

Chapter 10: Third-*io* and Fourth Conjugation Verbs

Chapter 10 covers the following: the formation of the fourth and third *-io* conjugations. And at the end of this lesson, we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are three important rules to remember: (1) the thematic vowel in fourth conjugation is *-i-*; (2) the future tense sign in fourth conjugation is *-e-* and; (3) the third-*io* conjugation resembles fourth conjugation more than third.

The formation of the present tense in fourth conjugation follows the same pattern as the other conjugations: to a fourth-conjugation verb base is added a thematic vowel, in this case *-i-*, and onto that are appended personal endings. Those personal endings are the same we've seen in the other conjugations. Though the thematic vowel in fourth conjugation often shows up as a long *-ī*, nowhere is the long mark mandatory because it does not distinguish one form from another. But the strong presence of that *-i-* is felt in other ways, for instance, while it sometimes shortens as in *veniō*, *venīt*, and *venīunt*, it never disappears entirely the way that *-a-* can disappear in first-conjugation forms like *amo* or the weak thematic vowel in third-conjugation forms like *duco*. The translation of the present tense in fourth conjugation should pose no challenges. It follows the same pattern as the other conjugations: "I come," "I do come," "I am coming," etc.

The imperfect tense in fourth conjugation presents few surprises, too. It uses the tense marker *-ba-* just like the other conjugations, and to that adds personal endings. The only irregularity of any sort is that fourth conjugation uses a double thematic vowel, *-ie-*, in the imperfect, but that hardly counts as a surprise given how strong the presence of *-i-* is at the end of the base in fourth conjugation. Thus, the imperfect in fourth conjugation follows along the lines of *veniebam*, *veniebas*, *veniebat*, and so on. The translation of the imperfect tense in fourth conjugation is also exactly what you would expect from the other conjugations: "I was coming," "I used to come," "I kept on coming" but then I stopped coming because everything was so predictable and boring.

If the present and imperfect in fourth conjugation are lacking in the grammatical thrills department, the future makes up for that — a little. It uses the same tense sign as third conjugation (*-e-*) and even has the same irregularity in the first person singular where the *-e-* is replaced with an *-a-*. However, unlike in third conjugation, the thematic vowel is never lost, resulting in forms like: *veniam*, *venies*, *veniet*, and so on. These translate as you would expect: "I will come," "I will be coming," and so on. On second thought, this future is not very exciting. I withdraw the comment.

The other forms in fourth conjugation follow predictable patterns, too. The imperative mood uses the verb base to which it adds the thematic vowel *-i-* and no ending to form the singular. The plural uses the ending *-te*, rendering forms like *veni* and *venite*, meaning "come!," singular and plural.

The infinitive is the final recipe in this cookbook of pleasant predictability. Take one fourth-conjugation verb base, add the thematic vowel *-i-*, slather onto the end of that the expected infinitive ending *-re*. No need to cook! It's an instant infinitive in fourth conjugation, like *venire*. With that you should have enough infinitive to serve everyone who wants — "to come."

The fifth and final conjugation in Latin looks on the surface like it's a blend of third- and fourth-conjugation forms. Therefore, it's called third-*io*. That's because the first principal part ends *-io*, as if it were fourth-conjugation, but it doesn't have an *-ire* infinitive the way fourth-conjugation verbs do, but an *-ere* infinitive the way third-conjugation verbs do. So it's third because of its infinitive, *-io* because of its first principal part.

Here are three examples of third-conjugation *-io* verbs: *facio, facere; fugio, fugere; capio, capere*. But in the third-*io* conjugation, the balance between third- and fourth-conjugation forms is nowhere near to even. There are far more forms that appear to be fourth-conjugation than third. Let's look at an example of a third-*io* conjugation verb now: *fugio*. You can see that it follows the same general pattern as the other conjugations: base plus thematic vowel plus personal endings, rendering *fugio, fugis, fugit* and so on -- not much excitement there either. The dominance of the *-i-* thematic vowel makes this conjugation look a lot like fourth, especially since the *-i-* rarely contracts into other forms. And just like in fourth also, there are no mandatory long marks because no macron distinguishes one form from another. The translation of third-*io* conjugation verbs in the present tense also does nothing to stir the needle on our "excitement-ometer." It follows exactly the same pattern as the other conjugations, for example: "I flee," "I do flee," "I am fleeing." I really am. I'm fleeing. Watch me. I'm fleeing to ...

The imperfect tense, where the excitement continues not to be: *-ba-* tense sign, *-ie-* double thematic vowel like fourth conjugation, translates "was," "used to," "kept on." I can't wait to see what's next!

And what's next is what's always next: the future! Maybe this will be exciting! Look at it: *-e-* future tense marker, *-a-* in the first person singular, no thematic vowel *-i-* lost, translates "will," "will be." That's not in the slightest bit exciting. This verb could be fourth and who would know the difference?

Oh wait. Here's the imperative: *fuge*, base plus thematic vowel *-e-*? Not *-i-* like in fourth. Oh, *-e-* like in third. Oh, that's right: third-*io*. And, oh my, there are some verbs that have irregular imperatives, like *facio* has *fac*, and those other forms we sang in the nursery: *dic, duc, fer*. Those don't look very "fourth-right." Well, at least the plural is regular. It uses the thematic vowel *-i-* and adds *-te* — that's to be expected from all the conjugations — producing *fugite*, "flee!" Good advice.

So what's so darn third about this third-*io*? Oh, the infinitive: base, plus thematic vowel *-e-*, plus the usual *-re* infinitive marker — making *-ere* just like third, not *-ire* like fourth. So, because of that, this is called third conjugation? Seems like a lot of grammar for one or two exceptions.

Well, all I can say is, it's time to flee to the vocabula—ree!

The first word is *natura, naturae, f.*, meaning "nature." It's a first-declension feminine noun.

The second word in this vocabulary list is the preposition *cum*. It means "with," and it takes an ablative object. We'll later learn that, when the object of *cum* is a certain type of pronoun, *cum*

follows that object. In that case, *cum* and its object are written as one word, for example, *mecum* “with me,” *tecum* “with you,” also *secum*, *nobiscum*, *vobiscum* and *quibuscum*. *Cum* can also come second in its phrase, when there is an adjective modifying its object, for example, *magna cum laude* “with great praise,” the way I hope you will graduate. You are not responsible for knowing either of these idioms — yet.

Next come six verbs. The first is *capio*, *capere*, meaning “take,” “capture” or “get.” It’s a third-*io* conjugation verb. Note that (3io) is an abbreviation for third-*io* conjugation.

The next verb is also third-*io*, *facio*, *facere*, meaning “make” or “do.” Note that the vocabulary pattern in which a verb ends *-io* and is followed by *-ere* is another way of indicating that a verb is third-*io* conjugation. And here’s another very important pattern to notice: if there’s a prefix attached to a verb like *capio* or *facio*, these verbs undergo what grammarians call “vowel gradation,” meaning that their base which is originally *cap-* or *fac-* becomes *-cip-* or *-fic-*. In other words, the more colorful internal vowel *-a-* degrades to the less colorful *-i-* because, when the prefix is added, the syllable *-cip-* receives less stress, is said more quickly, and with that is prone to lose the color in its vowel. Thus, putting an *in-* on the front of *capio* produces *incipio*, or a *re-* on the front of *facio* produces *reficio*. Many, though not all, Latin verbs experience this type of vowel gradation, when a prefix is attached.

The next verb is *fugio*, *fugere*, meaning “flee,” “hurry away,” “avoid” or “shun.” It’s another third-*io* conjugation verb. Note that this verb does not undergo vowel degradation when a prefix is attached. Thus the *-u-* remains as *-u-* in compound verbs like *refugio* or *effugio*.

The next verb, *venio*, *venire*, meaning “come,” is a fourth-conjugation verb. (4) is the abbreviation for fourth conjugation. Like *fugio*, this verb also does not vowel-graduate, to wit, ...

... *invenio*, *invenire*, fourth conjugation, meaning “come upon” or “find.” A first principal part ending *-io* and an infinitive *-ire* is another sign that a verb is fourth-conjugation. Note that the *-e-* in *ven-* does not vowel-graduate when the prefix *in-* is attached. And note also that the prefix *-in* in its sense “upon” reflects exactly the English compound verb “come upon,” in its sense “find” or “discover.”

The final verb in this vocabulary list is *vivo*, *vivere*, meaning “live.” It’s a third-conjugation verb. How would you say in Latin: “they will live”? Remember, it’s third conjugation. What’s the tense sign for third-conjugation future? Yes, it’s *-e-*: *vivent*, as in “We went to Rome and had a blast.”

The next word is *filia*, *filiae*, f., meaning “daughter.” It’s a first-declension noun. This is the feminine equivalent of a word we’ve already learned, *filius*, *fili*, m., second declension, meaning “son.”

The next word, *hora*, *horae*, f., meaning “hour” or “time,” is a first-declension feminine noun.

The next word, *senectus*, *senectutis*, f., meaning “old age,” is a third-declension feminine noun. Remember, any word that goes *-tus*, *-tutis* is going to be third-declension feminine. What is the base of this word? That’s right: to get the base of any third-declension noun you have to drop the

-is from the genitive singular, here resulting in *senectut-*. What would be the ablative singular of this word? Excellent: *senectute*.

And finally, the last word in this vocabulary list is *via, viae, f.*, meaning “way,” “road” or “street.” It’s a first-declension feminine noun. So, what do you guess *viā* means? Well, that’s the ablative ending, and “by/with/from” are the typical English prepositions that correspond to the Latin ablative, so this must mean “by way of.” English inherited that word in the form *via* directly from Latin. So you can say you’re learning Latin *via* the web.

Do the rules that were cited at the beginning of this chapter now make sense to you? If not, please review this presentation. If so, please proceed to the next slide.

For the next class exercise, please print out a copy of the practice and review sentences for Chapter 10. You’ll find them on page 46 of Wheelock’s text.

And that’s it. That’s the end of the presentation for Chapter 10.

Haec est finis verborum... for now.