

## LATIN GRAMMAR I

### Wheelock 2: Intro to Nouns and Cases, First Declension

1. Introduction to English Nouns: Important to understand *basic English grammar* in order to learn Latin grammatical concepts.

Quiz: Are these the same word?      wart      warts

1.1. **Inflection:** *changes to the word form (usually the ending, sometimes the vowels) to mark the word for various grammatical functions in the sentence.* Words can be inflected to mark their case (function in sentence), number, and gender. For ex.:

1. *book* v. *books* (the inflectional ending *-s* marks number, the plural compared to sing.)
2. *foot* v. *feet* (the inflectional vowel change *-oo-* to *-ee-* marks number, the plural compared to sing.) cf. also *man* v. *men*.
3. *child* v. *child's* (the inflectional ending *-s* marks the function of possession)

Note: English is not a highly inflected language. Latin is—almost every single Latin word is marked with some inflectional ending to signal important grammatical information.

#### 1.2. Inflection: **Case**

Case marks the noun's function within the sentence. English has only 3 cases: subjective, possessive, and objective. (Latin has 6—more below!) *Most* English nouns do not change their form to distinguish the subject from object, but pronouns do.

Case	English Nouns (little change)	English Pronouns (lots of change): 1s	English Pronouns: 3p
Subjective	<i>Harry</i> loves Sally.	<i>I</i> love Sally.	<i>They</i> love Sally.
Objective	Mom loves <i>Harry</i> .	Mom loves <i>me</i> .	Mom loves <i>them</i> .
Possessive	Mom loves <i>Harry's</i> hairdo.	Mom loves <i>my</i> hairdo.	Mom loves <i>their</i> hairdo.

#### 1.3. Inflection: **Number**

English nouns are either singular (sing.) or plural (pl.). Again, note the following exx.:

*book* v. *books*  
*foot* v. *feet*  
*child* v. *children*

Latin nouns are also marked for number: *porta* (gate) v. *portae* (gates)

#### 1.4. Inflection: **Gender**

English nouns are either masculine (masc.), feminine (fem.), or neuter (neut.). Note, for ex.:

*man* = masc.

*woman* = fem.

*bicycle* = neut.

English nouns tend to follow *natural gender*. Latin nouns sometimes follow natural gender, but often they simply have *grammatical gender* (with no hint that the noun in question is masc., fem., or neut. in *quality*).

## 2. Latin Nouns (nouns designate persons, places, things, ideas)

### 2.1. Semantic categories of nouns

2.1.1. Common v. Proper nouns      urbs (city)

Rōma (Rome, named city)

2.1.1. Abstract v. Concrete nouns      īra (anger)

porta (gate)

### 2.2. Syntax & Semantics of the Six Cases of Latin

Note: purpose of this survey is not to introduce the specific *forms* of the cases, but the concept of the cases. We will learn the case forms over several chapters (including this one).

#### 2.2.1. Nominative Case: Nouns in nominative case serve one of 2 main functions: (1)

Subject of finite verbs, (2) The predicate (or subject complement) of a copular or linking verb.

Virgil eats Thai food.

Virgil is hungry.

Virgil looks hungry.

2.2.2. Genitive Case: Nouns in genitive case generally serve to modify/qualify (or limit) other nouns. Such genitive nouns can be translated with ‘of \_\_\_’ and frequently, though not exclusively, indicate possession (i.e., the genitive noun is the possessor of the other noun).

I drink the coffee of Caesar.

I drink Caesar’s coffee.

Caesar holds a rod of iron.

2.2.3. Dative Case: Nouns in dative case are indirectly affected by the verbal activity and so typically mark indirect objects (semantically, the recipient or beneficiary of the action).

Dative nouns are usually rendered with ‘to/for\_\_\_\_\_’.

I give the coffee to Caesar.

We make Caesar an offer (he can’t refuse!).

2.2.4. Accusative Case: Nouns in accusative case typically mark the direct object—the object most directly affected by the verbal action. No extra words are needed to translate a DO in accusative case. Which nouns in the two exx. above would be accusative?

Sometimes the noun in accusative case is governed by a preposition (to, after). The noun governed by the prep is called the “object of the preposition” and will be in accusative case or ablative case (depending on what the particular prep requires).

The troops came to the city of Rome (ad urbem Rōmam).

2.2.5. Ablative Case: Nouns in ablative case serve to modify or limit the verbal activity in an adverbial way. If the ablative noun occurs alone (that is, it is not governed by a preposition), then you typically translate it with extra English prepositions: ‘by/with/from\_\_\_\_\_’. If the ablative noun is governed by a preposition, then translate the prep, then the ablative noun (without the extra English words).

I bought coffee with money (pecūniā).

I sang with the poet (cum poētā).

2.2.6. Vocative Case: Nouns in vocative case name the addressee (the “noun of direct address”). These nouns are almost always the same form as nominative. (You’ll be told when this isn’t the case.) Sometimes the interjection Ō is used with the vocative noun.

Julius, I brought you coffee.    Oh girl (ō puella), I love you.

### 3. First Declension Nouns/Adjectives

3.1. A *declension* is a pattern of inflections for nouns/adjectives in all the cases. (Verbs have patterns of inflections called *conjugations*.)

3.2. There are 5 main declensions in Latin; what determines which declension a noun follows is what the noun stem ends with (before case endings are added). First declension nouns have a stem ending with –a.

3.3. Note: when you are given a new noun, you’ll see both the nom sing and the gen sing form. You should learn both, as the genitive form will usually help you identify the noun stem and know which declension pattern the noun follows.

3.4. How nouns differ from adjectives: Nouns have a single gender; adjectives inflect for all genders because they have to agree in gender with what they modify.

porta (fem only)

magnus, magna, magnum (masc, fem, neut sg)

3.5. Most first declension nouns are fem. But some are masc, esp. nouns indicating professions: nauta (masc. ‘sailor’), poēta (masc. ‘poet’).

### 3.6. First declension paradigm:

Sing.	Stem vowel + case ending	Stem/base + case ending	English gloss
Nom	-a	porta	the (a) gate
Gen	-ae	portae	of the gate
Dat	-ae	portae	to/for the gate
Acc	-am	portam	the gate
Abl	-ā	portā	by/with/from the gate
Voc	-a	porta	O gate

Pl.	Stem vowel + case ending	Stem/base + case ending	English gloss
Nom	-ae	portae	the gates
Gen	-ārum	portārum	of the gates
Dat	-īs	portīs	to/for the gates
Acc	-ās	portās	the gates
Abl	-īs	portīs	by/with/from the gates
Voc	-ae	portae	O gates

3.6.1. Since vocative = nominative, focus on memorizing the endings for the first 5 cases (Nom, Gen, Dat, Acc, Abl).

3.6.2. The English gloss provides one of the meanings associated with using a noun in that case. Note also that Latin has neither a definite or indefinite article (the, a/an), so you'll supply an article in English if it's appropriate to the context.

3.6.3. Attributive Adjectives: Adjectives are used to modify a noun—to provide an attribute of the noun being used in a clause. Attributive adjs indicate what kind of noun is in view: The happy boy ran; I ate a slimy worm. In Latin, such adjs usually immediately follow the noun being modified (though some adjs of number and size/quantity can precede) and **MUST** agree with the noun in case, number, and gender.

I praise the old country.

Laudō patriam antīquam.

We frighten the big girls.

Terrēmus magnās puellās.

Much money summons great fame.

Multa pecūnia vocat magnam fāmam.

3.6.4. Describing Morphology & Syntax: the Wheelock textbook suggests that you attempt to describe the noun/adj's morphology or form (case & number) and its syntax (what other word is it related to that determines its form, and what function it has). Ex from above:

patriam: Acc f s; dependent on Laudō; functions as DO of verb

antīquam: Acc f s; dependent on patriam; modifies/agrees with its noun