

## Chapter 1: First Conjugation

Chapter 1 covers the following: Latin pronunciation, the function of subjects and verbs, the five components of the Latin verb -- those are: person, number, tense, mood, and voice -- how to conjugate and translate a Latin verb in the present indicative active, and how to create present active infinitives and imperative forms in the first and second conjugation. At the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary you should memorize in this chapter.

Latin Pronunciation: Consonants. Most Latin consonants are pronounced the same way that consonants are pronounced in English, but a few are different from their English counterparts. For instance, /c/ is always a hard /k/ sound like in “keep,” for example, *cupidus*. /g/ is also always hard as in “gate,” for instance, *gerit*. /t/ is always hard also, as in “take,” for instance *natio*. The Latin consonant that will seem the most different to you is /v/ which is pronounced in Latin like our /w/ as in *video* or *venit*. It will take some time for you to adjust to this pronunciation. /ch/ is pronounced as /k/ as in *Calchis* or *Chiasmus*. It's never pronounced as /ch/. And finally /i/ which serves as both a consonant and a vowel in Latin. When it's a vowel, it's what you would expect from English, simply an /i/ sound. But when it's a consonant, it sounds like our consonant /y/, as in *iacit* or *Iulius*. To distinguish when /i/ is serving as a vowel or a consonant, sometimes it's written differently and the consonant form is spelled like our letter J but it still has the /y/ sound. This is like German where J is pronounced with a /y/ as in the German word for “yes,” *ja*.

Latin vowels come in one of two varieties: long or short. The short vowels are as follows: /ă/ as in *ab* or *amat*, /ĕ/ as in *et* or *gerere*, /ĭ/ as in *id* or *inficit*, /ŏ/ as in *propter* or *oborior*, /ŭ/ as in *muscus* or *uncia*. Long vowels are indicated by a macron, that is, a line written above the vowel. When vowel length matters in the determination of grammatical forms, it is referred to as a “mandatory long mark” and must be indicated. We'll call mandatory long marks to your attention as they occur. And just for the record, there are no mandatory long marks in Chapter 1.

The long vowels in Latin are as follows: /ā/ as in *ārā* or *clāmāmus*, /ē/ as in *vērē* or *gerēmus*, /ī/ as in *venire* or *confīnīs*, /ō/ as in *expōnō* or *quōquō*, (yes, there's a Latin word, *quōquō*), and /ū/ as in *versūs* or *mītuus*. Note how different the first three are from their English counterparts. Latin /ā/ is really just a lengthened version of the short vowel, /ă/. Latin /ē/ is pronounced like our /ā/. And third, the Romans pronounced their /ī/ the way we pronounce our /ē/.

Vowels can also be combined in pairs called diphthongs. Latin has four you should know: /ae/ as in *saepe*, *atrae* or *praeclarae*, /au/ as in *aut*, or *auriga*, or *faustis*, /oe/ as in *Oedipus* or *proelium*, and /ui/ as in *sui* or *cui* or *fui*. And yes, there's a Latin word *fui* too.

Let's practice pronouncing Latin together. And if we're going to do that, let's go ahead and speak some of the most famous words ever written in that language: the first seven lines of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Try pronouncing these with me. I'll go very slowly. “*Arma virumque canō, Troiae quī prīmus ab ōrīs Itāliam fātō profugus Lāvīnaque vēnit lītora -- mult' ill' et terrīs lactātus et alto vī superum, saevae memorem Iūnōnis ob īram multa quoqu' et bellō passus, dum conderet urbem īnferretque deos Latiō, genus unde Latīnum Albānīque patrēs atqu' altae moenia Rōmae.*”

Before we begin to look at Latin grammar, let's look at some basic grammar that applies to both Latin and English. The first thing to be aware of is that words in Latin and English are divided into what grammarians call "parts of speech," that is, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and so on. How a word functions determines what part of speech it is. Eventually we'll study all the parts of speech in Latin -- said the teacher with a smile that was really a threat. But for right now, that is Chapter 1, the two that matter are verbs and nouns. The first, verbs, are action words which show what someone or something is doing. For instance, "The students *completed* their homework," (hint, hint). Here the verb "completed" shows what the students, that is the subject of the sentence, did. Subjects are nouns that are closely related to verbs because they are the "doer nouns" in the sentence. They show who or what is doing the action of the verb. For instance, "The *Romans* conquered Gaul." Here, the subject, "Romans," represents who did the action of the verb, in this case, "conquered."

Here are some examples of subjects and verbs: "The teacher had a friend." "Teacher" is the subject; "had" is the verb. "The farmer will save me." "Farmer" is the subject; "will save" is the verb. "Friends stick together." "Friends" is the subject; "stick" is the verb. "I came, I saw, I conquered." "I" in all three instances is the subject; "came," "saw," and "conquered" are three verbs. "We got into trouble." "We" is the subject; "got" is the verb. "Why are you just sitting there?" "You" is the subject; "are sitting" is the verb. Since Chapter 1 in Wheelock deals mainly with Latin verbs, we'll focus on the verb henceforth in this presentation.

There are five essential grammatical terms that are used in reference to verbs. They are mood, tense, voice, person, and number. You should become familiar with these terms as soon as you can. The mood of the verb indicates how the speaker feels about the action. Does the speaker feel that what's being said is a fact, a command, or is there something uncertain about it in the speaker's mind? Mood can also show that the verb is inside complicated grammar. Tense is the grammatical term used to indicate when the action of the verb is happening. Voice is the term used to indicate whether the subject of the verb is acting or being acted upon. Person is the grammatical term which indicates the nature of the subject. Is it I, you, he/she/it, we, you plural, or where I grew up, y'all, or they? And finally, number says whether the subject is singular or plural, that is, one person or many. For the moment, all the verbs that we will deal with are indicative in mood (that is, they indicate a fact), present in tense (they happen now), and active in voice (the subject is the doer of the verb). In Chapter 1, we'll focus mainly on how to change person, that is, who is doing the action, and number, is the person singular or plural? To help you remember all the categories of these verbs and the terms that apply to them, there's a chart that you can print out on the course website. I suggest you do that and glue it to the front of your Latin notebook because eventually you're going to have to glue them into your brain. Knowing these terms is essential to understanding Latin grammar.

Another important grammatical term concerning Latin verbs is conjugation. Conjugation has two meanings in Latin. It's the process of joining a personal ending onto the base of a verb to form a full Latin verb form, and it's the term used to refer to one of the five categories of Latin verbs which are distinguished from each other by the vowels found at the end of their base (/a/, /ē/, /ě/, /ī/, /ĩ/).

Now let's look at how to form a Latin verb. Latin verbs in the present tense consist of three elements: the verb base, the thematic vowel, and a personal ending. The verb base conveys the verb's meaning. For instance, *am-* conveys the sense of "love"; *laud-*, "praise"; *duc-*, "lead." The thematic vowel signals which conjugation or category the verb belongs to. *-a-* is the thematic vowel for first conjugation; *-ē-* is the thematic vowel for second conjugation. Later we'll learn that *-ĕ-* signals third conjugation and *-i-* signals fourth and third-io. A verb belongs to one conjugation and that's all. Which conjugation has to be memorized with each verb. Finally, the personal ending indicates the person and number of the verb, that is, who's doing the action of the verb. Person signals whether it is first, second or third person, and number signals whether it is singular or plural. The person and number of the subject and verb must agree, in other words, must be the same. Personal endings are attached only to finite verbs, that is, verbs with personal endings, as opposed to "infinitives," verbs that have no endings. Finally, finite verbs serve as the main verbs of sentences and clauses.

Latin verb endings carry important grammatical information. First, they show person: first, second or third. First person signifies "me" or "my group." In English first person is represented by the pronouns "I" or "we." Second person represents the person to whom the speaker is talking. "You" is used in standard English to indicate both the singular and plural, but where I come from there's a very useful second-person plural form of "you," "y'all." So, we're gonna use "y'all" in this class when we mean second person plural, 'cause that's a good thing to know. Like how many of you all there are out there? And if y'all don't like it, y'all can just learn to live with it. And finally, third person, the person or persons over there, represented in English by "he," "she," or "it," and in the plural, "they." Latin verb endings also show number, that is singular or plural. The singular pronouns are "I," "you," "he," "she" and "it," and the plural pronouns are "we," "y'all," and "they."

The Latin personal endings which are used at the end of Latin verbs to indicate person and number are as follows: *-o* (sometimes *-m*) meaning "I," *-s* meaning "you," *-t* meaning "he, she, it," *-mus* meaning "we," *-tis* meaning "you" or "y'all," and *-nt* meaning "they." Thus Latin verbs do not absolutely require pronouns like "I" or "you" to indicate person and number.

These endings are then appended onto a thematic vowel. In first conjugation that thematic vowel is *-a-*. Note that there is a minor exception here. The thematic vowel, *-a-*, is lost in the first person singular. Finally this cluster of thematic vowel and ending is attached onto a verb base to create a full finite Latin verb form in the first conjugation, in this case. *Amo*, "I love;" *amas*, "you love;" *amat*, "he, she or it loves;" *amamus*, "we love;" *amatis*, "y'all love;" *amant*, "they love."

Second conjugation uses *-e-* as its thematic vowel but that's the only major difference between first and second conjugation. Just as in first conjugation, adding the thematic vowel plus endings onto a second-conjugation verb base creates a full finite verb. *Habeo*, "I have;" *habes*, "you have;" *habet*, "he, she or it has;" *habemus*, "we have;" *habetis*, "y'all have;" *habent*, "they have." Notice that in the first person singular of second conjugation, unlike in first conjugation, the thematic vowel is not lost, resulting in the double vowel *-eo-*. While the second conjugation thematic vowel *-e-* is actually a long vowel, its length never distinguishes different forms so writing the macron is not mandatory but including it can help you remember that a verb is

second conjugation and so it is a good idea even though the macron is not mandatory to include it sometimes. For example, with the second conjugation infinitive as we'll see in a moment.

Translating present tense verbs. Latin has only one present-tense form of the verb, for example, *amo*, "I love." English, however, has three: the simple form, "I love," the continual form, "I am loving," and the affirmative form, "I do love." This form is used most often with negative statements like "I do not love." Why, you may ask, does English have three present tense forms? I have no idea. But if we were ancient Romans, the senate would certainly outlaw two of them. After all, how many ways do you need to say, "Here comes the enemy!"?

Infinitives. Infinitives in English begin with "to" as in, "to love," "to have," "to praise." Infinitives in Latin end with *-re*, for example: *amare*, "to love;" *habere*, "to have;" *laudare*, "to praise." Note that Latin infinitives use the thematic vowel appropriate for each conjugation: in first conjugation, *-a-*; in second conjugation, *-e-*.

Imperatives. Verb forms in the imperative mood indicate commands, for example, "Go!" "Run!" "Stop!" The present imperative mood in Latin has two forms. In the singular, no ending is used, for example: *ama!*, "love!;" *vide!*, "see!" In the plural, *-te* is used, for example: *amate!*, "love!;" *videte!*, "see!" Note that Latin distinguishes between when a command is directed at one person, an imperative singular, or more than one person, an imperative plural. *Lauda*, the singular, is used when the command is directed at only one person. *Laudate*, the plural, is used when the command is directed at more than one person. Also note that, just as with other forms, Latin imperatives use the appropriate thematic vowel for each conjugation: *-a-* for first conjugation; *-e-* for second.

Finally, let's look at the vocabulary for this chapter.

The first entry, *me*, means "me" in English. In later lessons we'll learn other forms of this pronoun, for instance: "I," "of me," "to me," and so on.

*Nihil* means "nothing." It's one of the few nouns in Latin which does not change form, no matter how it functions grammatically.

*Non* means "not." This adverb regularly comes before what it negates.

*Saepe* means "often." It's another adverb like *non*.

*Si* means "if." This is a conjunction introducing a clause called a condition. We'll study conditions later

*Amo, amare* means, in Latin, "love." It's a first-conjugation verb. The abbreviation (1) indicates first conjugation. *Amo* means "I love;" it's the first-person singular form. And *amare* means "to love;" it's the present infinitive. These first two forms called "principal parts" are used in dictionaries not only to tell you what the word means but to show you its grammatical category.

*Cogito, cogitare* means "think," "ponder," "consider." It's also a first-conjugation verb.

*Debeo, debere* meaning “owe,” “ought,” or “must,” is a second-conjugation verb. (2) is the abbreviation for second conjugation. This verb is often followed by an infinitive, as in “You ought to start memorizing this vocabulary -- now!”

*Do, dare* means “give” or “offer.” It’s another first-conjugation verb.

*Laudo, laudare* means “praise” and it’s also first conjugation.

*Moneo, monere* meaning “warn” or “advise” is second conjugation.

*Servo, servare* meaning “save” or “preserve” is a first-conjugation verb. Please be careful to note that this verb does not mean “serve.” It’s easy to remember that it means “save” if you bear in mind its many English derivatives like “conserve,” “preserve,” “reserve.”

*Conservo, conservare* meaning “save” or “conserve” is also a first-conjugation verb. The *con-* on the front of the verb serves only to intensify its meaning.

*Valeo, valere* means “be strong,” “have power,” “be well.” It’s a second-conjugation verb. Literally the verb means “to thrive” but it’s used often in its imperative, *vale* or *valete*, to mean “goodbye.” English does much the same with our verb “farewell.”

*Video, videre* means “see” or “understand.” It’s second conjugation. This verb has both a physical meaning, “to see” with the eyes, and a mental meaning, “to see” with the mind, that is, “to understand.”

*Voco, vocare* means “call” or “summon.” It’s a first-conjugation verb.

*Quid* means “what.” It introduces a question. Technically it’s an interrogative pronoun but you don’t need to know that term yet.

And finally, *erro, errare* meaning “wander,” “err,” “go astray,” “be mistaken.” It’s a first-conjugation verb with a physical meaning, “wander,” and a mental meaning. “err,” “go astray,” or “be mistaken.”

That’s it. That’s the end of Chapter 1. For the next class exercise print out a copy of the worksheet for Chapter 1.

*Improbitas gesta! Valete discipuli!*