deponents', from Latin *deponere* – "to lay down/put away": they 'put their passive meaning down' at some point, but kept the forms.

All of them, besides some semi-deponent verbs (see below) have no active forms at all.

You can easily identify them in the vocabulary list: they will be the only ones listed in the passive (e.g., *hortari, hortor, hortatus sum*). Since the Perfect Passive principal part uses the participle already (*hortatus sum*) it is not needed a second time and therefore dictionaries only list three forms for deponents.

There are no new forms to be learned, the passive voice functions exactly as in normal verbs.

The following is an overview of the most common deponent verbs with principal parts:

| Infinitive Present | Present     | Perfect                | Meaning              |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| hortari            | hortor      | hortatus (a,um) sum    | to encourage, urge   |
| loqui              | loquor      | locutus (a, um) sum    | to say, speak        |
| sequi              | sequor      | secutus (a, um) sum    | to follow            |
| mentiri            | mentior     | mentitus (a, um) sum   | to lie               |
| fateri             | fateor      | fassus (a, um) sum     | to confess, admit    |
| moliri             | molior      | molitus (a, um) sum    | to undertake, plan   |
| pati               | patior      | passus (a, um) sum     | to suffer, permit    |
| arbitrari          | arbitror    | arbitrates (a, um) sum | to judge, think      |
| reverti            | revertor    | reversus (a, um) sum   | to return, come back |
| conari             | conor       | conatus (a, um) sum    | to try, attempt      |
| egredi             | egredior    | egressus (a, um) sum   | to go out            |
| mori               | morior      | mortus (a, um) sum     | to die               |
| nasci              | nascor      | natus (a, um) sum      | to be born           |
| proficisci         | proficiscor | profectus (a, um) sum  | to set out, start    |
| uti                | utor        | usus (a, um) sum       | to use (+ Abl)       |
| vereri             | vereor      | veritus (a, um) sum    | to fear              |
| largiri            | largior     | largitus (a, um) sum   | to give, donate      |

## Participles of Deponent Verbs

Deponent Verbs form all the three participles that normal verbs can form as well. Now you might foresee an issue with the Perfect Passive Participle (PPP) and you are right. Since deponents can technically not exist in the passive voice (although using passive forms), the PPP becomes a new kind of participle:

- it designates actions before the main verb (just like the normal PPP)
- but it is in the active voice (unlike the normal PPP)

We could in fact call them PAP (Perfect Active Participle) if that name wasn't already taken by the Present Active Participle.

With that, we can even translate sentences using an English 'before and active' Participle into Latin without reformulating (as long as we find a fitting deponent):

"Having come back home, Cicero wrote a letter."      *Cicero domum reversus epistolam scrivit.*

## Semi-Deponents

Very few verbs are normal in the present stem and become deponents only in the perfect stem. Those are called 'semi-deponents'. They can also be easily recognized in the vocabulary list by their principal parts.

Their meaning is active in all tenses, even where they use passive forms!

| Infinitive Present | Present | Perfect             | Meaning              |
|--------------------|---------|---------------------|----------------------|
| gaudere            | gaudeo  | gavisus (a, um) sum | to rejoice, be happy |
| audere             | audeo   | ausus (a, um) sum   | to dare              |

# Latin Syntax



# The Structure of this Syntax:

The aim of the following presentation is twofold. On the one hand, it is designed as an introduction to syntax that develops its concepts gradually and can be read as a coherent, continuous exposition. On the other hand, it is intended to function as a reference that allows individual topics to be consulted independently. These two goals place different and sometimes competing demands on structure and organization. There is no single "correct" way to order a syntactic description. Almost every sentence simultaneously involves nouns, verbs, adjectives, and various adverbial elements, and any linear presentation must therefore impose a sequence on phenomena that are tightly interwoven in actual usage. The approach adopted here follows a traditional and pragmatic solution: it begins with nominal forms and their functions, before turning to verbal forms and then those that have elements of both.

## Cases

Latin usually indicates the grammatical function of nouns (such as subject, object, location, or attribute) by means of case. Instead of relying primarily on word order or prepositions, as English does, Latin marks these relationships morphologically: a noun appears in one of five cases, each of which can serve several distinct functions depending on context. Because English lacks a comparable case system, understanding a Latin sentence requires identifying the specific function a noun is performing and determining how that function would normally be expressed in English. Thus English may say *in Rome*, using a preposition to mark location, whereas Latin can express the same idea simply as *Romae*, where location is conveyed by case alone (the so-called locative function). At the same time, Latin also makes extensive use of prepositions, and syntactic relations are distributed between case marking and prepositional constructions. Cases primarily indicate the syntactic function of a noun in a sentence: whether it functions as an argument of the predicate (subject, or object), as an attribute within a noun phrase, or as a satellite that situates the action more loosely. In addition, nouns in these syntactic positions can be interpreted in different semantic roles, depending on the verb and the context in which they appear. These semantic roles are not fixed meanings of the cases themselves, but recurring ways in which nouns are understood in relation to an action. Semantic roles are very restricted by the syntactic function (something in the syntactic position of the Subject, for example, can only really be the agent or patient of the action of the sentence), but the syntactic position alone does not determine the semantic role.

This distinction between syntactic function and semantic role can be illustrated with a simple English example. Consider first a basic nucleus such as

I open the door.

We can now add an additional noun outside this nucleus, for instance a friend. Let's say that we want to add it in the syntactic position of a satellite. Only once this noun is integrated into the sentence by a particular syntactic construction does a more specific interpretation arise. The friend can be introduced as a beneficiary (I open the door for a friend), or as an associate (I open the door with a friend). In both examples, the syntactic structure determines that this is a satellite and also gives us a good idea about its semantic role.

But even within a single syntactic structure, semantic roles are not fixed. The construction with + noun is syntactically can support different interpretations. In I open the door with a friend, with is normally understood as expressing association. In principle, however, the same structure could also be interpreted instrumentally, although this makes little sense in practice, since one would hardly ram a door open using a friend as a tool. The semantic interpretation fails here not because the syntax is different, but because the context and the noun make such a reading implausible. But if we replace the noun while keeping the syntax constant, the instrumental interpretation becomes entirely natural: I open the door with a key. The syntactic construction has not changed, but the semantic role has. This shows that semantic roles are not mechanically encoded in a particular case or construction. Rather, they emerge from the interaction between syntactic position, lexical meaning, and context.

In the following, we will therefore proceed in two steps. First, we will give a rough overview of the typical syntactic functions associated with each case. This provides an initial orientation that already accounts for most constructions encountered in basic Latin.

Preferred syntactic functions of cases

- Nominative arguments (always Subject)
- Accusative: mostly arguments (direct objects)
- Dative: mostly arguments (indirect objects)
- Genitive: almost always attributes
- Ablative: almost always satellites

This overview covers a large proportion of Latin usage, but it is not exhaustive. Latin can also mark objects with the genitive or ablative in certain constructions, and some verbs take their objects in the form of prepositional phrases. This is comparable to English, where a verb such as talk is intransitive, but can nevertheless take a prepositional object (I talk to you). Some grammars do not classify such phrases as objects; in this grammar, they will be treated as such.

In a second step, we will look at common semantic roles, especially in satellites. While similar distinctions can in principle also be made for arguments (for example, a subject can be an agent or a patient of an action), this is usually unnecessary for a basic understanding of Latin syntax. Semantic distinctions are far more important in satellites, where a single syntactic position can give rise to a range of interpretations.

Typical semantic roles include:

- Beneficiary: the entity to whose advantage or disadvantage an action is undertaken
- Instrument: the tool or means by which an action is carried out
- Manner: the way in which an action takes place
- Reason: why an action is carried out
- Purpose: the goal with which an action is performed
- Spatial specifications
- Temporal specifications

These labels are meant as aids to interpretation rather than as strict grammatical categories.

## Case Function

Since this grammar should function as a reference work the following overview is divided by individual case and not by syntactic and semantic functions.

Each function is presented in its own box, but the header indicates whether this is a syntactic position or a semantic function. Each semantic function also indicates what syntactic function this would usually appear in. You will see the category “obligatory predicative” in some boxes. This will be explained in the following chapter.

### The Nominative

| Subject   | Argument                      |
|---|-------------------------------|
| The Person or thing about whom the statement is made. |                               |
| <b>Iulia</b> ambulat.                                 | “ <b>Julia</b> takes a walk.” |

| Predicative   | Argument                            |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| A Predicative in the nominative completes the Subject-Predicate phrase. It has the same case as the noun it belongs to (cf. the longer chapter about Predicatives below). |                                     |
| Marcus <b>Romānus</b> est.  | “Marcus is <b>a Roman</b> .”        |
| Caesar <b>dictātor</b> factus est.  | “Caesar was made <b>dictator</b> .” |
| Cornēlia <b>tristis</b> domum iit.  | Cornelia went home <b>sad</b> .     |

The Nominative can only be the Subject of a sentence (or dependent on it as a Predicative) and the Subject can only be a Nominative.

It is important to note that the Subject can also be included within the Predicate of a sentence, since the Latin language does not have to use Personal Pronouns: *ambulat* (“he/she/it walks”) is already a full sentence, the subject being implied in the verb form (3rd Person Singular).

## The Accusative

| Direct Object   | Argument  |
|---|---|
| A direct object is a noun that completes the meaning of a transitive verb by specifying the entity to which the verb's meaning is directed. |   |
| Marcus <b>Iuliam</b> vidit.   | "Marcus sees <b>Julia</b> ."                      |
| Some verbs use two accusative objects:  |   |
| Magister <b>discipulās linguam Latinam</b> docet.   | "The teacher teaches <b>the students Latin</b> ." |

| Accusative of Motion Towards   | Satellite                       |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Expresses the motion of something towards/a direction. Sometimes combined with a Preposition.<br>(Not to be confused with the Indirect Object) |                                 |
| Iulia <b>Italiam</b> venit.  | "Julia comes <b>to Italy</b> ." |

| Accusative of Extension in Time and Space  | Satellite   |
|--|---|
| Expresses an extension in Space or Time. This Accusative is used without a Preposition |   |
| <b>Multōs annōs</b> vixit.   | "He/She lived <b>for many years</b> .<br>(or "many years long") |
| <b>Tria millia</b> passuum processit.  | "He/She advanced <b>three</b> miles."                           |

## The Dative

| Indirect Object  | Argument |
|--|----------|
| <p>Something other than the Subject and the Direct Object (indirectly) affected by the Verb. Often expressed with 'to' or 'for' in English.</p>  |          |
| <p>Marcus <b>luliae</b> librum mittit.      "Marcus sends <b>Julia</b> a book."<br/> or: "M. sends a book <b>to Julia</b>."</p>  |          |
| <p>Since English does not mark its indirect Objects with a Dative case, they can sometimes look confusingly similar to Accusatives of Motion Towards. In a sentence like "Cornelia sends a letter to Marcus", we could interpret "Marcus" both as an indirect object or something the letter moves towards. Sometimes it helps to reformulate without a preposition in English to determine what would be needed in Latin. In a sentence like "He sends a book to Rome", we could not say "He sends Rome a book", which tells us that this needs to be an accusative of motion towards in Latin.</p> |          |

| Dative of Agent  | Argument |
|--|----------|
| <p>Describes the acting person in a Gerundive phrase.</p>  |          |
| <p>Usually translatable by 'by' or, better, reformulated using 'have to/must.'</p>                                 |          |
| <p>Liber <b>mihi</b> legendus est.      "The book is to be read <b>by me</b> (i.e., I have to read the book)."</p> |          |

| Dative of Purpose or End  | Obligatory Predicative |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>Expresses the purpose for which a person or thing serves. It is often combined with a Dative of Reference.</p>   |                        |
| <p>Ea res mihi <b>summae voluptati</b> est.      "This thing serves as <b>the greatest pleasure</b> to me (i.e., this is a <b>great pleasure</b> for me)."</p>  |                        |
| <p>In this example, <i>summae voluptati</i> is the Dative of Purpose (of what purpose is this thing?); <i>mihi</i> is Dative of Reference (with reference to whom/what is it of great pleasure?).</p> |                        |

## The Genitive

Almost all Genitives are attributes. They function like this:

| Genitive Attribute   |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Makes one noun depend upon another noun. It is used without a Preposition. Usually translated with “of.”</p> <p>This often indicates Possession, but not necessarily.</p> |                          |
| Ōrātiō <b>Cicerōnis</b>  | “ <b>Cicero’s</b> speech |

Within this syntactic position, the Genitive attributes can have various semantic roles. The following lists the main ones

| Subjective & Objective Genitive  | Attribute  |
|--|--|
| <p>A Genitive Attribute can appear with two slightly different meanings when it describes a noun that expresses a verbal action (like: ‘the fear,’ expressing the action of ‘fearing’ or ‘the love,’ expressing the action of ‘loving.’)</p> <p>The Genitive, in these cases, can either express the Subject of the verbal action (i.e., the one who is doing the action):</p> |  |
| amor <b>mātris</b>   | <p>“The love <b>of the mother</b> [e.g., towards her children]<br/>(i.e., the one she feels = she is the subject of the loving)”</p>     |
| or   |  |
| <p>The Genitive can express the Object of the verbal action (i.e., the one affected by the action):</p>  |  |
| amor <b>mātris</b>   | <p>“The [e.g. children’s] love <b>of the mother</b>”<br/>(i.e., the one directed at her = she is the object of someone else’s love).</p> |

| Genitive of Material                        | Attribute                                       |
|---|---|
| <p>Describes what something is made of.</p> |   |
| poculum <b>aurī</b>                         | “a goblet <b>of</b> (or: made of) <b>gold</b> ” |

| Partitive Genitive  | Attribute  |
|---|--|
| <p>Describes the larger group or context to which something belongs. Usually translated with “of.” (Not to be confused with the Possessive Genitive)</p>    |  |
| pars <b>urbis</b>   | “a part <b>of the city</b> ”                         |
| <p>The Partitive Genitive is often used with certain pronouns and adjectives such as aliquid, quid, multum, plūs, minus, satis, nihil, tantum, quantum:</p> |  |
| satis <b>eloquentiae</b>  | “enough/sufficient <b>(of) eloquence</b> ”           |
| Quid <b>novī</b> ?  | “What <b>(of) new (things)</b> ? = What’s the news?” |
| nihil <b>certī</b>  | “nothing <b>(of) certain</b> ”                       |

With very few verbs, the Genitive can function as an argument (and not as an attribute):

| Genitive Object  | Argument                                |
|--|---|
| <p>A few verbs take a Genitive as their object, e.g., meminisse (“to remember”). Grammars often don’t call this a “Genitive Object,” though.</p> |   |
| <b>cōstantiae tuae</b> meminī  | “I remember <b>your perseverance.</b> ” |

| Genitive of Quality  | Obligatory Predicative                                |
|--|---|
| <p>Describes a quality of something or someone. Usually used in combination with an adjective! Used without a Preposition.</p> |   |
| <p>Cf. Ablative of Quality.</p>  |   |
| Catilina erat <b>summae audaciae</b> vir.  | “Catilina was a man <b>of the highest boldness.</b> ” |

## The Ablative

The ablative's main syntactic function is that of a satellite. Those satellites can have many different semantic roles.

The ablative found in Classical Latin is the result of the historical merging of three originally distinct cases: one expressing separation (the literal "ablative," from *ab ferre*, "to carry away"), one expressing instrument or means, and one expressing location. That is why this case expresses a wide range of different semantic ideas that roughly map onto these three categories. You will see that almost all of them function as satellites that would be expressed with a preposition (like with, by, through, etc.) in English. It is therefore often helpful to just experiment with those and see what makes sense to get a feeling for the various uses of the Latin ablative.

| Ablative of Means or Instrument   | Satellite   |
|---|---|
| <p>The Means or Instrument by which something is done. It is used without a preposition.</p> <p>Usually translatable by 'with' or 'by':</p> |   |
| Litterās <b>stilō</b> scrīpsit.   | "She wrote the letter <b>with a pencil</b> ."     |
| <b>Suīs laboribus</b> urbem cōservāvit.   | "She saved the city <b>by her (own) labors</b> ." |

| Ablative of Respect   | Satellite  |
|---|--|
| <p>Describes the Respect in which something is true. Used without a preposition. Usually translated with "with respect to":</p> |  |
| Hī omnēs <b>linguā</b> inter sē differunt.  | "These (people) are all different to each other <b>with respect to (their) language</b> ." |

| Ablative of Manner   | Satellite                          |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <p>Describes the Manner in which an action takes place.</p> <p>It is usually used with the preposition <i>cum</i>:</p> |                                    |
| Id <b>cum virtūte</b> fēcit.   | "She did it <b>with courage</b> ." |
| <p>Not to be confused with the Instrumental Ablative!</p>  |                                    |

| Ablative of Time  | Satellite                                     |
|---|---|
| Describes the Time something takes place at or within. Usually without a Preposition. |   |
| <b>Eō tempore</b> id facere<br>nōn poteram.   | "I could not do it <b>at that time.</b> "     |
| <b>Paucīs horīs</b> id facient.   | "They will do it <b>within a few hours.</b> " |

| Ablative of Location (& Locative)   | Satellite                                      |
|---|--|
| Describes the Location something is at.   |  |
| The Ablative of Location is usually used with a preposition, except when used for cities, towns, small islands, or in combination with certain adjectives denoting a part of the whole ( <i>cunctus, totus, summus, medius</i> , etc.) as well as with some idiomatic expressions (like <i>parte, regiōne, terrā marique</i> , etc.). |  |
| Marcus <b>Carthāgine</b> est.   | "Marcus is <b>in (the city of) Carthage.</b> " |
| Iulia <b>in Italiā</b> est.   | "Iulia is <b>in Italy.</b> "                   |
| Romulus <b>in magnā casā</b> vivit.   | "Romulus lives <b>in a big cottage.</b> "      |
| In the first and second declension singular, a lot of cities, towns, and small islands (as well as <i>domus, rūs, &amp; humus</i> ) use the old Locative case instead (which looks like a Genitive):  |  |
| <b>Rōmae, Ephesī, domī</b>  | " <b>in Rome, in Ephesus, at home</b> "        |

| Ablative of Separation or Place from Which   | Satellite   |
|--|---|
| The Ablative of Place from which describes a movement away from a place. Usually with a prepositions like <i>ab, dē, ex</i> :  |   |
| Multi <b>ex agrīs</b> in urbem<br>venient.   | "Many will come <b>from the country</b> to the city." |
| The Ablative of Separation simply describes that some person or thing is separate from another, without implying any real movement. There is not always a preposition. |   |
| Cicerō hostēs <b>ab urbe</b><br>prōhibuit.   | "Cicero kept the enemy <b>away from the city.</b> "   |
| Eōs <b>timōre</b> liberāvit.   | "She freed them <b>from fear.</b> "                   |

On the next page, you will find some ablatives that do not function as satellites.

| Ablative of Comparison   | Argument (of an Adjective)                  |
|--|---|
| Describes the person or thing something is compared to with an adjective in the comparative. Used without a preposition. |   |
| Marcus clarior est <b>Titō</b> .   | "Marcus is more famous <b>than Titus</b> ." |

| Ablative of Quality   | Obligatory Predicative                       |
|---|--|
| Describes a quality of something or someone. Usually used in combination with an adjective! Used without a preposition. |  |
| Cf. Genitive of Quality.  |  |
| vir <b>summā virtute</b> est.   | "He is a man <b>of the highest virtue</b> ." |

| Ablative of Degree   | Satellite (of an Adjective)                 |
|--|---|
| Describes the degree to which something differs from something else in a comparison. Used without a preposition. |   |
| <b>Tantō</b> melius erat.  | "She was better <b>by so much</b> ."        |
| <b>Multō</b> acrius vigilabō.  | "I will watch out <b>much more</b> keenly." |

| Ablative of Personal Agent  | Argument                              |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Describes the agent in a passive phrase. Used with a preposition ( <i>a/ab</i> ). |                                       |
| <b>Ab amicō</b> id scriptum est.  | "It was written <b>by a friend</b> ." |

| Ablative Object  | Argument                           |
|--|------------------------------------|
| A few verbs take an Ablative as their object, e.g., <i>uti</i> ("to use") or <i>frui</i> ("to enjoy"). Grammars often don't call this a "Ablative Object," though. |                                    |
| fruor <b>amicitiā tuā</b>  | "I enjoy <b>your friendship</b> ." |

# Attributive, Predicative & Adverbial

In the structure of a sentence, certain words—such as adjectives, nouns, or participles—can be used either to modify a noun directly, functioning attributively, or to make an additional statement about a noun in relation to the predicate, functioning predicatively.

## Attributive

Attributes are used when an expression (e.g., a noun in the genitive, an adjective, or a participle) directly specifies a noun: *causa belli* (the reason for the war), *vir fortis* (a strong man), *templum aedificatum* (a built temple). These elements are an integral part of the noun phrase and, if they are adjectives or participles, agree in case, number, and gender with the noun to which they refer.

## Predicative

In contrast, there are predicative constructions, which occur when an expression (e.g., an adjective, noun, or participle) is not simply used as part of a noun phrase, but makes an additional statement about a sentence argument in relation to the predicate.

## Comparison

Compare the following two sentences: “I drink my hot coffee” and “I drink my coffee hot.”

The adjective in the first one simply modifies the noun phrase “coffee” by saying that this particular coffee is hot. It is similar to “I see a nice person”, with “nice” simply specifying what kind of person we are talking about. The coffee would be hot and the person nice, even if you didn’t drink or see them. Since the extra information is simply attributed to the respective noun, we call this use “attributive.”

The adjective in the second one, however, describes the coffee specifically during the act of drinking. The speaker here does not want to indicate that this is generally a hot coffee, but that he or she is drinking it while it is still hot, or perhaps distinctly because it is hot right now and that’s how our speaker likes it. Because there is this direct relation to the predicate of the sentence, we call this use “predicative.”

The same also works with Latin adjectives: *Militem inermem ceperunt* – “They caught the soldier unarmed.” Here, the soldier is not generally unarmed but precisely in the moment he got caught (perhaps that’s why he could be caught in the first place).

Nouns, too, can be used predicatively. In English, those are sometimes introduced by a preposition such as “as”: *Milites domum victores redierunt* – “The soldiers went home as victors.” Here, the soldiers are not generally of the winning type, but they just went home as winners after that specific battle.

In English, the distinction between attributive and predicative use is often reflected in word order. Attributive modifiers typically appear directly adjacent/before to the noun they modify (“a tall tree, the red book”), whereas predicative expressions are usually after the noun and linked to it by a verb (“the tree is tall,” “the book seems interesting”). In many cases, position alone is therefore sufficient to signal the function of an expression.

Latin, by contrast, relies far less on fixed word order to encode such distinctions. For this reason, categories such as attributive and predicative use must be identified more by context.<sup>1</sup>

A more precise distinction can be made between obligatory and non-obligatory predicatives. Non-obligatory predicatives are syntactically optional; they add an additional predication to the sentence that is not required by the verb. This was the case in the two examples above. They could have just caught the soldier (whether armed or not) and they could have just gone home (whether as winners or losers).

Obligatory predicates, on the other hand, are required by the valence of the verb and are necessary for the grammatical completeness of the sentence.

This is the case for the copula “to be.” For example, in the sentence “Marcus is a musician,” the full predicate would be “to be a musician.” “Marcus is” alone does not convey the full meaning of the predicate. We need the predicative noun “musician” to be well-formed.

In the sentence “Marcus is tall,” the full predicate would be “to be tall” and “tall” a predicative adjective.<sup>2</sup>

But there is a variety of other verbs that frequently need a predicative: “call, feel, seem, and become” are some examples:

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| “Marcus calls Julia a friend.”                   | → “to call (someone) a friend” |
| “Marcus feels bad about his exam.”               | → “to feel bad”                |
| “After finishing school, Julia became a lawyer.” | → “to become a lawyer”         |

In Latin, the predicative has to agree with the argument it refers to (in case for nouns; in case, number, and gender for adjectives):

*Sicilia insula est.* (nominative)  
*Marcus magnus est.* (singular, masculine, nominative)  
*Marcus Iuliam amicam dicit.* (singular, masculine, accusative)

In the last example, you can see that a predicative does not necessarily have to belong to the subject of the sentence. Here it belongs to the direct object Iuliam.

Predicative expressions are not limited to nouns, adjectives and participles. Even prepositional phrases can function predicatively, especially with the copula. They can express location or state. E.g., *Arbor in horto est* (the tree is in the garden).

Theoretically, one could distinguish all prepositional phrases along these lines. Compare the following two examples: “I saw Julia in the city” and “The tree in the garden lost its leaves in fall.” In the first sentence, the prepositional phrase relates to the predicate by specifying the circumstances under which the seeing took place; in the second, it simply attributes a general location to the noun tree. Such phrases, however, are usually classified in grammars as adverbial rather than predicative in the stricter sense.

<sup>1</sup> English does, however, allow postpositive adjectives in a small number of fixed or stylistically marked contexts (e.g. “something interesting,” “the president elect,” “heir apparent”). In such cases, word order alone is less informative, and function must be inferred from structure and meaning rather than position.

<sup>2</sup> Latin sometimes omits the copula altogether, especially where the predicative relation is clear from context. Comparable omissions occur in other languages and registers: English allows copula-less expressions in headlines or colloquial shorthand (cf: “Road work ahead”; “Where you at?”), Ancient Greek regularly omits the copula, Arabic lacks a copula in the present tense, and American Sign Language does not employ a copula at all. These variations show that predicative relations do not inherently require an overt verb “to be,” even though many languages frequently use one.

## Adverbial Expression

In addition to attributive and predicative uses, expressions can also function adverbially. Adverbial phrases do not describe a noun directly, nor do they make a predicative statement about a sentence argument. Instead, they situate the predicate itself by specifying the circumstances under which it holds—such as time, place, manner, cause, or purpose.

Unlike attributes, adverbial phrases are not part of a noun phrase, and unlike predicatives, they do not ascribe a property or role to a particular argument. Their point of reference is the event or state expressed by the predicate as a whole. Thus, in *heri pugnaverunt* (“they fought yesterday”) or in *urbe manet* (“he stays in the city”), the additional information frames the situation rather than characterizing a participant.

Adverbial phrases may be expressed in a variety of ways, by adverbs, by prepositional phrases, or by other constructions. What unites these elements is not their morphology, but their role in organizing information around the predicate without being required for the grammatical completeness of the sentence.



# The Verb

Verbs constitute the semantic and structural core of the sentence, expressing the situation described and structuring the relations between its participants.

From a grammatical point of view, verbal forms can be divided into finite and non-finite forms, a distinction that reflects different ways in which verbal meaning is integrated into sentence structure.

## Finite Verbs

Finite verb forms are "limited" (from *fīnīre*, "to limit") to a specific person, namely the subject, and therefore function as the predicate of a clause.

They also encode various other grammatical categories like:

- Person, which attributes the action either the speaker (1st Person), to the addressee (2nd Person) or to others (3rd Person)
- Number, which determines if the verb is making a statement about one or more persons
- Tense, which situates the predicate in time
- Voice, which determines how the participants of the event are grammatically related to the verb
- Aspect, which expresses how the situation denoted by the verb unfolds over time
- Mood, which allows a sentence to be presented as a statement, a command, a question, or a hypothetical or desired situation

Finite forms thus play a key role in shaping how an utterance positions itself with respect to reality, intention, or obligation.

The categories of Person, Number, Tense, Voice, and Aspect will not be discussed in the Syntax part of this grammar, since they are sufficiently clear from the Morphology part.

## Non-Finite Verbs

Non-finite verb forms, by contrast, are not limited to a particular person and do not form the predicate. Instead, they overlap in form and function with nominal categories. Some behave primarily like nouns, others like adjectives, while still retaining essential verbal properties such as tense relations, voice, and the ability to govern objects. These forms therefore occupy an intermediate position between verbs and other parts of speech and can only be fully understood against the background of both nominal structure and verbal predication.

There is typically only one finite verb per clause, even though a clause may contain several non-finite verb forms that depend on it.

## Finite Verbs

### Moods

Verbal mood concerns the speaker's stance toward the situation expressed by the verb. Rather than describing what happens or when it happens, mood encodes whether a situation is asserted as a fact, issued as a command, entertained as a possibility, or conceived as desired, uncertain, or non-factual.

Mood thus does not characterize the event itself, but the relation between the speaker and the situation described. In this way, mood operates at the level of the clause as a whole and shapes how statements are anchored with respect to reality, intention, or evaluation.

The term mood is potentially misleading. In grammatical usage it ultimately goes back to Latin *modus* ("mode" or "manner"). In the history of English, this Latin term developed along two paths: one branch yielded "mode," which retained the general sense of "manner" or "way," while another yielded "mood," which came to denote emotional states in everyday usage. The grammatical sense, however, remained attached to the older version of "mood" as a technical term. As a result, grammatical mood has nothing to do with what it seems to, namely whether a speaker is happy, sad, angry, or otherwise emotionally affected, but instead denotes the mode in which a situation is expressed and evaluated.

We should probably just call it "mode" but since every grammar and textbook calls it "mood," we are stuck with the misleading term.<sup>1</sup>

### The Indicative

The indicative is the default verbal mood. It presents a situation as a statement of fact or as something treated as factual by the speaker, without expressing command, wish, or uncertainty. In this mood, a clause asserts that a situation holds, held, or will hold, and it is therefore the unmarked mode of verbal expression in ordinary narration and description.

The use of the indicative in Latin largely corresponds to its use in English, and for this reason it will not be treated in detail here. Where differences do arise (most notably in constructions such as indirect questions or other embedded clauses) these are not properties of the indicative itself, but of the moods that replace it in those contexts. Such cases will therefore be discussed in the sections devoted to the respective moods.

### The Imperative

The imperative is the verbal mood used to issue commands and instructions. It presents a situation not as a statement of fact, but as something the speaker seeks to bring about through directive force. In this respect, the use of the imperative in Latin corresponds

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<sup>1</sup> The organization adopted here reflects one possible way of approaching clause types. Alternatively, one might classify sentences according to their communicative function—such as declarative, interrogative, or volitive—rather than by verbal mood. Since the present grammar is also intended as a practical tool for translating from Latin into English, the discussion proceeds by moods, which provide a stable grammatical point of reference across a wide range of constructions.

closely to its use in English and will therefore not be treated at length here.

Where Latin differs from English (most notably in restrictions on person or in the use of alternative moods to express indirect or softened commands) the differences will be discussed in the sections devoted to the moods that Latin employs in those contexts.

## The Subjunctive

Unlike the other moods, the subjunctive does not lend itself to a narrow, single definition.

Forms traditionally called “subjunctive” are found across many Indo-European languages, but their functions vary widely from language to language. Even within Latin, the subjunctive covers a broad range of uses. This breadth is partly historical. In earlier stages of the language, functions that Classical Latin later expresses with one single mood (our subjunctive) were distributed across two distinct moods, commonly labeled “subjunctive” and “optative,” which were subsequently merged.

The subjunctive operates not by adding new elements to the content of the sentence, but it frames an otherwise already complete statement by indicating how the speaker relates to it, without altering the basic relations between participants or events.

This speaker perspective marked by the subjunctive can be described along two broad dimensions.

There are two main perspectives expressed by the subjunctive. It can either

- indicate how possible the speaker considers the content of the statement to be, rather than presenting it as a fact.

or

- present a situation as something that is wanted, that is, wished for, demanded, or hoped for, without stating that it actually happens;

Each of those perspectives can then appear in various degrees (cf. following chapters).<sup>2</sup>

In main clauses, the subjunctive primarily serves to express this kind of speaker perspective, and it is in this function that it is most transparently modal. For this reason, uses of the subjunctive in main clauses will be treated first. In dependent clauses, by contrast, the subjunctive often lost this primary function of conveying speaker perspective. Instead, it frequently functions as a marker of clause dependency and of the temporal or logical relation between clauses. This can be confusing and will therefore be discussed separately.

We will therefore begin with cases in which the subjunctive places a statement under a layer of possibility, and then turn to cases in which it places a statement under a layer of wanting (we will call those “Optative Subjunctives” as they do what the older optative used to do).

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<sup>2</sup> The speaker perspective expressed through the subjunctive should not be confused with sentences that contain verbs such as “to want,” “to think,” or “to believe” in the indicative. In such cases, the sentence does not present the described situation through a particular modal perspective, but makes a factual statement about what the speaker wants, thinks, or believes. The perspective expressed by these verbs is part of the content of the statement itself and therefore operates on a different syntactic level from the perspective conveyed by mood

## The Subjunctive in Main Clauses

### Possibility

The first type of perspective concerns how a speaker evaluates the possibility of a situation. A statement may be treated as something that could hold (often called “potential”), or as something that does not hold in reality (often called “unreal” or “counterfactual”). Both perspectives can be applied to situations in the past or in the present.

They are negated with *non*.

Potential: describing a situation that is viewed as possible by the speaker

#### 1. of the Present – Present/Perfect Subjunctive<sup>1</sup>

*Aliquis credat/crediderit...* → Somebody could believe...

#### 2. of the Past – Imperfect Subjunctive<sup>2</sup>

*Aliquis crederet...* → Somebody could have believed...

Unreal: describing a situation that is viewed as not holding in reality (counterfactual)

#### 1. of the Present – Imperfect Subjunctive

*Sine amicis vita tristis esset.* → Without friends, life would be sad.

#### 2. of the Past – Pluperfect Subjunctive

*Sine amicis vita tristis fuisset.* → Without friends, life would have been sad.

Notice in all of these examples that there is no addition to the content of the sentence. The speaker perspective is only indicated by switching the predicate into the subjunctive.

You might ask how this perspective would be expressed with reference to the future. This is less straightforward, since Latin does not have a distinct future subjunctive. The implications of this will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on conditional clauses.

<sup>1</sup> In independent clauses, the potential of the present is more frequently expressed by the perfect subjunctive. In conditional clauses (discussed below), the present subjunctive is more common; there, the perfect subjunctive often serves to emphasize completion rather than time.

<sup>2</sup> The potential of the past is rare in Classical Latin. It appears most often in the second person singular to express general statements, where English might use a generic “you” or “one,” as in “you/one might have thought.”

Deliberative Question

A subgroup of the uses discussed above are deliberative questions, that is, questions in which the speaker asks about a possible course of action.

Deliberative: deliberating question (asking what could or should be done)

1. of the Present – Present Subjunctive

*Quid faciam?* → What should I do?

2. of the Past – Imperfect Subjunctive

*Quid facerem?* → What should I have done?

## The Optative (Wishes)

With optative subjunctives (*optāre* = “to wish”), the speaker presents a statement as something they wish to happen. The situation itself is not altered; rather, it is placed under a layer of wanting.

Such wishes can take two basic forms. A wish may be presented as still possible, that is, as something the speaker believes could still happen (we could call that a fulfillable wish). Alternatively, a wish may be presented as no longer possible, expressing regret about something that does not hold or did not hold in reality (we could call that an unfulfillable wish). Both types of wishes can refer either to the present or to the past.

To illustrate this, consider a simple indicative statement such as *sānus est* (“you are healthy”) and observe how it changes when the speaker presents it as a wish. Latin sometimes introduces optative subjunctives with *utinam*, which helps distinguish these uses from subjunctives expressing possibility.

All optative subjunctives are negated with *ne* as they pertain to something that is not factual.

### Fulfillable Wishes:

#### 1. In the Present – Present Subjunctive

*Utinam sanus sis* → May you be healthy.

#### 2. In the Past – Perfect Subjunctive<sup>1</sup>

*Utinam sanus fueris* → May you have been healthy.

### Unfulfillable Wishes:

#### 1. In the Present – Imperfect Subjunctive

*Utinam sanus esses* → If only you were healthy.

#### 2. In the Past – Pluperfect Subjunctive

*Utinam sanus fuisses* → If only you had been healthy.

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<sup>1</sup> This usually doesn't appear in Classical Latin literature.

The Hortatory Subjunctive ("Commands," "Prohibitions")

Hortatory subjunctives (*hortārī* = "to encourage, exhort") represent a specific subtype of the "wanting" layer. In these uses, the speaker expresses a wish that is directed at another person's action, either encouraging it or forbidding it. Commands and prohibitions can thus be understood as wishes expressed with greater force.

In Latin, hortatory uses of the subjunctive are restricted to a small number of well-defined patterns, largely organized by grammatical person. Latin grammars traditionally assign specific labels to these uses. For ease of reference, these terms will be retained here.

The Hortative: Encouragement to the 1. Person Plural – Present Subjunctive

*Grati simus!* → Let us be thankful!

The Prohibitive: Prohibition to the 2. Person – Perfect Subjunctive

*Ne dubitaveris!* → Don't hesitate!

The Iussive: Command to the 3. Person – Present Subjunctive

*Ne effugiant hostes!* → The enemies shall not flee!

Other types of commands are covered by the imperative mood.

## Subjunctive in Dependent Clauses

As mentioned earlier, the subjunctive often functions differently in dependent clauses than it does in independent clauses. This difference is reasonably well understood against the background of the historical development of more complex sentence structures.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier stages of languages rely mostly on parataxis, that is, sequences of independent clauses placed side by side, each forming a complete sentence on its own. Over time, languages increasingly develop ways of integrating such clauses into larger compound sentences, in which one clause is grammatically dependent on another. This shift adds new possibilities for combining clauses into more complex constructions.

We can imagine this development along the following lines. Consider two independent clauses:

1. If only it wouldn't rain today.
2. I fear it, though.

In the first clause, the speaker presents a situation under a layer of “wishing” by using a subjunctive; in the second, the speaker just makes a statement (namely, that they fear). As sentence structures become more complex, such clauses can be combined into a single construction with a main clause and a dependent clause, for example:

I fear that it will rain today.

In this structure, the dependent clause (that it will rain today) no longer directly expresses a wish or fear. Instead, it functions as part of a larger sentence whose perspective is determined by the main clause. No need for the subjunctive. In Latin, however, the subjunctive originally associated with such perspectives was often retained in the dependent clause, even though it no longer fulfilled its original function there. Over time, the use of the subjunctive was extended to various types of dependent clauses, where it primarily serves to mark subordination rather than speaker perspective.

In these cases, the choice of the subjunctive does not indicate whether a situation is wished for or possible. Instead, it helps establish relative time between the dependent clause and its governing clause. In other words, it still has a function, but not the one we would expect from our knowledge of subjunctives in main clauses. This system, commonly referred to as *consecutiō temporum* (sequence of tenses), will be treated separately. Comparable systems can still be found in most Romance languages. Nevertheless, there are also dependent clauses in which the subjunctive continues to express the speaker's perspective, adding a notion of possibility or wishing in much the same way as it does in independent clauses. This is the case, for example, in conditional clauses and certain types of relative clauses. We will, therefore, discuss those first.

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<sup>1</sup> The following presentation is to be understood more as a pedagogical technique rather than an accurate description of historical developments. It does not really “explain” the phenomenon of the subjunctive in dependent clauses syntactically (and the “myth of primitive parataxis” is largely discarded today) but mostly serves the purpose of visualization and might be cut from future iterations of this chapter (cf. Introduction for some reflections on the method).

## Conditional Clauses

Conditional clauses consist of two parts: the protasis (the condition, i.e. the if-clause) and the apodosis (the consequence, i.e. the main clause). The Latin word for “if” is *sī*.

Latin conditional clauses can be formed either with the indicative or with the subjunctive, depending on whether the speaker presents the conditional relation neutrally or places it under an additional perspective.

In conditional clauses with the indicative, the relation between condition and consequence is presented without any added modal perspective. The speaker simply states that if one situation holds, another follows. Such clauses often function like logical relations (“if A, then B”) and do not indicate how the speaker positions themselves toward the realization of the condition. For this reason, these conditionals will be referred to here as indefinite.

In conditional clauses with the subjunctive, the speaker places the conditional relation under a layer of possibility, just as in independent clauses. This does not alter the conditional relation itself, but marks it as viewed from the speaker’s perspective rather than asserted neutrally. This layer may affect the protasis, the apodosis, or both.

Within subjunctive conditionals, two basic perspectives can be distinguished. A situation may be presented as

potential  
or  
unreal/counterfactual

Both perspectives can refer to the present or to the past.

The patterns presented below are intentionally schematic. They are meant to illustrate the basic contrasts introduced by the layer of possibility. In actual Latin usage, protasis and apodosis can combine different moods and tenses in more flexible ways than this overview suggests.

Sample Sentences:

The speaker perspective is explained in brackets. It should not be a part of your actual translation.

Indefinite (Indicative Mood):<sup>1</sup>

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Sī hoc dīcis, errās</i>        | If you say this (and I don't make any statement about whether you actually do so), you are mistaken                |
| <i>Sī hoc dīxistī, errāvistī.</i> | If you said this (and I don't make any statement about whether you actually did so), you were mistaken.            |
| <i>Sī hoc dīcēs, errābis</i>      | If you will say this (and I don't make any statement about whether you actually will do so), you will be mistaken. |

Potential:<sup>2</sup>

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Sī hoc dīcās, errēs</i> | If you should say this (and I think you could potentially do so), you would be mistaken. |
|----------------------------|--|

Unreal/Counterfactual:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Sī hoc dīcerēs, errārēs.</i>     | If you said this now (and I know you don't actually do so), you would be mistaken.   |
| <i>Sī hoc dīxissēs, errāvissēs.</i> | If you had said this (and I know you didn't actually), you would have been mistaken. |

Generally speaking, these examples are a very schematic overview. In reality the choice of mood is often much more complex and can be mixed (imagine, say, a sentence like "If you had come yesterday, I would be happy now." – unreal in the past + unreal in the present). We will also not deal with conditional clauses in indirect discourse.

1 Here, too, we can notice that Latin is a bit stricter when it comes to expressing precise time relations: English would tend to express a future protasis in the present tense (even though its content is, strictly speaking, taking place in the future): "If there is a party, I will attend." We can also observe that in the use of the Future Perfect. Look at this sentence: *haec sī attuleris, cenābis bene* – "If you will have brought these things, you will eat well" Strictly speaking, one would have to have brought the things first and will only then be able to eat well, but English tends to simple use the present tense in the protasis ("If you bring this, you will eat well.").

2 While in independent clauses the potential of the present is more frequently expressed by the perfect subjunctive, in conditional clauses the present subjunctive is more common. The use of perfect subjunctive is possible but often serves to emphasize completion (aspect) rather than time.

## Some remarks on future conditional clauses

Forming indefinite conditional clauses in the future is straightforward. One simply uses the future indicative in both protasis and apodosis (“if A will happen, then B will happen”; cf. the third example under Indefinite Conditionals above).

With subjunctive conditional clauses, the situation is less straightforward, since Latin does not have a future subjunctive.

If a speaker wants to formulate a future conditional while placing it under a potential perspective, Latin normally uses the present potential.

A closer look at the potential subjunctive of the present shows why it can be used for future-oriented conditionals. Although formally anchored in the present, such constructions already involve a prospective orientation. In a sentence like “If you should say this, you would be mistaken,” the situation is presented as possible at the moment of speaking, but its realization would necessarily lie beyond that moment. The act of saying (and of being mistaken) could logically only occur after the speaker has uttered the conditional. In this sense, the potential of the present already contains an implicit reference to the future.

If a speaker wishes to formulate a conditional with an unreal / counterfactual perspective whose content is explicitly oriented toward a future or intended action, Latin may use a periphrastic construction combining the future active participle with a form of *esse* in the imperfect subjunctive. This construction is attested in classical Latin, though it remains comparatively rare and is largely confined to contexts where intention or impending action is especially prominent.<sup>1</sup>

Older grammars have attempted to account for these phenomena by using a different categorization of conditional clauses involving future reference, a move that has resulted in rather confusing terminology. Within this framework, the present potential is often called a “future less vivid” (to reflect the fact that the situation is conceived as potential in the present, even though its realization would necessarily lie in the future), while an indefinite conditional referring to the future (e.g. *sī hoc dīcēs, errābis* – “if you say this, you will be mistaken”) is labeled a “future more vivid.”

The underlying intuition is that a future scenario presented without a speaker perspective (a simple “if A, then B”) is in some sense more immediate or concrete than one that is explicitly placed under a potential perspective (“if A should happen, B would happen”). However, the notion of vividness ultimately obscures what is grammatically at stake. The Latin subjunctive only marks whether a conditional relation is presented neutrally or viewed from a speaker perspective. The notion of “vividness” creates the illusion that the subjunctive adds some kind of emotion or excitement to the statement, but that is simply not a thing that the Latin subjunctive does.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. this sentence of Cicero: *Si tibi nemo responsurus esset, tamen causam demonstrare non posses* – “Even if no one were going to answer you, you still would not be able to lay out the case” (*div. in Caec.* 43).

## Subjunctive in Relative Clauses

One further context in which the subjunctive retains a genuine perspective-modifying function is the relative clause. Here, the speaker can subtly adjust the meaning of the clause by placing it under a layer of wish or possibility.

Relative clauses provide another context in which the subjunctive can retain a genuine perspective-modifying function. We can see this most clearly by first considering a relative clause in the indicative.

*Legātōs in Germāniam mīsit, quī epistolam trādidērunt.*

She sent messengers to Germany who handed over the letter.

Here, the relative clause simply states a fact about the messengers: they did hand over the letter.

A speaker can, however, modify this statement by adding a perspective of what was envisaged or wished for at the time of sending, rather than what actually happened. Instead of presenting the action of the relative clause as a fact, the speaker presents it as something that was aimed at or hoped for.

However, a speaker could add a notion of “wished for” to it to make it mean something like:

“She sent messengers to Germany in order to hand over the letter.” (≈ “...whom she wanted to hand over the letter.”)

In this case, the Latin sentence would simply put the verb into the subjunctive:

*Legātōs in Germāniam mīsit, quī epistolam trāderent.*

Seen from this angle, the development is easy to understand. What could once be expressed as an independent optative statement (“may they hand over the letter”) is now integrated into a larger sentence as a relative clause, while retaining the same subjunctive perspective of something wished for rather than asserted as fact.

In many cases, however, the original notions of wish or possibility are no longer so transparent. As relative clauses became more firmly integrated into complex sentence structures, the subjunctive came to be associated with a range of relations between the relative clause and the main clause that are not always easily reducible to a single underlying perspective.

For this reason, modern grammars usually classify subjunctive relative clauses according to the relation they express, rather than by tracing them back to wish or possibility. The most common categories are purpose (final), consecutive, causal, and concessive relative clauses. In many cases, idiomatic English translations no longer use a relative clause at all.

Examples:

*Stultus es, qui id credas.*

You are stupid, because you believe that (≈ ..., you who believe that). → causal

*Nemo tam sapiens est, qui omnia sciat.*

No one is so wise as to know everything. (≈ ..., with the consequence that they are one who knows everything.)  
→ consecutive

*Rex, qui amicus populi Romani Roman esset, exturbatus est.*

The king, although he was a friend of the people, was expelled. (≈ ... although being one who was a friend)  
→ concessive

## Consecutio Temporum – Sequence of Tenses

In dependent clauses where the subjunctive no longer expresses a layer of speaker perspective, its primary function is to indicate the relative time of the dependent clause in relation to the action of the superordinate clause. In this respect, the subjunctive behaves much like participles and infinitives (cf. chapters on non-finite verbs).

There are three basic temporal relations that can be expressed: the action of the dependent clause may take place before, at the same time as, or after the action of the main clause.

In addition to this decision about relative time, Latin also distinguishes between two groups of main-clause tenses: those with a primary tense and those with a secondary tense. Each of these governs a different set of subjunctive forms in the dependent clause.

This system is traditionally referred to as the *consecutio temporum* (sequence of tenses) and can be summarized in the following chart:

| Main Clause   | Dependent Clause              |                              |  |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
|   | Before                        | Simultaneous                 | After  |
| <u>Primary Tense:</u><br>Present<br>Future                    | Perfect Subjunctive<br>(b)    | Present Subjunctive<br>(a)   | FAP + <i>esse</i><br>(in Present Subjunctive)<br>(c)   |
| <u>Secondary Tense:</u><br>Imperfect<br>Perfect<br>Pluperfect | Pluperfect Subjunctive<br>(e) | Imperfect Subjunctive<br>(d) | FAP + <i>esse</i><br>(in Imperfect Subjunctive)<br>(f) |

### Sample sentences:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| a) <i>Interrogat, ubi puer sit.</i>             | She asks where the boy is.        |
| b) <i>Interrogat, ubi puer fuerit.</i>          | She asks where the boy had been.  |
| c) <i>Interrogat, ubi puer futurus sit.</i>     | She asks where the boy will be.   |
| d) <i>Interrogavit, ubi puer esset.</i>         | She asked where the boy was.      |
| e) <i>Interrogavit, ubi puer fuisset.</i>       | She asked where the boy had been. |
| f) <i>Interrogavit, ubi puer futurus esset.</i> | She asked where the boy will be.  |

*Coniugātiō periphrastica* ("periphrastic conjugation")

In the chart above, dependent clauses whose action is understood as taking place after that of the main clause make use of what is called the *coniugātiō periphrastica* ("periphrastic conjugation"). This construction serves as a workaround for the fact that Latin has no distinct future subjunctive form.

In classical Latin, this periphrastic construction is primarily found in indirect questions (like the examples above) and in dependent clauses introduced by *quīn*. In most other types of dependent clauses (such as *ut*-clauses, *cum*-clauses, and relative clauses), future reference is not morphologically marked. Instead, these clauses are treated as simultaneous for the purposes of the sequence of tenses.

## Non-finite Verbs

Non-finite verb forms differ from finite verbs in that they do not function as the predicate of a clause. They are not limited (*finīre*) to a specific person and therefore cannot, on their own, anchor a clause.

Instead, they overlap in form and function with nominal categories. While they retain verbal properties (such as governing objects or being modified by adverbs), they simultaneously either as nouns or as adjectives. They are therefore a bit harder to understand. The main categories of non-finite verb forms in Latin are the Infinitive, the Participle, the Gerund, the Gerundive, and the Supine.

Latin makes extensive use of such forms to integrate verbal content into larger sentence structures without creating new predicates. The following sections will examine these non-finite forms and the different ways in which Latin uses their dual nature. For that, we will mostly focus on understanding the functional aspects of making verbs nominal.<sup>1</sup>

## Verbal Nouns

Latin, like English, makes use of two main verbal noun constructions: an infinitive and a gerund. Both serve the same basic function: they allow verbal actions to be treated as nouns. The two forms differ in their morphology and in the contexts in which they are used. English and Latin, however, distribute the functions of verbal nouns differently across the infinitive and the gerund: in some contexts English uses a gerund where Latin uses an infinitive, and in others the reverse is the case. One might imagine their relation as two partially overlapping circles.

Throughout the following chapters, English will be used as a point of orientation, but the discussion is primarily organized from the perspective of Latin. For this reason, English infinitives will be used in the discussion of (Latin) infinitives, and English gerunds in the discussion of (Latin) gerunds, even where this does not reflect idiomatic English usage. Where this didactic simplification becomes misleading, the difference will be noted explicitly.

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<sup>1</sup> Some grammatical traditions analyze non-finite constructions as a type of “clause-like” subordination: they express relations similar to those of dependent clauses, but do so without a finite verb. In this view, non-finite verbs introduce dependent verbal actions that could often be expanded into full subordinate clauses (see for example the accusative with infinitive structures explained in the next chapter). While this approach can be very helpful, we will instead foreground their double verbal and nominal character, as this more clearly brings out both their internal structure and the ways in which Latin diverges from English. Instead of using the term “clause” we will simply speak of “constructions” in the following chapters.

## The Infinitive

The infinitive is a non-finite verb form. Like all non-finite forms, it combines verbal with non-verbal syntax. It expresses a verbal action more abstractly without attributing it to a certain grammatical person and thereby functions like a noun.<sup>1</sup>

This nominal character becomes visible in the roles the infinitive can assume within a sentence. An infinitive can function as the subject or as the object of a verb, just like a noun.

Take the following sentence:

“The teacher praises the student”

Here, *praises* is a finite verb in the third person and functions as the predicate of the sentence.

Now imagine that we want to refer not to a particular act of praising, but to the action itself in a more abstract way. In English, the infinitive is often marked by *to*. We could say something like:

“To praise the student is appropriate.”<sup>2</sup>

Here, the action of praising is not presented as something that happens at a specific moment, but as an action considered in general. In this example, the infinitive fulfills a syntactic function that is usually reserved for nouns: it functions as the subject of the sentence. This position in our sentence could just as well be filled by an actual noun: “A winter coat is appropriate.”

The infinitive can also fulfill the function of the object in a sentence. We could say:

“The team expects to win the game tonight.”

At the same time, the infinitive retains essential verbal properties: it can take objects of its own (in our case “the student” or “the game”) and can be modified by adverbs (we could say “to praise someone abundantly” or “to win the game decisively”).

The infinitive also expresses two other verbal properties: a notion of time and voice. Like all non-finite verb forms, it does, however, not express absolute tense. Instead, it indicates the time of the verbal action relative to the predicate of the sentence. There are three different time relations: it can be before, simultaneous to, or after the predicate.<sup>3</sup> This verbal action can take place actively or passively. This gives us six different ways an infinitive can appear in, which are demonstrated with the verb “to praise” in the following chart.

1 The terminology is historically unfortunate. Infinitives are non-finite verb forms, that is, forms that are not limited (*finiti*) by person and number. In this sense, all non-finite verb forms are equally “in-finite.” The traditional term infinitive, however, singles out one specific non-finite form and thereby obscures the fact that it belongs to a broader class of forms that share this property. But since the label is firmly established, we are stuck with it.

2 As mentioned in the introduction, we are using the infinitive here for the purpose of simplified demonstration (of the Latin usage). In idiomatic English, a verbal noun in the position of the subject would, however, almost always be expressed by the gerund (“Praising the student is appropriate”).

3 In many contexts, English leaves the temporal relation of an infinitive implicit or resolves it by reformulating the construction altogether, often by using a finite subordinate clause instead. As a result, English infinitives tend to mark relative time only where this is especially relevant or stylistically acceptable.

|              | Active                | Passive                   |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Before       | to have praised       | to have been praised      |
| Simultaneous | to praise             | to be praised             |
| After        | to be about to praise | to be about to be praised |

The examples above were active. In the passive, we could say: "To be praised is great" (Subject)<sup>1</sup> or "The student expects to be praised" (Object).

English infinitives can also express different time relations relative to the predicate.

"The teacher is happy to have praised the student."

Here, the infinitive again functions as an object, but the verbal action it expresses takes place before the action of the predicate (first the praising, then the happiness about it).

These examples already show that English infinitives can become stylistically cumbersome when more complex distinctions of voice and relative time are expressed (and we didn't even attempt to build infinitives that express something "after" the predicate's action). English therefore often prefers finite subordinate clauses in contexts where Latin regularly uses infinitive constructions.

#### Latin Infinitives:

Latin expresses the same basic distinctions of relative time and voice in its infinitive system. Like English, Latin infinitives can indicate an action that is simultaneous with, before, or after to the action of the predicate, and they can appear in the active or passive voice. It yields the following six forms:

|              | Active          | Passive        |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Before       | laudā-v-isse    | laudātum esse  |
| Simultaneous | laudā-re        | laudā-rī       |
| After        | laudātūrum esse | laudātūrum īrī |

The infinitive has no person, number, or gender. Since it does not agree with any other element in the sentence, it appears by default as neuter singular. Unlike other nouns, however, it does not decline through cases: the form of the infinitive remains the same whether it functions as subject or as object.

<sup>1</sup> Just like in the example above, the verbal noun in the position of the subject would normally be the gerund in English: "being praised is great."

The Infinitive as Subject:

Like in English, the Latin infinitive can function as a Subject of a sentence.

*Navigāre negotium magnum est.* "To sail is a difficult affair."

*Cōnfīdere decet, timēre nōn decet.* "It's suitable to have confidence, to fear is not suitable."

The Infinitive as Object:

Like in English, some verbs (like *posse, discere, velle, dēsinerē, audēre, cōnāri*, etc.) can take an infinitive as an Object (this is sometimes called a "complementary infinitive").

*dēsine id mē docēre.* "Stop lecturing me about that."

*audet dicere.* "He dares to say."

## The Accusative with Infinitive

Besides functioning on its own as a subject or object, the infinitive can also be used to express an entire statement in non-finite form. In this construction, the infinitive carries its own logical subject in the accusative, together forming what is traditionally called the accusative with infinitive.

This infinitive statement functions as a single syntactic unit within the larger sentence. Most commonly, it appears as the object of a superordinate verb, but it can also occupy the position of the subject.

A similar construction exists in English as well:

In sentences like

"I saw her go" or "I would like him to know,"

we have, each time, a superordinate sentence consisting of a subject and a predicate ("I" and "saw"/"would like") and a dependent unit consisting of an accusative noun or pronoun ("her/him") together with an infinitive ("go/to know") which together functions as the object of the superordinate clause ("What did I see?" → "her go") In these cases, we can even see the accusative in English (her/him as opposed to she/he).

In English, this construction is relatively restricted. It appears mainly with verbs of perception ("see," "hear"), causation ("make," "let"), and a few others. Latin regularly employs such an infinitive construction in contexts where English would instead use a finite "that"-clause.

This is especially clear in indirect statements:

*Marcus dicit Iuliam in Italia esse.* "Marcus says that Julia is in Italy."

Here, the Latin accusative (*Iuliam*) corresponds to the subject of the English "that"-clause, and the Latin infinitive (*esse*) corresponds to its finite verb. What English expresses with a dependent clause containing a finite verb, Latin expresses with an infinitive construction. Time Relations in the Infinitive:

As with infinitives in general, the infinitive in this construction does not express absolute tense. Instead, it indicates the time relation of its verbal action relative to the superordinate verb:

The action described by a present infinitive is not present, but simply simultaneous the main clause.

The action described by a perfect infinitive is not in the perfect tense, but simply before the main clause

The action described by a future infinitive is not in the future tense, but simply after the main clause.

Sample sentences:

*Marcus dicet Iuliam in Italia esse.*

"Marcus will say that Julia is in Italy."  
(at the time M. speaks)

*Marcus dicit Iuliam in Italia fuisse.*

"Marcus says that Julia was in Italy."

*Marcus dixit Iuliam in Italia futuram esse.*

"Marcus said that Julia will be in Italy."

## Nominative with Infinitive

Closely related to the accusative-and-infinitive is the construction traditionally called the nominative with infinitive. Here, the infinitive again expresses a verbal action in relation to a finite verb, but the noun that belongs logically to the infinitive appears as the subject of the sentence, not in the accusative.

Structurally, this construction arises when a verb that would normally govern an infinitive statement is put into the passive. As a result, the subject of the infinitive is promoted to the subject position of the main clause.

The Nominative with Infinitive mainly appears with verbs like *dicere*, *existimāre*, *putāre*, *iubēre*, *habēre*, etc.

Once again, the tense of the infinitive expresses a time relation to the main clause!

Unlike the accusative-and-infinitive, whose use is far more extensive in Latin than in English, the nominative-with-infinitive largely overlaps in the two languages. In most cases, a Latin nominative-with-infinitive can be translated directly into English without any change in construction:

*Marcus dicitur in Italia esse.*      "Marcus is said to be in Italy."

*Marcus putābātur in Italiā fuisse.*      "Marcus was believed to have been in Italy."

*Marcus iussus est in Italiam  
prōficere.*      "Marcus was commanded to go to Italy."

## The Historical Infinitive

In certain narrative contexts, especially in historiography, Latin authors sometimes abandon finite verb forms altogether and use infinitives as the main verbal form of a sentence. This usage is known as the historical infinitive.

The effect is stylistic. It often appears when things get heated and narration becomes more rapid or list-like, especially in descriptions of collective action or sudden movement.

From a syntactic point of view, the historical infinitive is striking because the infinitive here does neither function as a subject nor an object, nor is it subordinate to another verb. Instead, it takes over the role normally fulfilled by a finite predicate.

At first, this construction can be difficult to recognize. However, it usually becomes clear from context: the sentence lacks a finite verb, and several infinitives typically appear in sequence, all depending loosely on the same implied subject.

It is impossible to translate this literally. It simply isn't a feature of the English language:

*At Romani domi militiaeque intenti **festinare**, **parare**, alius alium **hortari**, hostibus obviam **ire**, libertatem, patriam parentisque armis **tegere**.*

"But the Romans intensively **made haste** at home and in the field, **made preparations**, **encouraged** each other, **went** towards the enemy, and **protected** their liberty, their, fatherland, and their parents with weapons."

## The Gerund

The gerund is also a verbal noun, like the infinitive. It is used where a verbal action needs to appear in a nominal position other than subject or object, which are normally expressed by the infinitive. Therefore, the infinitive and the gerund are largely complementary in distribution.

This means that the gerund is used when a verbal noun is required in a declined position, most commonly in the genitive, dative, accusative, or ablative. It thus allows an action to be integrated into the sentence in much the same way as a regular noun. For this reason, traditional grammars often describe the gerund as a “declined infinitive.”

In English, this type of verbal noun is usually formed by adding -ing to a verb.<sup>1</sup> English does not decline the gerund, but it can still appear in different syntactic positions, which makes it useful for illustrating its function.

We could, for example imagine such a noun expressing a means as in:

“She improved steadily through practicing.”

Or as an attribute as in:

“The pleasure of teaching is hard to describe.”

In Latin, the gerund is formed from the present stem of the verb by adding *-nd-* and the case endings of the second declension. As an abstract verbal noun, it can only be singular and neuter. It also does not have a nominative form (since it cannot function as the subject of a sentence, because that role is taken by the infinitive).<sup>2</sup> As a result, the gerund appears only in oblique cases and is attested with the endings *-i*, *-o*, and *-um*.

The Gerund is always active (or rather indifferent to voice)

| videre     | Gen.      | Dat.      | Acc.       | Abl.      |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Sg. Neuter | vide-nd-i | vide-nd-o | vide-nd-um | vide-nd-o |

The accusative is rather rare, because in its usual function, the direct object, the infinitive would be used instead. It therefore only appears with prepositions that govern the accusative (like *ad*).<sup>3</sup>

The Dative is almost never used.

<sup>1</sup> This makes it harder to distinguish from the present active participle. We will address this in the participle chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This is an important difference to English, where the verbal noun used for the subject is the gerund and not the infinitive.

<sup>3</sup> In other words, verbs have two different accusatives (the infinitive when they function as objects and the gerund for all other accusatives).

Examples:

*Iulia consilium dormiendi cepit.* "Julia formed a plan of sleeping."

Here the gerund appears in the genitive as an attribute of *consilium*.

*Spatium sumamus ad cogitandum.* "Let us take time for thinking."

In this sentence, the gerund appears in the accusative with *ad*, expressing the context or purpose of the action.

*Quid est dulcius quam de edendo cogitare?* What is sweeter than thinking  
"about eating?"

Here the gerund is used in the ablative with *de*, again occupying a nominal position introduced by a preposition.

## Verbal Adjectives

Like English, Latin also makes use of verbal adjectives, namely participles and gerundives. Both serve the same basic function: they allow verbal actions to be expressed as adjectives, so that an action can be attributed to a noun within a sentence. English also has participles, but the gerundive has no direct equivalent in English.

## The Participle

Participles are non-finite verb forms that combine verbal and adjectival features. The term participle comes from Latin *particeps*, “having a share,” which already points to this double nature.<sup>1</sup> Like verbs, participles express an action and can take objects or adverbial modifiers. Like adjectives, they are used to qualify a noun and agree with it in case, number, and gender. A participle therefore does not normally function as the predicate of a clause. Instead, it introduces an additional verbal action and presents it as a property of a noun.

The action expressed by a participle can appear in two voices (active or passive) and in three different time relations to the main predicate. It can be simultaneous with it, prior to it, or subsequent to it (it never expresses absolute tense). This yields six combinations, which can be illustrated with the verb “to praise”:<sup>2</sup>

|              | Active          | Passive             |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Before       | having praised  | having been praised |
| Simultaneous | praising        | being praised       |
| After        | about to praise | about to be praised |

To see how participles function, it is helpful to place them in concrete sentences. Imagine them in the context of a statement about a teacher and a student:

“The teacher is at school praising the student.”

Here, the core of the sentence is just “the teacher is at school.” The teacher, however, is described closer by a new verbal action (“to praise”) and this verbal action is attributed to the teacher almost like an adjective. One could even rephrase the sentence as “the praising teacher is at school,” placing the participle just as one would an actual adjective (e.g., “the old teacher is at school”). What makes the form verbal rather than purely adjectival is that it does not merely describe a quality, but introduces an action. This action is articulated through verbal categories such as voice and relative time, and it can in turn govern its own arguments, for example an object such as “the student.”

In this case it is active and happens simultaneously to the rest (he is at school while praising the student).

1 The terminology is historically unfortunate here. The term participle (Latin *particeps*, “having a share”) originally refers to the hybrid nature of these forms, which combine verbal meaning with adjective properties. Some grammars therefore apply the term “participial” generally to all non-finite verbs since they all combine verbal with nominal or adjective properties. But since the term “participle” is so firmly established for this one type of participial word, we are stuck with the traditional terminology.

2 The present active participle in English is a form in -ing and therefore identical with the gerund. Some modern English grammars do not distinguish between those two forms anymore. One, slightly cumbersome but effective, way to understand the difference between the English forms in -ing is to try to transform them into a noun by adding an article. Compare the following experiments: “Seeing his old friend made him happy” can turn into “The seeing of his old friend made him happy” because “seeing” is basically a noun here. But in “Playing cards she sat in her garden” cannot turn into “The playing of cards, she that in her garden” because “playing” is a participle and therefore basically an adjective.

The same structure can appear in the passive:

“The student, being praised by the teacher, is at school.”

Here the participle attributes the action to “the student,” not to the teacher. The action is still simultaneous with the main predication.

We can easily imagine the whole participle situation taking place before the finite verb:

“The teacher, having praised the student (yesterday), is (now) in school.” (active)

“The student, having been praised by the teacher (yesterday), is (now) in school”  
(passive)

Finally, it is also possible to imagine the participial action as following the main verb, although this requires some periphrastic formulations.

“The teacher, about to praise the student (tomorrow), is in school (now)” (active)

“The student, about to be praised by the teacher (tomorrow), is in school (now).”

These examples already show that, while English can in principle express all combinations of voice and time relations through verbal adjectives, the resulting forms are usually periphrastic and feel rather cumbersome. English therefore tends to convey similar information by means of full subordinate clauses. Latin, by contrast, organizes the same relations more smoothly within its participle system. We will get to how to move between these two tendencies below.

## Latin Participles

Latin participles function in the same basic way as the English participles just discussed. They attribute an action to a noun and combine verbal categories with adjectival agreement. The difference does not lie in how participles function, but in how many distinct forms the language actually uses. Latin only makes use of three of the six possible combinations of voice and relative time:

- before & passive
- simultaneous & active
- after & active

The other three logically possible options (before & active; simultaneous & passive; after & passive) simply do not exist as participles in Latin!

Traditionally, the three existing participles in Latin are called:

- Perfect Passive Participle (PPP)
- Present Active Participle (PAP)
- Future Active Participle (FAP)

Just like with the infinitives, the names are historically inherited and potentially misleading (before is called “perfect”; simultaneous is called “present”; after is called “future”). The participle itself never establishes the temporal reference point; it only locates its action in relation to the main predicate.

## Morphology:

The PAP takes the present stem of a verb and add *-ns*, *-ntis* with endings of the 3rd declension

The PPP takes the fourth principal part and adds endings of the 1st & 2nd declension

The FAP takes the fourth principal part and adds *-urus*, *-ura*, *-urum* (1st & 2nd declension endings)

(cf. "Morphology" section for details)

## Syntax:

Because a participle functions as an adjective, it must be able to agree with the noun it describes in case, number, and gender. In the examples above, the participle only described the Subject of the sentence, but the noun can occupy any syntactic role in the sentence. Consider this sentence:

"The teacher praises the student, having completed her homework."

Here, the participle describes the direct object ("the student"). In English, the relation is indicated by word order. In Latin the participle would appear in the accusative singular feminine.

In Latin, however, this particular participial form would not exist to begin with, because there is no participle that denotes active action with anterior time. The example therefore serves two purposes: it illustrates how participles, like adjectives, attach to a noun through agreement, and it also marks the limits of the Latin participial system. As in all the examples above, we also see that, by virtue of its verbal character, a participle can govern its own objects, here "her homework."

This brings us back to the "clunkiness" of English participles: nobody would actually say "the student having been praised by the teacher." In Latin, however, a comparable construction sounds concise and idiomatic. In addition, Latin participles routinely convey adverbial information that English participles tend not to sustain on their own, in particular relations of cause, purpose, or concession.

Both languages regularly convey these relations; they simply distribute them across different syntactic structures. Latin often packages them into participial forms, whereas English typically unfolds them into full subordinate clauses.

Because we constantly move between Latin and English it is important to be aware of these differences. Working with participles therefore requires more than replacing one form with another: it involves recognizing how a given relation framed in one language and how it is more naturally expressed in the other. A Latin participle can carry a considerable amount of relational information without explicitly fixing how that information is to be understood. The following example illustrates this shift.

In a sentence such as

*Discipulus laudatus a magistro gaudet.*

Literally, this says "the student, having been praised by the teacher, is happy."

The participle *laudatus* attributes an action to *discipulus*, but it leaves open how this action relates to the main predication beyond the basic indication of anterior time and

passive voice. When rendering the sentence in English, this openness cannot usually be maintained. An English sentence is forced to settle the relation more explicitly, even though several interpretations may remain plausible.

The following translations all unfold information that is present in the Latin participle, but they do so by committing to different ways of structuring it. They are therefore sometimes mutually exclusive in English, even though they correspond to the same Latin construction:

Temporal clause:

"After he was praised by the teacher, the student is happy."

Causal clause:

"Because the student was praised by the teacher, he is happy."

Concessive clause:

"Although the student was praised by the teacher, he is happy."

Relative clause:

"The student, who was praised by the teacher, is happy."

## Integration into the Clause

Participles, like other adjectives, can be used either attributively or predicatively. This distinction concerns how the participle is integrated into the sentence structure and corresponds directly to the distinctions introduced earlier.

Used attributively, a participle is integrated into a noun phrase and contributes to the characterization of the noun it agrees with. In such cases, the participle does not relate directly to the finite verb, but functions as part of the nominal expression. In a sentence like *Laelius insulam obiectam portui Brundisino tenuit* ("Laelius held the island lying opposite the harbor of Brundisium") the participle simply specifies which island is meant.

Used predicatively, they say something about a noun in connection with the action/ predicate of the sentence. Predicative participles can be either obligatory or non-obligatory, depending on the valence of the verb. In *mihi dormienti epistula tua reddita est* ("your letter was delivered to me while I was sleeping"), the participle *dormienti* is predicative. It describes the state or activity of the "me" at the time the event takes place. It is not obligatory.

Predicative participles are easiest to identify when they are obligatory, i.e., the participle is required to complete the predicate. This is most clearly the case with the copula *esse*. In this function, the participle is a necessary addition to the predicate that either goes with the subject or the object of a sentence (E.g. *Gallia est divisa in partes tres* – "Gaul is divided in three parts").

Strictly speaking, the compound form that is usually described as the passive voice of the perfect tense is also an obligatory predicative of the participle. In *urbs aedificata est* ("the city has been built"), the participle *aedificata* supplies the verbal content of the predicate, while *esse* is the copula.

Some grammars also speak of "adverbial" or "circumstantial" participles. This terminology reflects the fact that whole participle phrases often play an adverbial role in the larger structure of the sentence by expressing circumstances such as time, cause, purpose, or

concession. Strictly speaking, however, this adverbial function belongs to the phrase as a whole rather than to the participle itself.

#### Examples:

*Magister puerum laudans in schola est.* The teacher, praising the boy, is at school.  
→ PAP in Nom. Sg. (describing the Subject)

We could translate with a temporal clause. The PAP is simultaneous. Therefore: "The teacher is at school while praising the boy" or as a relative clause "The teacher, who praises the boy, is at school."

*Magister puerum dormientem non laudat.* The teacher does not praise the sleeping boy.  
→ PAP in Acc. Sg. (describing the Direct Object)

Here, the literal translation actually sounds good as it is, but we could also translate with a temporal clause: "The teacher does not praise the boy while he (the boy) is sleeping." or even as a causal clause: "The teacher does not praise the boy because he is sleeping."

*Magister pueris scribentibus donum dat.* The teacher gives the writing boys a gift.  
→ PAP in Dat. Pl. (describing the Indirect Object)

Here, we could again translate with a temporal, relative, or causal clause, or even a concessive clause: "The teacher gives the boys a gift although they are writing."

*Urbs aedificata laudatur a hominibus.* The city, having been built, is praised by the people.  
→ PPP in Nom. Sg. (describing the Subject)

Once again, a participle describing the subject, but it is 'before & passive.' Since it sounds clunky in English, we might want to translate with temporal clause instead: "After the city was built, it was praised by the people."

## The Future Active Participle

The Future Active participle does not have a direct equivalent in English, but we can come close with a provisional literal translation, like "about to ...."

*Discipulus domum iit magistrum laudaturus.* "The student, about to praise the teacher, went home."  
→ FAP in Nom. Sg. (describing the Subject)

The FAP can also convey a purpose or intention: "The student went home to praise his teacher."

## Ablative Absolute

An ablative absolute is (usually) a construction consisting of a noun and a participle in the ablative. Like other participial constructions, the participle introduces an additional verbal action into the sentence.

What distinguishes the ablative absolute from other participle uses is how the construction is positioned syntactically. The noun–participle group does not enter into the usual syntactic relations of the sentence: it is neither a subject, nor object, nor attribute, nor part of the predicate of the main clause. Instead, it stands alongside the clause as a separate grammatical unit. In this sense, the construction is absolute (*absolutus* = “detached, standing apart”), that is, outside the normal sentence relations. Look at the following sentence:

*Urbe captā Romani abierunt.* (“city captured | the Romans left”)

There is no grammatical connection between the main clause and the participle construction. Grammatically speaking, the sentence simply states two separate facts: that a city was captured, and that the Romans left. Logically, however, the ablative absolute situates the action of the main clause by describing the circumstances under which it takes place (usually either temporally, causally, or concessively, like other Latin participles): We can imagine, of course, that the Romans are the ones who did the capturing and also that they are only leaving because the city is now captured and therefore their work is done, but grammatically this is not clear.

We have a quite similar construction in English, called “Nominative Absolute”. Compare the following sentences:

The dragon slain, the knight took his rest.  
The truck finally loaded, they said goodbye and drove off.

In both languages, it must be inferred from context how this circumstantial relation is to be understood. The relative time expressed by the Latin participle follows the same principles as elsewhere.

Although English also has an absolute construction, we usually want to express the logical (or temporal) connection between the two parts more visibly. We have several options to do so (though not all make sense all the time):

### Temporal clause:

“After the city was captured, the Romans left.”

### Causal clause:

“Because the city was captured, the Romans left.”

### Concessive sentence:

“Although the city was captured, the Romans left.”

Since there is no direct grammatical “relation”, a “relative” clause is not possible here.#

## Ablative Absolute without Participle

Sometimes an ablative absolute can even appear without any participle at all, but with another noun fulfilling the descriptive function of the Participle.

Compare the following two sentences (and their provisional translations):

*Caesare dormiente milites Romani Galliam eunt.*  
Caesar sleeping | the Roman soldiers went to Gaul.

*Caesare duce milites Romani Galliam eunt.*  
Caesar the leader | the Roman soldiers went to Gaul.

The first case is a normal ablative absolute (a participle and an agreeing noun, describing the circumstances of the main clause, but not being directly linked to any part of that main clause; both in the ablative).

The second case does almost the same, but with two nouns. They describe the circumstances of the main clause, while not being directly linked to any part of that main clause. The soldiers went to Gaul and the circumstances are that “Caesar was the leader.”

This construction most frequently appears with “job” descriptions, but sometimes also with adjectives:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Romulo rege</i>        | With Romulus as king/While R. was king                 |
| <i>Cicerone consule</i>   | While Cicero was consul/Under the consulship of Cicero |
| <i>matre invita</i>       | The mother unwilling = against the mother’s will       |
| <i>me vivo</i>            | Me alive = In my lifetime/while I was (still) alive    |
| <i>Eo mortuo</i>          | Him dead = After his death                             |
| <i>nobis insciis</i>      | We unknowing = without our knowledge                   |
| <i>Augusto imperatore</i> | With Augustus as emperor/While A. was emperor          |

## The Gerundive

The gerundive is another type of verbal adjective, one that does not exist in English. A gerundive looks almost like a gerund. It is formed from the present stem of the verb by adding -nd- and case endings. But like other adjectives, it agrees with a noun and therefore needs to be able to take all possible combinations of case, number, and gender. For that it can take all the endings of the first and second declension. At the same time, it is verbal in that it denotes an action. Crucially, this action is expressed in the passive: the noun the gerundive agrees with is presented as undergoing the action rather than performing it.

The uses of the gerundive can largely be grouped into two types. In the first, the gerundive contributes a further notion that makes it possible to approximate the construction in English. In the second, the gerundive functions in a structurally different way and is best understood in relation to the gerund.

### First group: Gerunds expressing Necessity

In this first group, the gerundive typically also expresses a notion of necessity. English does not have a direct equivalent, but we can get close with an expression such as “to be + past passive participle”:

This homework is to be done by Friday.

This sentence makes the relevant elements visible: the verb to do is used to characterize a noun (homework), the construction is passive, and it carries a notion of necessity.

Like all adjectives, the gerundive can be integrated into a sentence in two different ways: attributive and predicative.

#### Attributive:

Used attributively, the gerundive is integrated into a noun phrase and modifies the noun it agrees with:

*liber legendus*  
“a book to be read,”

More naturally, we could render this in English as “a book worth reading” or perhaps even “a must-read book.”

#### Predicative:

Used predicatively, the gerundive describes a noun in connection to the predicate. Predicative gerundives can be either non-obligatory or obligatory.

A non-obligatory predicative gerundive adds an additional characterization that is not required by the verb. For example:

*librum tibi do legendum*  
“I give you a book to be read.”

More naturally: “I give you a book for you to read.”

Predicative gerundives are easiest to identify when they are obligatory, that is, required to complete the predicate. This is most clearly the case with the copula *esse*:

*liber legendus est*  
"the book is to be read"

More naturally: "the book must be read"

When negated, this construction expresses prohibition rather than mere absence of necessity. In that, it functions like the English marker of necessity "must":

*liber legendus non est*  
"the book must not be read"

The person who must or mustn't do the action is added in the dative case.

*Liber tibi legendus est*  
"You must read the book"

## Second Group: The Dominant Gerundive

We have seen that the gerund is a verbal noun and, like other nouns, can take a direct object. For example, one might say:

*consilium Italiam relinquendi*  
"the plan of leaving Italy"

Here, *relinquendi* is a gerund in the genitive, functioning as an attribute of *consilium*, and *Italiam* is its direct object.

Latin often avoids such constructions with the gerund carrying an object in certain cases (we get to those below). Instead, it shifts to a gerundive construction. Since the gerundive is an adjective and cannot take an object, the structure of the phrase changes. The action expressed by the verb is now attached as an attribute to what was previously the object, and that noun takes over the syntactic role the gerund had before:

*consilium relinquendae Italiae*

From the point of view of English, this construction is puzzling. A literal translation such as "the plan of the Italy to be left" is both unidiomatic and misleading, since it suggests a notion of necessity that is not actually there. In this use, the gerundive no longer contributes the idea of obligation; it simply allows Latin to express the same content in a different structural way.

What has happened, in effect, is that within the noun phrase the gerundive has become the dominant element, while the noun it agrees with has become dependent on it. English does not allow such a reorganization, which is why the construction feels strange at first.

For practical purposes, this difficulty can be handled with a simple rule of thumb. When a gerundive replaces a gerund, it is helpful to reverse the Latin restructuring explicitly. The gerundive is first turned back into a gerund, restoring the underlying verbal noun construction.

The noun that the gerundive agrees with can then be attached to this gerund. In idiomatic English, this noun will often appear as the direct object of the gerund, yielding a natural translation. However, the procedure that works in all cases is to attach the noun as a genitive attribute. Applied to the example above,

*consilium relinquendae Italiae*

can thus be rendered mechanically as

“the plan of the leaving of Italy.”

This formulation is clunky, but it reliably preserves the structure of the Latin expression. From this mechanically faithful version, a more idiomatic English translation can usually be developed, such as “the plan of leaving Italy.”

Once this reversal is kept in mind, dominant gerundives become much easier to handle, even though they initially look alien to English speakers. The crucial point is that the syntactic function of the entire gerundive phrase must be identified first. Only then can the reversed gerund phrase be placed correctly in the English sentence.

Consider the following examples:

*Agricola de villa emenda cum mercatore egit.*

Literally: “The farmer negotiated with the merchant about the country house to be bought.”

Reversing the structure, we first restore the gerund and attach the noun as a genitive attribute:

“negotiated about the buying of the country house.”

This preserves both the internal structure of the Latin phrase and its syntactic role, here governed by the preposition *de* (“about”) + Ablative. From this mechanically faithful version, we can then move to a more idiomatic translation:

“The farmer negotiated with the merchant about the purchase of the country house.”

A similar process applies in sentences of motion or purpose:

*Exercitus ad urbem expugnandam processit.*

Literally: “The army advanced to the city to be conquered.”

Reversed mechanically, this becomes:

“the advancing to the conquering of the city.”

From there, a natural English formulation suggests itself:

“The army advanced to conquer the city.”

Finally, consider a construction with a preposition governing the ablative:

*Ciceronem nihil deterruit a reo defendendo.*

Literally: "Nothing deterred Cicero from the defendant to be defended."

Reversing the structure yields:

"from the defending of the defendant."

This allows an immediate idiomatic reformulation:

"Nothing deterred Cicero from defending the defendant."

One might ask why Latin does not simply use the gerund in all of these cases to begin with. That is a reasonable question, but like many features of language structure, it cannot be answered in any principled way. What can be observed, however, is how the two constructions tend to be distributed in actual usage.

Generally speaking, the gerundive is preferred when a verbal noun would take an object and is additionally either governed by a preposition or appears in the dative. In such contexts, the gerundive largely replaces the gerund. The gerund, by contrast, is used when no object is involved, or when the object is a neuter pronoun. These tendencies are not absolute rules, but they provide a helpful guideline for understanding why Latin usually chooses one construction over the other.



# Appendix

## Finite Dependent Clauses

So far, we have seen several ways in which Latin can integrate additional actions into a sentence, for example through verbal nouns (infinitives and gerunds) or verbal adjectives (participles and gerundives). They all allow events or states to be related to a main predicate without forming a separate finite clause. Finite dependent clauses represent another, structurally distinct strategy for doing the same thing.

A dependent clause is a clause with its own finite verb that is grammatically integrated into another clause. It is typically introduced by a subordinating marker such as a conjunction (e.g. *cum*, *quod*, *ut*) or a relative word (*qui*, *quae*, *quod*, *ubi*, *unde*, etc.). Like other sentence elements, dependent clauses can serve different structural roles. Some function as arguments of a predicate (as in indirect statements or indirect questions), while others function as satellites, situating the action of the main clause by specifying time, cause, condition, purpose, or concession.

One striking feature of Latin dependent clauses is the frequent use of the subjunctive mood. In many cases, this use is not marking a speaker perspective but serves as a structural marker of subordination. In passing, we already touched upon conditional clauses, relative clauses, and the general idea of the sequence of tenses in dependent clauses in the subjunctive. We will therefore not go through dependent clauses in a systematic way. While they are a very complex field, most of them are sufficiently understandable with the knowledge of the above and the semantic functions of the marker words.

Because of their central role in Latin narrative and their wide range of structural variation, we will, however, add a short overview of temporal clauses in this appendix.

## Temporal Clauses

Temporal clauses are usually a kind of satellite clause that describes the chronological relation between two actions: the action of the main clause and that of the temporal clause. There are many different ways this can look like in Latin. The following is just a partial overview of the existing possibilities. As opposed to the other parts of this document, it is not meant to be memorized but rather as a short overview of what to expect in Latin literature.

Temporal clauses are introduced by a particle (like “when,” “during,” “after,” “before,” etc.).

They can express three different time relations: before, simultaneously, after. Each of them can appear in a lot of variations regarding the exact time relation (they can mark things up to a certain point, or something that happened multiple times, etc.) and with different introductory particles.

We can also distinguish temporal clauses by their mood: simple ones that use the indicative, and those that are associated with additional layers of interpretation (such as cause) and can appear in the subjunctive.

For the ease of use, the following overview will not be sorted by these broader categories, but instead by the particles.

## Temporal Clauses with *postquam*, *ubi*, *ut*, *ut primum*, *simul atque* + Indicative

The action of the main clause starts right after the action of the temporal clause, which therefore mostly uses the perfect tense (or historical present).

The particles can be translated with "after," "as soon as," "when," "since"

*Postquam tuas litteras legi, me convenit Servius.* "After I read your letter, Servius came to me."

*Ubi omnis idem sentire intellexit, posterum diem pugnae constituit.* "When/as soon as he understood that all were of the same opinion, he appointed the next day for the battle."

*Simul atque introductus est, rem confecit.* "As soon as he was brought in, he did the job."

## Temporal clauses with *dum*, *donec*, *quoad*

*dum* + Present Indicative ("while"):

*Dum haec geruntur, Caesari nuntiatum est,* "While this was going on, a message was brought to Caesar."

*dum*, *donec*, *quoad* + Indicative ("as long as" / "until"):

*Dum anima est, spes est* "As long as there is life, there is hope"

*Hoc feci, dum licuit.* "I did this while/as long as it was allowed."

*dum*, *donec*, *quoad* + (Present or Imperfect) Subjunctive gives a notion of intention or expectancy to the temporal relation:

*expectas fortasse dum dicat.* "You are waiting perhaps until he says..." (i.e., waiting for him to say)

*Ego hic cogito commorari, quoad me reficiam.* "I think I will stay here until I am well again" (i.e., I will wait with the intention to get well before I leave)

## Temporal Clauses with *cum*

*cum* is by far the most versatile of all the conjunctions (not to be confused with *cum* + Abl. = "with"). The following list is, again, just for a quick orientation.

### *cum* with Indicative

*cum* temporal dates or defines the time at which the action of the main verb occurred ("when," "at the time when"). The main verb can be additionally described with (*nunc, tum, eo tempore*, etc.):

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Caesar, cum (primum) per anni<br/>tempus potuit, ad exercitum<br/>contendit</i> | "When/as soon as time allowed,<br>Caesar went to the army" |
|--|--|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Tum cum in Asia res magnas<br/>permulti amiserant</i> | "at that time, when many had lost great<br>fortunes in Asia" |
|--|--|

*cum* modal is not only denotes chronological simultaneousness, but also adds explanatory value ("on the grounds that"/ "by"):

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>cum tacent, clamant</i> | "When they are silent, they cry out" (i.e., their silence is<br>emphatic expression of their sentiments) |
|----------------------------|--|

*cum* iterative gives a repetitive, general actions ("every time when"):

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Gubernatores cum delphinos<br/>se in portum conicientes<br/>viderunt, tempestatem<br/>significari putant.</i> | "Every time the sailors saw dolphins swimming<br>into the harbor, they thought that a storm was<br>coming." |
|--|---|

*cum inversum* denotes an inverted relation between main and dependent clause. The dependent clause action is going on when suddenly (unexpectedly) the temporal clause action hits:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Vixdum epistulam tuam legeram,<br/>cum ad me amicus quidam venit.</i> | "I had just finished reading your letter,<br>when all of a sudden, a certain friend arrived." |
|--|---|

### *cum* with Subjunctive

*cum* narrative (or historic) is very common in narrations and gives the circumstances of the actions. It uses Imperfect Subjunctive when the circumstances are still ongoing, and Pluperfect Subjunctive when the circumstances are already completed:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Cum essem otiosus domi,<br/>M. ad me Brutus venerat.</i> | "While I was at leisure at home,<br>Marcus Brutus had come up to me." |
|---|---|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Cum id nuntiatum esset, maturat.</i> | "When this had been reported, he made haste." |
|---|---|

*cum* causal (sometimes *praesertim cum*) gives a temporal relation that is also understood as a causal relation ("because," "since"):

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>id difficile non est,<br/>cum tantum equitatu valeamus.</i> | "This is not difficult,<br>since we are so strong with respect to the<br>cavalry." |
|--|--|

*cum* concessive gives a temporal relation that is also understood as concessive ("though"):

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>cum primi ordines concidissent,<br/>tamen acerrime reliqui<br/>resistebant.</i> | "Though the first ranks had fallen,<br>the others still resisted vigorously." |
|--|---|

### Temporal Clauses with *antequam* and *priusquam*

These words mean "sooner ... than = before." Technically *ante* and *prius* modify the main clause, *quam* the subordinate clause. They can therefore be split up in a sentence.

The Indicative is used when a simply chronological sequence is shown:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>antequam legi tuas litteras,<br/>hominem ire cupiebam</i>         | "Before I read your letters, I wished the man to<br>leave."                   |
| <i>neque prius fugere destiterunt<br/>quam ad flumen pervenerunt</i> | "and they didn't stop their flight<br>before (until) they reached the river." |

The Subjunctive often adds a notion of expectancy or purpose or describes an action that did not take place:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Navalis hostis ante adesse potest<br/>quam quisquam eum videre<br/>possit.</i> | "An enemy at sea can be there before anyone<br>see him." |
|---|--|

#### Nota bene:

There is a frequent construction of corresponding *cum ... tum ...*, meaning "... as well as (especially) ...." It originally also stems from temporal structures (when already ..., then surely also ...), though it is usually not really recognizable as such anymore.

It functions similar to a corresponding *et ... et ...* with special emphasis on the *tum*-part:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>cum in ceteris civitatibus<br/>tum maxime in nostra</i> | "in other states, and especially in ours" |
|--|---|

