

Chapter 35: Uses of the Dative Case

Chapter 35 covers the following: special uses of the dative case, including those with certain verbs that take the dative; the dative with compound verbs; the dative of possession; and the dative with certain adjectives. At the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are four important rules to remember in this chapter: (1) Ten "special verbs" in Latin expect a noun in the dative case. (2) So-called "compound verbs" also take dative objects, though it would be more accurate to say the compounds (i.e. prefixes) attached to the front of some verbs do. (3) The formula for the "dative of possession" is: a third-person form of the verb "to be" (*esse*), plus a nominative noun, plus a dative noun, rendering a translation like "There is a book (nominative) to me (dative)," meaning "I have a book." (4) Nouns in the dative case are used to complete the sense of "certain adjectives."

The Dative with "Special Verbs." This is a lesson centering on Latin idiom, expressions which will almost certainly seem odd to you because their English equivalents don't correspond to the Latin exactly, or in some cases, even closely. Chapter 35 focuses on one type of Latin idiom, those involving the dative case, in particular, ten very common verbs which expect dative objects (technically, indirect objects), not accusative ones, even though the English verbs most often used to translate them call for direct objects. In other words, the English translation doesn't correspond directly to the Latin and thus can be misleading. Indeed, the English can make you think you'll see an accusative direct object when there will be, in fact, a dative object. The reason these ten Latin verbs have this unexpected expectation is their underlying meaning. For instance, when the Romans heard the verb *credo*, to which the closest English verb in sense is "believe," they didn't hear "believe" but "be trusting," which naturally calls for a dative: "be trusting (to ...)."

Here's a chart where we'll list all ten of these verbs in the left-hand column. Immediately to the right, in the center column, we'll put the English verb which is closest to them in sense, the word most often used to translate them, and to the far right, in the right-hand column, we'll note their literal Latin sense, what the Romans actually heard when they used this verb. Note that the English word in the middle column will expect an accusative direct object, but the literal translation in the far right column will not. It will expect a dative object because of its basic sense. For instance,

- *credo*, the first verb on this list, is most often translated "believe," though its real sense is "be trusting (to ...)."
- The second verb is *ignosco*, meaning "pardon," but that's not its true sense in Latin. When someone said *ignosco*, the Romans actually heard "grant pardon," a meaning that naturally expects the dative: "grant pardon (to...)."
- Third is *impero*, "command." But that's not what the Romans heard when they heard *impero*. They heard "give an order (to...)"
- Next, *noceo*, "harm," literally, "do harm (to ...)."
- *Parco*, "spare," literally, "be lenient (to ...)."
- *Pareo*, "obey," literally, "be obedient (to ...)."
- *Persuadeo*, "persuade," literally, "make sweet or agreeable (to ...)."

- *Placeo*, “please,” literally, “be pleasing (to ...).”
- *Servio*, “serve,” literally, “be a servant or slave (to ...).”
- And finally, *studeo*, “study,” literally, “be zealous or eager (for ...).”

Here are two sentences with examples of those “special verbs” and their dative objects. *Crede mihi!*: “Believe me!” Literally, “Be trusting to me!” *Hoc eis non placet*: “This doesn’t please them.” Literally, “This is not pleasing to them.” This is not hard. It’s just weird, and it’s a principle that involves only these ten “special verbs.” You can’t import the use “dative with special verbs” to verbs that aren’t “special.” If you need to see more examples of these “special verbs” in action, Wheelock provides sentences using them at the top of page 170, and I’ll include a few more examples in the vocabulary below.

Seriously, there’s nothing complicated about this. Frankly, nothing in this whole chapter is going to strain your brain. It’s all just a bunch of words that for some reason or other call for datives, like compound verbs, another type of verb that can have a dative attached to it. “Compound” means the verb has a prefix, so in some cases if a Latin verb has a prefix, it can take a dative. Actually it’s not the verb that takes the dative. It’s the prefix, so it would be technically more accurate to say “datives with the compound *of the verb*.” But really that’s just being fussy. Let’s leave the term as it is, as long as you understand the principle. Here’s an example of a dative with a compound verb: *Exercitui praesum*, literally, “I am (-*sum*) in front of (*prae-*) the army (*exercitui*),” meaning “I’m in charge of the army.” *Exercitui*, here, is actually not the object of the verb *sum* — *sum* can’t take an object! It’s intransitive! — it’s the object of the prefix *prae-* on the front of the compound verb *praesum*. That’s what the term “dative with a compound verb” means. The dative is the object of *prae-*. Another way to look at it is it’s a prepositional phrase that’s been broken up: the preposition has been tacked onto the front of a verb, and its object is expressed in the dative, not the ablative.

Here’s another example: *Senatus Caesarem exercitui praefecit*, meaning, “The Senate put Caesar at the front of (literally ‘to’) the army.” It’s better English to say the Senate put Caesar “in charge of” the army. Again, *exercitui* is a dative with a compound verb. And note that there is also an accusative noun here (*Caesarem*), the direct object of the verb *-facio* in its perfect form *-fecit*. So the presence of a dative with a compound verb doesn’t preclude having an accusative direct object, too, if the verb calls for one. Here’s another example: *Coronam regi imposuit*, “He put the crown on the king.” *Regi* is a dative with a compound verb — technically it’s the object of the prefix *im-* on the front of the compound verb *impono* — and *coronam* is the direct object of *-posuit*.

Not all prefixes set up the possibility of a dative with a compound verb, but many do. Wheelock lists them in footnote 3 on page 169: *ad-*, *ante-*, *con-* — that’s *cum* in compound — *in-*, *inter-*, *ob-*, *post-*, *prae-*, *pro-*, *sub-*, *super-* and sometimes *re-* and *circum-*. Other prefixes don’t use the dative, for instance, *ab-*, *de-*, and *ex-*, all meaning “from” one way or another. These will call for an ablative, because their inherent sense of separation is so integrally associated with that case. Not that the dative can’t show separation ... never mind! Dark place. Let’s not go there yet.

In the Supplementary Syntax at the back of the book (pages 374-379), Wheelock discusses two other idiomatic uses of the dative which you need to know. He should have included them in the

formal grammar somewhere in Chapters 1-40, so we're going to make up for that here and introduce the dative of possession and the dative with certain adjectives. Both are on page 375.

First, the Dative of Possession, the formula for which is a nominative noun, plus a third-person form of the verb "to be" (*esse*), plus a dative noun which is the actual "dative of possession." The literal English equivalent will sound something like this: "There is a book to me," which means "I have a book." Be careful! While the "to be" verb is always third-person, its tense and number can and often do change, for example, *Quondam omnibus iura haec erant*, literally, "Once these rights were to all (people)." *Erant* is plural and imperfect. A smoother English translation of this sentence would be "All people once had these rights."

The final important use of the dative we'll discuss in this chapter is also the simplest, the dative with certain adjectives. Some adjectives just by their nature call for a dative, like *carus* meaning "dear (to ...)" and *iucundus*, "pleasant (to ...)." To these could be added many more, such as *amicus* ("friendly [to ...]"), *par* ("equal [to ...]"), and *similis* ("like [to/unto ...]"). What makes this so easy for us to learn is that the English counterparts of most of these adjectives also set up the possibility of a dative after them. When idiom matches idiom, life is idiotically sweet. Enjoy it.

So let's review briefly the dative usages you just learned and frame them as the type of grammar question you'll be asked in exercises and on tests. The first is the "dative with special verbs." "Special verbs" include those ten we charted out above, like *noceo*, for instance, "*Nemini nocebat*," meaning "He did harm to no one," or in better English, "he harmed no one." So if I underline *nemini* and ask you what case and why, say "dative with a special verb," or you can say "dative with *noceo*." In other words, you can cite the rule or the special verb. Both are equally correct. Second is the "dative with a compound verb," more precisely "the compound of the verb," such as "*Militibus bonum praeposui*," meaning "I placed (-*posui*) a good man (*bonum*) in front of (*prae-*) the soldiers (*militibus*)." That is, "I made a good man the soldiers' commander." If I underline *militibus* and ask you what case and why, what would your answer be? "Dative with a compound verb." But don't cite the specific verb here. Instead, say the rule ("... with a compound verb"), so I know that you know it's the *prae-* that's tripping off the dative, not the whole verb including -*posui*. The -*posui* has its own expectation, here *bonum*, an accusative direct object, which is also a perfectly legitimate grammar question. Next is the "dative of possession," a construction consisting of a dative noun, plus a nominative noun, plus a third-person form of *esse*, as in *Nobis sapientia est*, meaning literally "There is wisdom to us," or in other (better) words, "We have wisdom." What would your answer be if I underlined *nobis* and asked you "What case and why?" "The dative of possession," of course. And finally, the "dative with certain adjectives," really a collage of adjectives whose meaning calls for a dative, such as *Omnibus amici simus*, "Let's be friends (or friendly) to all people." *Omnibus* is what case and why? "Dative with a special adjective (or *amicus*)." That's it for the grammar in this chapter. Now let's look at the vocabulary.

First word, *adversus*, -a, -um, meaning "opposite, adverse." It's a first/second-declension adjective, one of those "special adjectives" which expects a dative after it, as in *nobis adversus*, "adverse to us."

The next word is a verb, *impero* (1), meaning “give orders to, command.” This is one of the ten “special verbs” featured in this chapter. It takes a dative object. How would Latin say “Let us not command this army”? [“Let”? How does Latin say “let”? Yes, the jussive subjunctive. So what’s the present-tense subjunctive marker for first conjugation? Who reads a diary? “She” does! And the word for “army” will be in what case? That’s right: dative. Finally, how does *hic, haec, hoc* form its dative singular? *Hic, haec, hoc; huius, huius, huius, ... huic!* So what’s the answer?] *Ne exercitui huic imperemus!*

Next is another verb, *miror, mirari, miratus (sum)*, meaning “marvel at, admire, wonder,” a first-conjugation deponent. Like the vast majority of deponents, *miror* expects an accusative direct object. So how would Latin say “If someone should flee danger, why would I admire him?” [I told you we’d practice sentences in this vocabulary. Do I lie? Okay, let’s take this one thing at a time. What kind of condition uses “should ... would”? FLV, which in Latin has what tense and mood? Present subjunctive. How do you say “someone” after “if”? “After *si, nisi, num* and *ne, ...*” Yeah, “... *ali-* takes a holiday.” So it’ll be *si ... quis*. And the translation?] *Si quis periculum fugiat, cur eum mirer?*

And here’s another verb: *noceo, nocere, nocui, nocitum*, meaning “do harm to, harm, injure.” It’s second-conjugation and another of those “special verbs” which take the dative. The last principal part *nocitum* hints that this verb has a passive, which it does ... but it doesn’t. No true passive. *Nocitum* is necessary to see how to form *nociturus*, the future active participle which is used in the future active infinitive which is seen often in indirect statement. So you need to know the perfect passive base *nocit-* but you won’t actually see it as a real passive because this verb doesn’t have a real passive. Latin can’t use *noceo*, or indeed any of this chapter’s “special verbs” that take the dative, in a true passive sense. These verbs don’t have direct objects so there’s nothing to turn into the subject in a passive context, and the one thing verbs have to have is a subject. So no true passives with any of the “special verbs” in this chapter! How would Latin say “No one will harm her”? [What case will “her” be? Dative. And what conjugation is *noceo*? Second. How’s the future formed in second? *-bi-*! So, ...] *Nemo ei nocebit*. [Or you can use *illi* or *huic*, or *isti* if for some reason you don’t like her.]

Next is *parco, parcere, peperci, parsurus*, meaning “be lenient to, spare,” a third-conjugation verb, yet another “special verb” that takes the dative. The last principal part *parsurus* is the future active participle. It’s cited, in place of a perfect passive participle, because as we just noted, none of these “special verbs” have true passives. Think about it! You can’t “be ‘be lenient’-ed to”! Note the reduplication in the third principal part, *peperci*. By now reduplication in the perfect active should come as no surprise to you. How would Latin say “Who spared — use the perfect — that most wretched city”? [Remember you can’t say it exactly that way. You have to change the English to make it conform better to the Latin. Can you say “spare” plus an accusative direct object? No. So rephrase it the way Latin would say this.] “Who was lenient to that most wretched city?” [So, what’s the Latin?] *Quis urbi miserrimae pepercit?*

The next word is another “special verb,” *pareo, parere, parui*, meaning “be obedient to, obey,” second-conjugation. It takes the dative. And be careful. It looks a lot like *paro, parare* (1), meaning “prepare, provide, get.” Very different verbs with very different meanings. Speaking of which, the meaning of *pareo* is for some reason hard for English speakers to memorize, no doubt

in part because English contains all but no notable derivatives of *pareo*. Past students of mine have found it useful to remember *pareo* this way: Who do you obey? Your “parents,” of course. Etymologically, that’s a totally invalid correlation — our word “parent” comes from a different Latin verb (*pario, parere*, “give birth”) — but if this memory hook works, who cares? All it has to do is help you remember what *pareo* means. So, how would Latin say “You (pl.) ought — use *debeo* — to obey your father and mother”? *Patri matrique (vestrae) parere debetis*. Literally, “You ought to be obedient to (your) father and mother.”

Next up, *persuadeo, persuadere, persuasi, persuasum*, meaning “make sweet to, persuade,” a second-conjugation verb, another “special verb” that takes the dative. Literally, it means “to make thoroughly (*per-*) sweet (*-suad-*) to,” that is, “to sugarcoat” something so that someone will swallow it, one way to look at persuasion. The Romans’ natural suspicion of “slick” arguments, the sort of subtle thinking they associated with the Greeks, is not well hidden here, as if with this one word they were saying, “Listen to enough ‘sweetened’ Greek philosophy and you’ll start believing that money is bad and children don’t have to ‘be obedient’ to their parents. ‘Persuasion’ is nothing but a dangerous and tasty drug. Stop thinking and start fighting for Rome! Name one empire that philosophy has ever built!” **Swad-*? Interesting base! What do you think that turned into in English? According to Grimm’s Law, /*d*/ changes into ... /*t*/, cf. *dent-* and tooth. So in English **swad-* became ... “sweet.”

Here’s another “special verb,” *placeo, placere, placui, placitum*, meaning “be pleasing to, please,” a second-conjugation verb, that takes the dative. How would Latin say “If they had remained there, they would have pleased us more”? [What kind of condition? Past contrary-to-fact, which uses what tense and mood? Pluperfect subjunctive. And “more”? What is that? An adjective? An adverb? An adverb! It modifies “pleased,” not “us.” So what’s the comparative of “greatly” (*magnopere*)? *Magis*. And so what’s the Latin translation for the full sentence?] *Si ibi remansissent, nobis* — remember: *placeo* takes the dative! — *magis placuissent*.

And here’s yet another “special verb”: *servio, servire, servivi, servitum*, meaning “be a servant to, serve,” a fourth-conjugation verb that takes the dative. Be careful not to confuse this verb with *servo, servare*, “to save”! Watch for the *-i-* in *servio*, the “serve” verb, as in *serviant*, meaning “let them serve, they serve (S).” [I chose the subjunctive here not to be mean — or not *just* to be mean — but to remind you about *a*’s in present-tense forms: *-a-* signals the present subjunctive in third, third-*io* and fourth.] How about *servant*, then, meaning “they save (indicatively).” Sure looks a lot like English “servant,” doesn’t it? But it’s not. The sign at Roman restaurants reads “No *-i-*, no ‘service’!” Another thing to note about these verbs is that the *servo* “save” verb create compounds — *conservo, reservo* — whereas the *servio* “serve” verb never has compounds. So you see *-serv-* with a prefix? It means “save.” One last thing to note about this verb: the perfect can be *servii* (vs. *servivi*). We’ve mentioned before the pattern where Latin drops *w*-sounds in between vowels. Remember *dives, divitis* or *ditis*, “rich man”? Okay! Then, remember it next time!

The next-to-last “special verb” on this vocabulary list is *studeo, studere, studui*, meaning “direct one’s zeal to, be eager for, study,” a second-conjugation verb, plus dative.

Finally, here's a noun: *praemium*, -ii, n., meaning "reward, prize." It's second-declension neuter, so its accusative plural will be ... *praemia*.

Next is a prefix, *prae-*, meaning "before, in front of, forth." And here is a compound verb, *antepono*, *anteponere*, *anteposui*, *antepositum*, meaning "put before, prefer," third-conjugation. It expects, as many compound verbs do, two nouns in different cases: an accusative (the direct object of the verb itself, *pono*) and a dative, which is a "dative with a compound verb," or better, the compound of the verb, *ante-* ("before"). How would Latin say "All people prefer love to war"? [The big question is which noun will be accusative, that is, the object of the verb *-pono* in the compound *antepono*? "Love." And which will be dative, the object of the *ante-* prefix on the front of *antepono*? "War." So ...] *Omnes amorem bello anteponunt*.

And the last "special verb," the last word to learn here, is *ignosco*, *ignoscere*, *ignovi*, *ignotum*, meaning "grant pardon to, forgive." It's a third-conjugation verb, and it expects a noun in the dative case. Its elements are interesting and worth noting: The prefix *i(n)-* means "not," the base *-gno-* means "know" — Grimm's Law! /g/ = /k/! — and *-sc-* is the inchoative affix meaning "begin." Note that, as is the rule, the inchoative affix is dropped in the perfect, *ignovi* and *ignotum*, where "begin" has no place. So all together, *i-* / *-gno-* / *-sco* means literally "I begin not to know." When the Romans heard that, they understood "fail to acknowledge," most often a crime someone's committed, which is one way of saying it's forgiven. A crime can't be a crime until it's recognized as such. If Romans wanted to say "not know, be unaware of" — that is, actually "be ignorant" — they had to deploy a different verb, like *ignoro* or *nescio*. Remember: most judges will not pardon ignorance of the law, nor will I "fail to acknowledge" unawareness of Latin. Get to work memorizing the vocabulary in this chapter!

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 35 (on pp. 170-171 of Wheelock's text.).

Si haec omnia studio quam maximo discere voletis, multa beneficia accipietis, O discipuli mei.