

Chapter 30: The Perfect and Pluperfect Subjunctive

Chapter 30 covers the following: the formation of the perfect and pluperfect subjunctive, active and passive; the formation and use of indirect questions; sequence of tenses; and at the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are five important rules to remember in this chapter: (1) The formula for the perfect active subjunctive is the perfect active base, plus *-eri-*, plus personal endings. (2) The formula for the pluperfect active subjunctive is the perfect active infinitive, plus personal endings. (3) Perfect and pluperfect passive subjunctive forms are created by replacing the indicative *sum* and *eram* with their subjunctive counterparts, *sim* and *essem*. (4) "Primary" tenses are present, future and future perfect; "Secondary" tenses are imperfect, perfect and pluperfect. (5) The rules for "sequence of tenses" call for a present or perfect subjunctive in a clause attached to a primary-tense main verb, and an imperfect or pluperfect subjunctive in a clause attached to a secondary-tense main verb.

In this chapter we finish up the formation of the subjunctive mood with the perfect and pluperfect tenses, active and passive, beginning with some good news. First, just as there is no future subjunctive, there is no future perfect subjunctive either. Second, the inclusion of these two tenses in both voices to your verbal repertoire means we're adding twenty-four new forms — "That's good news?" It is! — because, with one minor exception, there's actually nothing new to learn here at all. Third, these forms show up relatively rarely in practice, and the rule is, when forms don't get used all that often, they can't support much irregularity. And fourth, the few irregular forms we actually encounter here are based on irregular forms we've already studied. The upshot is, for all the "new" forms here, this chapter offers a bit of a breather from new formation, or for those of you who didn't learn these forms the first time, an excellent opportunity to catch up. What's going to be the challenge in this chapter is not formation but syntax, that is, the way words work together. So let's get the easy part over with first.

Formation. The perfect subjunctive introduces the only form you haven't seen before, and even that so closely resembles something we've already studied you could probably predict it: the future perfect active indicative, the form characterized by *-eri-*. That same marker signals a verb is in the perfect active subjunctive. Attach *-eri-* to the end of the perfect active base (i.e. the third principal part minus its *-i* ending), and plug on the usual active personal endings (*-m*, *-s*, *-t* and so on), not those perfect active endings seen in the indicative (*-i*, *-isti*, *-it*, etc.) — it ends up looking almost exactly like the future perfect indicative — *-erim*, *-eris*, *-erit*; *-erimus*, *-eritis*, *-erint*. When attached to a perfect base, such as *amav-* ("have loved"), it produces *amaverim*, *amaveris*, *amaverit*; *amaverimus*, *amaveritis*, *amaverint*.

To translate these forms, follow the rules as you do with all subjunctives: add "(S)" to the end of the English translation. Thus, "I have loved (S), you have loved (S)," and so on. It ends up looking like the twin of the future perfect indicative, in the same way that in third conjugation the future indicative and present subjunctive are all but identical — though the translation of the perfect subjunctive and future perfect indicative is quite different: "have (S)" and "will have (indicatively)." But note the one exception: the first-person singular. The perfect subjunctive uses the ending *-erim*; the future perfect indicative *-ero*.

Actually, there are more differences because the perfect subjunctive features long marks in its second-person forms and first-person plural (*-erīs*, *-erītis*, and *-erīmus*), whereas all those *ī*'s are short in the future perfect indicative. In other words, the Romans could hear a difference between “you have loved” (*amaverīs*) and “you will have loved” (*amaverīs*) and so the long *ī*'s in the subjunctive should be mandatory long marks, technically. But the reality is that you'll see these forms so infrequently that (as a result) you won't get much opportunity to practice your knowledge of this fine distinction, which makes these macrons really not worth learning, at least not at this point in your Latin education. So just put those long marks on the shelf and we'll get them down and fool around with them someday, if we need to.

Where the perfect active subjunctive contains one or two irregular forms, its pluperfect counterpart has none at all. If I hadn't already spoiled the surprise by giving away the answers in the rules, you probably could have guessed how it's formed on your own. Since in the present-tense-system the Romans used the present infinitive plus personal endings to form the imperfect subjunctive, how would you guess they formed the pluperfect subjunctive, the imperfect subjunctive's perfect-system counterpart? Of course, they used the perfect infinitive (that *-isse* form) instead of the present, and added endings, producing *-issem*, *-isses*, *-isset*, and so on. Added onto a perfect base like *amav-*, the result is *amavissem*, *amavisses*, *amavisset*; *amavissemus*, *amavissetis*, *amavissent*.

And just like the imperfect subjunctive, this really isn't an infinitive with endings, that pedagogically practical paradox. It's a past-tense marker *-(i)s-* — you've seen it in *remansi*, *duxi* — followed by a past-tense subjunctive marker *-se-*, seen also in *essem*, the imperfect subjunctive of *esse*. Once again, in time value that's -1 + -1 which equals -2 (the pluperfect). Phonologically (i.e. in terms of sounds) combining *-is-* and *-se-* resulted in a double *-ss-*, which according to the rules of early Latin didn't rhotacize (i.e. turn to *-r-*) because there were two *s*'s right next to each other, unlike in the imperfect subjunctive where the marker which had only one *-s-* (**-se-*, that's what it was originally) did rhotacize and ended up being *-re-*.

The translation of the pluperfect subjunctive offers no excitement of any sort. It's “had (S),” for instance, “had loved (S).” Even I can't think of anything more to say about that. So let's move on to the passive subjunctive in the perfect system, where the non-surprise parade continues.

You could probably also have predicted these forms on your own and it would have been a fun riddle, if I hadn't blabbed the answer a few minutes ago. Just take the indicative forms of *esse* which you learned when we studied the perfect passive indicative and change them into the subjunctive. That is, make *sum sim*, *es sis*, ... It's not complicated. Then add that to the perfect passive participle — warning: two separate words! — and voilà! Perfect passive subjunctive! Here's an example: *amatus sim*, *amatus sis*, blah, blah, blah. Remember that the participle needs to agree with the subject, so the plural will be *amati simus/sitis/sint*, or *amatae* if the subject is feminine, *amata* if it's neuter. You know all this. The translation is “have/has been loved (S).”

Okay, you tell me what the pluperfect passive subjunctive will be. Duh, the perfect passive participle, plus *essem*, *esses*, *esset*, ..., the subjunctive counterpart of *eram*, *eras*, *erat*, ... for instance, *amatus* (or *-ta* or *-tum*) *essem/esses/esset*, and in the plural *amati* (or *-tae* or *-ta*), plus

essemus/essetis/essent. And the translation? What else? “Had been loved (S).” And that’s it. That’s all you need to know in terms of formation for this chapter, and most of it you knew before you even started this presentation. Let’s go to something you don’t know.

Indirect Questions. The same way a statement can be expressed directly (He said to me, [quote] “They’re here.”) or indirectly (“He told me *that* they’re here.”), questions can be related directly (“I’m asking you, [quote] ‘Why are they here?’”) or indirectly: “I have no idea why they’re here.” Note a subtle but telling difference in the way English distinguishes between direct and indirect questions. Direct questions reverse the normal order of subject and verb (“Why *are they* here?” — “are” verb, then “they” subject), whereas indirect questions do not (“I have no idea why *they are* here.” — subject “they,” then verb “are,” the normal order in English for subject and verb). In other words, *not* reversing the subject and verb in a question is how English speakers tell each other the question is being related indirectly. And note something else. An indirect question is not a question as such. It doesn’t necessarily demand an answer the way a direct question does. “Why are they here?” demands an answer. “I have no why they’re here” is a statement.

The formula for indirect questions in Latin is (a verb of the head), plus a question word, plus a finite subjunctive verb, which — except for the subjunctive nature of the verb — is exactly the way English forms indirect questions, without the inverted word-order business, of course, because the Romans didn’t listen to word order for grammar the way we do. Compared to the complexities involved in indirect statement — accusative subjects, infinitive verbs, relative time — indirect question is a breeze. When finite verb naturally translates into finite verb, no matter the mood, life is beautiful. Mostly.

“Subjunctive” here does raise the same problem it did in result: real result versus potential result. Remember that? Okay, I’ll remind you. Latin doesn’t distinguish between a real result (“We are so broke that we can’t even buy a subway token”) and a potential result (“We are so lost that we may never get home”). How about you? Still lost? Fine, it doesn’t matter anyway. For those students who are so dedicated to self-betterment that they *really* care about learning, pre-classical Latin did distinguish between “factual” indirect questions, for example, “I’m telling you what I know and how I know it!” — in archaic Latin both the “know’s” there would have been indicative — versus “dubitative” indirect questions where the speaker doesn’t know the answer. That type of indirect question called for the subjunctive, for instance, “But you’re still wondering how much I might actually know.” That’s dubitative — isn’t “dubitative” a great word? I just want to say “dubitative” all day long! — because you’re dubitatively dubious about the truth of what I’m saying, and dubitative dubity is the subjunctive’s natural home. By classical times, however, the subjunctive had come to be used in all indirect questions, whether factual or dubitative. It was part of that larger on-going change in which this mood was beginning to represent subordination as well as uncertainty. You’re fast-forwarding me right now, aren’t you, and I sound like a cartoon character? Fine, let’s get back to the grammar.

Any question word can serve as the conjunction introducing an indirect question: the “who, which, what, why” that begins the clause. Very easy, if the question begins with a question word. What if the direct version of the question doesn’t have a question word, for instance, “Did you go?,” not “When did you go? Why did you go? Where did you go?,” just “Did you go?” You need something telling the listeners or readers they’re heading into an indirect question. Here

English uses “whether, if” as in “I asked you whether/if you went.” Latin uses *an* or *num*, the counterparts of English “whether, if.”

The upshot of all this is we now have a new answer to “What mood and why?” “Subjunctive, Indirect Question.” So, with a sentence like *Nobis narravit cur hīc esset*, meaning “He told us why he was here,” if I were to underline *esset* and ask you what mood it is and why, what would your answer be? “Subjunctive, Indirect Question.”

The final aspect of grammar Wheelock presents in this chapter is a phenomenon called “Sequence of Tenses.” It’s something essential to Latin but has no counterpart in English, mainly because we’ve all but lost our subjunctive. Sequence of tenses has to do with what tense of the subjunctive is used in certain types of clauses when the main verb is a particular tense. Thus, “sequence” of tenses, meaning the way the tense of the main verb affects the tense of a subjunctive verb in a dependent clause.

Here’s a chart. If the main verb is what grammarians call “primary,” i.e. present, future or future perfect (happening now or in the future), and if the action of the subjunctive verb in the clause is happening at the same time as that of the main verb — the term for that is “contemporaneous” — for instance, “He knows who she is.” That is, he knows (right now in the present) who she is (right now, at the same time as the main verb, i.e. contemporaneously). If that’s the case, then Latin uses the present subjunctive in the clause. Here it would be *sit*. However, if the action of the clause occurs before the main verb, that is, it’s past or “prior” action, for instance, “He knows who she was,” if that’s the case, then Latin uses the perfect subjunctive. Here that would make it: *fuierit*. Conversely, if the main verb is past tense which includes imperfect, perfect and pluperfect — grammarians call those tenses “secondary” — for instance, “He knew who she was,” then Latin uses the imperfect subjunctive to show this type of contemporaneous action in the clause, here *esset*.

But what if the verb in the clause represents time prior to a past-tense main verb? $-1 + -1 = -2$, the pluperfect, as in “He knew who she had been.” — that sounds like the plot of a *film noir*! — and that calls for the pluperfect subjunctive: *fuisse*. [Which would also be a great name for a French *film noir*. “*Fuisse*! She had a past and he knew it!”] This whole sequence-of-tenses stuff is actually quite simple.

This is the heart of what you need to know. If the main verb is present or any kind of future ($+0$, $+1/2$ or $+1$ time value), the sentence is in primary sequence, and if the subjunctive verb in a clause represents prior action, use the perfect subjunctive in the clause, for example, *Scis cur reliquerim*, “You know why I left.” *Reliquerim* is perfect. But if the main verb is past-tense — thus, the sentence is in secondary sequence — and the subjunctive verb in the clause shows contemporaneous action, use the imperfect subjunctive in the clause, for instance, *Scivisti cur relinquerem*, “You knew why I left.” *Relinquerem* is imperfect.

This whole part of the chapter comes down to this fact: while both imperfect and perfect subjunctives represent action happening one step back in the past, they’re not interchangeable. The Romans used one when the main verb was present or future, and the other when the main verb was past-tense. That’s what these tenses of the subjunctive ought to be called: not the

imperfect — the imperfect subjunctive doesn't represent incomplete action — but the contemporaneous-action-in-secondary-sequence tense, and not the perfect — the subjunctive perfect doesn't necessarily show completed action — it ought to be called the prior-action-in-primary-sequence tense. While these may be better names for these tenses, I don't think they're going to catch on. However "imperfect," we're stuck with both.

As you can see from all that, the terms here are really the problem, not the rules. Rules so simple. Terms so ... multisyllabic: primary sequence; secondary sequence; contemporaneous action; prior action. Haven't these people ever heard of one-syllable words? I have. Wanna hear one? Never mind. This all means there's a new question afoot: "What tense and why?" But the answers to that question are incredibly simple, because there's only one right answer for each tense. If the verb in the subjunctive clause is present, then the only correct answer is "contemporaneous action in primary sequence." There's no other way to have a present-tense subjunctive verb in a clause that uses sequence of tenses. If it's imperfect, it has to be "contemporaneous action in secondary sequence." Perfect? "Prior action in primary sequence." Pluperfect? "Prior action in secondary sequence."

And the good news is even "gooder" than that. Not all Latin clauses that require the subjunctive use sequence of tenses. The three we've studied so far do — purpose, result and indirect question — and as we'll soon discover, so do indirect command and fearing clauses. But other clauses don't, like *cum* clauses, conditions, relative clauses of characteristic, and the indelicately dubbed "deep syntax." These we'll meet later down the road. All in all, it's about half and half. Roughly half of Latin clauses use sequence of tenses; half don't.

Finally, we need to clarify one other thing in this chapter. On page 143, Mr. Wheelock mentions that Latin has a "future subjunctive," composed of the future active participle, plus a subjunctive form of *esse*, for instance, *acturus sit*, meaning "he is (S) about to act." What is that? Some sort of future "active" periphrastic, I suppose, in the subjunctive. It's true. It exists but fuggeddabowdit! You won't see this hybrid horror often enough to make it worth learning at this stage in your study of Latin. There are way more important things for you to be focusing on here, like the vocabulary for Chapter 30.

The first word is *ferrum, ferri*, n., meaning "iron, sword," a second-declension neuter noun. *Ferrum* has no plural, so if you want to say "swords" in Latin, you have to use another word such as *gladius, ensis, machaera, pugio, sica*. The Romans liked words for pointy things, and all those can be pluralized. Nor is *ferrum* an Indo-European word which is not at all unexpected, since Indo-European culture began breaking up before humans started using iron to make tools and weapons. Naturally, then, there was no word in Proto-Indo-European for "iron" and each daughter culture had to come up with its own term for the new metal. Greek, for instance, adopted the word *sideros*. Obviously, no connection there to *ferrum*. Where the Romans got *ferrum* is not entirely clear, perhaps from a Semitic base seen in Phoenician *barzel* and Syriac *parzlā*, but how? From some visiting Palestinian metal merchant? Why not borrow the word from a neighbor?

The next word is *malum, mali*, n., meaning "evil (deed), misfortune, hurt, injury." It's a second-declension neuter noun. You actually already know this word. It's the substantive of the

adjective we covered in the vocabulary for Chapter 4, *malus*, -a, -um, so it means literally “a bad (thing).” What’s its accusative plural? [It’s neuter.] Yes, *mala*. *Ne mala faciamus!* [Think about it!]

Next up, *ceteri*, -ae, -a, meaning “the remaining, the rest, the other(s), all the others.” The Romans used this word only in the plural, so we have to assume it didn’t have a singular. What does *et cetera* mean literally? “And the other things.” *Cetera* is a neuter plural substantive.

The next word is *quantus*, -a, -um, meaning “how large, how great, how much,” a first/second-declension adjective and a question word of the sort that can introduce Indirect Question. As we noted in the previous lesson, *quantus* is the correlative of *tantus*, -a, -um (“so great”). That is, *quantus* asks the sort of question *tantus* answers.

The next word, *denique*, is an adverb meaning “at last, finally, lastly,” followed by another adverb, *iam* meaning “now, already, soon, by then.” Basically what *iam* does is intensify the tense of whatever verb form it’s attached to. If it’s attached to a present-tense verb form, it means “now”; a past-tense form, “then, already by then”; and a future-tense form, “soon, then soon.”

Next follows a series of important verbs. [Yeah, yeah, yeah. They’re all important, but these are very important! Not only are they used a lot, but they illustrate significant linguistic principles seen in Latin and other Indo-European languages.] First up, *cognosco*, *cognoscere*, *cognovi*, *cognitum*, meaning “become acquainted with, learn, recognize.” It’s third-conjugation, and a compound in which the prefix *con-*, here *co-* (“with”), has been attached to the base *-gno-* (“know”). To this has also been added the affix *-sc-* which conveys a sense of becoming or beginning. Learn this affix, the technical term for which is inchoative. It’s seen broadly across Indo-European, where it shows process or increase. Many English words derived from Latin contain this affix, for instance, “florescent,” meaning literally “beginning to flower, bloom” — the base is *flor-* meaning “flower” — also “crescent,” literally “beginning to grow (*cre-*)”; “convalescent”: “beginning to be strong (*val-*)”; and “pubescent”: “becoming mature or adult (*pub-*).” And notice that because of its “beginning/becoming” sense the inchoative affix is naturally omitted in the perfect where the action is by definition complete which is contradictory to “becoming, beginning.” So the perfect forms of *cognosco* are *cognovi* and *cognitum*. No *-sc-*. This is a typical pattern for Indo-European verbs.

Another thing worth noting about this verb is that it’s cognate with English words like “know, cunning, canny.” Through a process called Grimm’s Law, /g/ changed to /k/ or /c/ in Germanic languages of which English is one. Thus, what was inherited from Proto-Indo-European as *gno-* became *kno-* or *can-* in English. This Grimm’s Law process didn’t, however, affect Latin where *gno-* remained *gno-*. You can see the same type of change in English “kin” which is cognate with Latin *genus* — they share the same basic sense “birth” — “cold” which is cognate with Latin *gelidus* (“chilly”); and “corn,” the English counterpart of the Latin word *granus* (“grain”). Finally, one last thing to note here centers around the meaning of *cognosco*. Its past tense meaning, “having learned,” amounts to the same thing as “knowing” in the present. Thus, the best translation of *cognovi* is often “I know.” Likewise, the pluperfect *cognoveram* (lit. “I had learned”) is the functional equivalent of “I knew.”

And here's another "thinking" verb, *comprehendo*, *comprehendere*, *comprehensi*, *comprehensum*, meaning "grasp, seize, arrest, comprehend, understand." It's third-conjugation. Note the two prefixes: *con-* in the form *com-* here ("with, completely"), plus *pre-* ("before, exactly"), both attached to the verb base *-hend-* ("take hold of"). Thus, *comprehendere* means literally, "to grab hold of firmly," i.e. "to arrest" — that's its physical sense — or in a mental sense, "take hold of with (the mind)," that is, "grasp mentally, understand." Notice how the *-n-* in the present base (*comprehendo*) is not lost in the perfect. That nasal infix, as it's called, should be omitted in the past tense, as it is in other verbs like *tango/tetigi* and *vinco/vici*, but apparently the Romans forgot the rule and left the *-n-* in the perfect. What's really going on is they found this change in base just as annoying as you do, since long before the rise of the Romans this process of adding a nasal infix to signal that a verb is present-tense had ceased to be an active feature in their language. As Latin evolved, it started removing these by-then irregular forms. Too bad the Romans weren't a little faster at doing this. Could have saved us a lot of principal-parts memorizing. So the root of *comprehendo* is really *-hed-* (not *-hend-*). It comes from an Indo-European verb base **ghed-* which produced English "get," as in "get it." Get it? Our word "get" also has a mental sense.

Next is another third-conjugation verb, *pono*, *ponere*, *posui*, *positum*, meaning "put, place, set," a verb that is itself both widely used and has created many frequently used compounds, such as *impono* ("place on"), *repono* ("put back"), *compono* ("put together"), *praepono* ("place before"). These, in turn, created a raft of derivatives in English, the majority of which are based on the perfect passive participle *positum* — "imposition, reposition, composition, preposition" — and *expono*, which is part of this vocabulary. We'll get to it in a second. How would Latin say "to be placed" (the present passive infinitive)? [Third conjugation! How does third conjugation form present passive infinitives?] That's right: *poni*. Which gives us our word "pony." Nah, I'm lying. Just checking to see if anyone's there. Some linguists do, however, trace the verb "pony," as in "to pony up money, to pay," back to Latin *pono*. Still, ...

Another verb follows: *rogo* (1), meaning "ask." *Rogo* often introduces indirect questions, e.g. "The students asked if this vocabulary list is ever going to end." And the teacher replied by asking them who they think the teacher is here. The Romans often used *rogo* in a legal sense where it meant "seek (e.g. a claim in court), sue, pursue a legal case." From that sensibility we get derivatives like "interrogate (lit. ask between, i.e. back and forth), abrogate (lit. "ask away," i.e. give up your legal rights), prerogative (what you insist on having before [*pre-*] a legal proceeding), derogatory (lit. to 'ask down,' meaning 'to cross-examine in an insulting manner')."

Next up is an adverb *primo*, meaning "(at) first, at the beginning." It comes from the same base that produces the superlative adjective *primus* ("first"), in what looks like an ablative form. The ablative does, after all, show point in time.

The next-to-last word in this vocabulary is *unde*, a question word meaning "whence (from where), from what/which place, from which." It functions as both an adverb and a conjunction. You do understand that "whence" means "from where," so "from whence" is idiotically redundant. Don't say it. Don't let it be said in your presence. Idiocy is contagious. Always wear

a mask whence you can filter out air-borne syntactic infections. *Unde* is a close relative of *ubi*, except that *ubi* means “where, in what place,” where *unde* means “whence, from what place,” whence *unde* can introduce questions, both direct and indirect. How would Latin say “he came” in the sentence “I asked where he came from?” [That’s a matter of sequence of tenses, isn’t it? What sequence is the sentence in? Primary or secondary? Well, what tense is the main verb? Past or present? Past! So the sequence is ... secondary. And is the action of the subordinate clause contemporaneous or prior? Clearly, the “asking” and the “coming” are happening at the same time — it’s not “I asked him where he *had* come from” — so what tense of the subjunctive does Latin use to show contemporaneous action in secondary sequence? The imperfect. Thus, in this sentence “he came” would be ...] *veniret*.

And the last word in this vocabulary list is *expono*, *exponere*, *exposui*, *expositum*, meaning “set forth, explain, expose.” It’s a third-conjugation verb, and clearly a compound of *pono* (“place”), which has been prefixed with *ex-* (“out”), producing the sense “lay out (e.g. a lesson or explanation),” or “uncover” (e.g. a plot). How would Latin say “it will be explained”? [Conjugation! What conjugation is *expono*? Third! And the future-tense marker in third is ... -e-! So, ...] *exponetur*. And what about “to have explained”? [Tense? Perfect. Mood/form? Infinitive. Voice? Active. And the ending used to create all perfect active infinitives in Latin is ... -isse, which is added to which principal part? The third, minus -i. So the answer is ...] *exposuisse*.

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 meeting, please bring in a copy of the worksheet for Chapter 30. Here’s a link to that worksheet.

Quem amaretis magister rogavit. Pater vester quidem qui est in ludis!