

Chapter 31: *Cum* Clauses

Chapter 31 covers the following: the formation and use of *cum* clauses; the irregular verb *fero*; and at the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are two important rules to remember in this chapter: (1) *Cum* clauses take the subjunctive mood (though in some cases they use the indicative); (2) *Fero* is the product of composite conjugation (which means two verbs have been mashed up into one) and contains several “athematic” forms.

The second test in this class looms ahead, and as we approach it, Wheelock shows his generous and merciful nature by slowing down your little boats from full-speed-ahead to go-with-the-flow. The next two chapters are reasonably easy, at least by comparison to their immediate neighbors on either side. In this chapter, we'll address a very simple type of subordinate clause, the *cum* clause, along with one irregular verb, *fero* (“bear, carry”). In the next chapter, we'll look at adverbs and how they proceed through comparison — which is “predictably, more predictably, most predictably” — and we'll end this section of the class by lading three more irregular verbs on board your mental barges: *volo*, *nolo*, and *malo*, all meaning “wish” one way or another. And then Test 2. [Insert thunderclap effect.] But for the moment, smooth sailing! No big new concepts, clauses or constructions. Kick back and enjoy the cruise!

Our first destination aboard the SS PQR is the land of *cum* clauses, where life is peachy, beachy, simple and straightforward. Take the conjunction *cum*, append a subjunctive verb and you have a clause that begins “when, since, although.” Now this is the conjunction(!) *cum*, not the preposition *cum*, the word that means “with;” different words from different sources that only became identical in the classical age. The Roman playwright Plautus, for instance, who lived a century before the kind of Latin we're learning was spoken — Plautus wrote ca. 210-185 BCE — he used *quom* when he meant “when, since, although” (the conjunction) and *cum* when he meant “with.” But somehow between his day and Cicero's a century later, the two words had come to be spelled the same way, presumably because by then they were also being pronounced the same way, from which we must conclude that in practice there was never any real possibility for confusing *cum* (“with”) and *cum* (“when”). And there's a clear reason for that. *Cum*, the “with” preposition, must be followed by an ablative-case form. Conversely, *cum*, the “when/since/although” subordinating conjunction, will rarely ever be. How often do Latin sentences naturally begin with an ablative? So you see *cum* and it's not followed by an ablative, it's “when.” Period. *Cum* with an ablative after it? Guess “with”! The odds are strongly in your favor. Unless you happen to be reading Plautus who tells you which one it is: *cum* or *quom*. The lesson is: read Plautus. [Do it! He's hilarious.]

Cum can convey a number of sensibilities qualifying the main thought of a sentence. It can show circumstance, for instance: *Cum venires, felix eram*, meaning “When you came, I was happy.” You arrived; I was happy. Maybe it was because of you; maybe it was in spite of you. I'm not saying. It was just a matter of circumstance. Or *cum* can show cause: *Cum discesseris, timui*, meaning “Since you've departed, I've been afraid.” I live in fear now because you're no longer here. The context of the sentence will tell you which is right — or at least better. One other way a

cum clause can qualify a sentence is to express what grammarians call “concession,” basically an inversion of an expected circumstance: “I thought everything was headed *this* way, but things ended up going *that* way, completely different from what I (and logic) would have predicted.” The English word used to signal this concessive sense is “although.” So where Latin says: *Cum revereris, tamen timeo*, English would say “Although you’ve come back, I’m still afraid.” [Who could have seen that coming?] Often a signal that the *cum* in the *cum* clause means “although” is the presence of *tamen*, meaning “nevertheless, still” in the main sentence.

Did you notice there’s nothing really uncertain about what’s being expressed in the *cum* clauses above: “you came,” “you departed,” “you’ve come back” — they’re all facts. By the classical age and indeed well before, the subjunctive had begun to assume its new role as a subordination marker, not just an uncertainty beacon. That process was still, nevertheless, far short of “perfect” (in its Latin tense-sense) well into Cicero’s time, which induced some very prominent Roman authors to put their *cum* clauses in the indicative mood, especially when the *cum* clause involved a present or future circumstance that seemed fairly obviously real. That happens less often with the past, something everyone can argue about — why else would universities have history departments? — and thus past-tense verbs in *cum* clauses tended to stay in the subjunctive. Still confused? Read Wheelock, page 147, note 1. It’ll change your life.

On to the next part of this chapter, the irregular verb *fero, ferre, tuli, latum*, the only other challenge confronting you here, and you’ll find the irregularity of *fero* really not all that irregular. Believe me, there’s way worse out there in Linguistics Land. In *Feroville* it’s only a matter of visiting a few odd-looking forms, and setting sail into the sunset of syntactic success. If *fero* is anything, it’s third-conjugation, with two major complications. One, it’s the product of two different bases mashed up into one verb: *fer-* which dominates the present-tense system, and *tul-/lat-* which rules the perfect. The perfect base *tul-* is, in fact, originally the past tense of *tollo* (“lift, raise”), a verb we studied earlier (Chapter 22), and close enough in meaning to *fero* (“bear, carry”) for *fero* to “borrow” it — “pilfer” might be more accurate — after which *tollo* had no choice but to steal some other verb’s perfect, in this case, *sustuli* from its compound **subtollo* which promptly died following the amputation. [Verb world can be a cruel place.] *Fero*’s perfect passive base *lat-*, is a combination of the zero-grade of the *tol-* base (**-tl-*) — “zero grade” is linguistics talk for a form that has only consonants, no vowels — plus the perfect passive marker *-at-* which is seen broadly across Latin, as in *amatum* [You do remember *amatum*, right?] — resulting in **tlat*, which the Romans made more pronounceable by dropping the *t-* off the front. Thus, *latum*.

Two. The other major irregularity plaguing *fero* is much less pervasive, involving only a few of its endings which have no thematic vowel — the technical term is “athematic” — that is, there’s nothing to buffer the *fer-* base from the personal ending. That’s the way the Romans inherited this verb from their Indo-European ancestors. However, if the inevitable collision of consonants produced something unpronounceable by Latin standards, the Romans, such an admirably pragmatic people, added a thematic vowel but when the combination of consonants did work, well, why insult your *maiores* any more than necessary? Thus, *fero, fers, fert*, but *ferimus* — note a thematic vowel’s been added in here, an *-i-*, as if *fero* were third-conjugation — then *fertis* and *ferunt*. The Romans apparently considered **fernt* unpronounceable, so again a thematic vowel’s been added. Thus, three forms in the present active indicative are athematic: *fers, fert* and *fertis*!

In the passive: *feror, ferris, fertur* — the last two are clearly athematic — *ferimur, ferimini, feruntur*. All three of those have thematic vowels. So, *ferris, fertur* — those are the only two athematic forms you have to memorize in the present passive indicative. The imperfect? Total third-conjugation regular: *ferebam, ferebas, ...* Active and passive. The future? Behold! The *-e-* (and *-a-* in the first person singular) you'd expect in a third-conjugation verb. Nothing new to learn there.

And the other forms in the present system? The infinitives are athematic — *ferre* (active) and *ferri* (passive) — as are the imperatives, *fer* and *ferte* — remember *fer?* it was mentioned in Chapter 8 with the three other verbs which have athematic imperative singulars: *dic, duc, and fac* — but the present participle *ferens* has picked up a thematic vowel. **Ferns, *ferntis?* No way. That's un-Roman. And the subjunctive? Easy as "a" diary. The third conjugation subjunctive marker *-a-* solves the athematic issue by buffering the base and ending as a thematic vowel would. So no problems there either: *feram, feras, ferat, ...* But if the present active infinitive is athematic, so will the imperfect subjunctive be: *ferrem, ferres, ferret, ... Ferret?* Sounds furry. And the passive will be the same: *ferrer, ferreris, ferretur, ...* Odd-looking but predictable.

Now, *discipuli*, let's practice a few *fero* forms! So, strap on those athematic endings and "bear, carry, bring, suffer, endure, tolerate," because that's what we Romans do. We ... *Ferimus*. What does it mean? [We'll use any of the six English translations of *fero*. I'm going to pick one for each translation at random.] "We bear." *Feretur?* "He/She/It will be brought." *Tuleras?* "You had carried." *Feras?* "You suffer (S)." *Latus sum?* "I have been endured." *Ferebant?* "They were tolerating." *Ferretis?* "Y'all endured (S)." *Lati essemus?* "We had been carried (S)." *Ferri?* "To be suffered." *Tulisse?* "To have borne." *Tulisses?* "You had tolerated (S)." *Latum erit?* "It will have been brought." But what will have been brought to you?

The vocabulary, of course. The first word is *annus, anni*, m., meaning "year." It's a second-declension, masculine noun, often used in the ablative of time, for instance, *uno anno*, "(with)in one year."

The next word is *auxilium, auxilii* — yep, that's three *i*'s in the genitive singular! — neuter, meaning "aid, help." It's a second-declension neuter noun. What's its accusative plural? (Neuter, neuter) Yes, *auxilia*.

Next is *navis, navis*, f., meaning "ship," a third-declension *i*-stem noun, which means its genitive plural will be ... *navium*. How would Latin say "in a ship, by ship"? [That's the ablative of means, right. And does the ablative of means use a preposition? No. So what's the ablative singular ending of a third-declension feminine *i*-stem noun? Is it *-i*? No. The only change from usual third declension in a masculine/feminine *i*-stem is to add an extra *-i-* in the genitive plural. Thus, the ablative singular of *navis* is ...] *nave*, with a short-*ē* ending like most third-declension nouns.

The next word is *aequus, -a, -um*, meaning "level, even, calm; equal, just." It's a first/second declension adjective. Literally, it means "level, even," a definition that can be applied to anything horizontally stable or balanced, even the ocean. Indeed, the Romans sometimes called the sea the *aequum* ("the level [thing]"), when, of course, it was being that way. Other times they

used less positive language. *Aequus* also has a figurative sense, “just, fair,” in reference to things which are morally or ethically well-balanced. This sense stems from the image of level scales in a balance. Finally, this adjective has another sense, a mental one, “calm,” seen, for instance, in the idiom *aequo animo*, literally “with a level mind,” meaning “calmly.” It’s an ablative of manner missing its *cum*, as ablatives of manner can do when there’s an adjective like *aequo* attached to the noun.

The next word is *apud*, a preposition meaning “among, in the presence of, at the house of.” It takes an accusative object, for example, *apud amicos*, meaning “among friends,” or *apud Vergilium*, “at Vergil’s house.” Woohoo, party at Vergil’s! That ought to be epic.

Next is *cum*, the subordinating conjunction introduced above that means “when, since, although.” The clause it starts usually contains a subjunctive verb. And when there’s a *tamen* in the main sentence, the Latin adverb meaning “nevertheless, still,” the *cum* in the *cum* clause assumes the sense “although.” *Tamen* is technically postpositive (i.e. it comes second in its sentence), although it can come first when the *cum* clause serves as the first element.

Next up is *fero, ferre, tuli, latum*, meaning “bear, carry, bring; suffer, endure, tolerate.” If anything, it’s third-conjugation, and we’ve already “endured” its oddities. No need to revisit them here. Here we need to address a different feature of *fero*, the fact that it sired a number of important compounds. For instance, attach *con-* onto the front of *fero* — *con-* is the form *cum-* (“with”) takes when it’s used as a compound — and the result is *confero, conferre, contuli, collatum*, meaning literally “bring together,” often with the sense “compare.” It’s third-conjugation-ish, like its base verb *fero*, whose irregular athematic forms it follows, e.g. *confers, confert, confertis*, and so on. With a reflexive pronoun, *confero* takes on the sense “go.” That is, *se conferre* means literally “to carry or betake oneself,” as in *Me ad Graeciam contuli* (“I betook myself to Greece”), which is one way of saying in Latin, “I went to Greece.” What do you think the English derivative “collate” based on the fourth principal part of this verb means? [What have you done if things “have been brought together”? They’ve been ...] “assembled.” And how would Latin say “let us compare”? [That’s a jussive subjunctive, isn’t it? And what conjugation, if any, is *fero*? Third? What vowel is used to create the present subjunctive in that conjugation? “She reads ...” -a-, so dear diary, the answer is ...] *conferamus*.

Another third(ish)-conjugation compound of *fero* is *offero, offerre, obtuli, oblatum*, meaning “offer.” What are “oblations,” an English derivative of this word? That’s right: “offerings.” And how would the Romans have said “they had offered,” let’s say, in the subjunctive? [What tense? Pluperfect. What voice? Active. So, how is the pluperfect subjunctive active formed in Latin? The perfect active infinitive plus endings. Thus, the answer is ...] *obtulissent*. And what about “to be offered,” the present passive infinitive? Yes, it’s one of those athematic forms, *offerri*. And what about the other “to be offered,” i.e. “about to be offered,” the future passive participle, and let’s make it nominative singular neuter? [How are gerundives formed in Latin? Gerundives!! hint, hint! The present verb base, plus thematic vowel, plus -nd-, and first/second-declension endings. So, ...] *offerendum*.

Next is another verb, *respondeo, -ere, respondi, responsum*, meaning “answer.” It’s second-conjugation. Literally, it means “pour back” (*re-* “back” + *spondeo* “pour”), a metaphor taken

from formal prayers in antiquity, which were often conducted in a sort of “call-and-response” format where one person said something and another answered. Several ancient vases show the process of worshippers exchanging prayers and at the same time pouring out libations (liquid offerings, usually wine) onto an altar as a gift to a god. Because of this ritual, “to pour back” came to mean “to respond, answer.”

Here’s another noun, *exsilium*, *exsilii*, n., meaning “exile, banishment.” It’s second-declension, and can also be spelled *exilium*, without the -s-. Literally, it’s a compound of the prefix *ex-* (“out”) attached to the verb base *-il-* (“go”), a base that’s seen in a slightly different form *-ul-* in *ambulare* (“to walk”), literally “to go on both (*amb-*) [i.e. legs].” As far as we can tell, that is how most Romans walked.

And the last noun in this vocabulary list is *vinum*, *vini*, n., meaning “wine.” It’s second-declension.

And the last word in this vocabulary list is *mediocris*, *mediocre*, meaning “ordinary, moderate, mediocre.” It’s a third-declension adjective, and thus by definition *i*-stem. So what’s its accusative plural? That is, how does Latin say “ordinary things” (the neuter plural substantive) as a direct object, for instance? Good, *mediocria*.

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 P&R sentences for Chapter 31. You’ll find them on page 149 of Wheelock’s text.

Cum haec difficillima cognoveritis, vos esse discipulos optimos ostenderitis.