

Chapter 5: The Future Tense

Chapter 5 covers the following: the formation of the future tense, the formation of the imperfect tense (which is not covered in Wheelock), and first- and second-declension *-er* adjectives. At the end of the lesson, we'll review the vocabulary you should memorize in this chapter.

There are three important rules to remember: (1) the tense sign for the future tense is *-bi-* meaning "will"; (2) the tense sign for the imperfect tense is *-ba-* meaning "was" or "were," "used to," "kept on," or "did"; (3) adjective endings are directional.

The Future Tense in Latin. The future tense indicates that the action of the verb will take place at some point after the present. The English future tense sign is "will." "Shall" is no longer used. English inserts the future tense sign, "will," between the personal pronoun, "I," "you," "he," and the verb base. For example, "they *will* love," "we *will* warn," "I *will* be mistaken." Latin does the same except that the verb base plus the thematic vowel precedes the personal ending: *am-* meaning "love," *-a-* the thematic vowel, and *-s* the personal ending denoting "you." The future tense sign, *-bi-* goes between the base and thematic vowel and the ending, *am-a-bi-s*, "love will you" literally in that order, meaning "you will love." Here are some examples of the future tense in Latin: *vocabimus*, "we will call"; *monebit* "he will warn." Remember that the elements of a Latin verb come in the reverse order from English verbs. Latin starts with a base which conveys the meaning, then the tense sign, then the personal ending. English starts with a pronoun -- the equivalent of the personal ending in Latin -- then the tense sign, then the verb base which conveys the meaning.

Here are the first- and second-conjugation future tense endings: *-bo*, *-bis*, *-bit*, *-bimus*, *-bitis*, *-bunt*. Two of these endings, you will note, are slightly irregular. The first person singular *-bo* is a combination of *-bi-*, the future tense marker, and *-o*, the first person singular ending. The third person plural ending *-bunt* is a combination of *-bi-* and the third person plural ending, *-nt*. And here is a conjugation of a first-conjugation verb in the future tense: *amabo*, *amabis*, *amabit*, *amabimus*, *amabitis*, *amabunt*. And here is the translation of that same verb in the future tense: "I will love," "I will be loving," and so on. Here is a conjugation of a second-conjugation verb in the future tense: *valebo*, *valebis*, *valebit*, *valebimus*, *valebitis*, *valebunt*. Note that only the thematic vowel is different between first and second conjugation. And here is the translation of that same verb in the future tense: "I will thrive," "I will be thriving," and so on.

The Imperfect Tense in Latin. Wheelock doesn't introduce the imperfect tense until Chapter 15 but it's better to learn it now for two reasons: it's a basic form used widely in Latin — you need to be familiar with it as early as possible in your study of Latin — and by Chapter 15 you'll appreciate an easy chapter with no new forms to learn. In grammar, imperfect means "unfinished": *im-* means "not" and *-perfect* means "done." This tense signifies action that was not completed in the past or was repeated or habitual. As such, it best corresponds to English past tense forms like "was doing," "used to do," "kept on doing." The simple past, "did," is another translation but don't use it for now. We'll talk about that later.

The imperfect tense sign in Latin is *-ba-* which is placed between the base/thematic vowel and the ending. Note that's exactly the same position as the future tense sign, isn't it? Here's an

example of an imperfect verb in Latin: *vocabamus*, “we were calling,” or “we used to call,” or “we kept on calling,” or the simple past, “we called,” but I’ve already warned you not to use that. Don’t do it! Here are the imperfect tense endings in Latin: *-bam*, *-bas*, *-bat*, *-bamus*, *-batis*, *-bant*. Well, hallelujah, there are no irregularities.

And here’s an example of a first-conjugation verb in the imperfect tense: *amabam*, *amabas*, *amabat*, *amabamus*, *amabatis*, *amabant*. Be sure to take some time to practice these on your own. Wheelock doesn’t introduce the imperfect tense until Chapter 15 and you’re expected to know it from now on. And here’s a translation of that same first-conjugation verb in the imperfect tense: “I was loving,” “I used to love,” “I kept on loving,” “I loved,” “you were loving,” “you used to love,” blah, blah, blah, I think you get the gist. If you don’t, send me an email -- in Latin! Here’s an example of a second-conjugation verb in the imperfect tense: *valebam*, *valebas*, *valebat*, *valebamus*, *valebatis*, *valebant*. Note that second-conjugation verbs use the thematic vowel *-e-* but again, that’s the only major change between first and second conjugation. And here’s a translation of that same verb in the imperfect tense: “I was thriving,” “I used to thrive,” “I kept on thriving,” “I thrived,” but I’m not going to if I have to say all these forms so I’m going to move on.

Before we leave them, let’s review the imperfect and future tense in Latin. Note that the imperfect- and future-tense markers are very similar: *-ba-* signifies the imperfect, *-bi-* signifies the future. The only consistent difference is that *-a-* is used in the imperfect and *-i-* is used in the future. Remember also that the imperfect has no irregular forms while the future has two: *-bo*, and *-bunt*.

Let’s leave the world of verbs for a moment and look at adjectives with bases ending in *-r-*. Just like nouns, adjectives with *-r-* at the end of their base either contract and have just *-r-*, or they don’t contract and have *-er-*. *Noster*, *nostra*, *nostrum* meaning “our” — this adjective contracts and thus its base is *nostr-*. *Alter*, *altera*, *alterum* meaning “other” — this adjective does not contract; its base is *alter-*. Be careful to note in your vocabulary lists whether or not an *-er* adjective contracts or not since having the correct base is essential in creating the other case forms properly. And remember, if an adjective contracts, the *-er* form shows up only in the nominative masculine singular, that is, *noster*. In all the other forms, there’s just an *-r*, not an *-er*.

Finally, let’s look at the vocabulary for Chapter 5.

The first word, *animus*, *animi*, m., means “soul, spirit, mind.” This is a second-declension masculine noun. The plural, *animi*, has a meaning somewhat different from the singular. It means “high spirits,” “pride,” “courage.” English has plurals that work like this: brains, wits, spirits, guts. All these plurals also denote a single abstract quality.

The next word is *culpa*, *culpae*, f., meaning “blame, fault.” This is a first-declension feminine noun.

Next, *gloria*, *gloriae*, f., meaning “glory, fame,” another first-declension feminine noun.

The next word *te* meaning “you (singular)” is the accusative case form of the second-person singular personal pronoun. We’ll learn the other case forms for this word later.

The next word *propter* meaning “on account of, because of” is a preposition that takes the accusative case. Most Latin prepositions take the ablative, not the accusative. It would be wise if you memorized your Latin prepositions as belonging to one of two categories: those that take the ablative and those that take the accusative.

The next word is *noster, nostra, nostrum* meaning “our,” that is, “belonging to us.” It’s a first/second-declension adjective. As we noted above, this adjective contracts so its base is *nostr-*. Although the meaning of *noster* suggests plurality, because it means “belonging to us,” its ending like those of all Latin adjectives agrees with the noun it goes with. So for instance, if you want to attach *noster* to *gloria*, it is *nostra gloria*, “our fame.” *Nostra* is singular because *gloria* is singular. But if you want to attach *noster* to *amici*, it’s *nostrum amici*, “our friends.” *Nostrum* is plural because *amici* is plural. It’s important not to forget the rule that an adjective must agree with the noun it modifies in number, gender, and case. Or here’s another way to think of it: adjective endings in Latin are directional. That is, their number, gender, and case do nothing more than direct you to the noun they go with. Only when adjectives function as substantives do their gender and number assume any “substantive” sense.

The next word is *igitur* meaning “therefore” or “consequently.” This is a conjunction, and it is postpositive. “Postpositive” means it tends to be the second word in its sentence. For example, “*Pecunia igitur te non servabit*,” meaning “Consequently, money will not save you.” In English, we use *therefore* and *however* much in the same way, for example, “We, therefore, decided to depart — you, however, chose to remain.” Here’s the catch: when you’re translating into Latin, remember you should never start your sentence with *igitur*.

-Ne. *-Ne* is a particle. “Particle” is a grammatical term for a small word. *-Ne* signals that the sentence it’s in is a question. Another term for *-ne* is an enclitic, meaning it “leans” (*-clitic*) “on” (*en-*) another word, which is a rather poetic and charming way of saying that it is attached to the end of a word and cannot exist independently. For example, “*Pecuniane magistrum servabit*,” meaning “Will money save the teacher?” [The answer is yes, so go ahead and send it.] When you encounter *-ne* in a Latin sentence, don’t translate it! Just phrase your English translation as a question. *-Ne* is often attached to *non*, creating the common Latin sentence opener, *nonne*. *Nonne* is put at the beginning of questions which expect the answer yes, for example, “*Nonne gloria est magna?*,” meaning “Isn’t our glory great?” or “Our glory is great, isn’t it?” *Num* is put at the beginning of questions which expect the answer no. “*Num animi mei valebunt?*,” meaning “My courage will not prevail, will it?” You are responsible for knowing *-ne* but not for knowing *num* — yet!

The next word is *satis* meaning “enough, sufficient.” Like *nihil*, this noun is indeclinable which means it doesn’t change form as it goes through its cases. In English, “enough” is both a noun and an adjective. For example, “I have enough money.” In that sentence, “enough” is an adjective. “I’ve had enough of that.” In this sentence “enough” is a noun. But in Latin, *satis* is only ever a noun. In other words, you always have to say *satis pecuniae*, “enough of money.”

Note that *satis* is often followed by a genitive. And for the time being, we'll call that a "genitive with *satis*" until we learn the technical term later, the partitive genitive.

The next word is *tum* meaning "then, at that time, thereupon, in the next place." *Tum* is an adverb and it doesn't change form.

The next word is *remaneo*, *remanere* meaning "remain, stay, stay behind, abide, continue." This is a second-conjugation verb. *Remaneo* means the same thing as *maneo*, so the *re-* is basically redundant.

And finally, the last word of this vocabulary list is *supero*, *superare* meaning "be above, have the upper hand, surpass, conquer." This is a first-conjugation verb.

And that's it. That's the end of the introduction to Chapter 5. Do you remember the rules that we cited at the beginning of this chapter? Do they now make sense to you? If not, please review this presentation. If so, please proceed to the next slide.

For the next class exercise, print out a copy of the worksheet that's attached to chapter 5 from the course website.

Doctrina perfecta! Valet discipuli!