Chapter 11: Pronouns

Chapter 11 covers the following: the personal pronouns in Latin; the formation of *īdem, eadem, idem*, meaning “the same”; and as usual at the end of the lesson we’ll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

But before we begin, a brief warning: this chapter requires a great deal of memorization. Many of the forms you’ll learn here are irregular, or at least, they may seem to be at first. However, there are in fact patterns underlying many of the apparent irregularities and, wherever these patterns exist, I’ll point them out to help you in your memorizing. But the sad fact is, you’ll need to spend a good deal of time studying and memorizing these important and common pronoun forms. Get to work now. You’ve been warned.

Personal Pronouns. “Personal” in grammar means “relating to person,” that is, first, second, or third person. In English, those persons are represented by pronouns: I, you, he, she, it, and so on. These are forms we’ve already studied in relation to verbs. Now we’ll look at them independently as pronouns. In other words, what we’re studying in this chapter is how Latin treats these forms, not as verb endings but as nouns, the way they decline through cases as nouns do in Latin. Or to put it another way, remember how we studied that “boy” in Latin goes *puer*, nominative singular (subject); *pueri*, genitive singular, “of the boy;” *puero*, dative singular, “to/for the boy.” You do remember that, right? I’m going to pretend you said yes. Now we’re going to study the Latin equivalent of the pronoun “I” and its comrades do the same ─ i.e., the way Latin says: nominative “I,” genitive “of me,” dative “to me,” and so on; and its second-person counterpart: “you,” “of you,” “to you;” and the third person: “he,” “she,” “it,” “his,” “hers,” “its,” and so on, along with their plural counterparts.

So let’s get to it. And no better place to begin than with what’s most important in the world: me! I mean, of course, the first-person singular pronoun. With that introduction, it should come as no surprise that the Latin first-person singular pronoun begins *ego*. It’s where we get the word “ego.” Let’s decline this pronoun together. Here it is: *ego, mei, mihi, me, me.* Let’s say it again: *ego, mei, mihi, me, me.* And to the right on the diagram is its second-person comrade. Let’s say that together too: *tu, tui, tibi, te, te.* Let’s now say them both: *ego, mei, mihi, me, me, tu, tui, tibi, te, te.* Keep saying these until you’ve memorized them or your tongue is bleeding, or both. And here is the translation of these forms: *ego* means “I” as subject, *mei* “of me,” *mihi* “to/or for me,” *me* “me” as direct object, *me* “me” as the object of a preposition. The same holds true for the second person singular *tu*, so no need to belabor that translation. I think you get the point.

But I bet you’re wondering — or at least I hope you are — why Latin would have a nominative singular for “I” and “you” at all. Aren’t those pronouns embedded in the verb? Why would you need to say *ego*, when *amo* and *video* by their very nature indicate first person singular? Good question! And the answer is these pronoun forms like *ego* and *tu* are emphatic. In other words, they’re used to emphasize the subject, not explain what the subject is the way nominative personal pronouns function in English. In English we have to say “we” if we want to indicate that “we” is the subject. But that same information is embedded in every Latin finite verb. So the Romans didn’t use their nominative personal pronouns to explain what the subject is; rather, they used them to emphasize it. For instance, if we said in Latin *tune amas?* “Are you in love?” In this
case, the Latin speaker would be emphasizing the subject, “you,” by including the Latin nominative personal pronoun *tu*.

I can’t leave *ego* and *tu* without talking a little linguistics. If linguistics bores you, stick your fingers in your ears for the next two minutes. Because personal pronouns are commonly used forms in Indo-European languages, they reveal some interesting features of the evolution of those daughter languages which developed out of the mother tongue that Latin and English share: Proto-Indo-European. Originally, the Latin word *ego* and the English word “I” were the same word. Both evolved from a form that looked like *ego* — so Latin actually changed the form of this pronoun very little — but in English the inherited -g- transformed at some point into a /kh/ sound. This ended up as a form that sounded like /iːk/ which is still the Dutch word for “I,” cf. German *ich*. English eventually dropped the -k-, lengthened the i-, and we ended up with our first-person singular personal pronoun. The same interchange between -c- and -g- can be seen in our word “cold” and the Latin word *gelidus*, both from an Indo-European base that means “frozen.” Also, English “kin” and Latin *gens* come from a single Indo-European word that meant “family.” A comparable pattern of change explains *tu* in Latin and “thou,” the archaic English form of “you.” Indo-European *t-* remained as *t-* in Latin, but in English it evolved into *th-* — thus, *tu* and “thou.” They were once the same word. You can see the same pattern in the word for “mother:” Latin has *mater*, English has “mother.” Likewise, the word for “tooth,” where Latin has *dentes*, English has “teeth.”

Linguistics break over. You can take your fingers out of your ears. Let’s return to the declension of *ego* and *tu*. Their genitive singular forms, *mei* and *tui*, show the same -i ending seen in second declension. No -ius here. These are personal pronouns, not demonstratives. And these genitive forms of the personal pronouns will have a characteristic that may seem very odd to you: they do not show possession. The personal possessive adjectives *meus* and *tuus* perform that function. So there’s no need to have another way of saying “belonging to me” or “belonging to you” other than *meus* and *tuus*, “my” and “your.”

So then, you’re probably saying to yourself, “If these forms don’t show possession, how are genitive forms like *mei* and *tui* used?” Well, possession is not the only use of the genitive. There are other uses, for instance, an objective genitive. For example, “love of me” — it’s called objective because the genitive operates as the implicit object of the verbal sense inside the noun — “Love of me” implies “Someone loves me.” Another use of the genitive that doesn’t show possession is the partitive genitive, as in “some part of me.” Wheelock discusses both on page 50, footnote 4. Was that too much? I have the sense I’ve lost some of you. And I don’t want to threaten your love of Latin by throwing too much grammar at you too fast. If that’s the case, sorry. If you got what I just said about objective and partitive genitives, great! But if not, don’t panic. You’re not responsible for knowing these uses of the genitive right now. Those are dragons we’ll slay when we get to a different dungeon.

Returning to the declension of *ego* and *tu*, the dative case forms are *mihi* and *tibi* — not much I can do to help you memorize those other than to point out they look like each other. Sorry. Memorize them. At least the last two forms won’t be that complicated. *Me* and *te* are the accusative and ablative forms of these pronouns. *Me* — come on — looks like “me.” And *te*, well you’re just going to have to memorize that one.
One more thing to note about these pronouns is how they operate with the preposition *cum*, the preposition we learned in the previous chapter. When Latin says “with me,” it does not say *cum me* but *mecum*. It’s an idiom. The same is true of *te; tecum*, “with you.”

And here is the plural of *ego* and *tu*: *nos* and *vos*, “we” and “y’all.” Let’s recite these forms together: *nos, nostrum* — we’ll talk about *nostri* in a second — *nobis, nos, nobis*. And the second person: *vos, vestrum, vobis, vos, vobis*. And here is how these forms translate: “we,” “of us,” “to/for us,” blah, blah, blah, no surprises here. Let’s move on.

As in the singular, the nominative forms are used mainly for emphasis, and the formation of the nominative and accusative plural forms, *nos* and *vos*, is not all that irregular if you look at them as close cousins of the third-declension nominative and accusative plural forms -*es*. Again like in the singular, the genitive forms do not show possession. *Noster* and *vester*, the personal possessive adjectives meaning “our” and “y’all’s,” are used to show possession for these forms, but the plural exhibits an interesting difference from the singular. Instead of having only one form of the genitive which is used both as a partitive and objective genitive, *nostri* and *vestri* are used as partitive genitives — for example, “some of us” or “most of y’all” — and the singular génitive this shows strong pointing 

Here is the singular of *is, ea, id*. The Romans really had no equivalent to English “he/she/it,” or in the plural “they.” Where we would use these third-person plural pronouns, the Romans used their weak demonstrative adjective *is, ea, id*, meaning “this” or “that,” and in its substantive sense “this/that man/woman/thing.” You’re probably saying to yourself, “Wait! Haven’t we already learned the words for “this” and “that” in Latin — *hic* and *ille*?” Well, yes. In fact, we learned another one: *iste* meaning “that” with very strong demonstrative sense. *Is, ea, id* completes the third side of this triangle. It’s the weakest of the three demonstrative pronouns in Latin. Taken in order, *is, ea, id* shows very weak pointing but still means “this” and “that.” *Hic* and *ille* show medium-level pointing, and *iste* has the strongest demonstrative sense amounting to condemnation, “that grrrrrr...”

Here is the singular of *is, ea, id*. Let’s say these forms together: *is, ea, id, eius, eius, eius, ei, ei, eum, eam, id, eo, eā, eo*. And here is the translation of *is, ea, id* as a weak demonstrative adjective. Where I’ve used “that,” “this” would be equally correct. Here is *is, ea, id* translated as a pronoun: “he,” “she” or “it.” Note that unlike the personal pronouns the genitive singular of this form, *eius*, can show possession. So *eius* can mean “his,” “hers” or “its” depending on its
gender and context. We will also see that this is true of the plural, *eorum*, *earum*, which can mean “their,” as in, “belonging to them.” And to seal the case that *is*, *ea*, *id* is really a demonstrative, not a personal pronoun, the irregularity we saw with the preposition *cum*, where *me*, *te*, *nobis*, and *vobis* all precede the preposition *cum* creating *mecum*, *tecum*, *nobiscum*, and *vobiscum*, none of that applies to *is*, *ea*, *id* which puts the *cum* where it should, in front of their ablative forms *eo* and *eā*, producing *cum eo*, *cum eā*, *cum eo*, “with him,” “with her,” “with it” — what you would expect of a normal prepositional phrase. This also applies to the plural, *cum eis*, meaning “with them.”

The formation of *is*, *ea*, *id*, while it looks irregular on the surface, has some patterns that can help with memorization. For starters, the base is, if anything, *e*- just a short /eh/ sound, to which is added first/second-declension endings if any endings dominate here at all. Those first/second-declension endings naturally produce one mandatory long mark, *eā*, in the ablative singular feminine. Typical of Latin irregular forms, the nominative singular masculine *is* is highly irregular though the -s ending does resemble the nominative singular in third declension. More irregular is the change of base, from *e*- to *i*- , a change seen also in the nominative singular of the neuter, *id*, which means that will also be the accusative singular of the neuter because, remember, neuter nominatives and accusatives are always the same. Since *is*, *ea*, *id* is actually a demonstrative pronoun, not a personal pronoun, it exhibits the archaic genitive singular ending -*ius* and its dative singular counterpart -*i*, producing *eius* and *ei*. Surely there’s no need to remind you that *hic* has a genitive singular *huius* and a dative singular *huiic*; *ille*: *illius*, *illi*; *solus*: *solius*, *solii*, *unus*: *unius*, *uni*, and so on. You did remember that, right? Well good for you, Shirley! And as if there were any need to prove the point further that *is*, *ea*, *id* is really a demonstrative form, not a personal pronoun, its neuter singular, *id*, shows the -*d* characteristic of archaic demonstrative forms like *illud*, *istud*, and *aliud*.

Here is the plural of *is*, *ea*, *id*. Let’s say these forms together: *ei*, *eae*, *ea*, *eorum*, *earum*, *eorum*, *eis*, *eis*, *eis*, *eos*, *eas*, *ea*, *eis*, *eis*, *eis*. As typical of irregular forms, the plural is regular where the singular is not. Simply take the base, *e*- , add first/second-declension endings with no mandatory long marks and you have the plural of the weak demonstrative meaning “these” and “those,” or as a pronoun, “they,” “their,” “to them,” and so on.

Besides serving as a weak demonstrative and the closest thing the ancient Romans had to third-person personal pronouns, *is*, *ea*, *id* was used by the ancient Romans in conjunction with the suffix, -*dem*, to create *idem*, *eadem*, *idem*, the Latin word meaning “the same.” From this Latin word comes the English word “identical.” Let’s recite the singular of this form together: *idem*, *eadem*, *eiusdem*, *eiusdem*, *eiusdem*, *eodem*, *eodem*, *eodem*, *eodem*, *eodem*. It should be instantly apparent to you that something is happening in this word which is foreign to the way Latin normally does its business. Because of the suffix at the end of the word, the case endings which normally come at the end come in the middle of this word. Maybe they should be called “middlings.” This was no minor annoyance to the ancient Romans who were used to listening to the end of a word for the signals which told them how that word functioned in a sentence. How serious this problem could be can be measured by the scarcity of suffixes of this sort in Latin. There are simply very few. Besides that, as the suffix ran into different endings, the collision of sounds could cause irregularities which only exacerbated the problem. The first problem comes right at the first: the masculine nominative singular where *is*
runs into -dem and contracts to īdem. When the neuter nominative singular id does the same, it contracts to idem. Thus the long mark on the i- in īdem, the masculine nominative singular form is mandatory. The accusative singular features another irregularity caused by appending -dem to the end of is, ea, id. Attaching -dem to the end of eum, the accusative singular masculine form of is, ea, id, produces a consonant cluster -md- which will almost always change to the more pronounceable -nd-. The same will happen in the accusative singular feminine where *eandem will turn into eandem. As expected, there’s another mandatory long mark here: the ablative singular feminine eādem which distinguishes this form from the nominative singular feminine.

And well, let’s look at the plural. Do you see a form that looks like the ablative singular but doesn’t have a long mark on the -a-? That’s right, the neuter nominative and accusative plural. No need to recite them. There are no real surprises here except for one minor irregularity in the genitive plural: *eorumdem will become eorundem for the same reason that the accusative singular is affected. The genitive plural feminine *earumdem will become earundem. And just to prove how hard it is to say *eaurundem, I had to record it six times, make that seven, before I got it right — or wrong — depending on your perspective. You try it. It’s really hard to make your mouth go -md- but I do it out of love for my students.

And here’s something else I do out of love for my students: I make you review the pronoun forms we just covered. Let’s take a little test. Remember, tests are the way teachers say they love their students and there’ll be a whole section of love like this on the second test. Here’s how love works: I’m going to give you an English sentence with a word highlighted in red. Together we’ll work out what would be the Latin for that word. During any of this review feel free to pause the presentation to look up forms and think about what the answer should be.

Here’s the first sentence: “She gave me everything I needed.” That’s first person singular. What pronoun does Latin use for the first person singular? Ego. And how is “me” functioning in that sentence? The indirect object. What case is the indirect object in Latin? Dative. Therefore the correct form of the pronoun would be mihi.

Next sentence: “The author of this book is right here.” In this case, let’s use hic, haec, hoc. The first question you should ask yourself is: is “this” functioning as a pronoun or an adjective? In other words, does “this” have something to modify? It does: “book.” Therefore hic, haec, hoc will get its number, gender and case from “book.” What case and number would “book” be if this sentence were Latin? Genitive singular. And what gender is the word “book” in Latin? Liber, libri, m. Therefore the correct form of hic, haec, hoc is huius.

Next sentence: “Everyone admires her.” Let’s use is, ea, id. What number and gender is “her”? Feminine singular. That should be obvious. How is “her” functioning in the sentence? It’s the direct object. What case is the direct object in Latin? Accusative. So what is the accusative singular feminine of is, ea, id? Eam.

Next sentence: “Everyone admires her courage.” “Her” again, and we’ll use is, ea, id again too but notice that here “her” is functioning in a very different way: it shows possession. What case in Latin shows possession? That’s right: the genitive. And “her” is again what gender and number? Feminine singular. But this sentence involves an important rule you should remember:
that to show possession with first- or second-person personal pronouns Latin uses meus, tuus, noster, vester, but there is no such personal possessive adjective for regular third-person pronouns. You have to use the genitive of one of the demonstrative forms. So what is the genitive singular feminine of is, ea, id? Eius. Don’t forget that archaic genitive singular ending -ius which shows up in the declension of a number of demonstrative forms.

Next sentence: “Did these gifts come from y’all?” What’s the second-person plural personal pronoun? Vos. “From” indicates what case in Latin? Ablative. “You” would be the object of the preposition ex or ab or de. They all take the ablative. So what is the ablative form of vos? Vos, vestrum, vobis, vos... vobis.

Next sentence: “Nothing excuses that.” “That” sounds pretty negative to me. Let’s go with iste, ista, istud. Is “that” singular or plural? Singular. And what gender is “that”? Neuter. How does it function in its sentence? It’s the direct object. So it should be what case? Accusative. What’s the accusative singular neuter of iste, ista, istud? That’s right: istud. Neuter nominatives and accusatives are always the same.

Next sentence: “You and I have the same character.” What’s the Latin word for “same”? Īdem, eadem, idem. Is īdem serving here as a substantive or a regular adjective? In other words, does it have something to modify? It does: “character.” So it’s a regular adjective. What’s the Latin word for “character”? Good: mores, morum, the plural of mos, moris. How is “character” functioning in the sentence? It’s the direct object. So what case will it be? Accusative. And what gender is the word mos? Mos, moris, m. So what is the accusative plural masculine of īdem, eadem, idem? Eosdem.

Next sentence: “Both guys love the same woman.” What is the Latin word for “another”? Alius, alia, aliud. What part of speech is “another” in this sentence? Noun? A verb? It’s an adjective. Does it have a noun to modify? Or is it a substantive? It does have a noun to modify: “person.” So it’s a regular adjective not a substantive. That means we’ll have to diagnose the grammar of the equivalent noun in Latin for “person” — the same thing we did with “this book” and “same character.” Let’s start with case. How is “person” functioning in this sentence? “Of another person.” It shows possession. What case should it be in? The genitive. Is person singular or plural? It’s singular. To know the gender of the word you have to know the Latin vocabulary item. What’s the Latin word for person — the term the Romans used when they wanted to say “human being” without making reference to a specific gender? “Human being,” hint, hint. That’s right: homo, hominis. What gender? Masculine. So what is the genitive singular masculine of alius? Alterius. It’s irregular because the Romans didn’t like to say *alius, remember?
Let’s stay on the same sentence but look at a different word: “your,” and let’s assume the “you” is plural. What Latin word would you use to say “belonging to you all”? Remember the rule: in the first and second person you use a possessive adjective like meus or tuus. What is the possessive adjective for the second person plural? That’s right: vester, vestra, vestrum. So, as an adjective, it’s either a substantive or it’s got a noun to modify. Which is it? The latter. It has a noun to modify: “sons’.” How is “sons’” functioning in this sentence? What does s’ mean in English? Good: a plural possessive. “Sons” are obviously masculine so what number gender and case should the adjective be in order to agree with “sons’”? That’s right: genitive plural masculine. So what’s the genitive plural masculine form of vester? Remember: it contracts. Good: vestrorum.

Last sentence, a short but sneaky one: “Only one of us agrees with you.” What is the Latin word for “one”? Unus, -a, -um. What number and gender is “one”? “One” is obviously singular and because you can’t tell the gender of “one” you use common gender, that is, masculine. How does “one” function in this sentence? It’s the subject. So what case will it be? Nominative. So what is the nominative singular masculine of unus? Duh, unus! Even from this side of the microphone I could hear you got that one.

Staying with the same sentence, “of us.” What is the Latin word for “us,” that is, “we”? Nos. English “of” is equivalent to what case in Latin? Genitive. In this case, what kind of a genitive? Does this genitive show possession? Could you say “our” instead of “us”? “Our some” like “our house”? No, that would make no sense. Is it an objective genitive? In the same way “love of us” implies “someone loves us,” could you say “some of us” implies “someone summing us”? No, that makes even less sense. So is it a partitive genitive? Does “some of us” refer to only “a part of us”? Why, yes it does. That makes sense. What is the partitive genitive form of nos? Nostrum. Noster is the adjective, nostri is the objective genitive. Here you must have nostrum.

One last word: “with you.” What’s the Latin word for “you,” let’s say singular? Tu. English “with” is the equivalent of what case in Latin? Ablative. And what preposition means “with” in Latin? Cum. So what’s the ablative form of tu? Te. Cum te, right? Wrong. Remember that this preposition acts like a post-positive when its object is a personal pronoun in the first or second person. The correct answer is tecum.

That’s enough pronoun torture for a while. I have to stop now. If I whip you too long, it aggravates the bursitis in my wrist.

And that’s it. That’s the… no, it’s not the end. Wait… We haven’t done the vocabulary. How long is this chapter going to go on? It’s like Dracula. It just won’t die. Okay, use your happy voice.

Now let’s look at the vocabulary for Chapter 11. My, oh my, would you look at that? There’s some good news. We’ve already done most of the vocabulary in Chapter 11 like ego, tu, is, idem, no need to go on and on about them. We already did.

The next word, nemo, another pronoun meaning “no one” or “nobody” has an irregular declension. Here it is: the nominative is nemo; the genitive is nullius, clearly borrowing its
The next word is an adjective: *carus*, *-a, -um*, meaning “dear.” It’s first/second declension. An important thing to note about this adjective is that because of its meaning, it expects a dative after it. Something is dear to someone. If I underline such a dative and I ask you what case and why, say “Dative with *carus*.”

The next word, *autem*, meaning “however” or “moreover,” is a conjunction or adverb and, like *igitur*, is postpositive.

The next word, *bene*, meaning “well” is another adverb. It’s the adverb counterpart of the adjective *bonus* meaning “good.” Be careful to note that *bene* is “well” in the sense of “You did well on this,” not “Are you feeling well?” That “well” is an adjective.

The last two items on this vocabulary list are both verbs. The first is a very important and common verb in Latin, *mitto, mittere*, meaning “send.” It’s third conjugation. *Mitto* is the basis for many compound verbs like *remitto*, “send back,” or *admitto*, “send to,” or *submitto*, “send under.” Learning this verb well now teaches you many verbs you’ll need to learn in the future. What tense sign will you use to create the future tense with this verb? It’s third conjugation. That’s right: it’s not *-bi*; it’s *-e*.

And finally, *sentio, sentire*, meaning “feel,” “perceive,” “think,” or “experience.” It’s a fourth-conjugation verb. How would Latin say “they were feeling”? Good: *sentiebant*.

And now that’s really it. We’re done with Chapter 11. For the next class meeting, please bring in a copy of the practice and review sentences for Chapter 11 on page 52 of Wheelock’s text. After we’ve completed all of the exercises and sentences in Chapter 11, you’ll take Test 2. Please go to the online materials for this chapter to see an example of that test with answers. The sample test is at the end of the webpage. Here’s a link.

*O discipuli cari, hos labores vobis impono quod vos amo.*