

Latin, Step by Step, Root by Root

An etymology-driven curriculum, built one word at a time

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This edition compiled incrementally — new chapters added as they are written.

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Preface

Latin is not learned the way most languages are learned. Nobody is going to greet you in it, and this book will not pretend otherwise — you learn Latin to *read* it, and to find out why so much of the vocabulary you already own looks the way it does.

Latin is a **taproot**: the ancestor of Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese, and the single largest source of English’s vocabulary after English’s own Germanic core. Almost every lesson here pays a double dividend — you learn a Latin word *and* you see why a dozen English words, and their Romance cousins, look the way they do.

Latin uses the alphabet you are reading, so there is no script to decode; the work is the words and the **endings**. Latin carries meaning in its endings rather than in word order or helper-words, which is why it can drop pronouns and still be perfectly clear (*agō* already means “I do”). Each chapter introduces that machinery one piece at a time, exactly where a real phrase needs it — never as a front-loaded grammar table.

We use **classical** pronunciation (Caesar’s *v* was a *w*, his *c* always hard) and mark long vowels with a **macron** (*ā ē ī ō ū*), as teaching texts do, though Romans themselves wrote none. Roots are traced back toward Proto-Indo-European where the trail is clear, and forward into English and the Romance languages — every form supplied in full.

How to use this book

Every numbered section is one word, or one small phrase, and takes a few minutes — the length of a queue, an errand, or the walk to the bus. Read them in order the first time through: each section stands on the ones before it, and nothing is used before it has been taught. After that the book becomes reference, and you can open it anywhere.

Say the Latin out loud wherever you can. The prompts under *Your turn* are written to be spoken, and saying a word is most of what makes it

stay. The questions under *Before you move on* carry their own answers in brackets: cover them, answer from memory, then look.

Nothing here is gated behind pronunciation. Each lesson names the one or two sounds its own word needs, exactly where they are needed. The whole system is gathered in a reference at the back of the book — somewhere to look things up when you are curious, never a chapter to sit through first.

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Contents

Preface	iii
1 Greetings	1
1.1 salvē / salvēte	1
1.2 salvē / salvēte	2
1.3 salvē	3
1.4 heard greeting	3
1.5 avē / avēte	4
1.6 valē / valēte	5
1.7 grātiās (tibi) agō	6
1.8 ita / nōn	7
1.9 Practice	8
2 Numbers One to Ten	11
2.1 ūnus duo trēs quattuor quīnque	11
2.2 sex septem octō novem decem	13
3 Please	15
3.1 quaesō	15
4 Sorry	17
4.1 ignōsce mihi	17
5 Days of the Week	19
5.1 diēs Lūnae, Mārtis, Mercuriī, Iovis	19
5.2 diēs Saturnī, diēs Sōlis	21
6 Colours	23
6.1 niger, albus	23
6.2 ruber, caeruleus	25

7	Family	27
7.1	pater, mater	27
7.2	frater, soror	28
8	Head and Hand	31
8.1	caput	31
8.2	manus	33
9	Seasons	35
9.1	vēr, aestās, autumnus, hiems	35
10	Water, Wine, and Bread	39
10.1	aqua, vīnum	39
10.2	pānis	40
11	Months	43
11.1	Iānuārius, Februārius, Mārtius	43
12	Noon and Midnight	47
12.1	medius diēs, media nox	47
13	Telling Time	49
13.1	hōra	49
14	Asking Someone's Age	51
14.1	vīgintī annōs nātus sum	51
15	Weather	55
15.1	tempestās	55
15.2	pluit, calor, sol	56
16	Numbers Eleven to Twenty	59
16.1	ūndecim — vīgintī	59
17	Dog and Cat	63
17.1	canis, fēlēs, cattus	63
18	Green and Yellow	67
18.1	viridis, flāvus	67

19	How Are You?	69
19.1	quid agis?	69
19.2	ut valēs?	70
19.3	valeō, valē	70
19.4	Practice	71
20	Exchanging Names	73
20.1	quid tibi nōmen est? / mihi nōmen est...	73
20.2	puerō nōmen est Mārcus / Mārcō	74
21	Nice to Meet You	77
21.1	volup est convēnisse	77
21.2	tē voluptas est convēnisse	78
21.3	Practice	79
22	You, Singular and Plural	81
22.1	tū / vōs	81
23	You're Welcome	83
23.1	nihil est	83
24	See You Soon	85
24.1	propediem tē vidēbō	85
25	See You Tomorrow	87
25.1	crās tē vidēbō	87
26	How	89
26.1	quōmodo	89
27	Well	91
27.1	bene	91
28	Day	93
28.1	diēs	93
29	Night	95
29.1	nox	95
30	Good Night	97
30.1	bonam noctem	97

31	Morning	99
31.1	māne	99
32	Good Morning	101
32.1	bonum māne	101
33	Evening	105
33.1	vesper	105
33.2	Hesperia, víspera, vespers	106
33.3	Practice	107
34	Good Evening	109
34.1	bonum vesperum	109
35	Noon and Afternoon	111
35.1	merīdiēs	111
36	Good Afternoon	113
36.1	salvē (post merīdiem)	113
36.2	salvē / salvēte	114
36.3	Practice	115
37	Eight Verbs at the Core	117
37.1	sum, esse	117
37.2	habeō, habēre	119
37.3	eō, īre	120
37.4	veniō, venīre	122
37.5	dīcō, dīcere	123
37.6	videō, vidēre	125
37.7	sciō, scīre	126
37.8	dō, dare	128
38	Thinking, Reading, Writing	131
38.1	cōgitō, cōgitāre	131
38.2	legō, legere	133
38.3	intellegō, intellegere	134
38.4	scribō, scribere	136
39	Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving	139
39.1	capiō, capere	139
39.2	rogō, rogāre	141

	39.3	adiuvō, adiuuāre	142
	39.4	amō, amāre	144
40		Hearing, Sleeping, Sitting, Standing	147
	40.1	audiō, audire	147
	40.2	dormiō, dormire	149
	40.3	sedeō, sedere	151
	40.4	stō, stare	152
41		Walking, Running, Opening, Closing	155
	41.1	ambulō, ambulāre	155
	41.2	currō, currere	157
	41.3	aperiō, aperire	159
	41.4	claudō, claudere	160
42		Bringing, Getting, Playing, Waiting	163
	42.1	ferō, ferre	163
	42.2	accipiō, obtineō	165
	42.3	lūdō, ludere	167
	42.4	exspectō, exspectāre	168
43		Answering, Meeting, Buying	171
	43.1	respondeō, respondere	171
	43.2	conveniō, occurrō	173
	43.3	emō, emere	175
44		The House, and Who Is Inside It	177
	44.1	domus, domūs	177
	44.2	porta, portae	178
	44.3	mūrus, mūrī	179
	44.4	hortus, hortī	180
	44.5	focus, focī	181
45		Earth, Fire, Wind, Sky, Sea	183
	45.1	terra, terrae	183
	45.2	ignis, ignis	184
	45.3	ventus, ventī	185
	45.4	caelum, caelī	186
	45.5	mare, maris	187

46	Light, Shadow, and Going to Sleep	189
46.1	lūx, lūcis	189
46.2	umbra, umbrae	190
46.3	stēlla, stēllae	191
46.4	lūna, lūnae	192
46.5	somnus, somnī	193
47	Salt, Honey, Milk, Egg, Fish	195
47.1	sāl, salis	195
47.2	mel, mellis	196
47.3	lac, lactis	197
47.4	ōvum, ōvī	198
47.5	piscis, piscis	199
48	Nescio, Male, Malus, Sed, Aut	201
48.1	nesciō, nescīre	201
48.2	male	203
48.3	malus, mala, malum	204
48.4	sed	206
48.5	aut	207
49	Possum, Volo, Qui, Et, Quando	209
49.1	possum, posse	209
49.2	volō, velle	210
49.3	quī, quae, quod	212
49.4	et	213
49.5	quandō	215
50	Hic, Iste, Ille, Is, Ibi	217
50.1	hic, haec, hoc	217
50.2	iste, ista, istud	218
50.3	ille, illa, illud	220
50.4	is, ea, id	221
50.5	ibi	222
51	Amicus, Pecunia, Medicus, Miles, Epistula	225
51.1	amīcus, amīcī	225
51.2	pecūnia, pecūniae	226
51.3	medicus, medicī	228
51.4	mīles, mīlitis	229

51.5	epistula, epistulae	231
52	Ubi, Cur, Quia, Meus, Tuus	233
52.1	ubi	233
52.2	cūr	234
52.3	quia	236
52.4	meus, mea, meum	237
52.5	tuus, tua, tuum	238
53	Iterum, Magister, Discipulus, Schola, Liber	241
53.1	iterum	241
53.2	magister, magistrī	242
53.3	discipulus, discipulī	244
53.4	schola, scholae	245
53.5	liber, librī	246
54	Edo, Bibo, Oculus, Auris, Pes	249
54.1	edō, esse	249
54.2	bibō, bibere	250
54.3	oculus, oculī	252
54.4	auris, auris	253
54.5	pēs, pedis	254
55	Numerī Ōrdinis	257
55.1	prīmus, prīma, prīmum	257
55.2	secundus, secunda, secundum	258
55.3	tertius, tertia, tertium	260
55.4	quārtus, quārta, quārtum	261
55.5	quīntus, quīnta, quīntum	262
56	Sextus ad Decimum	265
56.1	sextus, sexta, sextum	265
56.2	septimus, septima, septimum	266
56.3	octāvus, octāva, octāvum	268
56.4	nōnus, nōna, nōnum	269
56.5	decimus, decima, decimum	270
57	Ante et Post	273
57.1	ante	273
57.2	post	274
57.3	prīma hōra — sexta hōra — nōna hōra	276

58	Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage	279
58.1	(reading)	279
58.2	(reading)	280
58.3	(reading)	281
59	Reading — Objects, Places, and a Day	283
59.1	aqua -> aquam; epistula -> epistulam	283
59.2	amicus -> amicum; magister ->	284
59.3	ad scholam; in scholā; domum	286
59.4	(reading)	287
59.5	(reading)	288
60	Writing — My Own Line	291
60.1	(versus meus)	291
61	Writing — With A Clock	293
61.1	(cum horologio)	293
62	Writing — Four Lines, And The Word That Has A Twin	295
62.1	quia	295
	How Latin sounds (reference)	297
	Glossary	299
	Review Questions	313
	Answer Key	315
	Index	317

Chapter 1

Greetings

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) ✍️ pen (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 9 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can greet someone in Latin, thank them, answer yes or no, and say goodbye.

The whole doorway sequence on cue: write salvē independently from its sound, use salvē or avē on arrival, say grātiās tibi agō, answer ita or nōn, and use valē on the way out.

1.1 salvē / salvēte — “hello” (be well)

The first Latin word — and it already contains *save*, *safe*, and *salute*.

Sounds you’ll need

Latin is read as written, every letter sounded. A **macron** (ā ē ī ō ū) marks a *long* vowel — held longer, same quality. Classical **v** = **w**. So *salvē* = **SAL-weh**, not “sal-vay.”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Salvē (to one person) / *salvēte* (to several) is the imperative of *salvēre*, “to be in good health,” from *salvus* “safe, sound, whole.” To greet in Latin is to **wish someone health**. That root fans out into English — **save, safe, salvage, salvation, salute, salubrious**, the toast “**salut!**” — and into the Romance children as the word for health itself: Spanish *salud*, Italian *salute*, French *salut*.

Grammar Lens

salvē vs. *salvēte*: Latin changes the **ending** to mark one listener (*-e*) versus many (*-ēte*). This is the feature that defines Latin — meaning carried in endings, not in word order or extra words. English lost almost all of it; its Romance grandchildren kept some. You will meet it in every chapter.

Writing — follow one greeting you can see

Keep **salvē** visible. First point to the line over the final **ē**: that macron says to hold the vowel longer. Trace the whole word once, from **s** through **ē**, then say *SAL-weh*. Stop there.

This is not a spelling test. Your eye and hand are only following a greeting whose sound and meaning are already on the page.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- greet one friend — *salvē* (SAL-weh)
- greet a whole room — *salvēte*
- two English words from *salvus* (save, safe, salute, salvation...)

Before you move on

What does *salvē* literally wish, and how do you greet more than one person? (“Be well / be in good health”; *salvēte*, with the plural *-ēte* ending.)

1.2 *salvē* — copy one greeting with help

Point to **salvē** and say it once: *SAL-weh*. The model stays on the page.

Writing — one guided copy

Copy **salvē** once on the line below it. Write **salve** first, then add the short macron over the final **ē**. Look back at the model whenever you want.

Say the word as you finish. The macron belongs to the vowel: it records the long sound you already heard; it is not a new letter and not something to guess.

Before you move on

Compare your copy with the model. If one mark differs, repair only that mark. No hiding, no spelling from memory, and no second word today.

1.3 **salvē** — look, hide, write, check

Say **salvē** once: *SAL-weh*, “be well.” Its sound and meaning are already familiar. Today only the amount of visual help changes.

Writing — delayed copy

Look at **salvē** for five seconds. Notice the five letters and the short macron over the final **ē**. Cover the model completely. From memory, write the greeting once. Say *SAL-weh* as you finish.

Uncover the model and compare one feature at a time: **s-a-l-v-ē**. If one feature differs, repair only that feature. This is one gentle memory step, not a speed test.

Before you move on

Writing pass: **1/1** only when the covered-model attempt contains **s-a-l-v-ē** with the macron. Saying the greeting correctly does not replace the writing point.

1.4 Hear the greeting; write it independently

Cover the previous lesson and the answer box below. Hear this cue without looking at Latin spelling: “**Greet one person: SAL-weh — literally, be well.**”

Writing — dictation and transcription

Write the one-word Latin greeting from the sound and meaning cue. Remember that the final vowel is long, so its written vowel carries the macron.

Do not copy from an earlier page. Stop after one attempt.

Before you move on

Now uncover the answer: **salvē**.

- Writing: **1/1** for all five letters plus the final macron; otherwise **0/1**.
- Listening: **1/1** if the cue selected the one-person greeting; otherwise **0/1**.

Each skill must pass on its own. A correct listening choice cannot compensate for a missing or incorrect written form.

1.5 avē / avēte — “hail” (a formal greeting)

The ceremonious greeting — the one you still hear in *Ave Maria*.

Sounds you’ll need

Avē = **AH-weh** (again the *w*-sound for *v*). Two syllables, the second long.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Avē is the more formal greeting — “hail” — from *avēre* “to fare well, to be eager.” It survives in English essentially unchanged inside the prayer “**Ave Maria**” (“Hail, Mary”), and stands in Catullus’s famous *avē atque valē* — “hail and farewell” — spoken at his brother’s grave, pairing the word you say on arrival with the one you say on leaving (next lesson).

Why it’s said this way

Avē carried rank and ritual — addressed to emperors and gods (*avē, Caesar*). For an everyday “hi,” Romans reached for *salvē*; *avē* was the bow, not the wave.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- read it — AH-weh
- where English still uses it (*Ave Maria*, “Hail Mary”)
- which is more formal, *avē* or *salvē*? (*avē*)

Before you move on

What register does *avē* carry, and in what famous phrase does English keep it? (Formal / ceremonial, for emperors and gods; *Ave Maria*.)

1.6 valē / valēte — “goodbye” (be strong)

Latin’s goodbye wishes you *strength* — and hides inside *value*, *valid*, and *prevail*.

Sounds you’ll need

Valē = **WAH-leh**. Like *salvē*, a health-and-strength wish frozen into a command.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Valē (singular) / *valēte* (plural) is the imperative of *valēre*, “to be strong, to be well.” So goodbye in Latin literally wishes you **strength**. The root is an English gold mine: **value**, **valid**, **valiant**, **valour**, **valence**, **prevail**, **convalesce**, **ambivalent** (“strong both ways”). And the Romance children carry *valēre* as their verb “to be worth”: Spanish *valer*, Italian *valere*, French *valoir*.

Grammar Lens

salvē, *avē*, *valē* are all the same shape — a bare **imperative**, a command form of a verb about health or strength. Latin doesn’t say “hello/goodbye”; it *orders* you to thrive. Feel the *-ē* / *-ēte* pair recur: know it once, and you can address one friend or a whole room in any of the three.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- say goodbye to one person — *valē* (WAH-leh)
- to several — *valēte*
- the whole “hail and farewell” — *avē atque valē*
- two English words from *valēre* (value, valid, valiant, prevail...)

Before you move on

What does *valē* literally wish, and what everyday English noun comes straight from its root? (“Be strong / be well”; *value* — from *valēre* “to be worth.”)

1.7 grātiās (tibi) agō — “thank you” (I give thanks)

Say this and you have said *grace*, *gratitude*, *gracias*, and *grazie* all at once.

Sounds you’ll need

Grātiās = **GRAH-tee-ās**; *agō* = **AH-go**. In classical Latin *c* and *t* before *i* stay hard — **GRA-tee**, never “GRA-shee.”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The full phrase is *grātiās tibi agō* — literally “**I give thanks to you**” (*grātiās* “thanks,” *tibi* “to you,” *agō* “I do/drive”). The noun *grātia* means “favour, grace, gratitude,” from *grātus* “pleasing, thankful.” Into English: **grace, gratitude, gratis, grateful, gracious, ingratiate, congratulate**. And straight into the Romance “thank you” you already learned — Italian *grazie*, Spanish *gracias*, Portuguese *graças* — all just the plural *grātiās*, “thanks,” worn smooth.

Grammar Lens

agō means “I do” — the *-ō* ending **is** “I,” so no separate pronoun is needed. This is Latin’s great habit: the verb ending tells you *who* acts. *Agō* itself is a root you know: **agent, act, agenda** (“things to be done”), **agile, navigate**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the phrase — *grātiās tibi agō*
- the Romance descendants of *grātiās* (grazie, gracias, graças)
- what the *-ō* on *agō* already means (the pronoun “I”)

Before you move on

Grātiās agō literally says what, and why is there no word for “I”? (“I give thanks”; the *-ō* verb-ending already carries “I.”)

1.8 ita / nōn — “yes” and “no”

A surprise: Latin had no plain word for “yes.” Here is what Romans said instead.

Sounds you’ll need

Ita = **IH-tah**; *nōn* = **nōne**, with a long *ō*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Classical Latin had **no simple “yes.”** To agree you said *ita* (“thus, so”), *sīc* (“so, in this way”), *certē* (“certainly”), or you just **repeated the verb** — asked “are you coming?”, you answered “I’m coming.” It was *sīc* that hardened into the Romance “yes”: Spanish and Italian **sí** / **sì**, French *sì* (the emphatic yes). “No” is easier: *nōn* (“not”), from older *ne-oenum* “not one thing” — the ancient negative **ne-** that also gives English **no**, **not**, **none**, **never**, and which you will meet again as Sanskrit *na* and Hindi *nahīṇ*.

Why it’s said this way

A language that carries so much in its verb endings barely needs a “yes” word — the verb *is* the answer. This is a real window into how Latin thinks: agreement lives in the sentence, not in a little particle bolted on.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- three Latin ways to say “yes” (*ita*, *sīc*, *certē*)
- which one became Spanish/Italian *sí/sì*? (*sīc*)
- the English cousins of *nōn* (no, not, none, never)

Before you move on

How did Romans say “yes,” and what Romance word grew out of *sīc*? (With *ita/sīc/certē* or by repeating the verb; *sí* / *sì*.)

1.9 Chapter 1 — Practice and Recall

No new words. Just the greetings — and the English and Romance words they secretly contain.

Your turn: Rapid recall

Say these aloud:

- hello, one person — *salvē*
- hail, formally — *avē*
- goodbye, one person — *valē*
- thank you — *grātiās tibi agō*
- “thus” (a way to say yes) and “not” — *ita* / *nōn*

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Each greeting is an etymological hub. Trace them:

Say these aloud:

- which greeting root gives *save*, *safe*, *salute*? (*salvus*, from *salvē*)
- which gives *value*, *valid*, *prevail*? (*valēre*, from *valē*)
- which gives *grace*, *gratitude*, *grazie*, *gracias*? (*grātia*, from

grātiās)

Before you move on

- *salvus* “safe” → **save, safe, salvage, salvation, salute**
- *valēre* “be strong” → **value, valid, valiant, prevail, convalesce**
- *grātia* “grace” → **grace, gratitude, gratis, congratulate;** Romance *grazie/gracias*
- *nōn* ← *ne-* → English **no, not, none**; cousin of Sanskrit *na*

Before you move on

Catullus wrote *avē atque valē* at his brother’s grave. Translate it, and say what each verb literally wishes. (“Hail and farewell”; *avē* “fare well” on meeting, *valē* “be strong” on parting.)

Chapter 2

Numbers One to Ten

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count from one to ten in Latin and say why September sits in the ninth month.

Count ūnus to decem aloud, then read the Roman tally VI-X and place September against Rome's March-start year.

2.1 ūnus, duo, trēs, quattuor, quīnque — one to five

You've seen these numbers before — worn down. Here they are new, before a thousand years of erosion set to work.

You'll want to know: The five

	numeral	Latin	said
1	I	ūnus	OO-nus
2	II	duo	DOO-oh
3	III	trēs	trayss
4	IV	quattuor	KWAT-twor
5	V	quīnque	KWEEN-kwe

The Roman numerals **I II III IV V** are the tally you already half-know from clock faces — one, two, three strokes, then **IV** (one *before* five) and **V** (five itself). (The **qu** in *quattuor/quīnque* is said **kw**, and every Latin **v** is a **w** — so *quīnque* is *KWEEN-kwe*.)

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Latin is the well the Romance tracks keep drawing from. Line these up against their descendants and you see the erosion happen:

Latin	→ French	→ Spanish
<i>ūnus</i>	un	uno
<i>duo</i>	deux	dos
<i>trēs</i>	trois	tres
quattuor	quatre	cuatro
<i>quīnque</i>	cinq	cinco

(A purist’s note: French *deux* and Spanish *dos* actually descend from the **accusative** *duōs*, not the *duo* shown — as Romance words generally do.)

Quattuor → *quatre* → *cuatro* is the same wearing-down Hindi shows in *catvāri* → *chār* — two branches of one ancient word (**PIE** ***k^wetwóres**), one softening in Europe, one in India. And they seed English too: *ūnus* in *unit* and *union*, *duo* in *duo* and *dual*, *trēs* in *trio* and *triple*, *quīnque* in *quintet*.

Grammar Lens: A grammar seed: the first three bend

Here’s something Latin does that its children mostly dropped: **one, two and three change their endings** to match what they count — *ūnus/ūna/ūnum*, *duo/duae*, *trēs/tria* — while **four and up stay fixed**. You don’t need the full tables yet; just notice that *ūnus* is really *ūn-* with a changeable tail, and file away that Latin makes even its numbers agree.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*ūnus*, *duo*, *trēs*, *quattuor*, *quīnque*” — remember *v* = *w*, *qu* = *kw*
- the erosion — “*quattuor* → *quatre* → *cuatro*”
- the tally — I, II, III, IV, V

Before you move on

Count to five in Latin. (*Ūnus, duo, trēs, quattuor, quīnque.*) Which Latin word is the source of both French *quatre* and Spanish *cuatro*? (**quattuor.**) How is the **qu** in *quīnque* pronounced? (**kw** — *KWEEN-kwe.*) Which of the first five numbers **change their endings** to match what they count? (**One, two, three** — four and up stay fixed.) Next: six to ten, and the numbers hiding in the calendar.

2.2 sex, septem, octō, novem, decem — six to ten

Four of these five are hiding in your calendar right now — with the wrong numbers on them. Here's why.

You'll want to know: The five

	numeral	Latin	said
6	VI	sex	<i>sex</i>
7	VII	septem	<i>SEP-tem</i>
8	VIII	octō	<i>OK-toh</i>
9	IX	novem	<i>NO-wem</i>
10	X	decem	<i>DEK-em</i>

The numerals climb by adding to five — **VI VII VIII** (five-and-one, -two, -three) — then **IX** (one *before* ten) and **X**. (Remember *v = w*, so *novem* is *NO-wem*; and *c* is always hard *k*, so *decem* is *DEK-em*.)

You'll want to know: The numbers frozen in the calendar

Say the last four out loud and read the months beside them:

Latin	month	but it's month #
<i>septem</i> (7)	September	9
<i>octō</i> (8)	October	10
<i>novem</i> (9)	November	11
<i>decem</i> (10)	December	12

September literally means “the seventh.” It sits in ninth place because the old Roman year **began in March** — so month one was March, and the seventh month was our September. When January and February were

later pushed to the front, the names never moved. Every year you write four Latin numbers, each two places off, because Rome renumbered the calendar and forgot to rename the months.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

- *sex* → **sextet**, **sextant** (and *sex*- “six” in *sexagesimal*, base-60)
- *octō* → **octave**, **October** — while its Greek twin *oktō* gives **octagon** and **octopus** (eight arms)
- *decem* → **decimal**, and — via *duodecim* “twelve” — **dozen** (its Greek cousin *dekás* “group of ten” adds **decade**)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sex, septem, octō, novem, decem” — v = w, c = k
- the calendar — “septem → September, the seventh month... now ninth”
- the tally — VI, VII, VIII, IX, X

Before you move on

Count six to ten in Latin. (*Sex, septem, octō, novem, decem.*) Why does **September** (“the seventh”) fall in the ninth month? (Rome’s year began in **March**; two months were later added at the front and the names never changed.) How is *novem* said, and why? (*NO-wem* — Latin **v** is a **w**.) What everyday base-ten word comes straight from *decem*? (**decimal**.) You can now count to ten in the language every Romance number came from.

Chapter 3

Please

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can soften a Latin request the way Romans did, with *quaesō* or *sīs* instead of a word for please.

*Attach *quaesō* to a real request — *dā mihi aquam, quaesō* — and swap in *sīs* for the if-you-wish version.*

3.1 *quaesō* — please (I ask)

Latin has no word that simply means “please.” Instead you say what you’re actually doing: **asking**.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

quaesō — said *KWAI-so* (qu = **kw**, ae = **eye**) — literally means “**I ask**” or “**I beg**.” Romans dropped it into a sentence exactly where English drops *please*:

*Dā mihi aquam, **quaesō*** — “Give me water, **please**” (lit. “...I ask”).

It’s a worn-down cousin of the verb **quaerere**, “to seek, to ask” — the same root English took for **query**, **quest**, **question**, **require** and **inquire**. So *quaesō* is, at heart, “I’m seeking [this] of you.”

Why it's said this way

Because there's no single word, Latin had a small kit of polite moves — worth meeting so the absence doesn't feel like a gap:

- **sīs** — a squeezed **sī vīs**, “**if you wish**” (to one person); plural **sultis** (*sī vultis*). This is the *same* “if you wish” strategy French will use in *s'il te plaît*.
- **amābō tē** — literally “**I will love you**” — a warm, coaxing “please,” the way English might say “be a dear.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “quaesō” — *KWAI-so*, “I ask”
- in place — “Dā mihi aquam, quaesō”
- the “if you wish” version — “sīs” (from *sī vīs*)

Before you move on

What did Romans literally say instead of “please”? (**quaesō** — “I ask/beg.”) What verb is it from, and which English words share that root? (**quaerere** “to seek” — *query, quest, require*.) What does **sīs** stand for? (**sī vīs**, “if you wish” — the same idea French uses in *s'il te plaît*.)

Chapter 4

Sorry

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can apologise in Latin with *ignōsce mihi*, and use *paenitet mē* when I want to name the regret instead.

*Apologise to someone’s face with *ignōsce mihi*, then contrast it with *paenitet mē*, which names regret rather than asking pardon.*

4.1 *ignōsce mihi* — “forgive me” / I’m sorry

You’ve met *quaesō*, the worn-down “I ask” Romans used for *please*. Their word for *sorry* is built the very same way — a small verb carrying the whole apology.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

- **ignōsce** — the imperative “**forgive!**,” from **ignōscere**, itself **in-** (here appearing as **ig-**, “not”) + **(g)nōscere**, “**to know**.” Literally, *ignōscere* means “**to not-know**” — i.e. to overlook, to treat as unseen. Asking forgiveness in Latin is asking someone *not to hold something against you*, as if they hadn’t noticed it.
- **mihi** — “**to me**,” the dative pronoun.

So *ignōsce mihi* is “**forgive [it] to me**” — *don’t hold this against me*. That root **(g)nōscere**, “to know,” reaches deep into English: **know** itself traces to the very same ancient root, alongside **recognize** (“know again”), **cognition**, and **notice**. Latin’s word for “sorry” and English’s word for “know” are, at bottom, blood relatives.

Why it's said this way

Latin also had an **impersonal** construction for plain regret — no imperative, no “you” at all: **paenitet mē**, literally “**it grieves me**” (*mē* here is accusative, “me,” the one afflicted by the regret) — “*I regret [it].*” It comes from the verb **paenitēre**, “to cause regret,” the direct ancestor of English **penitent**, **penitence**, and **repent**.

Where **ignōsce mihi** asks someone to **forgive** you, **paenitet mē** simply names your own **regret** — closer to “I’m sorry [that happened]” than to “please forgive me.” The same regret/forgiveness split you’ll meet again and again across languages.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ignōsce” — forgive — then “mihi,” to me
- the whole phrase — “ignōsce mihi” = forgive me
- the other one — “paenitet mē” = I regret it

Before you move on

What does **ignōsce mihi** literally mean, piece by piece? (“**Forgive to me**” — *ignōscere* “to not-know/overlook” + *mihi* “to me.”)

What English words share the (*g*)*nōscere* root? (**Know, recognize, cognition, notice.**) What’s Latin’s other way to express regret, and how is it different? (**Paenitet mē**, “it grieves me” — names the regret, rather than asking to be forgiven.)

Chapter 5

Days of the Week

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) 👁 eyes (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name all seven Roman weekdays and say which modern names kept Rome's gods and which were rewritten.

Name the full seven-day planetary week, then sort Saturday and Sunday by which languages kept Rome's gods and which renamed them.

5.1 diēs Lūnae to diēs Veneris — the week, before it wore down

Spanish says *lunes*; French says *lundi*. Both are worn-down descendants of something Latin still says in **full**: **diēs Lūnae**, “the **day of the Moon**.” This lesson gives you the un-eroded originals.

You'll want to know: The five weekdays, spelled out in full

Each weekday is simply **diēs** (“day”) plus a **planet-god's name in the genitive** (“of _____”):

Latin	literally	planet-god	worn down to (Spanish / French)
diēs Lūnae	day of the Moon	Luna	lunes / lundi
diēs Mārtis	day of Mars	Mars	martes / mardi
diēs Mercuriū	day of Mercury	Mercury	miércoles / mercredi
diēs Iovis	day of Jupiter	Jupiter (<i>Iuppiter</i>)	jueves / jeudi
diēs Veneris	day of Venus	Venus	viernes / vendredi

Later languages kept only fragments of this phrase — a bare **-s**, a bare **-di** — but you’re now looking at the whole thing, still standing.

Why it’s said this way

Rome didn’t always keep a seven-day planetary week. For much of the Republic, Romans ran an **eight-day market cycle** (letters *A* through *H*, not planets at all). The **planetary week** — the Sun, Moon, and five visible planets, each ruling a day, in a fixed order — spread into Rome later, from Hellenistic astrology, and only gradually displaced the older market cycle. So *diēs Lūnae* and its siblings are themselves a Roman **adoption**, not an ancient Roman invention — a system Rome picked up and then passed on, worn down, to Spanish and French centuries later.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*diēs Lūnae*” — day of the Moon — then “*diēs Mārtis*,” day of Mars
- all five in a row — “*diēs Lūnae*, *Mārtis*, *Mercuriū*, *Iovis*, *Veneris*”
- the wear-down — “*diēs Mārtis*” became Spanish “*martes*,” French “*mardi*”

Before you move on

What does **diēs Mārtis** literally mean, and what does it become in Spanish and French? (“**Day of Mars**” — *martes* / *mardi*.) Did Rome always use a seven-day planetary week? (**No** — for much of the Republic it ran an eight-day market cycle; the planetary week arrived later, from Hellenistic astrology.) What holds every Latin weekday name together? (**diēs** “day” + the planet-god’s name in the **genitive**, “of ____.”)

5.2 diēs Saturnī, diēs Sōlis — Saturday and Sunday, before the renaming

The Roman planetary week had **seven** days, not five. The last two — Saturn’s and the Sun’s — tell a story neither Spanish nor French kept: a **religious renaming** that some languages accepted, and others didn’t.

You’ll want to know: The two original names

- **diēs Saturnī** — “**day of Saturn**.” This one survives almost untouched in English: **Saturday** (Old English *Sæternesdæg*) is a **direct borrowing** of the Latin god’s own name — the one weekday English kept a **Roman** god outright, rather than swapping in a Germanic equivalent, because there was no obvious Germanic god to stand in for stern old Saturn.
- **diēs Sōlis** — “**day of the Sun**.” Also a direct hit in English: **Sunday** (*Sunnandæg*), a plain translation — the Sun didn’t need a separate Germanic identity to be swapped in.

Why it’s said this way

As Christianity spread through the Empire, Latin usage **replaced** both pagan names:

- **diēs Saturnī** → **Sabbatum**, borrowing the Jewish **Sabbath** (Hebrew *shabbāt*, “to rest”).
- **diēs Sōlis** → **diēs Dominica**, “the **Lord’s** day” (*Dominus*, “lord”).

Spanish (*sábado, domingo*) and **French** (*samedi, dimanche*) inherited these newer, **Christianized** names. **English never made the swap** — so, unexpectedly, **English’s Saturday and Sunday are the older, more pagan forms**, while Spanish and French’s weekend names are the **newer**, religiously rewritten ones. The direction of “old vs. new” flips depending which language you’re standing in.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*diēs Saturnī*” — day of Saturn — then “*diēs Sōlis*,” day of the Sun
- English kept these directly — “Saturday, Sunday”
- Spanish/French renamed them — “*sábado/samedi* (Sabbath), *domingo/ dimanche* (the Lord’s day)”

Before you move on

What did Rome originally call Saturday and Sunday? (**Diēs Saturnī** “day of Saturn,” **diēs Sōlis** “day of the Sun.”) Which modern language kept these pagan names **directly**, and which two languages **renamed** them? (**English** kept them (*Saturday, Sunday*); **Spanish and French** replaced them with the Christian *Sabbatum / diēs Dominica*.) So which is actually “older” — English’s weekend names, or Spanish’s? (**English’s** — Spanish’s are the later, Christianized rewrite.)

Chapter 6

Colours

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say black, white, red, and blue in Latin, and explain why its blue was never as settled as its red.

Say niger, albus, ruber, and caeruleus in turn, and split ruber's two children between French rouge and Spanish rojo.

6.1 niger, albus — Latin's black and white, each with a shine-twin

You've seen **niger** already, hiding inside French *noir* and Spanish *negro*. Here's what those daughter languages left behind: Latin didn't have just one word for black, or just one for white — it had **two of each**, split by **brightness**, not just hue.

You'll want to know: Two blacks, two whites

- **niger** = “black” with a **gleam** — a shiny, lustrous black. This is the one that survives into Romance (*noir, negro, nero*).
- **āter** = “black” that's **dull, matte, lightless** — the flatter, duller black. (English keeps a fossil of it in **atrocious** and **atrociousness** — something so dark/dreadful it's “black” in the *āter* sense.)
- **albus** = “white” that's **plain, dull, matte** — this is the one that mostly faded from Romance's everyday vocabulary (surviving in Spanish *alba*/French *aube*, “dawn,” rather than as the everyday color word).

- **candidus** = “white” with a **shine, a gleam, a glow** — bright white. English keeps this one working hard: **candid** (originally “shining bright,” then “morally bright/honest”), **candidate** (Romans running for office wore a bleached, gleaming-white toga, the *toga candida*), and **candle**.

Why it’s said this way

Romance languages mostly **dropped** this shine-vs-matte split and kept only one word per color (*niger* survived for black; *albus* and *candidus* both survive, but neither became the plain everyday “white” in most daughter languages — Spanish and French instead borrowed a **Germanic** word, *blanco/ blanc*, for their everyday white, as you may already have seen). So Latin’s four color-words shrank to cover just two basic ideas — brightness stopped being how Latin-descended languages sort black and white.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “niger” — gleaming black — then “āter,” dull black
- “albus” — dull white — then “candidus,” shining white
- the English fossils — “atrocious” (āter), “candid, candidate” (candidus)

Before you move on

What distinguished Latin’s two black words, and its two white words? (**Brightness** — *niger* “gleaming black” vs. *āter* “dull black”; *candidus* “shining white” vs. *albus* “dull white.”) Which two English words come from *candidus*, and why does *candidate* mean what it does? (**Candid** and **candidate** — Roman office-seekers wore a bleached-white *toga candida*.) Did Romance keep this four-way split? (**No** — it settled on one plain word per color, and Spanish/French even borrowed a **Germanic** word for everyday white.)

6.2 ruber, caeruleus — a rock-solid red, and a shaky blue

One of these two words is about as old and stable a color-word as language gets. The other is a genuine puzzle — because Latin, like a surprising number of ancient languages, never quite settled on a clean word for “blue.”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ruber (“red”) descends from PIE *h₁rewd^h*-, a root so old it also gives English **red**, **rust**, **ruddy**, and German **rot**. Latin’s own family used **two** everyday variants of this root — **rubeus** and **russus** — and Romance split them between languages: French **rouge** comes from *rubeus*; Spanish **rojo** comes from *russus*. Different Latin words, same ancient root, same color.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

You might expect a clean Latin ancestor for “blue” the way *ruber* is for red. There isn’t really one. **Caeruleus** is the closest word Latin had — and it’s a much fuzzier idea than *ruber*: it covers the color of the **sky** and the **sea** (*caeruleum mare*, “the blue/dark sea”), but it can also shade toward **dark green** or simply “**dark**,” depending on context. It isn’t a fixed, single hue-word the way *ruber* clearly is. This isn’t just a Latin quirk. Classicists and linguists have long noted that **many ancient languages lacked a clean, stable basic word for blue** — Ancient Greek is the most famous case (Homer’s “**wine-dark sea**,” never a simple “blue sea”). Across many language families, “blue” tends to be one of the **last** basic color words to settle into place, historically — sometimes splitting off late from words that also covered green, dark, or grey. Latin’s *caeruleus* looks like part of that same broader pattern, though the exact reasons are still debated among linguists rather than fully settled.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ruber” — red — the ancient, PIE-rooted color word

- its two children — “rubeus → French rouge,” “russus → Spanish rojo”
- “caeruleus” — sea/sky-colored — Latin’s shakiest, least fixed color word

Before you move on

What PIE root gives **ruber**, and what English words share it? (*h₁rewd^h*- — **red, rust, ruddy**.) Which two Latin red-words split between French and Spanish, and which went where? (**Rubeus** → **French rouge**; **russus** → **Spanish rojo**.) Why is **caeruleus** a shakier word than *ruber*? (**It covers sea/sky and can shade toward dark or green** — it was never a single fixed “blue,” a pattern linguists have noticed across many ancient languages, most famously Greek’s “wine-dark sea.”)

Chapter 7

Family

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my father, mother, brother, and sister in Latin, and say why Spanish stopped using frāter.

Name the four household members aloud, then trace frāter germānus down to Spanish hermano.

7.1 pater, mater — the oldest words, kept close to the source

“Father” and “mother” are among the **oldest reconstructible words in human language**. Latin kept them almost exactly as they were; English took the very same ancestor down a different road.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

- **pater** (“father”) ← PIE *ph₂tēr*.
- **māter** (“mother”) ← PIE *méh₂tēr*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Here’s the point worth getting exactly right: **pater and English father are not one derived from the other**. Both descend **independently, in parallel**, from the same PIE word. Latin simply kept the ancestral **p** and **t** close to unchanged; the Germanic branch

that produced English took a separate route through **Grimm’s Law**, which shifted that same inherited **p** → **f** and **t** → **th**:

PIE ancestor	Latin	Germanic → English
<i>ph₂tér</i>	pater	father
<i>méh₂tēr</i>	māter	mother

So *pater* and *father* are **siblings**, sharing one parent-word thousands of years back — not a case of English borrowing or descending from Latin. *Pater* also gives Latin (and later English, through Latin) the whole “of-a-parent” family: **paternus** (“fatherly,” → English *paternal*) and **māternus** (→ *maternal*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pater, māter” — father, mother
- the relationship — “cousins, not ancestor and descendant”
- “pater → paternus → paternal; māter → māternus → maternal”

Before you move on

Does English *father* come **from** Latin *pater*? (**No** — both descend **independently** from the same PIE word, *ph₂tér*.) What sound-law explains the difference between them? (**Grimm’s Law** — the Germanic branch shifted the inherited **p** → **f**, **t** → **th**; Latin kept them.) What Latin adjectives give English *paternal* and *maternal*? (**Paternus, māternus**.)

7.2 frater, soror — Latin’s original siblings, before Spanish moved on

Two more ancient words — and a preview of a twist: these are the very words that later got **pushed aside** in everyday Latin, on the road to Spanish.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

- **frāter** (“brother”) ← PIE *b^hréh₂tēr*.
- **soror** (“sister”) ← PIE *swésōr*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Same rule as *pater/māter*: **frāter is not the source of English “brother”** — they’re **cousins**, both from *b^hréh₂tēr*, with Grimm’s Law shifting the Germanic branch’s **b^h** → **b** while Latin developed its own **f** (from an earlier *b^h* → *f* shift already inside Latin itself). **Soror** is the more surprising one. English **sister** looks nothing like *soror* — and that’s because Latin **dropped** the *w* from the PIE cluster *sw-* (giving plain *s-*), while the Germanic branch **kept** the *w* far longer (Old English had *sweostor*). So *soror* and *sister* are, once again, **cousins from the same PIE word**, *swésōr* — neither one turned into the other; each branch just handled that opening *sw-* differently.

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the twist: classical Latin could say **frāter germānus**, “a brother of the same blood,” to mark a *full* sibling. Over time, in everyday (Vulgar) Latin, that **adjective** *germānus* took over the whole job, and **frāter itself faded out of common use** — which is exactly why Spanish says **hermano**, not a descendant of *frāter* at all. (French *frère* took the opposite path and kept *frāter* as its everyday word — different Latin regions, different survivors.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “frāter, soror” — brother, sister
- the cousin relationship — “frāter/brother and soror/sister are BOTH parallel descendants, not one from the other”
- the twist — “frāter germānus” → just “germānus” → Spanish “hermano”

Before you move on

Is English “sister” descended from Latin *soror*? (**No** — both are cousins from PIE *swésōr*; Latin dropped the *w*, Germanic kept it longer.) What Latin phrase eventually replaced *frāter* in everyday speech, and where does it show up today? (**Frāter germānus** → just *germānus* → Spanish **hermano**.) Did every Romance language make that same swap? (**No** — French kept *frāter* as *frère*; Spanish moved on to *germānus*.)

Chapter 8

Head and Hand

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 🖐️ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say head and hand in Latin, and explain why manus is feminine when its declension usually is not.

Say caput and manus with the correct gender, then list the manus words English still runs on.

8.1 caput — the head, still working two thousand years later

Few Latin words stayed as busy in English as this one. And yet — one of Latin’s own descendants **abandoned** it for the actual body part.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

caput, capitis — “**head**.” A perfectly ordinary noun, and one of Latin’s most productive exports:

English	literally
captain	the “head” of a ship or unit
capital	the “head” city, or the “head” sum of money
decapitate	to remove the head
capitulate	to arrange terms under “little-head” headings — hence, to yield

Spanish kept *caput* as its everyday word too: **cabeza** descends from it (by way of Vulgar Latin *capitia*).

Why it's said this way

French had *caput* available — and **dropped it** for the body part entirely. Instead French says **tête**, from Latin **testa**, “an earthenware pot, a shell.” Roman soldiers joked about the skull the way English speakers say “noggin” (a small mug), and in Gaul, that joke eventually **replaced** *caput* as the everyday word. *Caput* didn't disappear from French, though — it survives there too, just not for the actual head: **chef** (“chief”), **chapitre**, **capital**, **capitaine**.

So three languages took three different paths with the very same word: **Spanish** kept *caput* as the plain, everyday “head”; **French** demoted it to “chief/chapter/capital” and reached for a pot-joke instead; **English** never used it for the body part at all, only for these borrowed “head of something” senses.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “caput, capitis” — head
- the English family — “captain, capital, decapitate, capitulate”
- the twist — French swapped *caput* out for *testa*, “pot”

Before you move on

What does **caput** mean, and what English words come from it? (“**Head**” — *captain, capital, decapitate, capitulate*.) Did every Romance language keep it as the everyday word for “head”? (**No** — Spanish did (*cabeza*); French replaced it with **testa**, “pot,” soldiers’ slang for the skull.) Where does *caput* survive in French, if not as “head”? (**Chef, chapitre, capital, capitaine**.)

8.2 manus — the hand, and a famous grammatical exception

Here’s a word that’s productive in English *and* grammatically odd in Latin itself — an oddity that then rode straight through into Spanish.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

manus, manūs — “hand.” It belongs to Latin’s **4th declension** — a group of nouns ending in *-us* that runs **overwhelmingly masculine**: *fructus* (“fruit”), *exercitus* (“army”), *senātus* (“senate”), *portus* (“port”) are all masculine. **Manus is one of only a handful of exceptions** in that declension — feminine, alongside *anus* (“old woman”) and *domus* (“house,” though *domus* is even messier: it mixes 4th- and 2nd-declension endings throughout its own paradigm) — for reasons tied to each noun’s own ancient history, not a rule you could predict from the *-us* ending alone.

That oddity didn’t stay buried in Latin grammar books: Spanish’s word for hand, **mano**, inherited *manus*’s feminine gender directly — which is exactly why *mano* is famously feminine despite ending in **-o**, the ending that signals *masculine* in nearly every other Spanish noun. One small Latin exception, carried whole into a completely different pattern in a daughter language, centuries later.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

English	literally
manual	done by hand
manufacture	made by hand (<i>manus</i> + <i>facere</i> , “to make”)
manuscript	written by hand (<i>manus</i> + <i>scribere</i>)
maintain	hold in the hand (<i>manū tenere</i>)
manage	to handle

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*manus, manūs*” — hand
- the exception — “feminine, unlike *fructus, exercitus, senātus*”
- the English family — “manual, manufacture, maintain, manage”

Before you move on

What gender is **manus**, and is that typical for its declension? (**Feminine** — unusual, since the 4th declension runs mostly **masculine**; *manus* is one of a few exceptions, alongside *domus* and *anus*.) What Spanish word inherited this exact oddity? (**Mano** — feminine despite ending in *-o*.) Give an English word from *manus*. (**Manual, manufacture, manuscript, maintain, manage.**)

Chapter 9

Seasons

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the four seasons in Latin and say which ones Romance rebuilt out of a phrase instead.

Name vēr, aestās, autumnus, and hiems, then sort which survived plainly and which Romance rebuilt as prīma vēra and hibernum.

9.1 vēr, aestās, autumnus, hiems — Latin’s own four seasons

Four Latin nouns, one for each season — and a genuine surprise about which ones actually survived into Spanish and French as ordinary words.

You’ll want to know: The four seasons, plain and simple

Latin	meaning
vēr, vēris	spring
aestās, aestātis	summer (also just “heat”)
autumnus, autumnī	autumn
hiems, hiemis	winter

Why it’s said this way

autumnus survived plainly: it’s the direct ancestor of Spanish *otoño*, French *automne*, and English *autumn* itself — no detours.

But **vēr** and **hiems**, the plain nouns for spring and winter, mostly **didn't** make it into everyday Romance vocabulary. Instead, Spanish and French built brand-new words out of **adjective phrases** describing those seasons:

- Not *vēr* alone, but a Vulgar Latin phrase/reanalysis, **prīma vēra** (roughly “**first spring**”) → Spanish *primavera*, French (originally) *primevère* — later displaced there by *printemps* (“first-time,” from *prīmum tempus*, the very same “adjective + tempus” recipe as winter’s word below; *primevère* narrowed to just mean “**primrose**” today) — and Italian *primavera*, still the everyday word there.
- Not *hiems* alone, but **hībernū (tempus)**, “**the wintry [time]**” → Spanish *invierno*, French *hiver* — the same root as English **hibernate**.

Aestās (“summer/heat”) did survive directly into French *été* — but Spanish took yet another path: it built **vērānū (tempus)** (“of spring”) from *vēr* itself, and that word’s *meaning* later drifted forward to name **summer** instead of spring, giving Spanish *verano* — leaving *primavera* to do spring’s job.

So the picture is mixed, not a clean split: **autumnus** cruised straight through into Spanish, French, and English unchanged; **aestās** cruised through into French (*été*) but got replaced in Spanish; **vēr** and **hiems**, the plain nouns for spring and winter, essentially left **no** everyday trace in either language — both were replaced by phrase-built words instead (or, in *verano*’s case, by a related word whose meaning simply moved).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*vēr*, *aestās*, *autumnus*, *hiems*” — the four seasons
- the one that survived plainly — “*autumnus* → *otoño*, *automne*, *autumn*”
- the two built from phrases — “*prīma vēra* → *primavera*,” “*hībernū* → *invierno*, *hiver*”

Before you move on

What are Latin's four season-nouns? (**Vēr**, **aestās**, **autumnus**, **hiems**.) Which one survived plainly into Spanish, French, and English? (**Autumnus** → *otoño*, *automne*, *autumn*.) What did Spanish and French build instead of the plain words *vēr* and *hiems*? (**Adjective phrases** — *prīma vēra* “first spring” → *primavera*/*primevère*; *hībernum* “wintry” → *invierno*/*hiver*.)

Chapter 10

Water, Wine, and Bread

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name water, wine, and bread in Latin, and explain why a companion is someone you share bread with.

Ask for aqua, vīnum, and pānis, then unpack com- plus pānis into companion.

10.1 aqua, vīnum — one word worn thin, one word untouched

Two everyday Latin nouns — and two wildly different fates. One of Rome's daughters wore this word down to almost nothing. The other word barely moved at all, anywhere.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

aqua, aquae — “water.” Spanish and Italian kept it close to whole: **agua, acqua**. French, though, eroded it further than almost any other word it inherited from Latin: *aqua* → *ewe* → *eaue* → **eau** — three written letters, *e-a-u*, spelling one bare vowel sound, “oh.” Compare *caput*, which French similarly abandoned as an everyday word (for *testa*) — *aqua* wasn't replaced, but it was worn down almost to nothing while staying in place.

English kept the **whole, undamaged** word as a learned borrowing: **aquatic, aquarium, aqueduct, aqualung** all sound exactly like their Latin ancestor.

You'll want to know: *vīnum* — survived, everywhere, almost untouched

vīnum, *vīnī* — “**wine**.” Unlike *aqua* and *caput*, this word simply **didn’t erode much in any direction**: Spanish *vino*, French *vin*, Italian *vino* — all close to the original. Germanic borrowed it directly and early, giving English **wine** itself. Centuries later, English picked up more of the family — this time secondhand, through **French**: **vine** (< OF *vigne* < *vīnea*, “vineyard”), **vinegar** (< OF *vinaigre*, *vin* + *aigre*, ultimately *acer* “sour”), **vintage** (< OF *vendage* < *vīndēmia*, *vīnum* + *dēmere* “to harvest”). **Vineyard** isn’t a borrowing at all — English built it at home, compounding the already-borrowed “wine” with native “yard.” Few Latin words traveled this far, by this many different roads, and stayed this recognizable.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*aqua*” — water — then the daughters: “*agua*, *acqua*, *eau*”
- “*vīnum*” — wine — then: “*vino*, *vin*, *vino*, *wine*”
- the contrast — *aqua* wore thin in French; *vīnum* stayed solid everywhere

Before you move on

Which Latin word for a drink got worn down almost to nothing, and in which language? (**Aqua**, in **French** — down to a bare “*eau*.”) Which word barely changed **anywhere**, surviving into every Romance daughter and into English too? (**Vīnum** — wine, *vino*, *vin*, *vino*.) Where did the *whole*, undamaged form of *aqua* survive in English? (**Aquatic**, **aquarium**, **aqueduct** — learned borrowings, not everyday words.)

10.2 *pānis* — bread, and the friend who shares it

One Latin word for bread, surviving whole across every Romance daughter — and hiding, inside a compound, one of the loveliest word-stories in English.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

pānis, pānis — “bread.” Spanish **pan**, French **pain**, Italian **pane** all continue it directly — bread mattered enough to keep its own name everywhere.

You’ll want to know: com- + pānis — “sharing bread”

Add the prefix **com-** (“with, together”) and you get **compānio/ compānia** — a Vulgar Latin coinage, not a Classical-era word — literally “**one you share bread with**,” the direct ancestor of English **companion** and **company**. A *company* was, at first, nothing more than a group who ate together.

Why it’s said this way

English only kept the **friendship** half of this word — *companion* has nothing to do with actual bread anymore to an English speaker. **Spanish**, though, still keeps **both halves** traceably related: **pan** (the bread itself) and **compañero** (the friend, “one who shares *pan*”) sit right next to each other in the same language, both transparently built from the same root. Latin’s *pānis* split into two separate lives in English, but stayed one visible family in Spanish.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pānis” — bread — then “pan, pain, pane”
- “com- + pānis” — “with bread” — companion, company
- the contrast — English kept only the friend; Spanish kept both the bread and the friend

Before you move on

What does **pānis** give Spanish, French, and Italian directly? (**Pan, pain, pane** — bread.) What English words come from *com- + pānis*, and what do they literally mean? (**Companion, company** — “one you **share bread with**.”) Does English still connect “companion” to actual bread? (**No** — only Spanish keeps both *pan*

and *compañero* traceably related.)

Chapter 11

Months

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can name all twelve Roman months and say what July and August were called before they were renamed.

*Recite the twelve months in order, then restore *Quintilis* and *Sextilis* to July and August's slots.*

11.1 Iānuārius to December — the twelve months, before and after the rename

These twelve names turn up again, worn down, in Spanish and French. Latin lets you see something they can't show you directly: **two of these months used to have completely different names.**

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Latin	who / what
Iānuārius	Janus , the two-faced god of doors and beginnings
Februārius	<i>Februa</i> , the Roman purification festival
Mārtius	Mars , the war-god
Aprīlis	perhaps aperīre , “to open” (buds opening)
Māius	Maia , goddess of growth
Iūnius	Juno , queen of the gods
Quīntīlis	literally “ the fifth ” (<i>quīntus</i>) — later renamed Iūlius
Sextīlis	literally “ the sixth ” (<i>sextus</i>) — later renamed Augustus
September	“ the seventh ” (<i>septem</i>)
Octōber	“ the eighth ” (<i>octō</i>)
November	“ the ninth ” (<i>novem</i>)
December	“ the tenth ” (<i>decem</i>)

Why it’s said this way

You’ll often hear that **Julius Caesar** and **Augustus** “added” two **months** to the calendar, which is why September through December no longer match their numbers. That’s **not what happened**. Rome’s year, centuries earlier, had already been expanded from ten months to twelve by adding **Iānuārius** and **Februārius** at the front — that’s the real reason *September* (“seventh”) ended up as the **ninth** month. *Quīntīlis* (“the fifth”) and *Sextīlis* (“the sixth”) already existed as ordinary, plainly-numbered months, right alongside *September* through *December*. Long after Julius Caesar’s death, the Senate simply **renamed** *Quīntīlis* to **Iūlius** in his honor; decades later, Augustus received the same honor, and *Sextīlis* became **Augustus**. No months were created — two old, numbered ones just got new names, and Latin’s fifth and sixth months quietly disappeared from view, hiding inside *julio/juillet* and *agosto/aouût* in every daughter language.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the twelve — “Iānuārius, Februārius, Mārtius, Aprīlis, Māius, Iūnius, Quīntilis, Sextilis, September, Octōber, November, December”
- the originals — “Quīntilis, the fifth” / “Sextilis, the sixth”
- the correction — “renamed, not inserted”

Before you move on

What were *Iūlius* and *Augustus* called **before** they were renamed, and what did those names mean? (**Quīntilis** “the fifth” and **Sextilis** “the sixth.”) Did Julius Caesar and Augustus add new months to the calendar? (**No** — they got two already-existing months **renamed** after them.) What actually caused *September–December* to fall out of step with their numbers? (**Adding Iānuārius and Februārius** to the front of the year, centuries earlier.)

Chapter 12

Noon and Midnight

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say noon and midnight in Latin, and explain why English’s noon does not come from either.

*Say *medius diēs* and *media nox*, then follow both halves into Spanish, French, and English’s unrelated *nōna hōra*.*

12.1 *medius diēs, media nox* — the source phrase, worn down at different rates

Here’s the same Latin phrase, followed into three languages — and each one treated it completely differently.

You’ll want to know: The two phrases

- **medius diēs** — literally “**the middle day**,” meaning “**midday, noon**” (*medius*, “middle” + *diēs*, “day”).
- **media nox** — literally “**the middle night**,” meaning “**midnight**” (*media*, the feminine of *medius* + *nox, noctis*, “night”).

Why it’s said this way

- **Spanish** kept **both halves of both phrases** as fully ordinary, living words: *medio/media* (“middle”) and *día/noche* (“day/night”) — giving *mediodía* and *medianoche*, entirely transparent.
- **French** eroded the **same phrase unevenly**. *Nox* survived as

the everyday word *nuit* (“night”) — still fully transparent inside *minuit*. But *diēs* did **not** survive as French’s everyday word for “day” (that’s *jour* instead) — so inside *midi*, the *-di* fragment is a fossil, recognizable only from weekday names like *lundi*, *mardi*, not from any living, standalone word for “day.”

- **English** didn’t inherit this phrase for “noon” **at all**. Instead, English’s *noon* comes from an entirely different Latin phrase: **nōna hōra**, “the **ninth hour**” — originally meaning roughly 3 p.m. (counting from a sunrise start), it drifted steadily earlier over the centuries until it settled on **midday**.

One Latin phrase, three completely different fates: fully kept, half-worn, and simply replaced by another Latin phrase altogether.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*medius diēs*” — mid-day, then “*media nox*” — mid-night
- the three fates — “Spanish kept both halves, French kept only night, English used a different phrase entirely”
- “*nōna hōra*” — the ninth hour — English’s real ancestor for “noon”

Before you move on

What do **medius diēs** and **media nox** literally mean? (“The middle day” = noon; “the middle night” = midnight.) Which language kept both halves of both phrases fully transparent? (**Spanish** — *mediodía*, *medianoche*.) Which language kept “night” but not “day”? (**French** — *nuit* stayed alive, *-di* became a fossil.) Does English’s *noon* come from this same phrase? (**No** — from *nōna hōra*, “the ninth hour,” which drifted from afternoon to midday.)

Chapter 13

Telling Time

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can talk about the hour in Latin, and explain why a Roman hour was not a fixed sixty minutes.

Say hōra, then work out how long a Roman hour actually was on a winter day against a summer one.

13.1 hōra — the source word, and an hour that wasn’t always 60 minutes

You already met **nōna hōra**, “the ninth hour,” in an earlier lesson — now meet the word itself, and an honest surprise about what a Roman “hour” actually was.

You’ll want to know: hōra ← Greek hōrā

hōra = “**hour**” — borrowed from **Greek hōrā**, “a season, the right time, a time of day” (the Greek goddesses of the seasons, the *Hōrai*, share this root). Latin narrowed the broader Greek sense down to today’s specific meaning: one twelfth of the day.

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the part that trips people up: the Romans divided **daylight** — sunrise to sunset — into **12 equal hōrae**, and **night** into another 12. But since daylight itself is longer in summer and shorter in winter, **each hōra stretched or shrank with the seasons**: a summer

daytime *hōra* in Rome could run close to 75 modern minutes, a winter one closer to 45. Only at the two equinoxes did an *hōra* land close to today’s fixed 60 minutes. This is exactly why **nōna hōra** (“the ninth hour,” counted from sunrise) landed around 3 p.m. at the equinox but could shift earlier or later depending on the season — and why it drifted, over centuries, into the fixed clock-time we call “noon.”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

language	word	what happened
Spanish	<i>hora</i>	inherited almost unchanged
French	<i>heure</i>	inherited, worn down further
German	<i>Uhr</i>	not inherited — borrowed centuries later, separately
English	<i>hour</i>	inherited via French

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*hōra*” — the source word, Greek *hōrā* underneath
- the honest surprise — a Roman *hōra* stretched and shrank with the seasons, it wasn’t a fixed 60 minutes
- “*hōra* / *hora* / *heure* / *hour*” — one root, four different fates

Before you move on

What Greek word is *hōra* from, and what did it originally mean? (*hōrā* — “a season, the right time.”) Was a Roman *hōra* always 60 minutes long? (**No** — it was 1/12 of that day’s actual daylight or nighttime span, so it stretched in summer and shrank in winter.) Which of Spanish, French, and German did **not** directly inherit this word from Latin? (**German** — it borrowed *Uhr* separately, much later.)

Chapter 14

Asking Someone's Age

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say how old I am in Latin, using the classical born-so-many-years construction.

*State your own age as *vīgintī annōs nātus sum*, and set that pattern against Romance's have-your-years and English's be-your-years.*

14.1 *vīgintī annōs nātus sum* — a THIRD way to say your age

You already know that Spanish and French say “I HAVE my years,” and German/English say “I AM my years.” Here’s the honest surprise: Latin itself did **neither**.

You’ll want to know: *vīgintī annōs nātus sum* — “twenty years born”

vīgintī annōs nātus sum = “I am twenty years old” — literally “I am, having been born, twenty years” (a man speaking; a woman says *nāta*). Taken apart:

- *nātus/nāta* — “born,” the perfect passive participle of *nāscor*, “to be born” (the same root behind English **nature**, **native**, **nation**, **innate**).
- *annōs* — “years,” in the **accusative case**, marking **duration** — “for twenty years [of life so far].” This is the same

accusative-of-duration you'd use for "I studied **for three years**" (*trēs annōs*).

- **sum** — "I am."

So the whole phrase reads: "I am — having been born [and living] twenty years [so far]." Cicero uses exactly this pattern in *Cato Maior de Senectute* (§14), in Cato's own voice: **quīnque et sexāgintā annōs nātus**, "having been born sixty-five years," i.e., "at sixty-five years old" — the same section also gives Ennius's age as **annōs septuāgintā nātus**, "seventy."

Why it's said this way

You've already met the clean Romance/Germanic split for this concept — Romance languages **have** their years (*tengo, j'ai, ho*), Germanic languages **are** their years (*ich bin, I am*). Here's the twist: **Latin itself used neither construction**. Classical Latin's *nātus* + accusative-of-duration pattern is a **third**, distinct grammatical shape — not "having" years, not simply "being" a number, but "being **born-for-that-long**." The Romance "have your years" pattern (*habēre* + years) that Spanish, French, and Italian all inherited is a **Vulgar Latin innovation** that arose **after** Classical Latin, replacing the older *nātus* construction — so Spanish's *tengo veinte años* is NOT a direct continuation of how Cicero would have said it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- "vīgintī annōs nātus sum" — I am twenty years old, literally "born twenty years"
- "nātus" — born, same root as English "native, nature, nation"
- the honest surprise — this is a **THIRD** pattern, neither "have" nor simple "be"

Before you move on

What does **vīgintī annōs nātus sum** literally mean? ("I am, having been **born**, twenty years" — using the perfect participle *nātus* + the accusative of duration.) Does this match Romance's

“have your years” pattern? (**No** — that’s a **later Vulgar Latin innovation**, not what Classical Latin did.) What English words share the root of *nātus*? (**Native, nature, nation, innate.**)

Chapter 15

Weather

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say it is raining, and name heat and sun in Latin, using its subjectless weather verbs.

Say pluit with no subject at all, then name calor and sol, and check the pl- to ll- path into llueve.

15.1 tempestās — one Latin word widened, its own derivative narrowed

You’ve seen Spanish’s *tiempo* mean both “time” and “weather” at once. Here’s the honest history: Classical Latin actually kept these apart — but it wasn’t Spanish that changed that. It happened inside Latin itself.

You’ll want to know: tempestās — a derivative of tempus, specialized for weather, then narrowed further

tempestās = “**weather, storm**” — grammatically a **derivative noun** built on **tempus** (“time”), and by Classical Latin it had already **specialized**: *tempus* stayed strictly “time,” while *tempestās* carried the weather/storm sense on its own. (English kept this split too: *tempestās* gives **tempest**, “a violent storm,” while *tempus* gives **temporal, tempo**.)

Be careful with what happened next, though: Spanish’s single *tiempo* is **not** these two words merging back together. Later — still **within Latin’s own history**, before Spanish, French, or Italian existed as separate languages — **tempus itself re-widened** to also cover “weather” (that’s why

French *temps* and Italian *tempo* carry the exact same double sense; this happened at the shared Latin stage, not as a Spanish-only development). Meanwhile *tempestās* kept going too, narrowing further to mean specifically “**storm**” — and it’s still alive in Spanish today as its own separate word, **tempestad** (“storm, tempest”), sitting right alongside *tiempo*. So it’s one word (*tempus*) widening back out, not two words fusing into one.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tempestās” — weather/storm, a derivative of *tempus*, “time,” narrowed today to Spanish’s “tempestad”
- “tempus” — time, later widened inside Latin to weather too

Before you move on

Were *tempus* and *tempestās* the same word in Classical Latin? (**No** — *tempestās* is a derivative that specialized for weather/storm, while *tempus* stayed strictly “time.”) Did Spanish merge these two words back together? (**No** — *tempus* itself re-widened to cover “weather” already within Latin’s own history, shared by French/Italian too; *tempestās* kept narrowing and survives separately as Spanish *tempestad*.)

15.2 pluit, calor, sol — three pieces of weather language

You know the history of **tempestās**. Now learn how Latin actually states rain, heat, and sun.

Grammar Lens: pluit — a subjectless weather verb

Latin uses dedicated impersonal verbs with no subject at all:

- **pluit** — it rains
- **ningit** — it snows
- **tonat** — it thunders

Pluit is the ancestor of Spanish **llueve**. Its opening follows the same **pl-** → **ll-** path as *plovere* → *llover*, *clāmāre* → *llamar*, and *flamma* → *llama*.

This verb pattern resembles English “it rains” more closely than Spanish **hace calor**. Spanish kept the dedicated verb for rain but built a new **hacer** expression for heat, cold, and sun.

You’ll want to know: **calor** and **sol** — carried straight through

Latin **calor** (“heat”) and **sol** (“sun”) are also Spanish **calor** and **sol**. These words needed no visible sound change at all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pluit” — it rains; ancestor of Spanish **llueve**
- “calor” — heat, unchanged in Spanish
- “sol” — sun, unchanged in Spanish

Before you move on

How does Latin say “it rains”? (**Pluit**, with no subject.) What sound path connects it to Spanish **llueve**? (**pl-** → **ll-**.) Which two weather nouns pass into Spanish unchanged? (**Calor** and **sol**.) Does Latin use a counterpart of Spanish **hacer** for all three ideas? (**No** — it uses dedicated impersonal weather verbs.)

Chapter 16

Numbers Eleven to Twenty

Modes:  voice (1)  Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can count from eleven to twenty in Latin, including its backwards eighteen and nineteen.

Count ūndecim to vīgintī aloud, then say duodēvīgintī and ūndēvīgintī and explain what they are counting backwards from.

16.1 ūndecim, vīgintī — the source numbers, including a genuine oddity

You’ve seen Spanish’s *once* through *quince* as fused, worn-down compounds. Here are the whole, un-fused Latin originals — plus a real quirk in Latin’s own counting system that Spanish quietly dropped.

You’ll want to know: ūndecim–quīndecim — plain “X-ten” compounds

Latin	literally
ūndecim	ūnus + decim, “one-ten”
duodecim	duo + decim, “two-ten”
tredecim	trēs + decim, “three-ten”
quattuordecim	quattuor + decim, “four-ten”
quīndecim	quīnque + decim, “five-ten”

Straightforward additive compounds — number, then *decim* (“ten,” from **decem**). These are the direct, whole ancestors of Spanish’s *once*, *doce*, *trece*, *catorce*, *quince* — fused down over the centuries into single words.

You’ll want to know: **sēdecim**, **septendecim** — still additive

sēdecim (16, “six-ten”) and **septendecim** (17, “seven-ten”) keep the same additive pattern.

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the real oddity. Latin didn’t say “eight-ten” or “nine-ten” for 18 and 19 — it counted **backward from twenty** instead:

duodēvīgintī — “two FROM twenty” (18)

ūndēvīgintī — “one FROM twenty” (19)

This is genuinely **subtractive** counting, not additive — the same logic behind how Latin also names the day before the Kalends. It’s a real irregularity sitting right in the middle of an otherwise perfectly additive system. **Spanish did not inherit this quirk:** *dieciocho* and *diecinueve* are built fresh on the simple “ten-and-X” template, quietly regularizing away something genuinely odd in Latin’s own counting.

You’ll want to know: **vīgintī**

vīgintī (“twenty”) — the direct, unchanged source of Spanish’s *veinte*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ūndecim, duodecim, tredecim, quattuordecim, quīndecim” — the plain “X-ten” compounds
- “duodēvīgintī, ūndēvīgintī” — 18 and 19, counted BACKWARD from twenty
- “vīgintī” — twenty

Before you move on

- What pattern do *ūndecim* through *quīndecim* follow? (**Additive** — number + *decim*, “ten.”)
- What’s genuinely odd about Latin’s 18 and 19? (They’re **subtractive** — *duodēvigintī*/*ūndēvigintī*, literally “two/one FROM twenty,” not “eight/nine-ten.”)
- Did Spanish keep this pattern? (**No** — *dieciocho*/*diecinueve* use plain addition, regularizing away Latin’s quirk.)

Chapter 17

Dog and Cat

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a dog and a cat in Latin, and say which of its two cat-words came first.

Name canis, fēlēs, and cattus, then say which cat-word is Classical Latin's own and where the newcomer arrived from.

17.1 canis, fēlēs, cattus — the expected word, and the word that pushed it out

Spanish's *perro* mysteriously displaced the word Latin gave it. Here is that word, and a parallel story about “cat.”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

canis (“dog”) is the direct source of English **canine**, French **chien**, Italian **cane** — and it's also the Latin word Spanish **inherited** first, as **can**. But Spanish's everyday word for dog is *perro* instead, a word with **no confirmed etymology at all** — *can* survives only in archaic or literary use, quietly pushed aside by a newcomer nobody can fully explain.

You'll want to know: fēlēs and cattus — a similar displacement, this time INSIDE Latin

Here is a parallel that happened **within Latin itself**, before any Romance language existed:

- **fēlēs** was Classical Latin’s own, original word for “**cat**” — used by Cicero, Pliny, and others, and still preserved today in the scientific name for the domestic cat, ***Felis catus***.
- **cattus** (also *catta*) is a **later** word that entered Latin as domestic cats themselves spread along Roman trade routes, out of their point of domestication in **Egypt** (c. 2000 BCE). *Cattus* is most likely ultimately an **Afro-Asiatic** word (compare Nubian *kadis*, “cat”) — the word traveled **with the animal**.

By around 700 CE, *cattus* had pushed *fēlēs* out of everyday use almost everywhere — it’s *cattus*, not *fēlēs*, that gives Spanish *gato*, Italian *gatto*, French *chat*, and more.

Why it’s said this way

Both “dog” and “cat” show a Latin-inherited word getting pushed aside by a newcomer — but the two stories aren’t equally well understood. *Cattus* replacing *fēlēs* is a well-documented, well-sourced piece of history, with a real trade-route explanation. *Perro* replacing *canis*-derived *can* is genuinely **unexplained** — a real gap in the historical record, not just a simplification for beginners.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “canis” — dog, source of English “canine”
- “fēlēs” — Classical Latin’s own word for cat
- “cattus” — the newcomer that replaced it, probably from Egypt via Africa

Before you move on

- What English word is a direct cousin of **canis**? (**Canine**.)
- Which Latin word for “cat” is older? (**Fēlēs** — Classical Latin’s own word, later displaced by *cattus*.)
- Where does *cattus* most likely come from? (An **Afro-Asiatic** word, probably from **Egypt**, that traveled with the cat itself.)

- Are the two displacements equally well understood? (**No** — *cattus* has a sourced history; Spanish *perro* remains a genuine mystery.)

Chapter 18

Green and Yellow

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say green and yellow in Latin, and explain why almost no Romance language kept flāvus.

Say viridis and flāvus, then follow verde one way and galbinus the other into jaune, giallo, and galben.

18.1 viridis, flāvus — the kept word, and the word Romance abandoned twice over

One of Latin’s color words survived cleanly into Spanish. The other one is a genuine oddity: Latin had a perfectly good word for yellow — and virtually **no** Romance language kept it, though most of them agreed on a surprising replacement together.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

viridis (“green”) comes from **virēre**, “to flourish, to be green, to be vigorous” — and this is the **direct** source of Spanish’s *verde*, worn down by entirely ordinary sound change (syncope of the medial vowel: *viridis* → *virdis* → *verde*). A clean, uneventful inheritance.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

flāvus (“yellow, golden, blond,” often specifically of hair) is a genuine, well-attested Classical Latin color word, from **Proto-Indo-European** **bhleh₃w-* (“shining, light-colored”) —

though *lūteus* was Latin’s more neutral, plain “yellow” word in everyday prose. Here’s the honest oddity: almost **no** Romance language kept *flāvus* as its everyday word for “yellow.” Spanish and Portuguese independently reinvented *amarillo/amarelo* from *amarus*, “bitter.” But here’s the genuinely surprising twist: **French’s** *jaune*, **Italian’s** *giallo*, and **Romanian’s** *galben* all converge on a **different shared Latin word** instead — **galbinus**, which meant “**light green**,” not yellow at all. So this isn’t every daughter language scattering off in its own direction — it’s closer to **two** major replacement stories: Ibero-Romance’s shared “bitter” reinvention, and a much wider swath of Romance sharing *galbinus* instead. *Flāvus* itself didn’t vanish completely — it survives today mainly in **Roman personal names**, like **Flāvius** and **Flāvia**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “viridis” — green, direct source of verde
- “flāvus” — yellow, Latin’s own word, almost universally abandoned
- “galbinus” — “light green,” yet somehow the shared source of French’s *jaune*, Italian’s *giallo*, AND Romanian’s *galben*
- “Flāvius” — a Roman name preserving *flāvus*, where the color word itself didn’t survive

Before you move on

What Latin verb gives **viridis**, and what Spanish word does it directly become? (**Virēre**, “to flourish” → **verde**.) Did most Romance languages keep **flāvus** as their word for yellow? (**No**.) What are the **two** main replacement stories, and which languages fall into each? (**Ibero-Romance** — Spanish/Portuguese — independently reinvented *amarillo/amarelo* from “bitter”; **French, Italian, and Romanian** all instead converge on the *same* Latin word, *galbinus*, “light green,” not yellow at all.) Where does *flāvus* mainly survive today? (**Roman personal names**, like *Flāvius* and *Flāvia*.)

Chapter 19

How Are You?

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask someone in Latin how they are, and answer that I am well.

A five-line exchange run end to end: salvē, quid agis?, valeō with grātiās tibi agō, ut valēs?, and valē from both voices.

19.1 quid agis? — how are you?

Roman comedy gives you a short wellbeing question: **quid agis?**

Why it's said this way

Quid agis? literally means “What are you doing?” In the comedies of Plautus and Terence, it also works like “How are you?” or “How is it going?”

Say it in two pieces: **quid ... agis**. Keep Latin **qu** as *kw*.

That is the whole step. A second attested question comes next, after this one is comfortable.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **quid agis?**
- *Recall:* its literal meaning — “what are you doing?”
- *Recall:* its conversational use — “how are you?”

Before you move on

Ask “How are you?” with today’s Roman question. (**Quid agis?**)
What does it say literally? (**What are you doing?**)

19.2 ut valēs? — how do you fare?

You know **quid agis?** Add one alternative built from the farewell **valē**: **ut valēs?**

Why it’s said this way

Ut valēs? literally asks “How do you fare?” Its verb is **valēre**, “to be strong or well,” the same family as **valē**, “be well.” Plautus and Terence use this question in ordinary dialogue.

You may also meet modern **quōmodo tē habēs?** in spoken-Latin courses. It is grammatical, but it is not found in surviving classical texts. Keep that useful provenance distinction attached to the phrase.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **ut valēs?**
- *Recall:* **valē** — “be well”
- *Choose:* Which is classically attested: **ut valēs?** or **quōmodo tē habēs?** (**Ut valēs?**)

Before you move on

Ask “How do you fare?” (**Ut valēs?**) Which familiar farewell shares its verb? (**Valē.**) Name the modern but unattested alternative. (**Quōmodo tē habēs?**)

19.3 valeō and valē — answer and farewell from one verb

You can ask **ut valēs?**, “how do you fare?” Its most direct answer is already hiding inside the first farewell you learned.

You'll want to know: **valeō** — I fare well

The attested reply is **valeō**: “I fare well” or “I am strong.” Plautus’s characters can intensify it as **valeō rēctē** (“I am properly well”) or **valeō et salvōs sum rēctē** (“I am well and safe”).

The dictionary verb is **valēre**, “to be strong, be well.” Watch one stem move through the exchange:

- **ut valēs?** — how do you fare?
- **valeō** — I fare well
- **valē!** — be well!

That last imperative became the Chapter 1 goodbye. Latin’s farewell is therefore a wish for the other person to remain well.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ut valēs?” — how do you fare?
- “valeō” — I fare well
- “valē” — be well; goodbye

Before you move on

What verb unites **ut valēs?**, **valeō**, and **valē**? (**Valēre**, “to be strong or well.”) Which form answers the question? (**Valeō.**) What does the farewell **valē** literally command? (**Be well.**)

19.4 Practice — open, check, answer, close

Nothing new. You already own every word below; this lesson only puts them in order, so that for the first time you can carry a whole Latin exchange from the first breath to the last.

The exchange — five lines, all of them already yours

A: **Salvē! Quid agis?** *Be well! What are you doing?* — “hello, how’s it going?”

B: **Valeō, grātiās tibi agō. Ut valēs?** *I fare well, I give thanks to you. How do you fare?*

A: **Valeō.** — *I fare well.*

B: **Valē!** — *Be well!*, the parting wish

A: **Valē!**

Hear what holds it together. One verb, **valēre** (“to be strong, to be well”), supplies the second question (**valēs**), both answers (**valeō**), and the farewell (**valē**). Latin does not need a separate word for “I”: the **-ō** of *valeō* and *agō* already is it. And the exchange opens and closes on the same wish — *salvē* “be well,” *valē* “be well” — because a Roman greeting is a wish for the other person’s health, coming and going.

Your turn

- *Run through:* both voices, aloud, once straight through
- *Choose:* you meet a whole room, not one person → **salvēte**
- *Say it:* the ending that already means “I” in *valeō* and *agō* — **-ō**

Before you move on

Run the exchange once more without looking. Then: which single verb supplies *valēs*, *valeō*, and *valē*? (**Valēre**.) Which of the two Roman “how are you?” questions is *not* attested? (Neither — both *quid agis?* and *ut valēs?* are real; the modern one was *quōmodo tē habēs?*)

Chapter 20

Exchanging Names

Modes:  voice (2)  Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask someone's name in Latin and give my own, using the classical dative of possession.

Ask quid tibi nōmen est? and answer mihi nōmen est, holding the possessor in the dative while the name itself may go either way.

20.1 quid tibi nōmen est?, mihi nōmen est... — “what’s your name?”, the dative way

English says you **have** a name. German says you’re **called** something. Latin does neither — it says the name **belongs to you**, using nothing but a case ending.

You’ll want to know: quid tibi nōmen est? — literally “what is the name TO YOU?”

Quid tibi nōmen est? (“what’s your name?”) is, word for word, “**what** [is] **the-name** [to] **you?**” — no verb for “have,” no verb for “be called.” The name simply **exists**, and **tibi** (“to you,” dative case) says who it belongs to.

You’ll want to know: mihi nōmen est... — the same construction, in reply

The reply follows the identical pattern: **mihi nōmen est** [name] — “[the-name] [is] to-me [name].” This is Latin’s genuine “**dative of possession**”:

instead of a possessive verb, the possessor simply sits in the dative case, and the thing possessed — here, **nōmen**, “name” — stays in the nominative, as the sentence’s real subject.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “quid tibi nōmen est?” — literally “what’s the name to you?”
- “mihi nōmen est...” — “the name is to me...”
- the case doing the work — dative *tibi/mihi*, not a verb

Before you move on

What case does the possessor sit in, in **mihi nōmen est**? (**Dative** — *mihi*, “to me.”) Does Latin use a verb like “have” or “be called” for this? (**No** — the name simply exists; possession is shown by the dative case alone.) What noun remains the sentence’s grammatical subject? (**Nōmen**, “name.”)

20.2 Mārcus or Mārcō? — a real classical variation

The possessor in Latin’s naming construction is reliably dative. The personal name beside **nōmen**, however, is not locked to one case in every author.

Grammar Lens: The stable frame

The dative possessor appears across authors from Plautus through Livy and Sallust:

puerō nōmen est ... — to the boy the name is ...

That **puerō** does not change. It marks the person who possesses the name.

Grammar Lens: Two habits for the personal name

Cicero tends to keep the personal name nominative, agreeing with **nōmen**, the sentence's subject:

puerō nōmen est Mārcus

Livy and **Sallust** more often pull the personal name into the dative to match the possessor:

puerō nōmen est Mārcō

The underlying dative-of-possession construction is the same. The choice between **Mārcus** and **Mārcō** is authorial variation, not evidence that one sentence has stopped using the dative of possession.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “puerō” — to the boy; always the dative possessor
- “Mārcus” — Cicero's usual nominative pattern
- “Mārcō” — the matching dative found more often in Livy/Sallust

Before you move on

- Which case remains constant for the possessor? (**Dative.**)
- Which author tends toward nominative **Mārcus**? (**Cicero.**)
- Which authors more often use matching dative **Mārcō**? (**Livy and Sallust.**)
- Do the two forms represent different possession constructions? (**No.**)

Chapter 21

Nice to Meet You

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🖐️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say in Latin that it is a pleasure to have met someone, and say what that phrase really proves.

*Two meeting scenes: names traded with *quid tibi nōmen est?* between strangers, and *volup est convēnisse* kept for the chance re-encounter Plautus actually wrote it for.*

21.1 volup est convēnisse — the phrase Latin uses instead of a fixed idiom

Modern languages generally have one fixed phrase for “nice to meet you.” Latin, honestly, does **not** — but it has something better: a real line from a Roman comedy that does the job.

Why it’s said this way

Plautus’s comedy *Miles Gloriosus* (Act 2, Scene 3) gives us a real line that does exactly this work: “**Tē, [name], volup est convēnisse**” — literally “**you, [name], [it] is-a-pleasure to-have-met,**” or naturally, “**it’s a pleasure to have met you, [name].**” Break it down:

- **volup** — an old, indeclinable word for “**pleasant, pleasing**” (functioning here the way *iuvat*, “it pleases,” would)
- **est** — “[it] **is**”

- **convēnisse** — the **perfect infinitive** of *convenire*, “to come together, to meet” — “**to have met**”

Put together: “**to have met [you] is a pleasure.**” This is a genuine, attested line — not a modern reconstruction.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “volup est convēnisse” — “it’s a pleasure to have met you”
- the pieces — volup (pleasant) + est (is) + convēnisse (to have met)
- the grammar — convēnisse is a perfect infinitive

Before you move on

Does Classical Latin have one single fixed idiom for “nice to meet you”? (**No** — Romans expressed the sentiment according to context.) What real, attested phrase can do the job, and where does it come from? (“**Volup est convēnisse**”, literally “to have met [you] is a pleasure” — **Plautus**, *Miles Gloriosus*.) What kind of infinitive is **convēnisse**? (**Perfect** — “to have met.”)

21.2 Useful phrase, honest context

Volup est convēnisse is genuinely Roman. Now place it in its scene so you know exactly what that evidence does—and does not—prove.

Why it’s said this way

In *Miles Gloriosus*, Sceledrus and Palaestrio are fellow slaves who already know one another. The line welcomes a **chance encounter**. It does not document a fixed formula that Romans always used when introduced to a stranger for the first time.

The phrase still expresses the right sentiment: “to have met you is a pleasure.” Use it as an attested way to do that conversational work, while remembering that Classical Latin has no single fixed counterpart to Spanish *encantado* or German *freut mich*.

Why it's said this way

Modern spoken-Latin guides may teach **mihi pergrātum est tē convenīre**: “it is very pleasing to me to meet you.” Its grammar is sound, but the formula does not occur in surviving classical texts. It is useful modern Latin, not direct evidence of Roman conversational convention.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “volup est convēnisse” — classically attested
- its scene — a chance encounter between people already acquainted
- “mihi pergrātum est tē convenīre” — grammatical, but modern

Before you move on

Is the Plautine line a first-time introduction? (**No — it is a chance encounter between acquaintances.**) Is it still genuinely attested? (**Yes.**) Is **mihi pergrātum est tē convenīre** bad grammar? (**No.**) Is it classically attested? (**No — it is a modern spoken-Latin formula.**)

21.3 Practice — two meetings, each with the right words

English uses one formula for both meetings. Latin does not, and the chapter told you why. So you get two scenes, and the payoff is knowing which words go in which.

The exchange — scene one: strangers, so trade names

A: **Salvē! Quid tibi nōmen est?** *Be well! What is the name to you?*

B: **Mihi nōmen est Mārcus. Quid tibi nōmen est?** *The name to me is Marcus.*

A: **Mihi nōmen est Iūlia.**

B: **Valē!** A: **Valē!**

Mārcus and *Iūlia* are only slots — put your own name there. Notice what is missing: no verb for “have,” no verb for “be called.” The dative *tibi/mihi* carries the possession by itself, and *nōmen* stays the subject.

Scene two is the chance re-encounter — the situation Plautus actually wrote the line for:

A: **Salvē! Quid agis?**

B: **Valeō. Volup est convēnisse!** *I fare well. It is a pleasure to have met [you].*

A: **Valē!**

Your turn

- *Run through:* scene one with your own name in the slot
- *Choose:* a stranger → names; someone you already know → *volup est convēnisse*
- *Choose:* greeting several people at once → **salvēte**

Before you move on

Which case does *mihi* sit in, and what work does it do? (**Dative**; it owns the name without any verb.) Cicero would write *puerō nōmen est Mārcus*; who prefers *Mārcō*? (**Livy and Sallust.**) Is *mihi pergrātum est tē convenīre* good Latin, and is it Roman? (Good grammar; **not attested** — modern.)

Chapter 22

You, Singular and Plural

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can choose *tū* or *vōs* correctly in Latin, knowing the choice is about number and not politeness.

*Address one person as *tū* and a group as *vōs*, then say why neither carries politeness the way German's *Sie* does.*

22.1 *tū*, *vōs* — “you,” before politeness got involved

German's two words for “you” are about **formality** — *du* versus *Sie*. Latin's two words for “you” split on something completely different: plain **number**. Formality hadn't been invented yet.

You'll want to know: *tū* — you, one person

Tū = “you,” addressing **one** person. That's the whole rule — no formal/informal split, just singular number. You've already used its dative form, *tibi*, in *quid tibi nōmen est?*

You'll want to know: *vōs* — you, more than one person

Vōs = “you,” addressing **more than one** person — plain plural, nothing more.

Why it's said this way

Here's the real teaching point: in **Classical Latin**, this is a **purely grammatical number** distinction. There is **no** formal/informal dimension at all — using *vōs* to politely address a single powerful person had **not yet started**. That habit — plural pronoun used respectfully for one person — only developed later, in **Late Latin**, well after the classical period. It's the **direct ancestor** of French's polite *vous*. Careful, though: it is **not** the ancestor of German's *Sie* from the last lesson — *Sie* solves the same politeness problem in a completely **different** way, by repurposing an unrelated pronoun (3rd-person plural “they”), not by descending from *vōs* at all. Classical Romans simply didn't have this option yet: one person was always *tū*, no matter how important they were — though Romans still had **other** ways to show deference, like respectful titles (*domine*, “sir/lord”), just not through the pronoun itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*tū*” — you, singular, one person
- “*vōs*” — you, plural, more than one person
- the honest twist — Classical Latin's *tū/vōs* is PURE number, no politeness at all, unlike German's *du/Sie*

Before you move on

What's the difference between ***tū*** and ***vōs*** in Classical Latin — number, or politeness? (**Pure number** — *tū* is singular, *vōs* is plural; no formality dimension existed yet.) When did using *vōs* to politely address one person begin? (**Late Latin**, after the classical period — the direct ancestor of French's polite *vous*.) Is German's ***Sie*** descended from *vōs* the same way? (**No** — *Sie* solves the same problem independently, by repurposing 3rd-person plural “they,” not by inheriting from *vōs* at all.)

Chapter 23

You're Welcome

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can reply to thanks in Latin with nihil est, and say honestly how classical that reply is.

Answer grātiās tibi agō with nihil est, and state plainly that the reply is modern convention built from real words.

23.1 nihil est — “you’re welcome,” another honest gap

You already learned that Latin has no fixed “nice to meet you.” Here’s the same honest gap again: no fixed reply to “thank you” either.

You’ll want to know: nihil est — “it’s nothing”

Nihil est = literally “[it] **is nothing**” — **nihil** (“nothing”) + **est** (“is”). This is the phrase modern conversational-Latin communities commonly reach for as “you’re welcome,” parallel to English “it’s nothing” or Spanish *de nada*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Nihil itself is genuinely classical and richly attested, from an older *nihilum*, itself built from **ne-** (“not”) + **hīlum** (“a tiny thing, a trifle” — said to have originally meant “the eye of a bean,” though its own ultimate origin is uncertain). So “nothing” in Latin literally started life

as “not [even] a tiny bit” — the same shape of story as French’s *pas* (“not,” originally “a step”) or Spanish’s *nada* (from *nāta*, “a thing born”).

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the careful part: **nihil** and **est** are both thoroughly classical, and *nihil est* itself appears in real Latin texts — but always meaning things like “there’s nothing to it” (“*nihil est, nūgae*”, “nothing, trifles,” Plautus’s *Bacchidēs*) or “that’s nothing” (“*istuc quidem [edepol] nihil est*”, Plautus’s *Miles Glōriōsus*), **never** specifically attested as a reply **to thanks**. No surviving Roman text shows someone answering *grātiās agō* with *nihil est*. Treat it the way you already treated *quōmodo tē habēs?*: real Latin words, put to a genuinely useful modern job, but not a citation from a Roman play.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nihil est*” — “it’s nothing,” Latin’s answer to “thank you”
- *nihil*’s own history — *ne-* + *hīlum*, “not a tiny bit”
- the honest caveat — real words, modern job, not an ancient citation

Before you move on

What does **nihil est** literally mean, and what job does it do here? (“**[It] is nothing**” — the reply to *grātiās agō*, “thank you.”) What does **nihil** itself literally break down into? (**ne-** “not” + **hīlum** “a tiny thing” — “not a tiny bit.”) Is *nihil est* specifically attested in a classical text as a reply to thanks? (**No** — a modern conversational-Latin convention built from real words, not an ancient citation.)

Chapter 24

See You Soon

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can tell someone in Latin that I will see them soon, using a phrase Cicero actually wrote.

Say propediem tē vidēbō as a parting line, split propediem into prope and diem, and locate it in Cicero’s letters.

24.1 propediem tē vidēbō — a real change of pace: solidly attested, twice

The last few lessons were honest about real gaps — no fixed “how are you,” no fixed “nice to meet you,” no fixed “you’re welcome.” This one is different: a genuine, repeated Ciceronian phrase.

You’ll want to know: propediem tē vidēbō — “I shall see you soon”

Propediem tē vidēbō — “I shall see you soon” — is genuinely attested, not once but **twice**, in **Cicero’s** own letters:

- **Ad Familiārēs 2.12** (to Caelius): “*Sed, ut spērō, propediem tē vidēbō*” — “**But, as I hope, I shall see you soon.**”
- **Ad Familiārēs 15.6** (to Cato): “*Ego, ut spērō, tē propediem vidēbō*” — the same phrase, word order reshuffled, “**I, as I hope, shall see you soon.**”

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Propediem breaks down as **prope** (“near”) + **diem** (accusative of **diēs**, “day”) — literally “near the day,” meaning “very soon, shortly.” That’s the **same diēs** from your days-of-week lessons (*diēs Lūnae*, *diēs Veneris*) — a familiar root showing up in a brand-new job.

Grammar Lens: vidēbō — the verb ending doing the work, again

Vidēbō is the **future tense** of **vidēre**, “to see” — and just like *agō* back in “thank you,” the **-bō** ending already carries “**I will**,” so no separate pronoun for “I” is needed. *Tē* (“you”) is simply the direct object: “[I] will-see you.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “propediem tē vidēbō” — “I shall see you soon”
- propediem’s own pieces — prope (near) + diem (the day)
- the honest contrast — unlike the last few lessons, this phrase IS solidly attested, twice, in Cicero

Before you move on

Where is **propediem tē vidēbō** genuinely attested, and how many times? (**Twice**, in **Cicero**’s letters — *Ad Familiārēs* 2.12 and 15.6.) What does **propediem** literally break down into? (**Prope** “near” + **diem** “the day” — the same *diēs* from the days-of-week lessons.) Does *vidēbō* need a separate word for “I”? (**No** — the *-bō* future ending already carries it, the same way *agō*’s *-ō* did.)

Chapter 25

See You Tomorrow

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say in Latin that I will see someone tomorrow, and say which piece of it Romance mostly abandoned.

Say crās tē vidēbō on the same pattern, and say honestly that this combination is not itself a surviving quotation.

25.1 crās tē vidēbō — the same pattern, honestly not the same citation

Last lesson’s phrase was a direct quote from Cicero. This one uses the exact same grammatical machinery — but be honest: it isn’t itself pulled from a surviving letter.

You’ll want to know: crās tē vidēbō — built from known-good pieces

Crās tē vidēbō — “I’ll see you tomorrow” — swaps crās (“tomorrow”) in for *propediem* (“soon”) from the last lesson, keeping the same vidēbō (“I will see”) you already learned. Both pieces are genuinely classical: *crās* is a real, common Latin adverb, and *vidēbō* is the same attested future-tense verb as before. But be careful: unlike *propediem tē vidēbō*, this **specific combination** isn’t itself quoted in any surviving Roman letter — it’s a well-formed construction built by analogy, not a direct citation.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Crās traces back to **Proto-Italic** **krās* — but past that point, its ultimate origin is genuinely **uncertain**, with scholars proposing several different, competing Proto-Indo-European sources. Some things in etymology just don’t resolve cleanly, even for a word this ordinary.

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the real teaching point: **crās** didn’t survive as the everyday word for “tomorrow” in most of its major daughter languages.

French’s *demain*, **Italian**’s *domani*, and **Catalan**’s *demà* all rebuilt “tomorrow” from **dē māne** (“**in the morning**”) instead — the same morning-based logic reappearing three separate times. **Sardinian** and **Sicilian** are the main holdouts that kept *crās* itself as an everyday word. Spanish, too, moved away from it, building its own *mañana* on **māne** (“morning”) rather than keeping *crās*. A genuinely ordinary Latin word, abandoned by most of the family — echoing, if less completely, the same shape of story as *flāvus* from the colors lesson (which survives nowhere as an everyday word, only in names like *Flāvius*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “**crās tē vidēbō**” — “I’ll see you tomorrow”
- the honest caveat — same pattern as *propediem tē vidēbō*, but not itself a direct quotation
- the Romance twist — nearly everyone replaced **crās** with a morning-based word instead

Before you move on

Is **crās tē vidēbō** itself quoted in a surviving Cicero letter, the way *propediem tē vidēbō* was? (**No** — same grammatical pattern, built from two genuinely classical pieces, but not itself a direct citation.) Which Romance language kept **crās** as its everyday word for “tomorrow”? (**Sardinian and Sicilian** — most of the rest rebuilt it from *dē māne*, “in the morning,” instead.)

Chapter 26

How

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask how in Latin with *quōmodo*, and trace it into *cómo*, *come*, and *comment*.

Say quōmodo, split it into quō and modō, and show how comment double-marks the manner that come and cómo mark once.

26.1 quōmodo — the real word behind “how,” in three Romance languages at once

You’ve already met *quōmodo* once, as part of a phrase that turned out **not** to be classically attested. This lesson is honest about the flip side: the **word itself** is completely genuine.

You’ll want to know: quōmodo — genuinely classical, “by what manner”

Quōmodo (“**how, in what way**”) is a real, common Classical Latin word — a fusion of **quō** (ablative of *quis/quid*, “what”) + **modō** (ablative of *modus*, “manner, measure”), literally “**by what manner**.” It’s attested in both **Cicero** (*Dē Inventiōne*) and **Seneca** (*Epistulae Mōrālēs*) — genuinely classical, unlike the specific *quōmodo tē habēs?* greeting from Chapter 19, which was a modern construction. The **word** is real; it was only that one **exact phrase** that wasn’t.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Quōmodo is the **direct source** of Italian’s **come** and Spanish’s **cómo** — both simply continue *quōmodo*, worn down by ordinary sound change.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Here’s the honest surprise: French’s **comment** is **not** a simple continuation of *quōmodo* the way Italian and Spanish’s words are. French’s **comme** (“how, as, like”) continues *quōmodo* just like Italian’s *come* does — but then **comment** picks up French’s own **-ment** adverb ending on top of that, from **mente** (ablative of *mēns*, “mind”) — the **same -ment** that turns any adjective into an adverb (*rapide* → *rapidement*, “quickly”). One well-attested account of this history holds that *comment* therefore marks “manner” **twice** — once via *quōmodo*’s own *modō*, once via *-ment*’s *mente* — where Italian and Spanish mark it only once, though the exact historical steps have more than one scholarly account.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “quōmodo” — “how,” genuinely classical
- quō (what) + modō (manner) — “by what manner”
- the honest surprise — French’s *comment* double-marks “manner”; Italian/Spanish’s *come/cómo* mark it once

Before you move on

Is **quōmodo** itself genuinely classical, even though the specific phrase *quōmodo tē habēs?* wasn’t? (**Yes** — the word is real, attested in Cicero and Seneca; only that one specific greeting was modern.) What are *quōmodo*’s two Latin pieces, and what do they mean? (**Quō** “what” + **modō** “manner” — “by what manner.”) Is French’s **comment** a simple continuation of *quōmodo*, the way Italian’s *come* is? (**No** — it adds a second “manner” marker, *mente*, doubling up where Italian/Spanish only carry the sense once.)

Chapter 27

Well

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can answer well in Latin with bene, and show how one regular sound change turns it into bien.

Answer bene when asked how you fare, then derive bien from it in one regular sound change.

27.1 bene — a morphologically simple inheritance

Last lesson’s “how” took a roundabout path into Romance, picking up an extra piece along the way. This one is refreshingly simple: one Latin word, one regular sound change, nothing grafted on.

You’ll want to know: bene — “well,” related to bonus

Bene (“well”) is a genuine Classical Latin adverb, closely related to **bonus** (“good”) — both descend from the same **Old Latin** ancestor, **duenos/duonus** (found in the famous **Duenos inscription**, one of the oldest surviving Latin texts). Past that point, the ultimate Proto-Indo-European root is debated, with more than one proposal on the table.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Here’s the refreshing part: French’s **bien** and Spanish’s **bien** both continue **bene** through **one single, regular sound change** — short

stressed *e* diphthongizing to “**ie**,” the exact same shift behind *mel* → *miel* and *terra* → *tierra/terre* — and **nothing else**. No extra suffix gets grafted on, unlike *quōmodo*’s roundabout, multi-step journey into *come/cómo/comment*. When two Romance languages agree this closely, picking up only one shared, ordinary sound change between them, you’re looking almost straight at the Latin parent itself.

Why it’s said this way

Bene is attested being used **alone**, repeated, in Plautus’s **Stichus**, line 709 — though be honest about the context: it’s a **drinking toast**, not literally an answer to “how are you.” The characters raise their cups and say: “**bene vōs, bene nōs, bene tē, bene mē, bene nostram etiam Stephanium**” — “**well to you, well to us, well to you, well to me, well to our Stephanium too**.” A real, attested use of *bene* standing alone — just repurposed here for the same conversational slot “well” fills, the way *volup est convēnisse* was for “nice to meet you.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bene” — “well,” related to bonus
- the morphologically simple inheritance — French/Spanish *bien* is *bene* plus one regular sound change, nothing grafted on
- the honest context — *bene vōs, bene nōs...* is a drinking toast in Plautus, not literally “how are you”

Before you move on

What Latin word is French and Spanish’s **bien**, continued through one regular sound change? (**Bene**, “well.”) Is *quōmodo*’s path into Romance as morphologically simple as *bene*’s? (**No** — *quōmodo* picked up an extra grafted-on suffix along the way; *bene* → *bien* picked up only one ordinary sound change and nothing more.) Where is *bene* genuinely attested standing alone, and in what context? (**Plautus’s Stichus, around line 708-709** — a drinking toast, not an answer to “how are you.”)

Chapter 28

Day

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can use *diēs* on its own for day, after meeting it inside the weekday and noon phrases.

Say diēs alone, point to it inside diēs Lūnae and medius diēs, and separate journal and journey from diary.

28.1 diēs — the word you already know, now standing alone

You’ve used this word twice already without a lesson of its own — inside *diēs Lūnae* and *medius diēs*. Time to meet it directly.

You’ll want to know: diēs — “day”

Diēs — “day” — is a genuinely common, everyday Classical Latin word, not a rare or bookish one. You’ve already met it embedded in:

- **diēs Lūnae** (“Monday,” literally “day of the Moon” — Chapter 5)
- **medius diēs** (“noon,” literally “mid-day” — Chapter 12)

Now it’s the headword itself.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Diēs has its own derivative, **diurnum** (“daytime, daily”), which gives English **diurnal** directly — and, through French’s *jour*, *journée*, and *jornel* (all descendants of *diurnum* in their own right), **journal** and **journey** as well (a “journey” was originally “a **day**’s travel”). **Diary** takes a **separate** path: it comes from a **sibling** derivative of *diēs*, **diārium** (“daily allowance”), not from *diurnum* itself — two related but distinct branches off the same root. Further out, a genuine **Proto-Indo-European** root, **dyēws-* (“to shine, sky”), connects *diēs* to Latin’s own **deus** (“god”) and to **Iuppiter** (Jupiter, literally “sky-father”) — the same root that shines through the sky-god imagery of gods across the Indo-European world.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*diēs*” — “day”
- where you’ve already met it — *diēs Lūnae*, *medius diēs*
- the English cousins — diurnal, diary, journal, journey

Before you move on

Where have you already met **diēs** twice before this lesson? (**Diēs Lūnae**, “Monday”; **medius diēs**, “noon.”) What English word comes from *diēs*’s derivative *diurnum* directly? (**Diurnal**.) What two words come through French descendants of *diurnum* — *jour*, *journée*, *jornel*? (**Journal**, **journey**.) Does **diary** also come from *diurnum*? (**No** — a separate sibling derivative, *diārium*, “daily allowance.”)

Chapter 29

Night

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say night in Latin as *nox*, *noctis*, and see English night sitting inside it.

*Say *nox* and *noctis*, match it against English night, and build equinox out of *aequus* plus *nox*.*

29.1 *nox* — English’s own word, wearing a Roman toga

Last lesson gave *diēs* its own moment. Here’s its partner from *media nox* — and this time, the English cousin isn’t hiding behind centuries of sound change. It’s staring you in the face.

You’ll want to know: *nox* — “night”

Nox (genitive **noctis**) — “**night**” — is the word you’ve already met inside **media nox** (“midnight,” Chapter 12).

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Trace *nox* back far enough and you land on **Proto-Indo-European **nókʷts*** — and this is about as solid a reconstruction as historical linguistics gets. The cognates read almost like the same word spelled differently across a dozen languages: English’s own **night**, German **Nacht**, Greek **nyx**, Sanskrit **nakta**, Old Norse **nátt**, Gothic **nahts**. *Nox* and “night” aren’t just related — they’re about as close to being

the same word as two languages 6,000 years apart can get.

Grammar Lens: The same suffix as diurnum, and a name for equal nights

Nox's own derivative, **nocturnus** ("of the night"), wasn't built from scratch — it was coined **directly on the analogy** of *diēs*'s own **diurnum**, reusing its exact *-urnus* suffix on purpose: the same suffix-machine, deliberately applied to a second time-word. *Nocturnus* gives English **nocturnal** and **nocturne** directly. And **aequus** ("equal") + nox's stem *noct-* gives **equinox** — literally "**equal night**," the day when day and night balance.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- "nox" — "night," genitive *noctis*
- the tight cousin — nox/night, nearly the same word
- nocturnus's shared suffix with diurnum — the same *-urnus* pattern, two different times of day

Before you move on

Where have you already met **nox** before this lesson? (**Media nox**, "midnight.") What English word is *nox* almost identical to, both descending from PIE **nókʷts*? (**Night**.) What suffix does *nocturnus* share with *diēs*'s *diurnum*? (***-urnus***.) What does *aequus* + *nox* give in English? (**Equinox**, "equal night.")

Chapter 30

Good Night

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone a good night in Latin, and say why the wish takes the accusative case.

Wish someone bonam noctem, and say why it is not bona nox — Latin wishes take the accusative.

30.1 bonam noctem — real grammar, not a real citation

You already have *bonus* (good) and *nox* (night, last lesson). Put them together for “good night” — but the case they end up in is the real lesson here.

Grammar Lens: bonam noctem — why accusative, not nominative

Bonam noctem = “good night” — but notice: **not** *bona nox* (nominative). Latin wishes and exclamations conventionally use the **accusative** case — the same “**Accusative of Exclamation**” behind the genuinely attested *Fēlicem nātālem!* (“happy birthday!,” short for *tibi fēlicem diem nātālem exoptō*, “I wish you a happy birthday”). Grammatically, *bonam noctem* is a compressed exclamation — something like “[**I wish you**] a good night,” with the verb left unstated, the same kind of ellipsis you’d find in a letter opening like “*Cicero Atticō salutem [dīcit]*” (“Cicero sends greetings to Atticus”). The bare nominative *bona nox* would work too (with an implied “*sit*,”

“may it be”), but the accusative is the more natural, idiomatic choice for a wish like this.

Grammar Lens: Be honest: real grammar, not a real citation

Here’s the careful part, matching the same honesty already applied to *quōmodo tē habēs?*, *nihil est*, and *crās tē vidēbō*: the **accusative-of-wishing** principle itself is genuine, solid Classical Latin grammar. But this **specific fixed phrase**, *bonam noctem*, is **not** actually attested as a Roman farewell formula in any surviving classical text — it appears to be a later, post-classical convention, built correctly from real grammar but not itself a citation. Treat the grammar as reliable and the exact phrase as a well-formed construction, not a quotation from a Roman text.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bonam noctem” — “good night,” accusative
- the case rule — Latin wishes take the accusative, not the nominative
bona nox
- the honest caveat — solid grammar, but not itself an attested ancient farewell

Before you move on

Why is it **bonam noctem** and not **bona nox**? (**Latin wishes/exclamations conventionally take the accusative case**, not the nominative.) Is the accusative-of-wishing rule itself solid Classical Latin grammar? (**Yes.**) Is *bonam noctem* as one specific fixed phrase directly attested as a Roman farewell in any surviving classical text? (**No** — the grammar is real, but this exact phrase appears to be a later, post-classical convention.)

Chapter 31

Morning

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say morning in Latin with *māne*, and keep it apart from *manus*, the hand.

Say māne, recover it inside dē māne and mañana, and keep long-ā mānus apart from short-a manus, the hand.

31.1 māne — the word already hiding inside “tomorrow,” in four languages

You’ve already met this word once, without a lesson of its own — buried inside the very phrase that replaced *crās* across half the Romance family. Time to meet it directly.

Grammar Lens: māne — “morning,” an indeclinable word

Māne — “**morning, early**” — is an **indeclinable** neuter noun (and adverb): unlike *diēs* or *nox*, it never changes its ending, no matter its grammatical role. You’ve already met it once, inside **dē māne** (“in the morning,” Chapter 25) — the exact phrase that **French’s** *demain*, **Italian’s** *domani*, and **Catalan’s** *demà* all independently rebuilt as their new word for “tomorrow,” abandoning *crās*. **Spanish’s** *mañana* took a related but distinct path: built directly on **māne** itself, without the *dē-* (Vulgar Latin **maneāna*) — the same root, one step closer to the source.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Māne traces to **mānus**, an archaic Latin adjective meaning “**good**.” Watch the vowel length carefully: this is a **completely different** word from the everyday **manus** (“**hand**,” short *a*) — same spelling once macrons are dropped, unrelated meaning, a genuine false friend. From that “good” root comes **mātūrus** (“**ripe, timely, early**”), the direct source of English **mature** — and **mātūtīnus** (“of the morning,” tied to **Matūta**, the Roman goddess of dawn), which gives English, via Old French *matines/matin*, both **matins** (“morning prayers”) and **matinee** (“afternoon performance”) — the same root splitting into two very different senses of “a scheduled morning-adjacent thing.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “māne” — “morning,” already met inside *dē māne*
- the false-friend warning — *mānus* “good” (long *ā*) vs. *manus* “hand” (short *a*)
- the English cousins — *mature*, *matins*, *matinee*, all from the same root as *māne*

Before you move on

Where did you already meet **māne** before this lesson? (Inside **dē māne**, “in the morning,” Chapter 25 — source of French *demain*, Italian *domani*, and Catalan *demà*.) Did Spanish *mañana* come from *dē māne* too? (**Not quite** — it was built directly on *māne* alone, without the *dē*-.) Is *māne*’s root *mānus* the same word as *manus*, “hand”? (**No** — a false friend; *mānus* “good” has a long *ā*, *manus* “hand” a short *a*.) What two very different English words both trace to *māne*’s “good” root, via *mātūtīnus*? (**Matins** and **matinee**.)

Chapter 32

Good Morning

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say good morning in Latin, and describe the salūtātiō Romans actually performed at dawn.

Say bonum m̄ane, note that its neuter case is invisible, and describe the dawn salūtātiō Romans really used.

32.1 bonum m̄ane — a phrase Romans didn’t say, and a ritual they actually did

You have *bonus* (good) and *m̄ane* (morning, last lesson). Put them together for “good morning” — but this time, watch for what’s **missing**, not just what’s uncertain.

Why it’s said this way

Bonum m̄ane = “good morning.” Like *bonam noctem* two lessons ago, this specific phrase is **not** classically attested as a fixed Roman greeting. But here the honesty runs one level deeper: *bonam noctem* showed you real, solid grammar — the accusative *noctem*, distinct from nominative *nox*, demonstrating Latin’s genuine “Accusative of Exclamation.” **M̄ane**, though, is **neuter** and **indeclinable** — and Latin neuter nouns **never** distinguish nominative from accusative, in any word, ever. *Bonum* works identically whether you imagine it as nominative or accusative. The grammar point that made *bonam noctem* interesting simply **isn’t visible** here — not because it’s

missing, but because neuter words never show it, for anyone, anywhere in Latin.

Why it's said this way

Here's what Romans **did** have, richly documented: the **salūtātiō** (*mātūtīna salūtātiō*, “morning greeting”) — clients arriving at their patron's house at **dawn**, formally dressed, to pay respects, ask favors, and sometimes receive the *sportula* (a small cash or food allowance) in return. It structured the start of the Roman day the way a verbal “good morning” structures yours — just as a **ritual visit**, not a **spoken phrase**.

Salūtātiō comes from **salūtāre** (“to greet”), which comes from **salūs** (“health, safety, wholeness”) — and *salūs* is a genuine **doublet** of **salvus** (“safe, sound”), the very root behind **salvē** (Chapter 1's first word, “hello,” literally “be well”). Both *salūs* and *salvus* descend from the same **Proto-Indo-European** root, **solh₂-* (“whole”). So Rome's real morning greeting and its very first “hello” share one root, arrived at by two separate paths — a wish for someone's wholeness, whether spoken as *salvē* or enacted at dawn as the *salūtātiō*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bonum māne” — “good morning,” a modern phrase, not classical
- why its grammar is invisible — māne is neuter, and neuters never show nominative vs. accusative
- “salūtātiō” — the real Roman morning greeting, a dawn visit, not a phrase — from the same root as *salvē*

Before you move on

Does *bonum māne* show the same accusative-of-wishing grammar that *bonam noctem* did? (**No** — māne is neuter, and Latin neuters never distinguish nominative from accusative, so the case is invisible either way.) What was Rome's real, richly documented “morning greeting”? (The **salūtātiō** — clients visiting a patron's house at dawn.) What word, already taught in Chapter 1, shares its root

with salūtātiō? (**Salvē** — both salūs and salvus descend from the same PIE root, **solh₂-*, “whole.”)

Chapter 33

Evening

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say evening in Latin, and follow the vesper root into Hesperia, víspera, and vespers.

Sort any European evening word into the vesper family or the sērus family, then produce vesper and the everyday vespere Cicero uses for in the evening.

33.1 vesper — the evening word its own daughters mostly abandoned

A genuinely ordinary Latin word for “evening” — and a root that quietly reaches all the way to the English word *west*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Vesper (also **vespera**) — “**evening**” — is a genuine, ordinary Classical Latin word, not a rare or poetic one: **vespere** (“in the evening”) shows up routinely in Cicero’s own letters. It traces to **Proto-Indo-European** **wekero-* (“evening, night”), itself an enlarged form of a root **we-*, which some reconstructions gloss as “down” (the direction the sun sets) — though this specific piece is more contested than the vesper/west link itself. That same conceptual root, through a completely separate **Germanic** branch, gives English its own word for “**west**” — evening and west, sharing one deep idea: the direction the sun goes down.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vesper” — “evening,” genuinely everyday Classical Latin
- the deep root — *wekero-*, shared with English “west,” the direction of sunset
- the careful hedge — a lower root meaning “down” is more contested

Before you move on

What English word shares vesper’s deep PIE root, and what’s the connecting idea? (**West** — both trace to the direction the sun sets.) Is the proposed still-deeper root meaning “down” equally secure? (**No** — **that sub-root is more contested than the vesper/west link.**)

33.2 Hesperia, víspera, vespers — the root after Latin

Latin **vesper** and English **west** share the sunset idea. Now follow the evening root through Greek, English, Spanish, French, and Italian.

You’ll want to know: Greek *hesperos*

The Greek cognate **hesperos** gives English **Hesperus**, the evening star (Venus at dusk), and **Hesperia**, “land of the west.” The name is relative: Greeks used it for Italy, west of Greece; Romans could use it for Spain, west of Italy.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

English borrowed **vespers**, the evening prayer service, and **vespertine**, “of the evening,” directly from Latin. Spanish inherited *vespera* as **víspera**, but narrowed its meaning to “the eve” or “the day before” an event. French **soir** and Italian **sera** do not descend from **vesper** at all. They rebuilt “evening” from Latin **sērus**, “late,” through the idea of the “late day.”

One ordinary Latin word therefore leaves three different outcomes: a learned English loan, a narrowed Spanish descendant, and replacement by a different root in French and Italian.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Hesperia” — land of the west
- “víspera” — the eve or day before, narrowed from evening
- “soir, sera” — from *sērus*, “late,” not from vesper

Before you move on

What is Hesperus? (**The evening star.**) What does Spanish **víspera** mean now? (**The eve or day before an event.**) Which Latin root supplies French **soir** and Italian **sera**? (**Sērus, “late.”**) Name one direct English borrowing from **vesper**. (**Vespers** or **vespertine.**)

33.3 Practice — sort the evening words, then read the Latin

Be honest about what this chapter can give you. There is no Roman “good evening” yet — that arrives next chapter, and even then it is modern. What you can do **today** is triage: hear any European evening word and place it in the right family.

You’ll want to know: the two families, and the test that separates them

Everything in this chapter falls into exactly two lines, and one question separates them: **does the word still carry a *v* or an *h* from the sunset root, or does it come from “late”?**

- **Sunset family** — from *vesper*, or its Greek cousin *hesperos*: vespers, vespertine, víspera, Hesperus, Hesperia.

- **Late family** — from *sērus*, “late”: French *soir*, Italian *sera*.

Two traps worth naming. **Víspera** is in the sunset family but no longer means “evening” — it narrowed to “the eve, the day before.” And *soir* and *sera* look like the closest heirs of all, being the everyday words in Latin’s two nearest daughters, yet they are the ones that are **not** descended from *vesper* at all.

Your turn

- *Sort*: vespers, sera, Hesperus, soir, víspera → sunset or late
- *Say it*: the noun — **vesper**; and “in the evening” — **vespere**, the form Cicero uses in his letters
- *Say it*: the deep link that started it — *vesper* and English **west**, one idea: where the sun goes down

Before you move on

Sort these three without looking: **vespertine**, **sera**, **Hesperia**. (Sunset, late, sunset.) What does *víspera* mean in Spanish now? (**The eve, the day before** — narrowed, not lost.) And which everyday Latin form means “in the evening”? (**Vespere**.)

Chapter 34

Good Evening

Modes: 🔄 voice (1) 🔄 Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone a good evening in Latin, and point to the accusative that *bonum māne* could not show.

Wish someone bonum vesperum, and use its masculine ending to show the accusative rule bonum māne could not.

34.1 bonum vesperum — the accusative rule returns, this time visibly

Two lessons ago, *bonum māne* couldn't show you Latin's real wish-grammar, because *māne* is neuter. This time it's back — because *vesper* isn't.

Grammar Lens: *bonum vesperum* — masculine, and the case shows again

Bonum vesperum = “good evening.” Like *bonam noctem* and *bonum māne*, this specific phrase is **not** classically attested as a fixed Roman greeting — the same honest gap, a third time. But the grammar here is different from *bonum māne*’s: **vesper** is **masculine**, and Latin masculine nouns genuinely **do** distinguish nominative (*vesper*) from accusative (*vesperum*) — unlike neuter *māne*, where the two forms were always identical. So *bonum vesperum* **does** demonstrate the real Accusative-of-Exclamation rule again, the same wish-construction behind *bonam noctem* and the genuinely attested

Fēlicem nātālem! — just dressed in masculine endings instead of feminine ones.

Grammar Lens: A feminine alternate: *bonam vesperam*

Latin also has a separate **feminine** noun for evening, **vespera** (distinct from masculine *vesper*, though built from the same root — both headwords appeared together last lesson, though without their genders spelled out). Paired with *bonus*, its accusative gives **bonam vesperam** — agreeing the **same way** *bonam noctem* does: the adjective, *bonam*, matches *bonam* exactly. But watch the **nouns** carefully — they do **not** share an ending. *Vespera* is **1st declension** (accusative *-am*, *vesperam*), while *nox* is **3rd declension** (accusative *-em*, *noctem* — **not** *-am*). Same adjective agreement, genuinely different noun declensions underneath.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*bonum vesperum*” — “good evening,” masculine accusative
- why this one shows the case rule, unlike *bonum māne* — *vesper* is masculine, not neuter
- “*bonam vesperam*” — the feminine alternate, matching *bonam noctem*’s own shape

Before you move on

Is *bonum vesperum* itself directly attested as a classical Roman greeting? (**No** — a modern, pedagogical phrase, like *bonam noctem* and *bonum māne*.) Why does *bonum vesperum* show the real Accusative-of-Exclamation rule, when *bonum māne* couldn’t? (**Vesper** is **masculine**, and masculine nouns distinguish nominative from accusative; *māne* is neuter, where the two are always identical.) What’s the feminine alternate, and how does its adjective agreement compare to *bonam noctem*’s? (**Bonam vesperam** — the adjective *bonam* matches *bonam* exactly, but the **NOUNS** don’t share an ending: *vesperam* is 1st declension *-am*, while *noctem* is 3rd declension *-em*, not *-am*.)

Chapter 35

Noon and Afternoon

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say midday in Latin, and use ante merīdiem and post merīdiem to place any hour of the day.

Say merīdiēs, place an hour with ante merīdiem or post merīdiem, and say why Rome needed no separate afternoon noun.

35.1 merīdiēs — the word you already know, one sound-change later

You already have *medius diēs*. Rome had no separate word for “afternoon”; it split the whole day around this word.

Sounds you’ll need

Merīdiēs — “midday, noon” — is the **same phrase** as **medius diēs** (Chapter 12), just **contracted**: an earlier *medīdiēs* dropped its repeated *d*-sound (dissimilation) to become *merīdiēs*, a fifth-declension noun in its own right (accusative *merīdiem*). It’s the ultimate root of English **meridian**, via the Latin adjective **merīdiānus** (“of midday”).

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the twist: Spanish has *tarde*, French has *après-midi*, German has *Nachmittag* — a single word naming “the afternoon” as its own block of time. **Latin doesn’t**. Instead, Romans split the **entire day** around *merīdiēs* into two large halves: **ante merīdiem** (“before

noon") and **post merīdiem** ("after noon") — the direct ancestors of English's own **a.m.** and **p.m.**, used on every clock and phone today, often without anyone realizing they're speaking Latin. This wasn't just a loose figure of speech — it carried real legal weight. Under the **Twelve Tables**, Rome's foundational law code, a civil case had to be argued **before noon**, with both parties present; if one party failed to appear, the magistrate could rule **against them, in absentia, once it passed noon**. *Ante* and *post merīdiem* divided not just clock time, but courtroom procedure.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

You've already met *tardus* ("slow, late") through Spanish's own *tarde* — the very word Spanish reshaped into its "afternoon." In Latin itself, *tardus* never made that leap: it stayed a plain adjective, "slow, late," and never became a Latin noun for "afternoon." Spanish's shift from "late" to "the afternoon" happened entirely on its own, after Latin.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- "merīdiēs" — the same *medius diēs*, contracted
- "ante merīdiem," "post merīdiem" — before/after noon, the source of a.m./p.m.
- the honest twist — no separate Latin word for "afternoon," just a line drawn at noon

Before you move on

What earlier phrase is *merīdiēs* a contracted form of? (*Medius diēs*, Chapter 12.) What two English abbreviations, used on every clock, come directly from *ante merīdiem* and *post merīdiem*? (**a.m.** and **p.m.**) Did this noon-based division matter beyond just telling time? (**Yes** — under the Twelve Tables, Roman court cases had a real legal deadline at noon.) Does Latin have its own separate word for "afternoon," the way Spanish has *tarde*? (**No** — Romans split the whole day around *merīdiēs* instead.)

Chapter 36

Good Afternoon

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can greet someone in Latin in the afternoon with *salvē* or *salvēte*, and explain why nothing more is needed.

*One Roman day in four meetings — morning, afternoon, evening, and parting at night — with *salvē* and *valē* marked as the attested pair and the three bonus phrases marked as modern.*

36.1 *salvē* (post merīdiem) — the one that isn’t there

Three lessons in a row, you’ve met a modern phrase built on real (if sometimes invisible) Latin grammar for “good ____.” This lesson is different: there’s honestly nothing to build.

Why it’s said this way

Bonam noctem, **bonum māne**, and **bonum vesperum** are all modern, pedagogical phrases — not classically attested — but each pairs *bonus* directly with a **single noun** in the accusative: *noctem*, *māne*, *vesperum*. “Good afternoon” can’t take that same shape, because you already learned last lesson that Latin has **no simplex noun** for “afternoon” at all — there’s no *afternoonem* for *bonus* to modify. **Bonum post merīdiem** doesn’t work: *post merīdiem* (“after noon”) is a whole **prepositional phrase**, not a noun, so *bonus* has nothing to agree with. A three-word workaround, **bonum tempus**

pōmerīdiānum (“good afternoon time”), actually **is** grammatical — *pōmerīdiānus* (“of the afternoon”) is a real word Cicero himself uses, and here *bonus* agrees with a genuine noun, *tempus* (“time”). But it’s a **periphrasis**, not a direct two-word match for the other three phrases — and it isn’t itself attested anywhere as something Romans actually said as a greeting.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- why “*bonum post merīdiem*” doesn’t work — no noun for *bonus* to agree with; why “*bonum tempus pōmerīdiānum*” DOES work, but isn’t attested as a real greeting
- the grammatical adjective — *pōmerīdiānum*, “of the afternoon”

Before you move on

Does Latin have a two-word phrase for “good afternoon” the way it has *bonum vesperum* for evening? (**No** — Latin has no simplex noun for “afternoon” for *bonus* to pair with.) Is there ANY grammatical Latin phrase at all? (**Yes** — *bonum tempus pōmerīdiānum* is real grammar, but a three-word periphrasis, not attested as an actual greeting.) What did Romans say in the afternoon instead? (**Salvē** — the same everyday greeting from Chapter 1.) Why doesn’t *bonum post merīdiem* work grammatically? (*Post merīdiem* is a whole prepositional phrase, not a single noun *bonus* can agree with.)

36.2 salvē — the greeting that does not watch the clock

Latin cannot build a neat two-word “good afternoon.” What did Romans actually need in that time slot? Nothing beyond a greeting you already know.

Why it's said this way

Salvē to one person and **salvēte** to several people mean “be well.” Neither form contains a morning, afternoon, or evening boundary. Romans could use the greeting whenever they met someone. English encourages a learner to search for four matched clock-based formulas. Latin everyday greetings do not divide the day that way. The missing afternoon formula is therefore not a hole in Roman conversation.

The time-of-day arc now has three different kinds of evidence:

- a real institution, the morning **salūtātiō**
- grammatical but modern phrases such as **bonam noctem**
- no dedicated formula at all for afternoon—just **salvē**

Learning those differences is more faithful than forcing four symmetrical translations into Latin.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “salvē” — be well, to one person
- “salvēte” — be well, to several people
- the time restriction — none

Before you move on

What can one Roman say on meeting another in the afternoon? (**Salvē.**) What is the plural? (**Salvēte.**) Do these words encode a time of day? (**No.**) Why is there no conversational gap? (**The everyday greeting already works whenever people meet.**)

36.3 Practice — one whole day, in the words you have

Nine chapters of time-of-day words end here. This is the one place they all have to work at once — four meetings, one day,

and no inventing.

The exchange — morning to night, with the honest label on each line

Morning. A: **Salvē!** **Quid agis?** B: **Valeō.** **Salvē!**

Afternoon. A: **Salvē!** B: **Salvē!**

Evening. A: **Bonum vesperum!** B: **Salvē!**

Parting at night. A: **Bonam noctem!** B: **Valē!**

Now the label, which is half the payoff. **Salvē**, **salvēte** and **valē** are genuinely Roman and carry no clock inside them, so they work in every one of those four rows. The three *bonus* phrases — *bonum māne*, *bonum vesperum*, *bonam noctem* — are well-formed modern teaching phrases, not lines from any surviving Roman text. And the afternoon row has only *salvē* in it, because Latin never had a noun for “afternoon” for *bonus* to agree with.

So the safe rule you leave with: **when in doubt, salvē on arrival and valē on departure, at any hour.**

Your turn

- *Run through:* all four rows aloud, both voices
- *Choose:* mid-afternoon, and you want to be Roman → **salvē**
- *Say it:* why it is *noctem* and *vesperum*, not *nox* and *vesper* — Latin wishes take the accusative
- *Choose:* a room full of people → **salvēte**

Before you move on

Which two words in the whole day-cycle are genuinely attested? (**Salvē** and **valē**.) What did Rome actually have in the morning instead of a phrase? (The **salūtātiō** — a dawn visit, an action.) Why can *bonum māne* not show the accusative rule? (*Māne* is **neuter**; neuters never distinguish the two cases.)

Chapter 37

Eight Verbs at the Core

Modes: ⇄ voice (8) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 8 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I am, I have, I go, I come, I say, I see, I know and I give in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, and name the English words each verb left behind.

The chapter's eighth verb closes the set: after learning dō, the reader produces all eight first-person forms and all eight third-person forms in sequence — sum, habeo, eō, veniō, dīcō, videō, sciō, dō and est, habet, it, venit, dīcit, videt, scit, dat.

37.1 sum — the verb English never stopped sharing

You can already say **valeō**, “I fare well.” Now meet the verb that sits under every such statement: “to be.”

You’ll want to know: sum — “I am”

Sum means “**I am**.” The form a dictionary lists it under is **esse**, “to be.”

- **sum** — I am
- **es** — you are, to one person
- **est** — he is, she is, it is
- **sumus** — we are

- **estis** — you are, to several people
- **sunt** — they are

Latin packs the person into the ending, so **sum** on its own is already a whole sentence. No separate word for “I” is required.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Two English words are not merely cousins of these forms — they are the same inherited word. **Am** and **is** come from the Proto-Indo-European root **h₁es-* (“to be”), and so do **sum** and **est**. Latin builds its past from a second root entirely: **fuī** (“I was”) and **futūrus** (“about to be”) come from **b^huH-* (“to grow, become”) — which also gives English **be** and **been**, and Greek *phúsis* (“nature”), the source of **physics**. English patches its own verb from three roots the same way: *am/is*, *be*, and *was/were*.

From **esse** Latin built **essentia**, giving English **essence** and **essential**. Its participle *-sēns* supplies **present** (*prae-*, “before”) and **absent** (*ab-*, “away”), while the phrase *inter est* (“it is between, it matters”) hardened into **interest**.

Flag one false friend: Latin **sum** has nothing to do with an English “sum.” That word comes from *summa*, “the highest, the total.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sum” — I am
- “es, est” — you are, he or she is
- “sumus, estis, sunt” — we, you all, they
- the two English forms of the same root — am, is

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I am”? (**Sum.**) “They are”? (**Sunt.**) What form does a dictionary list? (**Esse.**) Which two English words come from the very same root as *sum* and *est*? (**Am** and **is**.) Where does Latin’s past **fuī** come from instead? (**A second root, *b^huH-**,

which also gives English *be*.)

37.2 habeō — the twin that is not a twin

You can say **sum**, “I am.” The next verb says what you hold. It resembles its English translation so closely that the resemblance is a trap.

You’ll want to know: habeō — “I have”

Habeō means “**I have**,” and more literally “I hold.” The dictionary form is **habēre**.

- **habeō** — I have
- **habēs** — you have, to one person
- **habet** — he has, she has, it has
- **habēmus** — we have
- **habētis** — you have, to several people
- **habent** — they have

The *h* was already weak in everyday Roman speech, and every Romance descendant dropped it: the letter is written, barely breathed.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Here is the trap. English **have** is **not** descended from *habēre*. It comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **keh₂p-* (“to seize”), whose Latin outcome is **capere** — the verb behind **capture**, **captive**, and **capable**. Two languages, two unrelated verbs, one accidental match of sound and sense. Etymologists cite this pair as the standard warning against trusting a resemblance.

The genuine English family of *habēre* is large. From *habitus* (“condition, bearing”) come **habit** and **habitual**; from *habitāre* (“to keep having, to dwell”) come **inhabit** and **habitat**. Prefixed, the verb yields **exhibit** (“hold out”), **prohibit** (“hold away”), and **inhibit**. The adjective *habilis* (“easily held, handy”) passes through French into

able and **ability**. And *dē + habēre* — “to have from someone” — contracts to **dēbēre**, which supplies **debt**, **debit**, **due**, and **duty**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “habeō” — I have
- “habēs, habet” — you have, he or she has
- “habēmus, habētis, habent” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — habit, inhabit, exhibit, able, debt

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I have”? (**Habeō.**) “They have”? (**Habent.**) Is English *have* descended from *habēre*? (**No** — it comes from the root behind Latin *capere*, “to seize”.) Which English word hides *dē + habēre*? (**Debt**, and with it *debit* and *due*.) Which everyday word comes from *habilis*, “handy”? (**Able.**)

37.3 eō — a whole verb in one vowel

Habeō gave you a comfortable two-syllable stem. The next verb has almost no stem at all — and you have been reading one of its forms in English theatres your whole life.

You’ll want to know: eō — “I go”

Eō means “**I go.**” The dictionary form is **īre**, “to go.” Strip the endings and what remains is a single vowel, *i-*.

- **eō** — I go
- **īs** — you go, to one person
- **it** — he goes, she goes, it goes
- **īmus** — we go

- **itis** — you go, to several people
- **eunt** — they go

Two cautions worth hearing once. Latin **it** means “he or she goes” and has no connection to English “it.” And the long $\bar{i}$ of **is** is a held vowel, which is what keeps it distinct from other short words.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ***h₁ey-**, “to go.” Latin prefixed it relentlessly, and English took the results wholesale.

Exit is not derived from a Latin verb — it *is* one: *exit*, “he or she goes out,” borrowed straight from Roman stage directions. Alongside it come **transit** and **transient** (*trāns*, “across”), **initial** and **initiate** (*in-īre*, “to go in,” hence *initium*, “a beginning”), **perish** (*per-īre*, “to go away utterly”), **circuit** (*circum*, “around”), and **obituary** (*ob-īre*, “to go to meet” one’s death).

Two are less obvious. **Ambition** is *ambīre*, “to go around” — what a Roman candidate did, walking the city to canvass for votes. **Sudden** is *subitus*, from *sub-īre*, “to come up from underneath,” unnoticed until it arrives. The related noun *iter*, *itineris* (“a journey”), gives **itinerary**. Beyond Latin, the Greek participle *ión* (“going”) was borrowed by Michael Faraday in 1834 to name a particle that travels through a solution: **ion**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “eō” — I go
- “is, it” — you go, he or she goes
- “imus, itis, eunt” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — exit, transit, initial, perish, sudden

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I go”? (**Eō**.) “They go”? (**Eunt**.) What does Latin **it** mean? (**He or she goes** — not English “it”.) Which

English stage direction is an untouched Latin verb form? (**Exit.**)
 What did a Roman candidate literally do to earn the word
ambition? (**Go around**, canvassing the city.)

37.4 *veniō* — the one that really is English “come”

Eō takes you away. Its opposite number brings you in — and this time the English translation genuinely is the same ancient word.

You’ll want to know: *veniō* — “I come”

Veniō means “**I come.**” The dictionary form is ***venīre***. Remember that Latin *v* is pronounced like English *w*, so this opens *weh-*.

- ***veniō*** — I come
- ***venīs*** — you come, to one person
- ***venit*** — he comes, she comes, it comes
- ***venīmus*** — we come
- ***venītis*** — you come, to several people
- ***veniunt*** — they come

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ****g^wem-***, “to step, to come.” That initial *g^w* hardens to *k* in the Germanic branch, which is exactly how English **come** arises — so *veniō* and *come* are the same word, split apart several thousand years ago. In the Greek branch the root became *baínō*, “I step,” which supplies **base**, **basis**, and **acrobat** (“one who walks on tiptoe”).

The Latin branch is where English got rich. Prefixed, *venīre* produces **advent** and **adventure** (*ad*, “toward”), **convene**, **convenient** and **convent** (*con-*, “together” — what is convenient literally “comes together” well), **event** (*ē-*, “out”), **invent** (*in-*, “to come upon” — an inventor originally *found* rather than made), **prevent** (*prae-*, “to come

before”), **intervene**, and **revenue** (*re-*, “what comes back”). Through French come **avenue**, **venue**, and **souvenir** (*subvenire*, “to come to mind”).

Flag a false friend: **Venus**, **venerate**, and **venom** look like members of this family and are not. They belong to a separate root, **wenh₁-*, “to desire” — the same one that gives English **win** and **wish**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “veniō” — I come, with a w-sound
- “venīs, venit” — you come, he or she comes
- “venīmus, venītis, veniunt” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — advent, convenient, invent, revenue

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I come”? (**Veniō**, opening with a w-sound.) “They come”? (**Veniunt**.) Which everyday English verb is the same inherited word? (**Come**.) What does **invent** literally mean? (**To come upon**, to find.) Do **Venus** and **venom** belong to this family? (**No** — a separate root meaning “to desire”.)

37.5 dīcō — saying began as pointing

You know **valē**, the farewell from Chapter 1. Learn the verb for “say,” and one of English’s grandest school words falls open.

You’ll want to know: dīcō — “I say”

Dīcō means “**I say**” or “**I tell**.” The dictionary form is **dīcere**. The *c* is always hard, as in English “keep,” so this is *DEE-koh*.

- **dīcō** — I say
- **dīcis** — you say, to one person

- **dīcit** — he says, she says
- **dīcimus** — we say
- **dīcitis** — you say, to several people
- **dīcunt** — they say

Latin also had a near-twin with a short *i*, **dicāre**, “to proclaim formally, to consecrate.” That sibling — not *dīcere* itself — is where **dedicate** and **abdicate** come from.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The Proto-Indo-European root ***deyk-** meant “to point out, to show.” Saying is a late specialisation of showing, and the family keeps both senses visible.

Pointing survives in **index** (“the pointer,” which is also the name of the forefinger) and **indicate**. Saying dominates the rest: **dictate**, **dictator**, **dictionary**, **diction**, **edict**, **predict**, **contradict**, and **benediction** (“speaking well”). A **verdict** is *vērē dictum*, “truly said.” A **judge** is a *iūdex*, from *iūs* (“law”) plus this root — the one who points out the law.

One word ties the chapter back to your first: a **valedictorian** is the person who says *valē*, the farewell you learned in Chapter 1.

The Germanic branch kept the older sense. English **teach** descends from Old English *tæcan*, “to show,” and **token** from *tācen*, “a sign” — both from the same root as *dīcō*. Greek *deiknumi* (“I show”) gives **paradigm**, literally “a thing shown side by side.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “dīcō” — I say, with a hard c
- “dīcis, dīcit” — you say, he or she says
- “dīcimus, dīcitis, dīcunt” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — dictionary, verdict, predict, teach

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I say”? (**Dīcō**, hard c.) “They say”? (**Dīcunt.**)
 What did the root originally mean? (**To point out, to show.**)
 What does a **valedictorian** literally do? (**Says valē**, the farewell.)
 Which everyday English verb keeps the old “show” sense? (**Teach.**)

37.6 videō — where seeing and knowing were the same act

You can already promise **crās tē vidēbō**, “tomorrow I shall see you.” The verb inside that promise deserves its own lesson: it has the widest family of any word in this chapter.

You’ll want to know: videō — “I see”

Videō means “I see.” The dictionary form is **vidēre**. The *v* is again a *w*-sound, so this is *WEE-day-oh*.

- **videō** — I see
- **vidēs** — you see, to one person
- **videt** — he sees, she sees
- **vidēmus** — we see
- **vidētis** — you see, to several people
- **vident** — they see

The future you already know, **vidēbō** (“I shall see”), is built on this same stem.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The Proto-Indo-European root ***weyd-** meant both “to see” and, by the obvious step, “to know” — because what you have seen, you know. The Latin harvest is enormous. Plain derivatives give **vision**, **visible**, **video**, **visit**, and **vista**. Prefixed ones are richer: **evident** (*ē-*, “seen out, unmissable”), **provide** and **provision** (*prō-*, “to see ahead”), and **prudent**, which is simply *prōvidēns* worn down. **Survey** is *super* plus

vidēre, “to look over”; **review** and **revise** look again; **advice** is what you are shown. **Envy** is the sourest of them: *invidēre* meant “to look against,” to cast an eye upon what belongs to someone else.

The other branches keep the knowing half. English **wit**, **wise**, and **wisdom** are Germanic outcomes of the same root. Greek turned it into *idéa* (“the look of a thing”) — English **idea** — and into *hístōr* (“one who knows because he has seen”), giving **history** and **story**. Sanskrit made it **Veda**, “knowledge.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “videō” — I see, with a w-sound
- “vidēs, videt” — you see, he or she sees
- “vidēmus, vidētis, vident” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — vision, evident, provide, survey, envy

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I see”? (**Videō**, with a w-sound.) “They see”? (**Vident**.) What second meaning did the root carry besides “see”? (**To know**.) What does **envy** literally describe? (**Looking against** someone.) Which English word for wisdom comes from this root? (**Wit**, and with it *wise* and *wisdom*.)

37.7 sciō — the knowing that cuts things apart

Videō already carried a shade of “know.” Latin nevertheless keeps two dedicated verbs for knowing, and this lesson takes the first.

You’ll want to know: sciō — “I know”

Sciō means “**I know**” — know a fact, know that something is so. The dictionary form is **scīre**. The *sc* is a plain *sk*, so this is *SKEE-oh*.

- **sciō** — I know

- **scīs** — you know, to one person
- **scit** — he knows, she knows
- **scīmus** — we know
- **scītis** — you know, to several people
- **sciunt** — they know

Its negative is a single word: **nesciō**, “I do not know” — *ne* plus *sciō*, fused. That is a genuinely useful thing to be able to say.

Latin’s other knowing verb is **nōscō**, “to get to know, to recognise.” A Roman used *sciō* for knowing a fact and *nōscō* for becoming acquainted.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Scīre is generally traced to the Proto-Indo-European root ***skey-**, “to cut, to split” — knowing as the act of telling one thing from another. The link is the standard account rather than a certainty, and careful dictionaries mark it as probable. The same root gives Greek *skhízein*, “to split,” behind **schism** and **schizo-**, and English **shed** in its old sense of dividing.

From *scīre* directly: **science** and **scientific** (*scientia*, “knowledge”), **conscience** and **conscious** (*con-*, “knowing with”), **omniscient** (“all-knowing”), and **prescient**. A **plebiscite** is a *plēbis scītum*, “a thing the people have decided.”

The prize of the family is **nice**. It comes from *nescius*, “not knowing,” which passed into Old French as *nice*, “simple, foolish,” then drifted through “fussy” and “delicate” to today’s mild compliment.

Now the false friend, and it is a big one. English **know** is **not** related to *sciō*. It descends from ***ǵneh₃-**, the root behind Latin **nōscō** — the source of **notice**, **notion**, **cognition**, **recognise**, and **ignore**, and of Greek *gnōsis* in **diagnosis**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sciō” — I know, opening sk-
- “scīs, scit” — you know, he or she knows

- “nesciō” — I do not know
- the English relatives — science, conscience, nice

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I know”? (**Sciō**.) “I do not know”? (**Nesciō**.) What older sense probably sits under the root? (**To cut or separate** — telling one thing from another.) Which mild English compliment began as *nescius*, “not knowing”? (**Nice**.) Is English *know* from this verb? (**No** — from the root behind *nōscō*, which gives *notice* and *cognition*.)

37.8 dō — the eighth verb, and the whole set together

Seven verbs so far: to be, to have, to go, to come, to say, to see, to know. One remains, and then the set closes.

You’ll want to know: dō — “I give”

Dō means “**I give**.” The dictionary form is **dare**, and the *a* in it is short — *DAH-reh*, not *DAH-ray*. That short vowel is unusual and marks *dare* out as irregular.

- **dō** — I give
- **dās** — you give, to one person
- **dat** — he gives, she gives
- **damus** — we give
- **datis** — you give, to several people
- **dant** — they give

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ***deh₃-**, “to give.” From the noun *dōnum* (“a gift”) English takes **donate**, **donor**, **condone**, and **pardon** (*per-dōnāre*, “to give thoroughly, to forgive”).

From the participle *datum*, “a thing given,” come **data** and **dative**, the giving case — and also **date**. A Roman letter closed with *data Rōmae*, “given at Rome,” followed by the day; the word for “given” became the word for the day itself.

Trāns plus *dare* makes *trādere*, “to hand over,” and that single compound splits into **tradition** (handed down), **traitor** and **treason** (handed over to the enemy), **betray**, and **extradite**. *Dōs, dōtis* (“dowry”) gives **dowry** and **endow**. Greek *dídōmi* supplies **dose** and **anecdote** (“things not given out”).

Two flags. English **give** is not from this root, despite the matching sense — it is Germanic and separate. And Latin compounds ending in *-dere* — *addere* (“to add”), *condere* (“to found”) — belong to a **different** root, **d^heh₁-* (“to put”), the one behind Greek *títhēmi* and English **theme** and **thesis**. So **add** is not a relative of *dare*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “dō, dās, dat” — I give, you give, he or she gives
- the eight “I” forms — *sum, habeo, eo, venio, dico, video, scio, do*
- the eight “he or she” forms — *est, habet, it, venit, dicit, videt, scit, dat*
- the English relatives of *dare* — *donate, data, date, tradition*

Before you move on

Give the eight “I” forms of this chapter. (**Sum, habeo, eo, venio, dico, video, scio, do.**) Now the eight “he or she” forms. (**Est, habet, it, venit, dicit, videt, scit, dat.**) Which English words come from *datum*, “a thing given”? (**Data, dative, and date.**) What does *trādere* literally mean? (**To hand over** — hence *tradition* and *traitor*.) Is English *give* a relative? (**No.**)

Chapter 38

Thinking, Reading, Writing

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I think, I read, I understand and I write in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, and name the English words each verb built.

The chapter closes on scribō: after learning it the reader produces all four first-person forms and all four third-person forms in sequence — cōgitō, legō, intellegō, scribō and cōgitat, legit, intellegit, scribit.

38.1 cōgitō — thinking as driving things together

Sciō is knowing a fact you already hold. This verb is the work you do before you hold it.

You'll want to know: cōgitō — “I think”

Cōgitō means “**I think**,” in the sense of turning something over. The dictionary form is **cōgitāre**. Both *o*-vowels are long and the *g* is hard: *KOH-ghēe-TAH-reh*.

- **cōgitō** — I think
- **cōgitās** — you think, to one person
- **cōgitat** — he thinks, she thinks
- **cōgitāmus** — we think
- **cōgitātis** — you think, to several people

- **cōgitant** — they think

Latin's other everyday verb here is **putō**, "I reckon, I suppose" — lighter, closer to English "I guess."

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Cōgitāre is *co-* ("together") welded onto *agitāre*, "to keep driving about" — itself the restless form of *agere*, "to drive, to do." Thinking, to a Roman, is not stillness: it is driving your material together and keeping it in motion.

English took the verb whole in **cogitate** and **cogitation**, and took the most quoted sentence in philosophy with it: *cōgitō ergō sum*, "I think, therefore I am" — whose second word is the **sum** you already know. The engine underneath, *agere*, is one of Latin's great suppliers: **act**, **action**, **agent**, **agenda** ("things to be driven forward"), **agile**, **agitate**, **exact**, and **navigate** (*nāvis*, "ship," plus *agere*). The root is Proto-Indo-European ***ag-**, "to drive," which in Greek became *ágō* and gave **pedagogue** ("child-leader") and **demagogue**.

Putāre is worth its own paragraph. It first meant "to prune a tree," then "to settle an account," then "to consider" — and English inherited all three stages: **amputate**, **compute** (and its worn-down form **count**), **dispute**, **deputy**, **impute**, and **reputation**.

One flag. English **think** is Germanic, from the root that also gives **thank** — a thought and a grateful thought. It is not related to *cōgitō*. Nor is **cognition**, which belongs to *nōscō*, the other knowing verb.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- "cōgitō" — I think, hard g
- "cōgitās, cōgitat" — you think, he or she thinks
- "cōgitāmus, cōgitātis, cōgitant" — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — cogitate, agent, agenda, compute

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I think”? (**Cōgitō**.) “They think”? (**Cōgitant**.) What two pieces is the verb built from? (**Co-**, “together,” and *agitāre*, “to keep driving about”.) Which philosopher’s sentence carries it, and which chapter-37 verb closes that sentence? (**Cōgitō ergō sum** — and **sum**.) Which English word began as *putāre*, “to prune”? (**Amputate** — and **compute**, and **count**.)

38.2 legō — reading is picking things up

Cōgitō drives ideas together. The next verb gathers something more concrete — and it is the single richest word in this book.

You’ll want to know: legō — “I read”

Legō means “**I read**.” Its older and wider sense is “I gather, I pick out.” The dictionary form is **legere**. Every *g* is hard and every vowel here is short: *LEH-goh*, *LEH-geh-reh*.

- **legō** — I read
- **legis** — you read, to one person
- **legit** — he reads, she reads
- **legimus** — we read
- **legitis** — you read, to several people
- **legunt** — they read

Reading is the younger meaning, and you can feel how it arrived: you pick the letters up, one after another. A Roman normally did this aloud.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The Proto-Indo-European root is ***leg-**, “to gather, to collect.” Straight from *legere* English has **legible**, **legend** (“things to be read”), **lectern**, **lecture**, and — through Old French *leçon*, from *lectiōnem*, “a reading” — **lesson**. A Roman **legion** was a *legiō*, a levy of men picked

out for service.

Prefixed, the verb becomes a machine. *Con-* gives **collect** (gather together); *sē-* gives **select** (gather apart); *ē-* gives **elect** (pick out).

Neglect is *nec legere*, “not to pick up.” **Elegant** is *ēlegāns* — originally an insult, “too choosy.”

Greek inherited the same root as *lēgō*, “I gather, I speak,” and its noun *lógos*, “word, reason.” From those come **logic**, **catalogue**, **dialogue**, **analogy**, **anthology** (a flower-gathering), and the *-logy* ending on every science you can name.

One caution. Latin *lēx*, *lēgis* (“law”) — behind **legal**, **legislate**, **loyal**, and **privilege** — is often derived from *legere*, “what is read out.” That link is **debated**; treat it as a maybe.

And a false friend: English **read** is Germanic, from a word meaning “to advise,” still visible in **riddle**. It has nothing to do with *legō*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*legō*” — I read, hard g
- “*legis*, *legit*” — you read, he or she reads
- “*legimus*, *legitis*, *legunt*” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — legible, collect, select, elegant

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I read”? (**Legō**.) “They read”? (**Legunt**.) What did the verb mean before it meant “read”? (**To gather, to pick out**.) What does **neglect** literally say? (*Nec legere*, “not to pick up”.) Is English *read* a relative? (**No** — it is Germanic, from a word meaning “to advise”.)

38.3 intellegō — reading between

Legō picks things out. Put one small word in front of it and you get the verb behind **intelligence** itself.

You'll want to know: *intellegō* — “I understand”

Intellegō means “I understand.” The dictionary form is *intellegere*. It is *legō* with a prefix, so the endings are the ones you have just learned: *in-TEL-leh-goh*.

- *intellegō* — I understand
- *intellegis* — you understand, to one person
- *intellegit* — he understands, she understands
- *intellegimus* — we understand
- *intellegitis* — you understand, to several people
- *intellegunt* — they understand

Nōn intellegō — “I do not understand” — is the single most useful sentence in this chapter.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The prefix is *inter*, “between, among.” Before an *l* it wore down to *intel-*. So *intellegere* is **to pick out from among**, to read between one thing and another. Latin says outright what English only implies: understanding is discrimination.

The family in English is one of the most familiar in the language: **intellect**, **intellectual**, **intelligent**, **intelligence**, **intelligible** and **unintelligible**, and — borrowed back through Russian — **intelligentsia**. Military and diplomatic **intelligence** is the older sense of the noun: information gathered.

There is a spelling puzzle here worth solving. Classical Latin wrote *intellegō* with an *e*, keeping the vowel of *legō*; later Latin respelled it *intelligō*. English took both, at different dates, which is why **intellect** keeps the *e* while **intelligent** carries the *i*. Two spellings, one verb. *Inter* on its own gave English **interval**, **interior**, **interrupt**, **international**, and **interest** — that last one already met as *inter est*, “it is between.”

Two flags. Latin had a second word for understanding, *comprehendere*, “to grasp together,” which gives **comprehend** and **comprehensive**; it is a different image and a different root. And English **understand** is Germanic, a compound of *under* and *stand* — no connection at all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “intellegō” — I understand
- “intellegis, intellegit” — you understand, he or she understands
- “nōn intellegō” — I do not understand
- the English relatives — intellect, intelligent, intelligible

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I understand”? (**Intellegō**.) “I do not understand”? (**Nōn intellegō**.) What two pieces is it built from? (**Inter**, “between,” and **legere**, “to pick out”.) Why does English have both *intellect* and *intelligent*? (**Two Latin spellings** — classical *intellegō*, later *intelligō*.) Is English *understand* related? (**No** — it is Germanic.)

38.4 scrībō — writing began as scratching, and the four together

Cōgitō turns things over, **legō** takes words off a surface, **intellegō** picks them apart. One verb is left: the one that put them there.

You’ll want to know: scrībō — “I write”

Scrībō means “**I write**.” The dictionary form is **scrībere**. The *sc* is a plain *sk* and the *ī* is long and held: *SKREE-boh*.

- **scrībō** — I write
- **scrībis** — you write, to one person
- **scrībit** — he writes, she writes
- **scrībimus** — we write
- **scrībitis** — you write, to several people

- **scrībunt** — they write

Note that the endings match *legō* exactly. Two verbs, one pattern.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **skreyb^h-*, “to cut, to scratch, to incise.” That is not a metaphor. A Roman writing a note pressed a pointed stylus into a wax-coated board; writing *was* scratching, and the verb never forgot it.

The English family is enormous and almost entirely transparent. Bare: **scribe**, **scribble**, **script**, **scripture**, **scrivener**. Compounded with a noun: **manuscript**, “written by hand,” from *manus*, the hand.

Prefixed with a preposition, the verb runs the whole set — **describe** (write down), **prescribe** (write in advance), **subscribe** (write underneath, which is what signing a document was), **transcribe** (write across), **inscribe** (write into), **circumscribe** (write around), **proscribe** (post a name publicly, which in Rome meant a death sentence), **ascribe**, **conscript**, and **postscript**.

One quiet survivor: Old English borrowed *scrībere* as *scrīfan*, “to impose a penance in writing,” and that gives **shrive**, **shrift**, and the Tuesday before Lent, **Shrove** Tuesday. When somebody gets **short shrift**, they are being given very little confession time.

Now the honest part. English **write** is **not** from this verb. It is Germanic, from a word that also meant “to scratch, to tear” — two languages reaching the same image with two different words. **Scrape** and **scrub** are likewise Germanic and unrelated, however much they sound the part.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “scrībō, scrībīs, scrībit” — I write, you write, he or she writes
- this chapter’s four “I” forms — cōgitō, legō, intellegō, scrībō
- the four “he or she” forms — cōgitat, legit, intellegit, scrībit
- the English relatives — scribe, script, describe, manuscript

Before you move on

Give this chapter's four "I" forms. (**Cōgitō, legō, intellegō, scrībō.**) Now the four "he or she" forms. (**Cōgitat, legit, intellegit, scrībit.**) What did *scrībere*'s root originally mean? (**To scratch, to incise** — a stylus in wax.) What does **subscribe** literally say? (**Write underneath** — to sign.) Is English *write* from this verb? (**No** — it is Germanic, and happens to mean "scratch" too.)

Chapter 39

Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I take, I ask, I help and I love in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, and name the English words each verb built.

The chapter closes on amō: after learning it the reader produces all four first-person forms and all four third-person forms in sequence — capiō, rogō, adiuvō, amō and capit, rogat, adiuvat, amat.

39.1 capiō — the verb behind English “have”

The last chapter closed on scribō. This one opens by paying a debt: when you learned habeo, you were told that English *have* is not its descendant but belongs to another verb. This is that other verb.

You’ll want to know: capiō — “I take”

Capiō means “I take,” and also “I seize, I catch, I hold.” The dictionary form is **capere**. Both vowels are short and the *c* is hard: *KAH-pee-oh*.

- **capiō** — I take
- **capis** — you take, to one person
- **capit** — he takes, she takes
- **capimus** — we take

- **capitis** — you take, to several people
- **capiunt** — they take

For “take up, take on” Latin also used **sūmō**, **sūmere**.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ***keh₂p-**, “to grasp.” Latin made *capere* of it; the Germanic branch made English **have** and **heave**. So *capiō* and *have* really are the same inherited word — the resemblance *habeō* seemed to offer was the false one, and this is the true one.

Plain derivatives: **capture**, **captive**, **captor**, **caption**, **capable**, **capacity**. Prefixed, the *a* often weakens to *i* or *e*, which is what disguises the family: **accept** and **except**, **intercept**, **anticipate** (“to take beforehand”), **participate** (*pars* plus *capere*, “to take a part”), **occupy**, **recuperate**, and **emancipate** — *ex* plus *manus* plus *capere*, “to take out of the hand.” Through French the same stem gives **receive** and **reception**, **deceive** and **deception**, **conceive** and **concept**, **perceive**, and **susceptible**. Vulgar Latin *captiāre* produced both **chase** and **catch**, which are therefore the same word twice. **Sūmere** is *sub* plus *emere*, “to take up,” and it supplies **assume**, **consume**, **presume**, **resume**, and **sumptuous**. *Emere* itself (“to buy”) gives **exempt**, **redeem**, **example**, and **premium**.

Now the trap. Latin *caput*, “head,” looks like a member of this family and is not. It is a separate word, and it — not *capere* — gives **capital**, **captain**, **chapter**, **chief**, and **cape** the headland.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “capiō” — I take, hard c
- “capis, capit” — you take, he or she takes
- “capimus, capitis, capiunt” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — capture, accept, receive, concept

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I take”? (**Capiō**.) “They take”? (**Capiunt**.) Which English verb is the same inherited word? (**Have** — and **heave**.) What does **emancipate** literally say? (**To take out of the hand**.) Do **capital** and **captain** belong here? (**No** — those are from *caput*, “head”.)

39.2 rogō — asking as reaching straight out

Dīcō tells someone something. **Capiō** takes. This verb is what you do when you want to take and have to ask first.

You’ll want to know: rogō — “I ask”

Rogō means “I ask” — both asking a question and asking for a thing. The dictionary form is **rogāre**. The *g* is hard: *ROH-goh*.

- **rogō** — I ask
- **rogās** — you ask, to one person
- **rogat** — he asks, she asks
- **rogāmus** — we ask
- **rogātis** — you ask, to several people
- **rogant** — they ask

Latin’s harder-edged partner is **petō**, **petere**, “I seek, I aim at, I ask for” — asking with an object in view.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Rogāre is generally traced to the Proto-Indo-European root ***reg-**, “to move in a straight line, to direct” — asking pictured as reaching straight out toward somebody. That last step is the standard account rather than a certainty, so hold it loosely. The root itself is a giant: it gives Latin *regō* (“I rule”) and *rēx* (“king”), hence **regal**, **regent**, **region**, **direct**, **correct**, and **erect**. In the Germanic branch it gives English **right**; in Sanskrit it gives the **raja** of **maharaja**.

From *rogāre* itself English has **interrogate** (“to ask thoroughly”), **arrogant** and **arrogate** (*ad-rogāre*, “to claim for oneself”), **abrogate** (“to ask away,” to repeal), **derogatory**, and **surrogate** (*sub-rogāre*, “to ask in someone’s place”).

Petere runs a second family: **petition**, **appetite**, **compete**, **repeat**, **impetus**, **perpetual**, and **centripetal**. Its root meant “to fly, to rush,” and that is why Latin *penna*, “feather,” belongs to it — so **pen** is a cousin of *petō*, and Greek supplies **helicopter**, a spiral wing. Two flags. English **ask** is Germanic and unrelated. And **rogue** is often guessed to come from *rogāre*; its origin is genuinely unknown.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “rogō” — I ask, hard g
- “rogās, rogat” — you ask, he or she asks
- “rogāmus, rogātis, rogant” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — interrogate, arrogant, prerogative

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I ask”? (**Rogō**.) “They ask”? (**Rogant**.) Which root is it generally traced to, and how sure is that? (**reg-*, “to move in a straight line” — **the standard account, not a certainty**.) Which everyday writing tool comes from *petere*’s family? (**Pen**, from *penna*, “feather”.)

39.3 adiuvō — the verb inside “aid”

You can ask now — **rogō**. This is the verb for what you are hoping the other person will do.

You’ll want to know: adiuvō — “I help”

Adiuvō means “I help.” The dictionary form is **adiuvāre**. Two sounds to place: the *i* between vowels is a consonant, said like English *y*, and the *v* is a *w*. So this is *ah-DYOO-woh*.

- **adiuvō** — I help
- **adiuvās** — you help, to one person
- **adiuvat** — he helps, she helps
- **adiuvāmus** — we help
- **adiuvātis** — you help, to several people
- **adiuvant** — they help

The plain verb **iuvō**, **iuvāre**, means “to help” and also “to please,” and *ad-* simply aims it at somebody.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Latin built a busier form of *adiuvāre* — *adiūtāre* — and Old French wore that down to *aidier*. English borrowed it as **aid**, and later took the French agent-noun as **aide**, which is why **first aid** and an **aide-de-camp** both hold this Roman verb without showing a letter of it.

Straight from Latin come **adjutant** (*adiūtor*, “a helper”) and **adjuvant**, the medical term for something given alongside a treatment to help it work. A bishop’s assistant is a **coadjutor**.

Latin’s other word for help is *auxilium*, and its family is a surprise. It comes from *augēre*, “to increase” — help as an increase of your strength. That verb gives **auxiliary**, **augment**, **auction** (a sale where the price grows), **author** (*auctor*, one who makes a thing grow), and the month **August**, for the emperor Augustus, “the increased one.”

The Germanic branch gives English **eke** — and a **nickname** is an *eke-name*, an also-name, with the *n* of *an* stuck to the front.

Two flags, and the first is a real trap. *Iuvō* (“help”) is **not** the source of **juvenile**. That comes from *iuvenis*, “young,” a separate word which also gives **junior** and **rejuvenate**. And English **help** is Germanic, unrelated to any of this.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “adiuvō” — I help, with a y and a w inside

- “adiuvās, adiuvat” — you help, he or she helps
- “adiuvāmus, adiuvātis, adiuvant” — we, you all, they
- the English relatives — aid, aide, adjutant, adjuvant

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I help”? (**Adiuvō.**) “They help”? (**Adiuvant.**) How is the *i* in the middle pronounced? (**Like English y.**) Which two everyday English words came from it through French? (**Aid** and **aide.**) Is **juvenile** a relative? (**No** — that is *iuvenis*, “young,” a different word.)

39.4 amō — the fourth verb, and the four together

Three verbs so far in this chapter: to take, to ask, to help. One remains, and it is the one every Latin class in history has started with.

You’ll want to know: amō — “I love”

Amō means “**I love**,” and, more mildly, “I like.” The dictionary form is **amāre**. The *a* of *amō* is short, the *ā* of *amās* is long.

- **amō** — I love
- **amās** — you love, to one person
- **amat** — he loves, she loves
- **amāmus** — we love
- **amātis** — you love, to several people
- **amant** — they love

Amō, amās, amat is the oldest teaching formula in the subject. You meet it here in its proper place: as the last of four ordinary verbs.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Begin with the honest limit. Almost every other verb in this book walks back to a reconstructed Proto-Indo-European root. *Amāre* does not. It is usually explained as a **nursery word** — the *am-* sound small children make — which is a respectable account and not a reconstruction. The trail stops earlier here, and saying so is better than inventing a root.

The forward journey makes up for it. **Amateur** came through French and means “one who loves it”; the sneer is a late arrival. Beside it stand **amatory**, **amorous**, **enamoured**, and **paramour** (“by love”). From *amīcus*, “friend,” come **amicable**, **amity**, and — Spanish being another daughter of Latin — *amigo*. **Amanda** means “she who is to be loved.”

The best of them is upside down. Put the negative *in-* on *amīcus* and you get *inimīcus*, “not-friend” — which is English **enemy**, and **enmity**, and **inimical**. The word for an enemy is the word for love with a “not” in front of it.

Two flags. **Amen** is Hebrew, borrowed through Greek, and has nothing to do with *amō*. And **amenable** comes through French *amener*, “to lead to.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “amō, amās, amat” — I love, you love, he or she loves
- this chapter’s four “I” forms — capiō, rogō, adiuvō, amō
- the four “he or she” forms — capit, rogat, adiuvat, amat
- the English relatives of amāre — amateur, amicable, enemy

Before you move on

Give this chapter’s four “I” forms. (**Capiō, rogō, adiuvō, amō.**)
 Now the four “he or she” forms. (**Capit, rogat, adiuvat, amat.**)
 Why does this lesson name no ancient root? (**Because amāre has none securely reconstructed** — it is taken as a nursery word.)
 Which English word is *amīcus* with a “not” on the front? (**Enemy.**)

Chapter 40

Hearing, Sleeping, Sitting, Standing

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖐️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I hear, I sleep, I sit and I stand in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, name the conjugation each belongs to, and tell an English word inherited from the shared ancestor apart from one borrowed out of Latin.

The chapter closes on stō: after learning it the reader produces all four first-person forms and all four third-person forms in sequence — audiō, dormiō, sedeō, stō and audit, dormit, sedet, stat — sorts stand from station as inherited against borrowed, and reaches back three chapters to retrieve sum and eō, neither of which had been revisited since chapter 37.

40.1 audiō — hearing, and the word for obeying

The last chapter ended on **amō**, whose trail stopped early — no secure ancient root to walk back to. This verb is the opposite case: its trail runs all the way back, and forward into a surprising English word. It is also the natural partner of **rogō**: you ask, and then you hear.

You’ll want to know: audiō — “I hear”

Audiō means “**I hear**,” and also “I listen to.” The dictionary form is **audīre**. The *au* is one sound, close to English *ow* in “now.”

- **audiō** — I hear
- **audīs** — you hear, to one person
- **audit** — he hears, she hears
- **audīmus** — we hear
- **audītis** — you hear, to several people
- **audiunt** — they hear

This is a **fourth-conjugation** verb — the group whose dictionary form ends in **-īre**. Note the “they” form: **audiunt**, with a *u* slipped in.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ***au-**, “to perceive.” Latin built *audīre* on it, and English borrowed the results wholesale: **audio**, **audible**, **audience**, **audition**, **auditor**, **auditorium**.

Audit is the best of them. An audit was literally a *hearing*: accounts were read out loud and checked by ear, long before anyone checked them by eye. The word kept the procedure and lost the sound. Now the one nobody guesses. Put *ob-* (“toward”) in front of *audīre* and Latin gives *oboedīre*, “to listen toward” — which through French becomes English **obey**, **obedient** and **disobey**. To obey is to listen hard at someone. The town crier’s **oyez** is the same verb, an Old French imperative: “hear ye.”

The Greek branch of ***au-** produced words for perceiving in general: **aesthetic**, and **anaesthesia**, “no perception at all.”

One flag. English **hear** is *not* a relative. It is Germanic, from another root — the one that also gives Greek *akoúein* and so English **acoustic**. *Audio* and *acoustic* mean nearly the same thing and are not cousins.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “audiō” — I hear
- “audīs, audit” — you hear, he or she hears
- “audīmus, audītis, audiunt” — we, you all, they

- the pair from the last chapter beside it — *rogō*, *amō*
- the English relatives — audience, audit, obey

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I hear”? (**Audiō**.) “They hear”? (**Audiunt**.) Which conjugation is it? (**The fourth** — the *-īre* group.) What was an **audit** originally, and which everyday word is *ob-* plus *audire*? (**A hearing**, accounts read aloud — and **obey**.) Which verb from the last chapter had no securely reconstructed root, and which one means “I ask”? (**Amō**, and **rogō**.)

40.2 dormiō — the verb you do with your senses off

Audiō is hearing; **videō**, from an earlier chapter, is seeing. This verb is the state in which you do neither.

You’ll want to know: dormiō — “I sleep”

Dormiō means “I sleep.” The dictionary form is **dormīre**. The first *o* is short, the *ī* of *dormīre* is long: *dor-MEE-reh*.

- **dormiō** — I sleep
- **dormīs** — you sleep, to one person
- **dormit** — he sleeps, she sleeps
- **dormīmus** — we sleep
- **dormītis** — you sleep, to several people
- **dormiunt** — they sleep

This is the same **fourth conjugation** as the verb before it, and it takes the same endings — including that *u* in **dormiunt**. Two verbs in the group is enough to hear the pattern.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **drem-*, “to sleep.” It is a quiet root: Sanskrit *drāti*, Greek *darthánein*, Old Church Slavonic *drěmati*. Latin *dormīre* is the western member, and English inherited none of it — every English word here is a loan.

Borrowed whole: **dormitory** (*dormitōrium*, “a sleeping place”), and its clipped form *dorm*. **Dormant**, from French, is a thing that is sleeping rather than dead. A **dormer** window began as the window of a sleeping room.

Now a warning, because this one is a trap dressed as a gift.

Dormouse looks like the perfect example and is not securely one. The animal’s name is attested in English before the French word for a sleeper it is supposed to come from, and the *-mouse* half may simply be English speakers making sense of a syllable they did not recognise. A hook you have to defend is not a hook.

Latin’s other word for sleep is the noun **somnus**, from a different root entirely, and English took plenty from that too: **insomnia** (“no sleep”), **somnolent**, and **soporific**. So the two Latin sleep-words divided the English vocabulary between them: the verb gave the rooms you sleep in, the noun gave the sleep itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “dormiō” — I sleep
- “dormīs, dormit” — you sleep, he or she sleeps
- “dormīmus, dormītis, dormiunt” — we, you all, they
- the two senses this verb switches off — audiō, videō
- the English relatives — dormitory, dormant

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I sleep”? (**Dormiō**.) “They sleep”? (**Dormiunt**.) Which conjugation, and which other verb shares it here? (**The fourth** — with **audiō**.) Why is **dormouse** not a safe example? (**Because the connection is not secure** — the English

word is older than the French one it supposedly comes from.) Which Latin noun gives **insomnia**, and which verb means “I see”? (**Somnus**, and **videō**.)

40.3 sedeō — the same word English already had

Dormire left English nothing but loans. This verb is the reverse, and it lets us name a distinction this book has been using without stating it.

You’ll want to know: sedeō — “I sit”

Sedeō means “**I sit**,” and also “I stay put.” The dictionary form is **sedēre**, with a long *ē*.

- **sedeō** — I sit
- **sedēs** — you sit, to one person
- **sedet** — he sits, she sits
- **sedēmus** — we sit
- **sedētis** — you sit, to several people
- **sedent** — they sit

This one is **second conjugation** — the *-ēre* group. That long *ē* is the whole signal, so give it room.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European ***sed-**, “to sit,” and English has it by two different routes — which is the point.

Inherited, down the Germanic line, with no Latin involved: **sit**, **seat**, **set** (“cause to sit”), **settle**, **saddle**. Two are hidden: **nest** is “the place where one sits down,” and **soot** is what settles.

Borrowed, later, out of Latin *sedēre*: **session**, **sedentary**, **sediment**, **sedate**, **preside**, **reside**, **dissident** (“sitting apart”), **assiduous** (“sitting at it”), **possess**. **Siege** is a seat too — an army sitting down in front of a town.

Hold the two apart. An **inherited** word came down to English from the shared ancestor without passing through Latin; a **borrowed** word was taken out of Latin, usually centuries later. *Sit* and *session* are one ancient word by two roads, and they look nothing alike because one wore down for three thousand years while the other was copied out of a book. You met this shape when **capiō** turned out to be the true relative of English *have*, with the borrowed *capture* beside it. One flag. **Sedan** is often attached to *sedēre*, and the connection is not established. Leave it out.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sedeō” — I sit, long ē in sedēre
- “sedēs, sedet” — you sit, he or she sits
- “sedēmus, sedētis, sedent” — we, you all, they
- the three verbs of this chapter so far — audiō, dormiō, sedeō
- the inherited word, then the borrowed one — sit, session

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I sit”? (**Sedeō.**) “They sit”? (**Sedent.**) Which conjugation? (**The second** — the long *-ēre* group.) Is English **sit** borrowed from Latin, and what about **session**? (**Sit is inherited**, by a different road; **session is borrowed.**) Which earlier verb showed that same shape, and why is **dormouse** not usable that way? (**Capiō** — cousin of *have*, source of *capture*; and *dormouse*’s link to sleeping is not secure.)

40.4 stō — standing, and the four together

Three verbs so far: hearing, sleeping, sitting. One remains. It is the opposite of the last, and it shows the inherited-and-borrowed pattern **sedeō** just taught all over.

You'll want to know: *stō* — “I stand”

Stō means “**I stand**,” and by extension “I stay.” The dictionary form is *stāre*. Two letters in the “I” form makes it the shortest verb you have met.

- *stō* — I stand
- *stās* — you stand, to one person
- *stat* — he stands, she stands
- *stāmus* — we stand
- *stātis* — you stand, to several people
- *stant* — they stand

This is **first conjugation**, the *-āre* group, and in the present tense perfectly regular: the long *ā* runs through every form after the first.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **sta-*, “to stand.” Sort the English by the two roads that gave *sit* and *session*.

Inherited: stand — with an extra *n* wedged into the middle, which is why it looks unlike *stō* — plus **stead** (as in *instead*), **steed**, **stall** and **stool**.

Borrowed from *stāre*: **station**, **statue**, **status**, **state**, **stable**, **estate**, **stage**, **substance**, **circumstance** (“standing around”), **obstacle** (“standing in the way”), **constant**, **instant**, **distance**. Two are so worn down they hide: *constāre*, “to stand at a price,” is English **cost**, and *restāre*, “to stand back,” is the **rest** that means the remainder. The doubled-up *sistere* gives **consist**, **resist**, **insist** and **assist**.

Set this beside the verb for being. **Sum** and **est** are inherited cousins of English *am* and *is* — the same two-road picture, only there the English side kept the meaning exactly. And set it against **eō**, “I go”: *stāre* is what you do when you are not going, and English holds both halves, *station* from this verb and *exit* from that one.

One flag. English **still** is often thrown in here and does not belong.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “stō, stās, stat” — I stand, you stand, he or she stands
- this chapter’s four “I” forms — audiō, dormiō, sedeō, stō
- the four “he or she” forms — audit, dormit, sedet, stat
- the two from an earlier chapter beside them — sum, eō
- inherited, then borrowed — stand, station

Before you move on

Give this chapter’s four “I” forms. (**Audiō, dormiō, sedeō, stō.**)
Now the four “he or she” forms. (**Audit, dormit, sedet, stat.**)
Which of the four is second conjugation? (**Sedeō** — the long *-ēre* group.) Which English word for standing is inherited, which is borrowed, and what is **cost** taken apart? (**Stand** inherited, **station** borrowed; *constāre*, what a thing stands at.) Which earlier verb has *am* and *is* as its inherited English cousins, and which one means “I go”? (**Sum**, and **eō** — the verb behind *exit*.)

Chapter 41

Walking, Running, Opening, Closing

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I walk, I run, I open and I close in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, name the conjugation each belongs to, and say what a Latin prefix does to the verb it sits on.

The chapter closes on claudō: after learning it the reader produces all four first-person forms and all four third-person forms in sequence — ambulō, currō, aperiō, claudō and ambulat, currit, aperit, claudit — reads include/exclude beside accept/except and intellegō as one prefix rule, and so retrieves capiō and intellegō from two and three chapters back, neither of them revisited before now.

41.1 ambulō — walking about

The last chapter left you sitting and standing — **sedeō** and **stō**, both of them staying put. This chapter moves.

You'll want to know: ambulō — “I walk”

Ambulō means “**I walk**,” with a flavour of walking *about* rather than walking *to* somewhere. The dictionary form is **ambulāre**.

- **ambulō** — I walk
- **ambulās** — you walk, to one person

- **ambulat** — he walks, she walks
- **ambulāmus** — we walk
- **ambulātis** — you walk, to several people
- **ambulant** — they walk

Like **stō**, this is **first conjugation** — the *-āre* group — with the same endings hung on a longer stem.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Start with the honest limit, because this word has one. The front half is secure: *amb-*, “around,” the same element as in *ambi-*. The back half is not settled — usually connected with an old root meaning “to wander” or “to go,” but the join has never been nailed down, so the standard gloss is a reasonable guess rather than a proof.

The harvest is not in doubt at all. **Amble** came through French and kept the leisurely sense exactly. **Ambulatory** is both an adjective and the walking-gallery of a church. **Perambulate** gave the Victorian **perambulator** and, clipped, the **pram**. A **preamble** walks in front (*prae-*, “before”).

Two compounds are worth saying out loud. A **funambulist** walks a rope (*fūnis*). A **somnambulist** walks in sleep — and *somnus* is the Latin sleep-noun named in the last chapter, so that word is two pieces you already have.

The best is **ambulance**. A French military hospital that followed the army instead of waiting for it was an *hôpital ambulant* — a walking hospital. English took the second word and forgot the first, so the vehicle is named for moving.

Two flags. English **walk** is Germanic and no relation. And French *aller*, “to go” — with **alley** behind it — is often derived from *ambulāre* by heavy wear, but that derivation is disputed. Do not lean on it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ambulō” — I walk
- “ambulās, ambulat” — you walk, he or she walks

- “ambulāmus, ambulātis, ambulant” — we, you all, they
- the two still verbs it moves away from — sedeō, stō
- the English relatives — amble, preamble, ambulance

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I walk”? (**Ambulō.**) “They walk”? (**Ambulant.**) Which conjugation, and which earlier verb shares it? (**The first**, the *-āre* group — with **stō.**) Which half of the word is uncertain, and why is a vehicle called an **ambulance**? (**The back half**; and because the hospital walked — it followed the army.) Which verb means “I sit”? (**Sedeō.**)

41.2 currō — running, and the root that came by two roads

Ambulō is walking about, and its own back half is a guess. This verb is the fast one, and its ancestry is not a guess at all.

You’ll want to know: currō — “I run”

Currō means “I run,” and also “I race.” The dictionary form is **currere**. Every vowel is short, the *rs* are rolled, the *c* is hard: *KOOR-reh-reh*.

- **currō** — I run
- **curris** — you run, to one person
- **currit** — he runs, she runs
- **currimus** — we run
- **curritis** — you run, to several people
- **currunt** — they run

This is **third conjugation**, whose dictionary form ends in *-ere* with a *short* second-to-last vowel. Say **currere** with the stress at the front to hear the difference from the long *-ēre* of the second.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **kers-*, “to run,” and it reached English by two very different roads.

Through the Latin verb: **current** (a running of water, then of electricity), **currency** (money that runs), **cursor**, **cursive**, **course**, **discourse**, **occur** (“to run to meet”), **recur**, **excursion**, **precursor**, and **succour** — *sub-* plus *currere*, to run underneath someone and hold them up. **Corridor** is Italian for “a running-place,” and **curriculum** is simply a racecourse.

Through a wagon: the Gauls had a word *karros* for a war chariot, from the very same root, and Latin borrowed it as *carrus*. From that noun English has **car**, **carry**, **carriage**, **cargo**, **charge** (which began as loading a wagon), and **career** — first a road for carts, then the speed you take one at. **Carpenter** is there too: a *carpentārius* made wagons.

Set this beside **veniō**, “I come.” *Veniō* is arriving; *currō* is the speed. English keeps them apart the same way — an *event* comes out, a *course* is the running of it.

Two flags. English **hurry** is not related. And the claim that English **horse** belongs to this root is a proposal, not a settled fact.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*currō*” — I run, hard c, rolled r
- “*curris*, *currit*” — you run, he or she runs
- “*currimus*, *curritis*, *currunt*” — we, you all, they
- the three speeds so far — *stō*, *ambulō*, *currō*
- the relatives — current, curriculum, car

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I run”? (**Currō**.) “They run”? (**Currunt**.) Which conjugation? (**The third** — short *-ere*.) What is a **curriculum** literally, and how did **car** get into the family? (**A racecourse**; and through a Gaulish wagon-word Latin borrowed,

from the same root.) Which earlier verb means “I come”, the arriving to this verb’s speed, and which means “I walk about”? (**Veniō**, and **ambulō**.)

41.3 aperiō — to un-cover

Currō showed one root reaching English by two roads. This verb shows something rarer: one root standing inside two Latin words that mean the opposite of each other.

You’ll want to know: aperiō — “I open”

Aperiō means “**I open**,” and also “I uncover, I reveal.” The dictionary form is **aperīre**, with a long *ī*.

- **aperiō** — I open
- **aperīs** — you open, to one person
- **aperit** — he opens, she opens
- **aperīmus** — we open
- **aperītis** — you open, to several people
- **aperiunt** — they open

This is **fourth conjugation**, the *-īre* group, and it takes exactly the endings **audiō** and **dormiō** took — including that *u* before the ending in **aperiunt**.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Aperīre is taken apart as *ap-*, “off, away,” welded onto an old root ***wer-** meaning “to cover.” To open, in Latin, is to cover *away*. Now the elegant part. Latin has a second verb on the very same root: **operīre**, “to cover, to shut” — *op-*, “over,” on ***wer-**. The two verbs differ in one syllable at the front, and that syllable turns covering into uncovering:

- **aperīre** — cover *away* → open
- **operīre** — cover *over* → shut

English took both halves and never noticed they were a pair. From the opening verb: **aperture**, an opening; **aperitif**, the drink that opens a meal; and, worn down through French *ouvrir*, **overt** and **overture**. From the shutting verb, mostly with *co-* in front (*cooperire*, “to cover completely”): **cover**, **covert**, and **discover**, which is *dis-* undoing the covering. Two French phrases came in whole: a **curfew** is *couvre-feu*, “cover the fire,” and a **kerchief** is *couvre-chef*.

Two honest notes. The Vulgar Latin descendants of these verbs blurred into each other, which is why French *ouvrir* and *couvrir* rhyme today. And **April** — you will see it explained as “the opening month,” from *aperire*. That is folk etymology; the real origin is unsettled.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “aperiō” — I open
- “aperīs, aperit” — you open, he or she opens
- “aperīmus, aperītis, aperiunt” — we, you all, they
- the pair, and what each prefix does — *aperire*, cover away; *operire*, cover over
- the chapter so far — *ambulō*, *currō*, *aperiō*

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I open”, and how “they open”? (**Aperiō**, **aperiunt**.) Which conjugation, and what does *aperire* literally say? (**The fourth**, the *-ire* group; and **cover away** — un-cover.) What is its opposite, and what does that prefix change? (**Operire** — *op-*, “over,” so cover *over*.) Which English word is *couvre-feu*, is **April** from this verb, and which verb means “I run”? (**Curfew**; **no**, that is folk etymology; and **currō**.)

41.4 claudō — closing, and the four together

Aperiō opened by covering *away*, and named its own Latin opposite. But that opposite is not the verb a Roman reached for

to shut a door. This one is, and it is the word English says every day.

You'll want to know: **claudō** — “I close”

Claudō means “**I close**,” “I shut in.” The dictionary form is **claudere**. The *au* is one sound, as in **audiō**; the *c* is hard: *KLOW-deh-reh*.

- **claudō** — I close
- **claudis** — you close, to one person
- **claudit** — he closes, she closes
- **claudimus** — we close
- **clauditis** — you close, to several people
- **claudunt** — they close

Like **currō**, this is **third conjugation** — short *-ere*. That is three classes across this chapter’s four verbs, worth noticing and not worth memorising: the class only tells you the endings.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **klau-*, and it did not mean “shut.” It meant **hook** or **peg** — the crooked wood you jam a door with. The action is named after the object, and Latin kept it: *clāvis*, “key.” English **close** is this verb. Not a cousin — the verb itself, borrowed through French from *clausum*. That matters, because you learned to sort the two ways apart: **sit** was inherited, **session** was a loan. *Close* is a loan that stopped looking like one. Beside it stand **closet**, **closure**, **disclose**, and the noun **clause**. A **cloister** is a *claustrum*, a bolted place, and **sluice** is *exclūsa*, “water shut out.” Then the prefixes, where the chapter’s two halves meet. *Claudere* takes them by the handful: **include**, **exclude**, **conclude**, **preclude**, **recluse**. Set *include* and *exclude* beside **accept** and **except** — the same two prefixes on *capere*. Set them beside **intellegō**, where *inter-* turns picking into understanding. A prefix carries the meaning. From *clāvis*, the key: **clavicle** (a little key — the collarbone), **clef**, and **conclave**, a room locked *with a key*. Greek *kleís* is the same inherited word and means both those things too.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “claudō, claudis, claudit” — I close, you close, he or she closes
- this chapter’s four “I” forms — ambulō, currō, aperiō, claudō
- the four “he or she” forms — ambulat, currit, aperit, claudit
- two prefixes, two verbs — include, exclude; accept, except

Before you move on

Give this chapter’s four “I” forms, then the four “he or she” forms. (**Ambulō, currō, aperiō, claudō; ambulat, currit, aperit, claudit.**) Which two share the third conjugation? (**Currō and claudō.**) Is English **close** inherited or borrowed, and what did the root name? (**Borrowed** — this Latin verb itself; and a **hook or peg.**) Which verb gives **accept** and **except**, the same prefixes as *include* and *exclude*, and which is *inter-* plus “to pick out”? (**Capiō, and intellegō.**)

Chapter 42

Bringing, Getting, Playing, Waiting

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I bring, I get, I play and I wait in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, and say whether a verb is welded together from two roots, built from a prefix on an older verb, or of ancestry nobody has settled.

The chapter closes on expectō: after learning it the reader produces all four first-person forms and all four third-person forms in sequence — ferō, accipiō, lūdō, expectō and fert, accipit, lūdit, expectat — sorts a verb’s children from its siblings (expect against spectacle), and reaches back five chapters to retrieve videō and dō, neither of which had been revisited since chapter 37.

42.1 ferō — one verb, two ancestors

Claudō shut the door that **aperiō** opened, and its root named a hook. This verb is stranger: it is not one word at all.

You’ll want to know: ferō — “I bring”

Ferō means “**I carry**,” and so also “**I bring**” and “**I bear**.” The dictionary form is **ferre**, not the *-ere* you would expect.

- **ferō** — I bring
- **fers** — you bring, to one person

- **fert** — he brings, she brings
- **ferimus** — we bring
- **fertis** — you bring, to several people
- **ferunt** — they bring

Say **fers** and **fert** slowly. Every verb so far put a vowel between the stem and the ending — *claudis*, *claudit*. Here the ending is jammed straight onto *fer-*. That happens in the *s*, *t* and *r* forms only; **ferimus** and **ferunt** keep their vowel.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Ferre comes from Proto-Indo-European **b^her-*, “to carry.” English inherited that root directly, as the verb **bear** — so *ferō* and *bear* are blood relatives, not borrowings.

Now the odd part. To say “I brought,” a Roman said **tulī**; the participle was **lātum**. Neither is from **b^her-*: both come from **telh₂-*, “to lift.” One verb, two ancestries, welded together because each root had gone missing where the other survived. Grammarians call this **suppletion**, and you met a smaller case: **sum**, “I am,” takes its past from another root.

Both halves are generous. From *ferre*: **transfer** (carry across), **refer**, **prefer**, **confer**, **offer**, **suffer** (bear from under), and **fertile**, a field that carries a crop. **Differ** is *dis-* plus *ferre*, “to carry apart” — and **defer** is that same Latin word split into two English ones. From *lātum*: **relate** and **translate**.

Set this beside **dō**, “I give.” *Dō* hands a thing over; *ferō* carries it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*ferō*, *fers*, *fert*” — I bring, you bring, he or she brings
- “*ferimus*, *fertis*, *ferunt*” — we, you all, they
- the two past pieces from the other root — *tulī*, *lātum*
- the giving verb beside the carrying one — *dō*, *ferō*

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I bring”, and “he brings”? (**Ferō, fert.**) Which two forms keep a vowel before the ending? (**Ferimus** and **ferunt.**) How many roots make this verb, and what is that called? (**Two** — **b^her-* and **telh₂-*; **suppletion.**) Which English verb is the same word as *ferō* by inheritance? (**Bear.**) Which earlier verb means “I give”, and which means “I close”? (**Dō, and claudō.**)

42.2 accipiō and obtineō — getting, two ways

Ferō carried a thing toward somebody. These two verbs are what happens at the other end — and neither is a new word. Each is a prefix welded onto a verb you have.

You’ll want to know: accipiō — “I receive”

Accipiō means “**I receive**,” “I get,” “I accept.” Latin has no all-purpose verb for English *get*; it uses the precise one.

- **accipiō** — I receive
- **accipis** — you receive, to one person
- **accipit** — he receives, she receives
- **accipimus** — we receive
- **accipitis** — you receive, to several people
- **accipiunt** — they receive

Those endings should feel familiar: they are **capiō**’s, because *capiō* is what is inside this word.

You’ll want to know: obtineō — “I get hold of”

Obtineō is the other half of “get”: not *receive* but *acquire and keep* — getting hold of a thing and holding it. It is **second conjugation**, *-ēre*: **obtineō, obtinēs, obtinet, obtinēmus, obtinētis, obtinent.**

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Accipere is *ad*, “to, toward,” plus *capere*, “to take.” Take it toward yourself, and you have received it. Two things happened at the seam. The *d* of *ad* turned into the *c* it was leaning on — **ad-capere** becoming **accipere**. And the *a* of *capere*, now buried in a longer word, thinned to *i*. English **accept** and **acceptance** come from here.

Obtinēre is *ob*, “over against,” plus *tenēre*, “to hold.” The same vowel thinning shows: not *ob-tenēre* but **obtinēre**. English took it whole as **obtain**.

Now put **adiuvō** next to them. It is *ad* plus *iuvāre* — the same *ad*, sitting in front of a vowel, where it had nothing to lean on and so stayed itself. One prefix, two states: kept in *adiuvō*, swallowed in *accipiō*.

Two flags. English **receive** is from *recipere*, a different prefix on the same verb. And **retain** and **contain** belong to *tenēre* at large, not to *obtinēre*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “accipiō, accipis, accipit” — I, you, he or she receives
- “obtimeō, obtinēs, obtinet” — I, you, he or she gets hold of
- the verb inside each one — capiō, and the hold-verb tenēre
- the prefix in three states — adiuvō, accipiō, obtineō

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I receive”, and “they receive”? (**Accipiō, accipiunt.**) Which verb is buried inside it, and what happened to that verb’s *a*? (**Capiō**; it **thinned to i.**) What are the two pieces of *obtinēre*? (**Ob** and **tenēre**, “to hold.”) Which earlier verb shows the same *ad*- unswallowed? (**Adiuvō.**) And which verb means “I bring”? (**Ferō.**)

42.3 lūdō — playing, and being played

Accipiō and **obtimeō** were built out of older parts. This verb is the opposite case: a short word whose own parentage is unknown, and which still went on to father a crowd.

You'll want to know: lūdō — “I play”

Lūdō means “**I play**” — a game, a sport, an instrument, a part on stage. The dictionary form is **lūdere**, with a long *ū* and a short *e*.

- **lūdō** — I play
- **lūdis** — you play, to one person
- **lūdit** — he plays, she plays
- **lūdimus** — we play
- **lūditis** — you play, to several people
- **lūdunt** — they play

Third conjugation, the short *-ere* group — the endings of *claudō*.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Begin with the honest limit. Where *lūdere* came from before Latin is **not settled**. Dictionaries offer a root along the lines of **loid-*, “play,” but specialists disagree about its form and about whether the Greek word usually cited belongs at all. Some sources state a root confidently; they are more confident than the evidence.

The noun is **lūdus**, and it means two things at once: a **game**, and a **school**. The elementary school where a Roman child learned letters was the *lūdus litterārius* — the place you went to **legō** and **scribō**, called by the word for play. Both senses sit in the one Latin word.

The English harvest is almost all about deception, because *lūdere* also meant “to make sport of.” **Illusion** is *in-* plus the root: a playing-upon. **Delude** plays you down, **elude** plays you away, **allude** plays toward a thing without naming it, and to **collude** is to play together against someone. **Ludicrous** kept the plain sense — fit for a game. A **prelude** plays before, an **interlude** between.

Two flags. English **play** is Germanic and is no relation. And the board

game **Ludo**, sold in Britain from the 1890s, is named with exactly the form you just said: *lūdō*, “I play.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*lūdō*, *lūdis*, *lūdit*” — I play, you play, he or she plays
- “*lūdimus*, *lūditis*, *lūdunt*” — we, you all, they
- the two things a *lūdus* was — a game, and a school
- what you did at that school — *legō*, *scrībō*

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I play”, and “they play”? (**Lūdō**, **lūdunt**.) Is this verb’s older ancestry known? (**No** — it is unsettled, whatever a confident dictionary says.) What were the two senses of *lūdus*, and which two earlier verbs happened at the second one? (**Game** and **school**; **legō** and **scrībō**.) Which English word means a playing-upon? (**Illusion**.) And which verb means “I receive”? (**Accipiō**.)

42.4 *exspectō* — waiting is looking out

Lūdō was a plain word with an unknown parent. This last verb of the chapter is the reverse: you can see straight through it to its two pieces.

You’ll want to know: *exspectō* — “I wait”

Exspectō means “**I wait**,” and more exactly “I wait *for*” — it usually has an object. It is **first conjugation**, the *-āre* group.

- **exspectō** — I wait
- **exspectās** — you wait, to one person
- **exspectat** — he waits, she waits

- **exspectāmus** — we wait
- **exspectātis** — you wait, to several people
- **exspectant** — they wait

Romans wrote it both **exspectō** and *expectō*, since only one *s* was ever pronounced. The longer spelling is the one that shows the seam, so it is the one worth learning.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Exspectāre is *ex*, “out,” plus *spectāre*, “to watch.” To wait is to **look out for**. And *spectāre* is itself built: it is the over-and-over form of *specere*, “to look” — so the middle piece already means “keep looking.” English **expect** is the direct child. Be careful with the rest.

Spectacle, spectator, inspect, respect and **suspect** are not from *exspectāre*; they are its brothers and sisters, the same *spectāre* with other prefixes on the front. Saying they come *from* “expect” gets the family tree upside down.

Set this beside **videō**, “I see.” *Videō* is a wholly different root, and its English children — **vision, video, evident** — are a separate family. Latin had one word for the eye receiving a thing and another for the eye going out after it.

One good flag. English **wait** looks Romance, because it reached English through French. It is not. It is a Germanic word the French had borrowed first, and its true relatives are **watch** and **wake**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*exspectō, exspectās, exspectat*” — I, you, he or she waits
- this chapter’s four “I” forms — *ferō, accipiō, lūdō, exspectō*
- the four “he or she” forms — *fert, accipit, lūdit, exspectat*
- the two eye-verbs — *videō, exspectō*

Before you move on

Give the chapter's four "I" forms, then the four "he or she" forms. (**Ferō, accipiō, lūdō, exspectō; fert, accipit, lūdit, exspectat.**) What does *exspectāre* literally say? (**Look out** — *ex* plus *spectāre*.) Is **spectacle** a child of *exspectāre*? (**No** — a sibling, from *spectāre* directly.) Which verb is welded from two roots, and which two are prefix plus an older verb? (**Ferō; accipiō and obtineō.**) Which verb's own ancestry is unknown, and which earlier verb means "I see"? (**Lūdō; and videō.**)

Chapter 43

Answering, Meeting, Buying

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I answer, I meet and I buy in Latin, produce the he-or-she form of each, and read an English word by recovering the older sense of the Latin verb inside it.

The chapter closes on emō: after learning it the reader produces all three first-person forms and all three third-person forms in sequence — respondeō, conveniō, emō and respondet, convenit, emit — recovers redeem and example from the root's older sense 'take', and ranks the four getting-verbs capiō, accipiō, obtineō, emō against dō, retrieving capiō and dō from chapters 39 and 37.

43.1 respondeō — to pledge back

Exspectō waited by looking out. This verb is what ends the waiting — and what a Roman heard in it was not “reply” but something much more binding.

You'll want to know: respondeō — “I answer”

Respondeō means “I answer,” “I reply.” The dictionary form is **respondēre**, with a long ē — **second conjugation**.

- **respondeō** — I answer
- **respondēs** — you answer, to one person
- **respondet** — he answers, she answers

- **respondēmus** — we answer
- **respondētis** — you answer, to several people
- **respondent** — they answer

The *-eō* of the I-form and the long *-ē-* everywhere after it are the mark of that class, exactly as in **obtineō**.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Respondere is *re-*, “back,” plus **spondere**, “to pledge, to promise solemnly.” So an answer, at the root, is a **pledge given back** — you are not merely saying words, you are matching someone’s undertaking with your own.

Spondere was a heavy word. Its relative in Greek is *spondē*, a **libation** — wine poured out to seal an agreement — and in the plural it simply means a truce. Promises were made by pouring.

The English family is unusually wide. Straight from this verb:

respond, **response**, **responsible** (able to answer for a thing) and **correspond**, two people answering each other by letter. From *spondere* on its own: a **sponsor** is one who pledges. From its participle *spōnsus* and *spōnsa*, “pledged,” English has **spouse** — a husband or wife is, etymologically, a promise. And *dē-spondere*, “to promise away,” gives **despondent**, the state of having given your hope to somebody else.

Set the verb among the ones you have. **Rogō** asks, **audiō** hears, **sciō** knows, **dīcō** says, and **respondeō** answers. Five verbs, one conversation — and *audiō* is the one that made **obey**, through *ob-audire*, “to listen toward.” Latin thought obeying was a kind of answering too.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “respondeō, respondēs, respondet” — I, you, he or she answers
- “respondēmus, respondētis, respondent” — we, you all, they
- the conversation, in order — *rogō*, *audiō*, *sciō*, *dīcō*, *respondeō*
- what the root really means — to pledge

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I answer”, and “they answer”? (**Respondeō, respondent.**) What are its two pieces, and what does the second one mean? (**Re-** and **spondēre**, “to pledge.”) Why is a husband a **spouse**? (Because *spōnsus* means **pledged**.) Which five verbs make the conversation? (**Rogō, audiō, sciō, dīcō, respondeō.**) And which verb means “I wait”? (**Exspectō.**)

43.2 **conveniō** and **occurrō** — coming together, running into

Respondeō answered by pledging back. This verb needs nothing new from you: both halves of it are already yours.

You’ll want to know: **conveniō** — “I meet”

Conveniō means “I meet,” “I come together with.” Fourth conjugation, because **veniō** is:

- **conveniō** — I meet
- **convenīs** — you meet, to one person
- **convenit** — he meets, she meets
- **convenīmus** — we meet
- **convenītis** — you meet, to several people
- **conveniunt** — they meet

You’ll want to know: **occurrō** — “I run into”

Ocurrō is the other kind of meeting: not arranged, but stumbled into. Third conjugation, like **currō**: **occurrō, occurris, occurrit, occurrimus, occurritis, occurrunt.**

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Convenīre is *con-*, “together,” plus *venīre*, “to come.” To meet is to **come together**. English has **convene, convention, a convent**

(those who came together), and **convenient**, which began as things *coming together* well. A **covenant** is this verb's present participle, picked up through Old French.

Occurrere is *ob-*, “toward, against,” plus *currere*, “to run.” To meet by chance is to **run into** — the English idiom says the same thing, and gives **occur**. A thought that *occurs* to you has run at you.

That *con-* is worth collecting. It sits on **cōgitō**, “I think” — *con-* plus a verb of shaking, so thinking is shaking things together. It sits on **claudō**: *conclūdere* shuts things in together, whence **conclude**. And it sits on **ferō**, where *cōnferre* gives **confer** and **conference**, people carrying their views together — a compound inherits its parent's oddity, so *cōnferre*'s past is *contulī*, borrowing that second root exactly as *ferō* does.

One more piece is already yours. Chapter 21 taught **volup est convēnisse**, “it is a pleasure to have met.” *Convēnisse* is this verb — you have been saying *conveniō* for twenty-two chapters without knowing it.

Your turn

- *Say it*: “conveniō, convenīs, convenit” — I, you, he or she meets
- *Say it*: “occurrō, occurris, occurrit” — I, you, he or she runs into
- *Say it*: the verb inside each — veniō, currō
- *Run through*: the meeting scene — “Salvē! Quid agis?” / “Valeō. Volup est convēnisse!”

Before you move on

How does Latin say “I meet”, arranged and by chance? (**Conveniō**, **occurrō**.) What are the pieces of each? (**Con** plus **veniō**; **ob** plus **currō**.) Which chapter-21 phrase holds this verb? (**Volup est convēnisse**.) Which earlier verb is *con-* plus a shaking-verb, and what does *con-* plus **ferō** give English? (**Cōgitō**; **confer** and **conference**.) And which verb means “I answer”? (**Respondeō**.)

43.3 emō — buying, which used to be taking

Conveniō and **occurrō** wore their older verbs on the outside. This last one hides something instead, and its English children give it away.

You'll want to know: emō — “I buy”

Emō means “I buy.” Short word, short vowels, third conjugation: **emere**.

- **emō** — I buy
- **emis** — you buy, to one person
- **emit** — he buys, she buys
- **emimus** — we buy
- **emitis** — you buy, to several people
- **emunt** — they buy

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

The root is Proto-Indo-European **h₁em-*, and it did not mean “buy.” It meant **take**. Buying is a late, narrow specialisation of taking — the same slide English makes when a shopper says “I’ll take it.”

The old sense never left the compounds, and that is where the payoff is. **Redimere** is *red-* plus *emere*, “to take back” — to **buy back**. From it English has **redeem**, **redemption**, and, through French, **ransom**: literally a buying-back of a person. **Eximere** is *ex-* plus *emere*, “to take out,” giving **exempt** — someone taken out of an obligation. Its noun *exemplum* is “a thing taken out” as a specimen, and English took that noun by two roads at once: as **example**, and, worn down through Anglo-French, as **sample**. **Praemium** is *prae-* plus the same root, “what is taken first,” and is English **premium**. You have met this verb once before without being told. In the taking-verb lesson, *sūmere* was taken apart as *sub* plus *emere*. That was this word.

Now set the three getting-verbs side by side, because Latin keeps them apart. **Capiō** takes. **Accipiō** receives what is handed over. **Obtineō** gets and holds. **Emō** takes by paying. And facing all four is **dō**, “I give” — because a sale is both at once: one side gives, the other takes.

One flag, and it is the last in this book. English **buy** is Germanic, and unusually it has no secure relatives outside Germanic at all. The whole **h₁em-* family reached English only as loans: redeem, ransom, example, premium.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “emō, emis, emit” — I buy, you buy, he or she buys
- this chapter’s three “I” forms — respondeō, conveniō, emō
- the three “he or she” forms — respondet, convenit, emit
- the four ways of getting — capiō, accipiō, obtineō, emō

Before you move on

Give this chapter’s three “I” forms, then the three “he or she” forms. (**Respondeō, conveniō, emō; respondet, convenit, emit.**) What did the root of *emere* originally mean? (**To take.**) So what is a **redemption**, and what is an **example**? (A **buying back**; a thing **taken out**.) Which verb receives what is handed over, and which gets and holds? (**Accipiō; obtineō.**) And which verb faces them all by giving? (**Dō.**)

Chapter 44

The House, and Who Is Inside It

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the parts of a house in Latin — the building, its door, its wall, its garden and its hearth — and point to the English words each one left behind.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

44.1 domus — the building a family lives in, and the root under domestic, dome and dominate

A new group of five words begins here. Nothing is assumed but the alphabet you already read.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

domus — “a house.”

Not the walls. Latin has another word for those. **Domus** is the household as a thing: the building *and* the family in it, the way English *house* can mean a dynasty.

Its owner is the **dominus**, the master of it — and that word travelled further than almost any other in this book. It is the *don* of Spanish, the *Dom* of Portuguese, and, softened through French, the **dame** and **madam** of English. A **domain** is what a *dominus* holds. To **dominate** is to act like one. And a **dungeon** is the same word: French *donjon*, the lord’s own tower, which came to mean the cell beneath it.

The building itself gave English **domestic** and **domicile**, and — through Italian *duomo*, “the house of God” — the **dome** on top of a cathedral.

One honest note. English **home** is *not* from *domus*. It is Germanic, from a different root entirely. The resemblance is close enough to be tempting and it is a coincidence, and this book will always tell you when a resemblance is one.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *domus, domūs*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What is a **dominus**? (The **master of the house**.) Name two English words from him. (**Dominate, domain, dame, dungeon.**) And is English *home* related? (**No** — Germanic, and the likeness is a coincidence.)

44.2 porta — and the reason a harbour, a porch and a portal are all the same word

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

porta — “a door,” or a **gate**.

The root is Proto-Indo-European **per-*, “to pass through,” and that is worth holding onto, because it explains a family of English words that look unrelated.

A **portal** is a *porta* made grand. A **porch** is a *porticus*, the covered way in front of one. And a **port** is a *portus* — the same root again, a place where you pass through, but from the sea rather than from the street.

Rome named its gates and remembered them: the *Porta Capēna*, the *Porta Flāminia*. A city’s gates were its addresses.

Two things to keep apart, because Latin does. **Porta** is the *opening*. **Ianua** — the door leaf that swings in it — is a different word, and it is the one that named **January**, the month standing in the doorway of the year.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *porta, portae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does the root of *porta* mean? (**To pass through.**) So what is a **port**? (A **way in**, from the sea.) And which Latin word for a door named a month? (**Ianua** — January.)

44.3 mūrus — the one that keeps things out, not the one that divides a room

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

mūrus — “a wall.”

Latin splits what English lumps together. A **mūrus** is a wall that **defends**: the wall around a city, the wall of a fort. The wall between two rooms is a *pariēs*, a different word altogether, and no Roman would confuse them.

English has one word for both and has to add an adjective — *city wall*, *interior wall*. That is a small, ordinary example of something this book will show you again and again: a language’s vocabulary records what its speakers needed to tell apart.

From *mūrus* English has **mural**, a painting made *on* a wall, and **immure**, to shut someone inside one. The Roman wall of Britain is still called by its builder’s name rather than this word — but *Hadrian’s Wall* is a *mūrus* in every sense Latin meant.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mūrus, mūrī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which kind of wall is a **mūrus**? (One that **defends**.) What is the other word? (***Pariēs***, a partition.) And what is a **mural**? (A painting **on a wall**.)

44.4 hortus — an enclosed piece of ground, and a true blood relative of English yard and garden

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

hortus — “a garden.”

This one is a **cousin, not a loan**, and that distinction is the engine of this whole book.

The root is Proto-Indo-European **ǵʰórtos*, “an enclosure” — a piece of ground with something round it. Latin took it as *hortus*. Germanic took the same word down its own road and English inherited it twice: as **yard**, the enclosed ground by a house, and — through Frankish and Old French — as **garden**. Three words, one ancestor, no borrowing between them.

The Latin form did lend as well: **horticulture** is the *cultivation* of a *hortus*, and it entered English from books rather than from speech, which is why it sounds bookish beside *yard*.

Look at what the enclosure meant. A garden is not defined by what grows in it. It is defined by the **fence**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *hortus, hortī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *yard* borrowed from *hortus*, or descended from the same ancestor? (**Descended** — a cousin.) What did the root mean? (**An enclosure.**) And what is **horticulture**? (Cultivating a **garden.**)

44.5 focus — the fire in the middle of the house, and the reason a lens has a focus

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

focus — “the hearth.”

The fireplace. The one warm point a Roman house was arranged around — and Latin had a *different* word for fire itself, which you will meet shortly.

Two roads out of this word, and they could hardly be less alike.

The spoken road. In late spoken Latin *focus* stopped meaning the fireplace and started meaning the **fire**, the way English *hearth* can.

That is the word the Romance languages inherited: French **feu**, Spanish **fuego**, Italian **fuoco**, Portuguese **fogo**. None of them descends from Latin’s own word for fire.

The written road. In 1604 Kepler needed a name for the point where a lens gathers light — the point where it would **burn** — and reached back into Latin for *focus*, the burning-place. That is the **focus** English uses today, and the verb *to focus* comes from it.

So the same word gives you a Spanish campfire and a camera lens, by two roads fifteen centuries apart.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *focus, focī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What did *focus* mean in classical Latin? (**The hearth.**) What became of it in spoken Latin? (It came to mean **fire** — French *feu*, Spanish *fuego*.) And why did Kepler choose it for a lens? (Because it is the **burning-point**.)

Chapter 45

Earth, Fire, Wind, Sky, Sea

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the five great outdoor things in Latin and say which of them English inherited by descent and which it borrowed from books.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

45.1 terra — dry land as opposed to sea, and the root under terrain, terrace and Mediterranean

A new group of five words begins here. Nothing is assumed but the alphabet you already read.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

terra — “**the earth**,” and specifically **dry land**.

That contrast is built into the word. *Terra* is what is **not** sea — and the Romans named the Mediterranean on exactly that pattern, as *the sea in the middle of the land*. You will have the second half of that name shortly, and when you do the whole thing stops being a proper noun and becomes a description you can read.

English took *terra* freely: **terrain**, **terrestrial**, **subterranean**, a **terrace** (a raised bank of earth), and a **terrier** — a dog that goes to **ground** after its quarry. Even **inter**, to bury, is *in* plus *terra*: to put into the earth.

And *terra firma*, “solid ground,” is still said in Latin because no English phrase does the job as briefly.
 English **earth** is Germanic and unrelated. Another coincidence worth naming rather than assuming.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *terra, terrae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *terra* contrast with? (**The sea.**) So what does **Mediterranean** literally say? (**In the middle of the land.**) And what does it mean to **inter** someone? (To put them **into the earth.**)

45.2 ignis — the classical word, which the Romance languages abandoned and English kept

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ignis — “fire.”

This is Latin’s own word, and it has a long pedigree: it is a genuine cousin of Sanskrit **agni**, the fire the Vedic hymns address, and of Russian *ogon’*. Two of this book’s tracks meet here, which is the point of having a Sanskrit track at all.

Now the strange part, and it is worth pausing on.

No Romance language kept it. French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese all threw *ignis* away and built their word for fire on *focus*, the hearth. The classical word for the commonest thing in the house simply lost.

But English kept it — as a **loan from books**. To **ignite** is to set on

fire; **igneous** rock is rock that was once molten. So an English speaker saying *ignite* is using Caesar's word for fire, while a Spanish speaker saying *fuego* is not.

That is a good corrective to a natural assumption. **The daughter languages are not always the better guide to the parent.**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ignis, ignis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which Latin word did the Romance languages keep for fire — *ignis* or *focus*? (**Focus**.) Which one did English borrow? (**Ignis** — ignite, igneous.) And which Sanskrit word is its cousin? (**Agni**.)

45.3 ventus — and a true Germanic cousin, with the sound change that proves it

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ventus — “the wind.”

Another **cousin**. Proto-Indo-European **h₂weh₁-nto-* gave Latin *ventus* and Germanic *windaz*, which is English **wind**. Latin's *v* against English's *w* is not a coincidence and not a corruption — it is regular, and once you have seen it you will see it everywhere.

The borrowed branch came later and from French: a **vent** is a hole for wind, to **ventilate** is to move wind through, and **ventilation** is what results.

And a **window** is a Norse gift, *vindauga* — a **wind-eye**. The hole in the wall that the wind looks through. Even the Germanic side of the family named it after this word.

So English holds the same root three ways: inherited as *wind*, borrowed as *vent*, and compounded by the Vikings as *window*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ventus, venti*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *wind* borrowed from *ventus* or descended alongside it? (**Descended** — a cousin.) What regular difference marks the two branches? (Latin **v-**, Germanic **w-**.) And what does *window* literally mean? (**Wind-eye**.)

45.4 caelum — the word under celestial, and under a ceiling painted like the sky

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

caelum — “**the sky**,” and also “**the heavens**.”

One word for both, which is why Latin can be ambiguous in exactly the places theology cares about. When a Roman said *caelum*, the weather and the gods were the same place.

English took it directly as **celestial**, anything of the sky or the heavens, and in **Celeste** as a name. The blue called *cerulean* is from the related *caeruleus*, which you have already met as a colour.

Ceiling is very probably the same word, arriving through French — a vaulted ceiling in a great hall was painted to *look* like sky, and the name stuck to the surface. The etymology is not perfectly settled, and this book will say so rather than round it off.

Two more you may already carry: the **equinox** you met with *nox*, and **cyan**, which is Greek rather than Latin and arrived by its own road.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *caelum, caeli*

- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What two things does *caelum* name? (**The sky and the heavens.**)
 What is something **celestial**? (Of the sky.) And how confident is the *ceiling* connection? (**Probable, not certain** — and the book says so.)

45.5 mare — the word that finishes Mediterranean and names every marine thing in English

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

mare — “**the sea.**”

You met its partner a moment ago. *Terra* is the land; **mare** is what is not land, and together they make the **mediterrāneum** — the sea in the middle of the earth. Two words you now hold explain a name most people use without reading.

The loans came thickly: **marine**, **maritime**, a **mariner**, a **submarine** (under the sea), and — through French — a **mermaid**, whose first half is this word.

And there is a cousin. Proto-Indo-European **mori-* also went down the Germanic road and gave English **mere**, an old word for a lake that survives in place names — Windermere, Grasmere. Small, standing water rather than an ocean, but the same ancestor.

So once again: a borrowed branch that sounds learned, and an inherited branch that sounds like a field in the north of England.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mare, maris*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *mare* pair with to make **Mediterranean**? (*Terra* — the land.) Which English word is its inherited cousin? (**Mere**, a lake.) And which are loans? (**Marine, maritime, mermaid.**)

Chapter 46

Light, Shadow, and Going to Sleep

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name light, shadow, star, moon and sleep in Latin, and use them to close a day the way a Latin speaker would.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

46.1 $\bar{l}ux$ — the root of lucid, translucent and Lucifer, and a cousin of English light itself

A new group of five words begins here. Nothing is assumed but the alphabet you already read.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

$\bar{l}ux$ — “light.”

Proto-Indo-European **lewk-* is one of the best-attested roots there is, and it reaches English from three directions at once.

Inherited: English **light** is the Germanic descendant. Same ancestor, no borrowing.

Borrowed from Latin: something **lucid** is clear as light; something **translucent** lets light through; to **elucidate** is to shed light on. And **Lucifer** is $\bar{l}ux$ plus *ferre* — the **light-bringer**, which was the Romans’ name for the morning star long before it was anything else.

Borrowed from Greek: the same root gave Greek *leukos*, “white,” which English carries in **leukemia**, named for white blood cells.

Three roads, one root — and the everyday word is the inherited one, which is the usual pattern in English rather than an accident here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *lūx, lūcis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does **Lucifer** literally mean? (**Light-bringer** — the morning star.) Is English *light* inherited or borrowed? (**Inherited.**) And which Greek word for *white* is the same root? (**Leukos** — leukemia.)

46.2 umbra — and the reason a little shade is called an umbrella

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

umbra — “**shade**,” or a **shadow**.

The English word that gives it away is **umbrella** — Italian *ombrella*, a **little shade**. It was a sunshade first and a rain shield only later, which is why a language of northern rain borrowed a word about southern sun.

To take **umbrage** is to take shade — offence, in the sense of being overshadowed. And **sombre** is *sub* plus *umbra* worn down through French: **under shadow**.

Astronomers kept the Latin bare. In an eclipse the **umbra** is the full shadow and the **penumbra** — *paene*, “almost” — is the partial one at its edge. That prefix is worth having: a **peninsula** is *paene* plus *insula*, an **almost- island**.

You have already met the *shade* of evening under a different word, when this book taught you *vesper*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *umbra, umbrae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does **umbrella** literally mean? (**A little shade.**) What was it for first? (**Sun**, not rain.) And what does *paene* add in **penumbra** and **peninsula**? (**Almost.**)

46.3 stēlla — a cousin of English star, and the word inside constellation and disaster

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

stēlla — “a star.”

A cousin again. Proto-Indo-European **h₂stēr* gave Latin *stēlla*, Greek *astēr*, and — by inheritance down the Germanic line — English **star**. Three branches, one ancestor.

From the Latin: something **stellar** is of the stars, and a **constellation** is a set of them standing **together** (*con-* plus *stēlla*).

From the Greek: an **asterisk** is a **little star**, **astronomy** is the naming of stars, and an **asteroid** is a star-shaped thing.

And one word that carries a whole worldview. **Disaster** is Italian *disastro* — *dis-*, “ill,” plus *astro*, “star.” A **bad star**. The word only makes sense in a world where the stars decide what happens to you, and English has kept using it for four hundred years after it stopped believing that.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *stēlla, stēllae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *star* a cousin or a loan? (**A cousin.**) What does **constellation** literally say? (**Stars standing together.**) And what does **disaster** literally say? (**An ill star.**)

46.4 *lūna* — the same root as *lux*, worn down to mean ‘the shining one’

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

lūna — “the moon.”

Look at what it is made of, because you have just met the pieces.

Lūna is **lew̥k-snā*: the **shining one**. It is the same root as *lūx*, worn down until the join stopped showing.

You already know one place it lives. The Latin name for Monday is *diēs Lūnae*, the moon’s day — which this book taught you before you could take it apart, and which is exactly what German *Montag* and English *Monday* say too, in their own words.

Lunar is the plain loan. **Lunatic** is the interesting one: Latin *lunāticus* meant “moon-struck,” from a belief that the moon’s phases moved the mind. English has kept the word and dropped the theory, the same way it kept *disaster*.

English **moon** is the inherited Germanic cousin — not from *lūna*, but from a root meaning **measure**, because the moon is what a month is counted by.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *lūna*, *lūnae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What is *lūna* built from? (*Lūx* — the shining one.) Which weekday is *diēs Lūnae*? (**Monday**.) And what did **lunatic** originally claim? (**Moon-struck** — the moon moved the mind.)

46.5 somnus — the word under insomnia and somnolent, and a cousin of Sanskrit svapna

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

somnus — “sleep.”

The last word of this chapter, and the right one to end a day on.

The root is Proto-Indo-European **swep-*, “to sleep,” and it reaches a long way: Sanskrit **svapna**, “sleep” or “dream,” is the same word, and Old English had *sweven* for a dream — a word that died out but is still in Chaucer.

Insomnia is *in-*, “not,” plus *somnus*: **no sleep**. Someone **somnolent** is sleepy, and a **somnambulist** walks (*ambulāre* — you have that verb) in their sleep.

The Roman god of sleep is **Somnus**, and his Greek counterpart

Hypnos gave English **hypnosis**. Two languages, two gods, one job.

Now put the chapter together. **Lūx** goes, **umbra** comes, the **stēllae** and the **lūna** appear, and then **somnus**. That is a Latin evening in five words.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *somnus*, *somnī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does **insomnia** literally say? (**No sleep**.) What does a **somnambulist** do? (**Walks in their sleep** — *ambulāre*.) And

which Sanskrit word is *somnus*'s cousin? (*Svapna.*)

Chapter 47

Salt, Honey, Milk, Egg, Fish

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five things on a Latin table, and I can use Grimm’s Law to tell an inherited English cousin from a borrowed Latin loan.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

47.1 sāl — a cousin of English salt, and the word a Roman soldier’s salary was named for

A new group of five words begins here. Nothing is assumed but the alphabet you already read.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

sāl — “salt.”

A **cousin**: Proto-Indo-European **séh₂ls* gave Latin *sāl* and Germanic *saltom*, which is English **salt**. And then Latin lent the same root back into English several more times, all through food.

A **salad** is *herba salāta*, **salted** greens. A **sauce** is *salsa*, the salted thing — and Spanish **salsa** is the very same word, arriving by a different road. A **sausage** is *salsīcia*, salted meat. Four English food words, one Latin root.

Then **salary**. Latin *salārium* was money paid to Roman soldiers, and the ancient explanation — that it was an allowance *for salt* — is what Pliny reports. **Treat it as the standard account rather than as**

settled fact: no document actually records soldiers being paid in salt, and some historians think *salārium* simply meant a ration allowance generally. The word is certainly from *sāl*. What the money bought is less certain than the story suggests.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sāl, salis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *salt* a cousin or a loan? (**A cousin.**) Name three loans from the same root. (**Salad, sauce, sausage, salsa.**) And how solid is the salary story? (**Standard, not proven** — the word is from *sāl*, the salt payment is Pliny's account.)

47.2 mel — the root of mellifluous and marmalade, and of molasses by way of Portuguese

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

mel — “honey.”

Proto-Indo-European **melit-*, and it is one of those roots that turns up in languages that otherwise share very little — Greek *meli*, Hittite *milit*, and Latin *mel*, all honey.

Something **mellifluous** is *mel* plus *fluere*, **flowing with honey** — used of a voice. **Mellow** is probably from the same family, though the road is not clean.

Two food words came in through Portuguese, which is why they look nothing alike. **Marmalade** is *marmelada*, a quince paste — Portuguese *marmelo*, “quince,” from Greek *melimēlon*, a **honey-apple**. And **molasses** is Portuguese *melaço*, the honey-like

residue left when sugar is refined.

English **honey** itself is Germanic and comes from a root meaning “golden.” Unrelated — a different language naming the same substance by a different property.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mel, mellis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does **mellifluous** literally say? (**Flowing with honey.**) Which two food words came through Portuguese? (**Marmalade, molasses.**) And is English *honey* related? (**No** — Germanic, from a root meaning golden.)

47.3 lac — the root of lactose, lettuce and, at one remove, of the Milky Way itself

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

lac — “**milk**.” The stem is *lact-*, which is where every English relative comes from.

Lactose is milk sugar; **lactic** acid is named from souring milk; to **lactate** is to produce it.

Then a word nobody expects. **Lettuce** is Latin *lactūca* — “the **milky** one,” named for the white sap that bleeds from a cut lettuce stem. Pick one and you can watch the etymology happen.

And the Greek sibling is *gala*, stem *galakt-*, also “milk.” The Greeks called the band of light across the night sky the *galaxías kúklos*, the **milky circle** — which Latin rendered as *via lactea* and English as the **Milky Way**. So **galaxy** and **lactose** are the same word, and the Milky Way is a translation.

You met *stēlla* and *lūna* a moment ago. This is the sky they are in.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *lac, lactis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What is **lettuce** named for? (Its **milky** sap.) What does **galaxy** mean? (**Milky** — the same root, through Greek.) And what is the **Milky Way** a translation of? (Greek *galaxías*, Latin *via lactea*.)

47.4 **ōvum** — a cousin of English **egg**, with two sound changes that hide the relationship completely

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ōvum — “an egg.”

Ōvum and **egg** are cousins — the same Proto-Indo-European **h₂ōwyóm* — and they look nothing like each other, which makes this a good place to see how much sound change can hide.

The loans are transparent: something **oval** is egg-shaped, an **ovary** is where eggs are made, **ovulation** is their release.

The inherited word had a rougher time. Old English had *æg*, and it was losing ground when Norse settlers brought their own form, *egg*. For a while both were in use — Caxton complained in 1490 that a merchant asking for *eggys* in Kent was not understood, because there they said *eyren*. The Norse form won, and the native English one vanished.

So the everyday word is a **Viking** word that replaced a cousin of itself, and the learned words came from Latin. English is full of this.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ōvum*, *ōvī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Are *ōvum* and *egg* related? (**Yes** — cousins, heavily disguised.)
 What was the native English word? (**Æg**, plural *eyren.*) And why
 do we say *egg*? (It is the **Norse** form, and it won.)

47.5 piscis — and the single clearest demonstration in this book of the sound law linking Latin to English

Recall the previous word in this chapter before adding another.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

piscis — “a fish.”

Keep this word. It is the cleanest single demonstration in this book of how a Latin word and an English one can be the same word.

Latin *p-iscis*. English *f-ish*. Same word.

The change is not random. Around two thousand years ago the Germanic branch shifted every inherited **p** to **f**, and it did so *without exception*. That is **Grimm’s Law**, and you have already been shown its results without being told the name:

- *pater* → **father**
- *pēs*, *pedis* → **foot**
- *piscis* → **fish**

Three pairs, one rule. Once you have it, you can run it yourself: Latin *plēnus* against English **full**, Latin *prō* against **for**.

The loans came separately and kept the *p*: **Pisces** the constellation, something **piscine**, a **piscina**. So English holds both the inherited form and the borrowed one, and now you can tell which is which by looking at a single letter.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *piscis, piscis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What sound does Latin *p* correspond to in inherited English words? (**F** — Grimm's Law.) Give two more pairs. (*Pater*/**father**, *pēs*/**foot**.) And why does **Pisces** keep its *p*? (It is a **loan**, not inherited.)

Chapter 48

Nescio, Male, Malus, Sed, Aut

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇐ Hands-free start: none of the 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I do not know, that something went badly, and I can set one thing against another or offer a choice between two.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

48.1 nesciō — and the rule the whole chapter turns on: nōn stands in front of the verb

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *piscis* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *sāl* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *bonum māne* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *Hesperia* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *caput* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *manus* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

nesciō — “I do not know.”

Look at the shape. It is **nē-** (“not”) welded onto **sciō**, the verb the eight-verb chapter gave you. Latin fused the negative into the verb once and kept it: *nesciō* is one word, and it is the word a Roman actually said.

Now the rule that unlocks everything else. For every other verb, Latin puts **nōn** — the word your very first lesson taught you as “no” — **immediately in front of the finite verb:**

- **nōn valeō** — “I am not well.”
- **nōn intellegō** — “I do not understand.”
- **nōn videō** — “I do not see.”

That is the whole of it. No auxiliary, no change to the verb, no word order to learn. You have had **nōn** since your first day and every one of these verbs since the eight-verb chapter, and until now nothing told you that you could put them together.

English **nescience** is *nesciō* borrowed whole. **Nice** is the same word by a long road: Latin *nescius* (“ignorant”) became Old French *nice* (“silly”), and seven centuries of drift turned an insult into a compliment.

Grammar Lens: non goes in front of the verb

State it once, plainly, because everything else in this tranche leans on it.

nōn + a finite verb = the negative of that verb.

- **nōn valeō** — I am not well.
- **nōn intellegō** — I do not understand.
- **nōn sciō** — I do not know (and **nesciō** is the word a Roman preferred).
- **nōn possum** — I cannot. (The next chapter’s verb, negated with this rule.)

Nothing else changes. Latin does not add an auxiliary, does not move the verb and does not have a second negative word to pair it with. One word, in front.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nesciō, nescīre*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

How does Latin negate an ordinary verb? (**nōn** immediately before it.) Say “I do not understand.” (***Nōn intellegō.***) And what two words are inside *nesciō*? (***Nē-*** and ***sciō.***)

48.2 male — the other end of the scale bene has had to itself all along

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *nesciō* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *lūna* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *bonum vesperum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *merīdiēs* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *manus* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *vēr* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

male — “badly.”

The *bene* lesson gave you **bene**, “well,” and left you with half a scale. This is the other half, and it is built the same way: an adverb ending in **-e**, formed from an adjective.

Valeō. — I fare well. **Male valeō.** — I fare badly. (Or, more usually: **nōn valeō.**)

English keeps *male-* as a prefix that means “wrongly”: **malice**, **malady**, **malign**, **malpractice**, **malfunction**. **Malaria** is Italian *mal’aria*, “bad air” — what people thought caused it before the mosquito was known. **Dismal** is *diēs malī*, “bad days,” the unlucky days of the medieval calendar.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *male*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What is the opposite of *bene*? (**Male.**) What two Latin words are inside *dismal*? (**Diēs malī** — bad days.)

48.3 malus — the adjective under male, and the word Rome punned on for the apple

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *male* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *stēlla* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *merīdiēs* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *habeō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *vēr* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *aqua* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

malus — “**bad**.”

The adjective that **male** was cut from. It changes its ending to match its noun, exactly as **bonus** does in *bonam noctem*: *malus* (m.), *mala* (f.), *malum* (n.).

Now the coincidence that changed a story. Latin also had **mālum**, “**apple**,” borrowed from Greek *mēlon* — a different word, with a long *ā*, and in writing without macrons the two look identical. Genesis names no fruit at all: it says only “the fruit of the tree.” When Latin translators wrote of the tree of *mālum*, the pun with *malum*, “evil,” was there for the taking, and medieval art took it.

Treat that as the standard account rather than as settled fact: the pun is real and the timing is right, and no single document records anybody deciding it. English **malevolent**, **malefactor** and **malcontent** are all *malus*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *malus, mala, malum*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *malus* mean, and what does *mālum* mean? (**Bad**; **apple**.) What separates them in writing? (**The macron** — vowel length.)

48.4 *sed* — the word that sets one thing against another

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *malus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *umbra* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *eō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *vesper* — *vespere* — *sērus* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *aqua* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *pānis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

sed — “but.”

You have met it once already without being told. The *propediem tē vidēbō* lesson quoted Cicero’s own letter: “***Sed***, *ut spērō*, *propediem tē vidēbō*” — “**But**, as I hope, I shall see you before long.” That was a real sentence by a real Roman, and this is the word that opened it. ***Sed*** joins two statements and marks the second as a correction or a contrast:

Nōn valeō, sed nōn male valeō. — I am not well, but I am not badly off.

Here is the strange part. *Sed* is one of the commonest words in surviving Latin prose and **not one Romance language kept it**. Spanish and Italian took *magis* (“more”) for *mas* and *ma*; French took *mais* from the same *magis*; Portuguese *mas* likewise. A word Cicero could not write a page without vanished completely.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sed*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *sed* mean? (**But.**) Which Roman did you first meet it from? (**Cicero**, in the *propediem* lesson.) Did any daughter language keep it? (**No** — they all took *magis* instead.)

48.5 aut — and the second or, which asks a different question

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *sed* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *lūx* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *bonum vesperum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *merīdiēs* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *pānis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *Iānuārius* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

aut — “or.”

The word that lets you offer a choice, which until now you could not do:

Aquam aut vīnum? — Water or wine?

Latin has **two** words here and they are not interchangeable. **Aut** offers an **exclusive** choice: one or the other, not both. **Vel** offers an **indifferent** one: either will do. *Vel* is literally the imperative of *volō* — “choose, if you like” — which is the next chapter’s verb.

Logicians still use the distinction. The inclusive-or of Boolean algebra is called **vel** after the Latin, and it is inclusive precisely because *vel* was; exclusive-or is *aut ... aut*. A grammatical nicety of a dead language is sitting inside every computer you have ever used.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *aut*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which *or* excludes, and which does not? (**Aut** excludes; **vel** does not.) What is *vel* literally? (**The imperative of volō** — choose if you like.)

Chapter 49

Possum, Volo, Qui, Et, Quando

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what I can do and what I want, join two statements, and put a when-clause or a who-clause after a noun.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

49.1 possum — potis plus sum, and the verb that will not sit still

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *aut* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *nesciō* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *salvē* (*post merīdiem*) — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *salvē* / *salvēte* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *pānis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *Iānuārius* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

possum — “I am able, I can.”

Two words in a coat. **Potis** meant “able,” and Latin bolted it onto **sum**, the verb the eight-verb chapter gave you. Where *sum* begins with *s*, the *t* of *potis* flattens into it — *pot-sum* becomes **possum** — and where it does not, the *t* survives:

person	form	built from
I can	possum	<i>pot-</i> + <i>sum</i>
you can	potes	<i>pot-</i> + <i>es</i>
he/she can	potest	<i>pot-</i> + <i>est</i>
we can	possumus	<i>pot-</i> + <i>sumus</i>
they can	possunt	<i>pot-</i> + <i>sunt</i>

What follows *possum* is an **infinitive**, which is the form every verb in this book is already stored under: **possum vidēre**, “I can see.” **Nōn possum vidēre**, “I cannot see,” using last chapter’s rule.

English **potent**, **possible**, **potential** and **omnipotent** are all *potis*; so is **power**, by way of French *pouvoir*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *possum, posse*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What two words are inside *possum*? (**Potis** and **sum**.) What form follows it? (**The infinitive**.) Say “I cannot see.” (**Nōn possum vidēre**.)

49.2 volō — and the root inside voluntary, benevolent and will itself

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *possum* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *male* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *salvē* — *bonum vesperum* — *bonam noctem* — *valē* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sum* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *medius diēs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *hōra* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

volō — “I want, I wish.”

The word that turns everything you own into a request. Like *possum*, it takes an **infinitive**:

Volō bibere. — I want to drink. **Nōn volō dormīre.** —
I do not want to sleep.

Its forms are irregular and worth hearing once: **volō**, **vīs**, **vult**, **volumus**, **vultis**, **volunt**. The infinitive is **velle**, not *volere* — an old form that survived because the verb was too common to regularise. The root is Proto-Indo-European **welh₁-*, “to choose.” English inherited it directly as **will** — a blood cousin, not a loan — and borrowed it back from Latin many times over: **voluntary**, **volition**, **benevolent** (“well-wishing”), **malevolent** (with last chapter’s *male*), and **voluptuous**.

And you have already met its imperative. **Vel**, “or,” from the last lesson of the denying chapter, is literally *volō* telling you to choose.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *volō*, *velle*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What form follows *volō*? (**The infinitive.**) Which English word is a blood cousin rather than a loan? (***Will.***) And where have you already met *volō*'s imperative? (**In *vel*, “or.”**)

49.3 *quī* — the commonest word in Latin prose, and the one that joins two sentences into one

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *volō* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *malus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *habeō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *medius diēs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *hōra* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

***quī, quae, quod* — “who, which, that.”**

This is the single most common word in surviving Latin prose, and it does one job: it hangs a second statement onto a noun in the first.

***Amīcus quī venit.* — The friend **who** comes. *Liber quem legō.* — The book **which** I am reading.**

Three forms, because it agrees with the noun it hangs on: ***quī*** for a masculine one, ***quae*** for a feminine one, ***quod*** for a neuter one.

You already know its relatives. **Quid** (“what”) from the wellbeing exchange and **quis** (“who”) are the question words built on the same Proto-Indo-European stem **kwi-*. And Grimm’s Law — the *piscis* law, *p* to *f* — does *kw* to *hw* as well, which is why English **who**, **what**, **which** and **why** are inherited cousins of this word rather than borrowings from it. The spelling *wh-* is the old *hw-* with its letters swapped.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quī, quae, quod*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *quī* do to two sentences? (**Joins them** — hangs the second on a noun in the first.) Are English *who* and *what* cousins or loans? (**Cousins**, by Grimm’s Law.)

49.4 et — and the enclitic -que, which does the same job glued to the back of a word

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *quī* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *sed* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *caelum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *eō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance

- *Recall*: say *hōra* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *vīgintī annōs nātus sum* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

et — “and.”

The plainest word in this book, and the corpus went forty-seven chapters without teaching it.

Aqua et vīnum. — Water and wine. **Pater et māter.**
— Father and mother.

Latin has a **second** way of saying it, and a reader meets it constantly: **-que**, glued onto the **back** of the second word rather than standing between the two.

Senātus populusque Rōmānus — “The Senate **and** the Roman people,” the SPQR on every Roman standard. The **-que** is that fourth letter.

-que is Proto-Indo-European **kwe*, an enclitic Sanskrit kept as *ca* and Greek as *te*. **Et** went the other way: it is Spanish *y*, French *et*, Italian *e* and Portuguese *e*, and every Romance daughter kept it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *et*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Two ways to say *and* in Latin? (**Et**, and **-que** glued to the back.)
What does the *Q* in SPQR stand for? (**-que**, “and.”)

49.5 *quandō* — as a question and as the hinge of a clause

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *et* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *aut* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *mare* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *veniō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *vīgintī annōs nātus sum* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *tempestās* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

quandō — “when.”

Built on the same **kwo-* stem as *quī* and *quid*, three lessons back. It does two jobs.

As a **question**: *Quandō venīs?* — “When are you coming?”

As a **hinge**, joining two statements in time: *Quandō veniō, videō* — “When I come, I see.”

Every Romance daughter kept it unchanged: Spanish *cuándo*, Italian and Portuguese *quando*, French *quand*. English **quandary** is often attached to it and the connection is **not established** — the word appears in the sixteenth century from nowhere obvious, and *quandō* is a guess rather than an etymology. This book will always tell you when a resemblance is only a resemblance.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quandō*

- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Two jobs for *quandō*? (**Asking when**, and **joining two statements in time**.) Is English *quandary* from it? (**Not established** — a guess, not an etymology.)

Chapter 50

Hic, Iste, Ille, Is, Ibi

Modes:  voice (5)  Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can point at something near me, something near you and something over there, refer back to a person already named, and say that a thing is there.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

50.1 hic — the near point of a three-way system Spanish still keeps

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *quandō* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *possum* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *lūx* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *veniō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *phuit* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

- *Recall*: say *ūndecim* — *vīginti* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

hic, haec, hoc — “**this**,” the one near me.

Latin points three ways, and this is the first of the three. **Hic** is the thing in the speaker’s own hand or reach.

Hic liber. — This book (here, mine).

Three forms because it agrees with its noun: **hic** for a masculine one, **haec** for a feminine one, **hoc** for a neuter one — the same three-way agreement *quī* showed you last chapter.

The system survived. Spanish still points three ways — *este, ese, aquel* — and it is Latin’s system, arriving through a different set of words.

Italian, French and Portuguese all collapsed to two. So a Spanish speaker meeting *hic, iste, ille* is meeting the shape of their own grammar in its original three pieces.

English **ad hoc** is *hoc*, “for this”; a **hic jacet** is what an old gravestone says: “here lies.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *hic, haec, hoc*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

How many ways does Latin point? (**Three**.) Which one is *hic*? (**The one near me**.) Which modern language kept all three? (**Spanish**.)

50.2 iste — the middle point, and the one Latin used to sneer with

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book

measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *hic* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *volō* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *umbra* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dīcō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *pluit* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *ūndecim* — *vīgintī* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

iste, ista, istud — “**that**,” the one near **you**.

The middle term, and the one with an attitude. *Iste* is literally “that of yours,” and Roman orators used it to keep a thing at arm’s length. Cicero’s speeches are full of **iste** meaning “that man of yours” with a curl of the lip — the word does the sneering, and no adjective is needed.

Iste liber. — That book of yours.

Then the words moved. Spanish **este** (“this”) is from *iste*, not from *hic* — the middle term slid down into the near slot when *hic* dropped out, and *ipse* slid in behind it to make *ese*. So Spanish still points three ways and does it with a different three words, which is a good demonstration that a SYSTEM can outlive every word in it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *iste, ista, istud*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Where is *iste*? (**Near you.**) What tone can it carry? (**Contempt** — Cicero’s “that man of yours”.) Which Spanish word came from it? (***Este*** — and it moved slot.)

50.3 ille — the far point, and the word that became the Romance article

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *iste* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quī* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *stēlla* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dīcō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ūndecim* — *vīgintī* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *canis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ille, illa, illud — “**that**,” the one over **there**, away from both of us. The far term, and the most consequential word in this chapter — because it did not stay a demonstrative.

Latin had **no article** (this book’s inventory records that as a demand it never states). Vulgar Latin invented one, and it invented it out of *ille*. Say *ille* often enough and unstressed, in front of a noun, and it wears down:

Latin	wore down to
<i>ille</i>	Italian il , French le , Spanish el
<i>illa</i>	Italian and Spanish la , French la
<i>illī</i>	Spanish ellos , French ils

The same word became the definite article **and** the third-person pronoun in every Romance language. Your very first lesson taught you that Latin's endings carry what other languages carry in extra words; here is the reverse motion, a demonstrative flattening into an extra word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ille, illa, illud*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Where is *ille*? (**Over there**, away from both.) What did it become? (**The definite article and the third-person pronoun** of every Romance language.)

50.4 is — the pronoun Latin does not really have, doing the job anyway

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *ille* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *et* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *lūna* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back

- *Recall*: say *videō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ūndecim* — *vīgintī* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *canis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

is, ea, id — “he, she, it.”

Latin has **no dedicated third-person pronoun**. What it has is *is*, *ea*, *id* — a demonstrative with no deixis left in it, neither near nor far, pressed into the job. *Hic* points at something; *is* merely refers back to something already named.

Amīcus venit. Is bene valet. — A friend is coming. He is well.

Its neuter, **id**, is a word English took whole: Freud’s *das Es* was rendered into English as the **id**, Latin for “it.” **Identical** and **identity** are *idem*, “the same one.” And an **idiom** is not from this at all — that is Greek *idios*, “one’s own,” and the resemblance is a coincidence.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *is, ea, id*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Does Latin have a real third-person pronoun? (**No** — *is, ea, id* does the job.) Where does Freud’s *id* come from? (**Latin id**, “it.”)

50.5 ibi — the place word the corpus has gone fifty chapters without

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book

measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *is* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quandō* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *somnus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *videō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *canis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *viridis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ibi — “there.”

Every demonstrative in this chapter has an adverb beside it, and this is the pair that matters most: **hīc** (“here”) and **ibi** (“there”).

Liber hīc est. Amīcus ibi est. — The book is here. The friend is there.

Note the macron. The pronoun is **hic**, short; the adverb “here” is **hīc**, long. Same four letters, different words, and only the vowel length tells them apart — which is the whole argument for writing macrons, made once more.

Ibi survives into Italian *ivi* and, worn down almost to nothing, into the French **y** of *il y a* — “there is.” A single letter of modern French is this Latin word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ibi*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Say “the book is here” and “the friend is there.” (***Liber hīc est. Amīcus ibi est.***) What separates the pronoun *hic* from the adverb *hīc*? (**Vowel length** — the macron.)

Chapter 51

Amicus, Pecunia, Medicus, Miles, Epistula

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 👁️ eyes (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: first 3 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a friend, money, a doctor, a soldier and a letter — five words a Roman town could not be described without.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

51.1 amīcus — from the verb to love, and the word the bread lesson pointed at and did not give

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *ibi* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *hic* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *sāl* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *sciō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance

- *Recall*: say *viridis* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *quid agis?* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

amīcus — “a friend.”

The bread lesson traced *pānis* to **companion** — the one you share bread with — and to “the friendship-word every Romance daughter still shares.” This is that word, and it took forty-one chapters to arrive. It is built straight onto **amō**, “I love,” from the *amō* lesson: a friend is one who is loved, and nothing more than that. And its negative is the interesting half. **In-amīcus** becomes **inimīcus**, “not-friend,” and *inimīcus* is English **enemy**. The most hostile word in the language is the friendliest one with two letters in front of it.

Spanish *amigo*, Italian *amico*, Portuguese *amigo* and French *ami* are all this word unchanged. English borrowed **amicable**, **amity** and **amiable** from it, and took **enemy** from its opposite by way of French.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *amīcus*, *amīcī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What verb is *amīcus* built on? (**Amō**, I love.) What is *inimīcus*, and what English word is it? (**Not-friend**; *enemy*.)

51.2 pecūnia — and the cattle it is named after

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *amīcus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays

- *Recall*: say *iste* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *mel* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ut valēs?* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *valeō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

pecūnia — “money.”

The word is a fossil of what wealth used to be. **Pecū** meant “cattle,” and a Roman’s *pecūnia* was originally his livestock. When Rome began to strike coins it stamped an ox on them, and the name of the herd became the name of the money.

The English family is larger than it looks:

- **pecuniary** — to do with money, straight from *pecūnia*.
- **impecunious** — having none.
- **peculiar** — from *pecūlium*, the private property a Roman slave or son was allowed to keep. “One’s own” narrowed to “odd” over the centuries.
- **fee** — a Germanic **cousin**, not a loan: Old English *feoh* meant both cattle and property, from the same Proto-Indo-European root.

The same picture is behind English **capital**, from *caput* — a head of cattle — and *caput* is the first body word this book taught.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pecūnia*, *pecūniae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What did *pecūnia* originally mean? (**Cattle**.) Is English *fee* a cousin or a loan? (**A cousin**.) And which body word tells the same story? (**Caput** — capital, a head of cattle.)

51.3 medicus — from measuring, not from healing

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *pecūnia* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *ille* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *lac* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *cōgitō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *salvē* — *quid agis?* — *valeō* — *valē* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *quid tibi nōmen est?* / *mihi nōmen est...* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

medicus — “a doctor.”

Not, as you might expect, from a word for healing. **Medicus** is from *medeor*, “I attend to,” and behind that is Proto-Indo-European **med-*, “to measure, to take the appropriate measures.” A doctor, to a Roman, is someone who works out the right amount.

The root spread widely on that meaning:

- **meditate** — to measure a thing over in the mind.

- **moderate** and **modest** — kept within measure.
- **mete**, as in “mete out” — an inherited English **cousin**, not a loan.
- **remedy** — *re-* plus *medeor*, attending to a thing again.

Every Romance language kept the word: Spanish *médico*, Italian *medico*, Portuguese *médico*. English took **medicine**, **medical** and **medic** from the same family, and French gave us **medico** back as slang.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *medicus, medicī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does the root behind *medicus* really mean? (**To measure**, to take the right measures.) Name two English words from it that are not about health. (*Moderate, modest, meditate.*)

51.4 mīles — the noun every Latin narrative turns on

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *medicus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *is* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ōvum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back

- *Recall*: say *legō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *quid tibi nōmen est?* / *mihi nōmen est...* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *puerō nōmen est Mārcus* / *Mārcō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

mīles — “a soldier.”

The noun a reader of Latin meets on the first page of almost any history, and one this book went fifty chapters without.

Note the shape: nominative **mīles**, genitive **mīlitis**. The *-t-* that appears in the genitive is the real stem, and every English derivative is built on the genitive rather than the nominative — **military**, **militia**, **militant**, **militarise**. That is a general habit worth having: when an English word from Latin looks nothing like the Latin nominative, look at the genitive.

Where the word came from is **not settled**. The old suggestion is *mille*, “thousand” — a soldier as one of a thousand-strong unit — and it is a guess with no evidence behind it. Some scholars propose an Etruscan borrowing. Treat the etymology as **open**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mīles*, *mīlitis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which form do the English derivatives come from? (**The genitive**, *mīlitis* — hence *military*.) Is the etymology settled? (**No** — the *mille* story is a guess.)

51.5 epistula — a Greek word Rome borrowed, and the thing Cicero wrote in his letters

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *mīles* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *ibi* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *piscis* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *intellegō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *puerō nōmen est Mārcus / Mārcō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *volup est convēnisse* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

epistula — “a letter.”

The farewell lessons quoted **two** of Cicero’s letters and never gave you the word for one. Here it is, and it is Greek: *epistolē*, “a thing sent **to** somebody,” from *epi-* (“to, upon”) plus *stellō* (“I send”). Rome borrowed the object and the word together.

The same *stellō* is inside **apostle** — *apo-stolos*, “one sent **away**” — so an epistle and an apostle are the same verb with opposite prefixes, which is why the letters of the apostles are called epistles twice over.

scrībō, from the verbs of mind, is the verb this noun needed.

Epistulam scrībō: “I am writing a letter.” The verbs of mind gave you the writing and the *propediem* lesson gave you the reading, and this is the thing itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *epistula*, *epistulae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What language is *epistula* from? (**Greek.**) What do *epistle* and *apostle* share? (**The verb *stellō***, send — with opposite prefixes.)

Chapter 52

Ubi, Cur, Quia, Meus, Tuus

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask where and why, answer with a because-clause, and say that a thing is mine or yours.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

52.1 ubi — the question the *quōmodo* lesson left half-finished

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *epistula* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *amīcus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *nesciō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *nesciō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *tē volup est convēnisse* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

- *Recall*: say *quid tibi nōmen est?* — *volup est convēnisse* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ubi — “where.”

The *quōmodo* lesson gave you “how,” and stopped. This is the other half of the pair every beginner needs, and the corpus went fifty-one chapters without it.

Ubi est liber? — Where is the book? **Ibi.** — There.
(Last chapter’s word, finally with a question to answer.)

Like *quī* and *quandō*, it is built on the **kwo-* stem. Latin also has **quō** (“to where”) and **unde** (“from where”) — Latin distinguishes three directions where English says only *where*, and this is the resting one. **Ubique** is “everywhere,” and English **ubiquitous** is that word: being in every where at once. Spanish *donde* and French *où* both descend from *ubi* with *dē* in front of it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ubi*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which earlier question word is *ubi* the pair of? (*Quōmodo*, how.)
What does *ubique* mean, and what English word is it?
(**Everywhere**; **ubiquitous**.)

52.2 cūr — and the two words that answer it

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *ubi* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *pecūnia* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *male* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *capiō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *tē volup est convēnisse* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *tū* / *vōs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

cūr — “why.”

The third of this chapter’s question words, and the one that opens the only question a learner cannot fake an answer to.

Cūr nōn venīs? — Why are you not coming? (with the *nescio* lesson’s rule.)

Cūr is an older *quor*, the same ***kwo-** stem again — *quī*, *quandō*, *ubi*, *cūr*, *quid*, *quis*, all one family. Recognise the *qu-* and you can spot a Latin question word without knowing which one it is.

And like *sed*, it **left no descendant**. Spanish asks *¿por qué?*, Italian *perché*, French *pourquoi*, all rebuilt from *per* or *pro* plus *quid* — “for what.” Latin’s own word for why did not survive its own daughters.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *cūr*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What do *quī*, *quandō*, *ubi* and *cūr* share? (**The *kwo- stem** — Latin’s question family.) Did any Romance language keep *cūr*? (**No**)

— all rebuilt it from *per* + *quid*.)

52.3 quia — the answer cūr asks for

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *cūr* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *medicus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *malus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *rogō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *tū* / *vōs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *nihil est* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

quia — “because.”

The word that completes the pair. *Cūr* asks; *quia* answers, and it hangs a whole second statement onto the first:

Cūr nōn venīs? Quia nōn possum. — Why are you not coming? Because I cannot.

That sentence uses four things this tranche has given you — *cūr*, *quia*, the **nōn** in front of a verb, and **possum** — and nothing else. It is the first question-and-reason exchange this book can build.

Latin has three words here and they are not quite the same: **quia** states a plain cause, **quod** states one the hearer already accepts, and **quoniam** (“since now”) states one both parties take for granted. A reader meets all three. Start with *quia*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quia*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Answer *cūr nōn venīs?* using this chapter and the last two. (*Quia nōn possum.*) How many Latin words mean *because*? (**Three** — *quia, quod, quoniam.*)

52.4 meus — the possessive the name lesson did without

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *quia* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *mīles* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sed* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *adiuvō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *tū / vōs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *nihil est* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

meus, mea, meum — “my.”

The name-exchange lesson taught you to say **mihi nōmen est**, “the name is **to me**,” and called it the genuinely classical way to give your

name. That is Latin's *dative of possession*, and it is why this word waited so long: for a name, a Roman preferred the case to the adjective.

For everything else, the adjective is what you want, and it agrees with what is owned rather than with the owner:

liber meus — my book (masculine, so *meus*) **epistula**

mea — my letter (feminine, so *mea*)

That is the opposite of English, where *my* never changes. It matches French *mon livre* / *ma lettre* and Spanish *mi* only in part — Spanish flattened the gender out of *mi* and kept it in *mío*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *meus, mea, meum*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What does *meus* agree with, the owner or the thing owned? (**The thing owned.**) What did the name exchange use instead for a name? (*Mihi nōmen est* — the dative of possession.)

52.5 tuus — and the pair of forms the tū / vōs lesson promised

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *meus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *epistula* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *aut* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *amō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *nihil est* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *propediem tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

tuus, tua, tuum — “**your**,” to one person.

The *tū* / *vōs* lesson made a point of it: in Classical Latin the difference is **number only**, with no politeness in it at all. This is *tū*’s possessive, and it inherits that: **tuus** is not familiar or rude; it means only that the thing belongs to one person. For several, Latin says **vester**.

Quid tibi nōmen est? — the name question, with *tibi*, the dative. **Liber tuus.** — Your book, with the adjective.

Tibi and *tuus* are the same pronoun by two routes, which is worth hearing once: the case form and the adjective come from one word, and Latin lets you choose.

Spanish *tu*, Italian *tuo*, French *ton* and Portuguese *teu* all descend from this — and every one of them acquired the politeness dimension that Latin’s had not got.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tuus, tua, tuum*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is *tuus* familiar or polite? (**Neither** — Classical Latin marks number only.) Which earlier word is its case-form twin? (***Tibi***.)

Chapter 53

Iterum, Magister, Discipulus, Schola, Liber

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask for something to be said again, and name the teacher, the pupil, the school and the book.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

53.1 iterum — and the repair move this book could not make

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *tuus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *ubi* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *possum* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *audiō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *propediem tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

- *Recall*: say *crās tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

iterum — “again.”

This one word closes the largest hole in this book. The *quaesō* lesson gave you “please”; the eight-verb chapter gave you **dīcō**, “I say.” Fifty-two chapters went by without a way of joining them, and here it is:

Iterum, quaesō. — Again, please. **Quid dīcis?** — What are you saying? **Lentē, quaesō.** — Slowly, please.

That is a **repair**: the move you make when you did not catch what somebody said. Every language teaches it in its first week, and this book — which could greet, thank, apologise and say please within four chapters — could not until now ask anyone to repeat anything.

Iterum is built on the same **i-* stem as **is** from the pointing chapter, with an old comparative suffix: literally “the other of the two,” hence “a second time.” English **iterate** and **reiteration** are loans from it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *iterum*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

How do you ask a Roman to say it again? (*Iterum, quaesō.*) Which two earlier lessons did the parts come from? (**The *quaesō* lesson**, and the **eight-verb chapter** for *dīcō*.)

53.2 magister — the greater one, against minister, the lesser

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book

measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *iterum* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *cūr* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *volō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dormiō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *propediem tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *crās tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

magister — “a teacher, a master.”

The word is one half of a matched pair and the other half is **minister**. *Magis* means “more,” *minus* means “less,” and both take the same old contrastive suffix *-ter*: the **greater** one and the **lesser** one. A Roman *magister* outranks a Roman *minister*, and a modern government minister is still, etymologically, a servant.

The English family is enormous, and all of it is one Latin word:

master, mister, Mr, mistress, Mrs, Miss, magistrate, maestro, magisterial — and Spanish *maestro*, French *maître*, Italian *maestro*. And *magis* itself you have met: The *sed* lesson recorded that *sed* died and *magis* became Spanish *mas* and Italian *ma*, “but.” The same “more” is inside both.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *magister, magistrī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What is the pair *magister* belongs to? (**Minister** — greater and lesser.) Which earlier word is *magis* also behind? (**The Romance but** — Spanish *mas*, Italian *ma*.)

53.3 *discipulus* — from learning, and the reason discipline means what it does

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *magister* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quia* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *quī* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sedeō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *crās tē vidēbō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *quōmodo* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

discipulus — “a pupil.”

Built on *discō*, “I learn,” which is itself a reduplicated form of the same root as *doceō*, “I teach.” Learning and teaching are one word split in two, and the pupil is named for the learning half.

Then the word that grew out of it. **Disciplīna** originally meant no more than “teaching, instruction” — what a *discipulus* receives. Only later did it narrow to the training that keeps order, and later still to punishment. English **discipline** carries all three senses at once, and a **disciple** is the *discipulus* of the Latin Bible.

Note the shape against the last lesson's. **Magister** and **discipulus** are the two ends of a Roman classroom, and Latin names one for rank and the other for what he does.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *discipulus, discipulī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What verb is *discipulus* built on? (**Discō**, I learn.) What did *disciplina* first mean? (**Teaching** — not punishment.)

53.4 schola — a Greek word that first meant leisure

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *discipulus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *meus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *et* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *stō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *quōmodo* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *bene* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

schola — “a school.”

Greek, and the meaning has turned completely over. *Scholē* meant **leisure** — spare time, the opposite of work. Only a person with leisure could spend it on learned discussion, so the word moved to the discussion, then to the place the discussion happened, then to the building children are sent to.

A word that meant *free time* now means *the place you must be at nine*. Latin took it as **schola**, and every daughter kept it: Spanish *escuela*, Italian *scuola*, French *école*, Portuguese *escola* — and each of them props up the *sc-* with a vowel in front, exactly the way Portuguese props up *escrever*. English **school**, **scholar** and **scholastic** are loans; **schedule** is not, and the resemblance is a coincidence.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *schola*, *scholae*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What did *scholē* originally mean? (**Leisure**.) Why do Spanish and French put a vowel in front of *sc-*? (**They prop up the cluster** — *escuela*, *école*.)

53.5 liber — and the bark it was written on

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *schola* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *tuus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *quandō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ambulō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *quōmodo* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *bene* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

liber — “a book.”

The word for the thing this whole book is trying to let you read, and it arrives here, in the second-to-last chapter written so far.

Liber first meant the **inner bark** of a tree — the surface Romans wrote on before papyrus was easy to get. The material became the text and the text became the book, the same journey English *paper* made from *papyrus* and *volume* made from *volvō*, “I roll,” because a Roman book was a scroll.

Watch out for the homograph. **Liber** with a long *ī* means “free,” and gives English *liberty*, *liberal* and *deliver*. **Liber** with a short *i* is the book. Two different words, four identical letters, and only the macron between them — the same lesson **hic** and **hīc** taught in the pointing chapter.

Spanish *libro*, Italian *libro*, French *livre*, Portuguese *livro*. English **library** and **libretto** (“little book”) are loans.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *liber*, *librī*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What did *liber* first mean? (**Tree bark** — the writing surface.)

What separates *liber* from *liber*? (**The macron** — book against free.)

Chapter 54

Edo, Bibo, Oculus, Auris, Pes

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I eat and drink, and name the eye, the ear and the foot beside the head and hand I already had.

The fifth word of the group, taken apart against the four before it.

54.1 edō — and the infinitive that collides with to be

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall:* say *liber* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *iterum* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *hic* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *currō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *bene* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *diēs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

edō — “I eat.”

Fifty-three chapters gave you bread, salt, honey, milk, eggs, fish, water and wine, and no verb to do anything with them. Here it is.

The root is Proto-Indo-European **h₁ed-*, and English **eat** is an **inherited cousin**, not a loan — the same relationship *piscis* and *fish* have, by the same Grimm’s Law. So are **etch** and, at a distance, **fret** (*fra-etan*, “to eat away”).

And then a trap worth meeting once. The infinitive of *edō* is **ēsse**, and the infinitive of *sum*, “to be,” is **esse**. Four identical letters again.

Only the long *ē* separates eating from being, and only in speech; a Roman reader took it from the sentence.

Edible and **comestible** are loans from this verb.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *edō*, *esse*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *eat* a cousin or a loan? (**A cousin.**) What two verbs share the spelling *esse*? (***Edō*** and ***sum*** — separated by vowel length.)

54.2 **bibō** — the verb inside beverage, bib and imbibe

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *edō* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *magister* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *iste* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *aperiō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *diēs* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *nox* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

bibō — “I drink.”

The other half of the pair, and the one that finally does something with the *aqua* and *vīnum* of the bread-and-wine lesson.

Aquam bibō. — I drink water. **Aquam aut vīnum bibō?** — Do I drink water or wine? (with the *aut* of the denying chapter.)

The form is odd and the oddity is old: *bibō* is a **reduplicated** verb, the root syllable said twice, from Proto-Indo-European **peh₃-*. Latin regularly turns that initial *p* into *b* here, which is why *bibō* looks nothing like Greek *pīnō* although they are the same word. English **beverage** is Old French *bevragē*, from *bibere*; **imbibe** and **bibulous** are direct loans; and a baby’s **bib** is probably from the same verb, the thing you drink over — probably, not certainly.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *bibō, bibere*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Say “I drink water.” (**Aquam bibō.**) Is *bib* certainly from *bibō*? (**Probably, not certainly.**)

54.3 oculus — and the eye already hiding inside a word you know

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *bibō* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *discipulus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ille* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *claudō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *nox* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *salvē* / *salvēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

oculus — “an eye.”

The third body word this book has, after *caput* and *manus*.

English **eye** is an **inherited cousin** — Proto-Indo-European **h₃ek^w* - gave Latin *oculus* and Germanic *augon*, which is *eye*. And the loans are everywhere: **ocular**, **binoculars**, **monocle**, **oculist**.

The best of them is **inoculate**. Latin *inoculāre* was a **gardening** word: to graft a bud — an *oculus*, an “eye” — into a plant.

Eighteenth-century physicians borrowed the gardener’s word for grafting a little disease into a person, and that is why an injection is named after an eye.

Italian *occhio* and Spanish *ojo* both descend from it, by the same *-cl-* to *-cchi-* change Italian makes on *occhio*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *oculus*, *oculī*

- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Is English *eye* a cousin or a loan? (**A cousin.**) Why is *inoculate* named after an eye? (**It was a gardening word** — grafting a bud.)

54.4 auris — and the reason a Roman listened by obeying

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *oculus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *schola* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *is* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ferō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *salvē* / *salvēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *avē* / *avēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

auris — “an ear.”

English **ear** is an **inherited cousin** again — the same Proto-Indo-European **h₂ews-* on both sides.

And it connects to a verb you already have. The *audiō* lesson gave you “I hear,” and noted that **obey** is hidden inside it. Now you can see why: *audiō* is itself built on this root — *aus-diō*, roughly “I put the ear to” — so hearing, in Latin, is an action performed with the named organ. *Ob-audīre*, “to listen towards,” wore down through French into **obey**.

Auricle, **aural** and **auscultate** are loans. Watch the near-collision:

aural (of the ear) and **oral** (of the mouth) are different words from different roots, and English pronounces them identically — which is why careful writers avoid both.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *auris, auris*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

Which earlier verb is built on this root? (***Audiō***.) What is the difference between *aural* and *oral*? (**Ear against mouth** — different roots, same sound.)

54.5 pēs — the clearest Grimm’s Law pair in the book, and the last word of the tranche

Six recalls before the new word, at growing distances. They are not decoration: each one is the retrieval window this book measures, and each names a word far enough back that saying it is work.

- *Recall*: say *auris* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *liber* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ibi* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *accipiō* — **R3**, durable again, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *videō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *salvē* / *salvēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, a second word from that far back

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

pēs, pedis — “a foot.”

The *piscis* lesson taught Grimm’s Law on *piscis* and **fish**, and promised the other pairs. This is the cleanest of them: Latin *p* against English *f*, *pēs* against **foot**, on the same Proto-Indo-European **ped-*. And the genitive matters again, exactly as it did for *mīles*. The nominative is *pēs*; the stem is *ped-*; and every English loan is built on the stem: **pedal**, **pedestrian**, **impede** (“to shackle the feet”), **expedite** (“to free them”), **biped**, **pedicure**.

Pedigree is the best of them: French *piéd de grue*, “crane’s foot,” because the three-line mark that shows descent on a genealogical chart looks like a bird’s footprint.

That is thirty-five words in seven chapters. Say the five of this chapter in order, then say the head and the hand you have had from the start, and you have named a body.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pēs, pedis*
- every word this chapter has given you so far, in order

Before you move on

What sound does Latin *p* correspond to in inherited English? (**F** — Grimm’s Law.) Which form do the English loans use? (**The genitive stem** *ped-*.) And why is a *pedigree* a foot? (**The chart mark looks like a crane’s footprint.**)

Chapter 55

Numerī Ōrdinis

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: first 4 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say first, second, third, fourth and fifth in Latin, and use them to say which hour or which day I mean.

The fifth ordinal, said against the four before it, and the month whose name it is.

55.1 prīmus — counting in order, and the word with no ūnus in it

A new kind of counting starts here, so the recalls come first, at the four growing distances this book measures.

- *Recall:* say *pēs* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *edō* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *lūdō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *amicus* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *ūnus, duo, trēs, quattuor, quīnque* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

prīmus, prīma, prīmum — “first.”

Counting does two different jobs. *Ūnus, duo, trēs* answer **how many**. This word answers **which one in the line**, and Latin keeps a whole second series for that job.

Then the surprise. There is no *ūnus* anywhere in *prīmus*. It is a superlative of an old *pri-*, “in front” — so the word means “foremost”, not “one-th”. That is why it looks nothing like the number it stands next to.

It changes its ending with the thing it counts, exactly as *bonus* and *malus* do: *prīma hōra*, “the first hour”; *prīmus diēs*, “the first day”.

English took the whole family: **prime, primary, premier, primitive** — and **prince**, from *prīnceps*, “the one who takes the first place”.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *prīmus, prīma, prīmum*
- *prīma hōra* — the first hour
- *prīmus diēs* — the first day

Before you move on

Which question does *prīmus* answer — how many, or which one in the line? (**Which one in the line.**) What number word is hiding inside it? (**None** — it is built on *pri-*, “in front”, and means “foremost”.) And what does the ending do when the thing counted changes? (**It changes with it** — *prīma hōra, prīmus diēs.*)

55.2 secundus — the one that follows

Recalls before the second ordinal, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall*: say *prīmus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *bibō* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *expectō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *pecūnia* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *valē* / *valēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

secundus, secunda, secundum — “**second**.”

Like *primus*, it is not built on its own number. There is no *duo* in it. It comes from *sequi*, “**to follow**” — so second place is the place that **comes after**, named by what it does rather than by where it falls in a count.

That single fact explains a shelf of English words. **Second** is this word, borrowed whole. So are **sequel**, **sequence**, **consequence** and **subsequent**; every one of them still carries “follow” in it.

And the second on a clock is the same word twice over. The Romans cut the hour into small parts, *pars minūta prima*, “the first small part” — our **minute** — and then cut that again into *pars minūta secunda*, “the second small part.” English kept the adjective and threw the noun away, so a **second** is literally “the following one”.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *secundus, secunda, secundum*
- *secunda hōra* — the second hour
- the pair — *primus, secundus*

Before you move on

What did the root behind *secundus* mean? (**To follow** — *sequi*.) So what is second place, in Latin’s own terms? (**The place that comes after**.) And why is a *second* on a clock called that? (It is the *pars minūta secunda* — the second cutting of the hour, after the **minute**.)

55.3 *tertius* — where the number starts to show through

Recalls first, then the third ordinal — and the first one you can see a number inside.

- *Recall*: say *secundus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *oculus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *respondeō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *medicus* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *grātiās tibi agō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

tertius, tertia, tertium — “third.”

Two ordinals have now gone past with no number in them at all. This one is different: *trēs* is **three**, and *ter-* is *trēs* worn down to fit an ending. Say them together and the join is audible — *trēs, tertius*.

So the third word in the series is the first one that is built the way you would expect all of them to be built: take the number, put an ending on it, and let the ending agree with the thing counted. *Tertia hōra*, “the third hour”.

English borrowed it late and kept it formal: **tertiary**, a **tercet** (three lines of verse), **tierce**. Spanish wore it down instead of borrowing it, into *tercero* — which is what happens to a word that stays in a language’s mouth rather than being fetched out of a book.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tertius, tertia, tertium*
- the join — *trēs* → *tertius*
- the three so far — *prīmus, secundus, tertius*

Before you move on

Which number is inside *tertius*, and what shape does it take? (*Trēs*, worn down to *ter-*.) Why is that worth noticing here rather than earlier? (**The first two ordinals had no number in them at all.**) And what did Spanish do with this word instead of borrowing it? (**Wore it down** into *tercero*.)

55.4 quārtus — the shape the rest of the series keeps

Recalls first, then the fourth — and the shape that carries the rest of the way.

- *Recall*: say *tertius* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *auris* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *conveniō* and *occurrō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *mīles* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ita* and *nōn* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

quārtus, quārta, quārtum — “fourth.”

Quattuor is **four**, and *quārtus* is *quattuor* with the middle squeezed out and an ending put on. After the odd pair at the front, that is the shape the series keeps: the number you already know, wearing an ending, behaving like a describing word and agreeing with whatever it counts. Which means the first three were the hard part, and they are behind you. From here, if you can say the number you can nearly say the ordinal.

Quārta hōra, “the fourth hour”. *Quārta pars*, “the fourth part” — and that phrase went into English three separate times: a **quart** (a fourth of a gallon), a **quarter**, and a **quarto** (a sheet folded into four). A **quartet** is four players; a **quatrain** is four lines.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quārtus, quārta, quārtum*
- the join — *quattuor* → *quārtus*
- the four so far — *prīmus, secundus, tertius, quārtus*

Before you move on

What happens to *quattuor* on the way to *quārtus*? (**The middle is squeezed out** and an ending goes on.) Which of the first four ordinals do NOT have their number inside them? (***Prīmus*** and ***secundus***.) And what does the ending of *quārtus* do? (**Agrees with the thing counted** — *quārta hōra, quārtus diēs*.)

55.5 quīntus — the fifth, and a month you have already met

Recalls first, then the fifth — and a payoff from a chapter long behind you.

- *Recall*: say *quārtus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *pēs* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *emō* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *epistula* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *avē / avēte* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *the first chapter's own recombining* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

quīntus, quīnta, quīntum — “fifth.”

Quīnque is **five**; *quīntus* is that number with the ending on it, exactly as *quārtus* was. Two in a row now behave the same way.

And here is where the series pays back something you were already told. The month lesson listed **Quīntīlis** among the twelve and translated it “the fifth” — the month that was later renamed *Iūlius*.

You could read that translation then. Now you can see the word:

Quīntīlis is *quīntus* turned into a month’s name, and *Sextīlis* beside it is the next ordinal doing the same.

English has **quintet** (five players), **quintuplets**, and **quintessence** — the *quīnta essentia*, the “fifth being”, which mediaeval writers put above earth, water, air and fire.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *quīntus, quīnta, quīntum*
- the join — *quīnque* → *quīntus*
- the month — *Quīntīlis*, the fifth

Before you move on

What number is inside *quīntus*? (**Quīnque**, five.) What was *Quīntīlis*, and what is it called now? (**The fifth month**; it was renamed *Iūlius*.) And what is a *quīnta essentia*? (**A fifth being** — the one put above earth, water, air and fire.)

Chapter 56

Sextus ad Decimum

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count in order all the way to tenth, and say why noon and siesta are ordinal numbers wearing a disguise.

The tenth ordinal, and the whole series said in order from primus to decimus.

56.1 sextus — the sixth, and the hour that became a nap

Recalls open the chapter, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall:* say *quīntus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *prīmus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *domus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *ubi* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *sex, septem, octō, novem, decem* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

sextus, sexta, sextum — “sixth.”

Sex is **six**; *sextus* is the same word with the ending. And *Sextilis*, the other renamed month, is what *Quintilis* was: an ordinal doing duty as a name, later handed over to Augustus.

The better story is the hour. A Roman day was cut into twelve hours running from sunrise to sunset, so *prīma hōra* began at dawn and the **sixth** hour landed on the middle of the day — which is why *sexta hōra* meant noon and the heat of it. That hour became a rest, the rest kept the hour’s name, and the name wore down through Spanish into **siesta**. A word for a nap that is, underneath, an ordinal number. English took the plainer ones: a **sextet**, a **sextant** (a sixth of a circle), and *sexagēsīmus* behind **sexagesimal**, counting by sixties.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sextus, sexta, sextum*
- the join — *sex* → *sextus*
- *sexta hōra* — the sixth hour, the middle of the day

Before you move on

Which hour of a Roman day was *sexta hōra*, and where did it fall? (**The sixth**, counted from sunrise — so **the middle of the day**.) What everyday Spanish word came out of it? (**Siesta**.) And which month was *Sextilis* renamed after? (**Augustus**.)

56.2 septimus — the seventh, and the week that is a seven

Recalls first, then the seventh.

- *Recall*: say *sextus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *secundus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *porta* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *cūr* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *quaesō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *ignōsce mihi* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

septimus, septima, septimum — “seventh.”

Septem is **seven**. Put the ending on and the vowel in the middle goes quiet: *septem* → *septimus*, with *e* worn down to *i* because nothing is leaning on it. Latin does that to unstressed middles constantly, and once you have heard it here you will hear it everywhere.

September is this number in a name, and the calendar lesson explained why it sits in ninth place: two months were pushed in at the front and the names never moved.

The prettier descendant is the week. *Septimāna* was “a set of seven” — seven days — and it went into Spanish as *semana* and French as *semaine*. So in two of Latin’s daughters the ordinary word for a week is a number word, and the number is this one.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *septimus, septima, septimum*
- the join — *septem* → *septimus*
- *septima hōra* — the seventh hour

Before you move on

What happens to the vowel in the middle of *septem* when the ending goes on? (**It wears down** — *e* to *i*.) Which month keeps this number, and why is it two places out? (**September; two months were added at the front.**) And what is a *semana*, taken apart? (**A set of seven** — *septimāna*.)

56.3 octāvus — the eighth, and the ending that breaks step

Recalls first, then the eighth — the one that does not do what the last four did.

- *Recall: say septimus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall: say tertius* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall: say mūrus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall: say quia* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall: say diēs Lūnae* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall: say diēs Sōlis* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

octāvus, octāva, octāvum — “eighth.”

Octō is **eight**. By now you would expect *octus*, and it is not that. This one takes **-āvus**, and it is the only ordinal in the ten that does.

Worth stopping on, because it shows what a pattern in a language actually is. Four ordinals in a row behaved alike, so the shape looked settled; the eighth breaks step, and then the ninth breaks it differently, and the tenth goes back to behaving. A learner who was told a rule and then met these would think the rule was broken. A learner who was shown the shape and then shown where it bends has learned the language instead.

October is this number in a month’s name. And an **octave** in music is the eighth note, the one at which the names begin again — *do to do* — so the interval is named for the count that closes it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *octāvus, octāva, octāvum*

- the ending that breaks step — not *octus*
- the eight so far, in order

Before you move on

What ending does *octāvus* take, and how many of the ten take it? (-āvus, and **only this one.**) What is an octave, counted out? (**The eighth note** — where the names start again.) And what is *October*, taken literally? (**The eighth month.**)

56.4 nōnus — the ninth, and where noon comes from

Recalls first, then the ninth — and the best word-history in the chapter.

- *Recall*: say *octāvus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quārtus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *hortus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *meus* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *niger and albus* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *ruber and caeruleus* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

nōnus, nōna, nōnum — “**ninth.**”

Novem is **nine**, and this time the word is not lengthened but squeezed: *noven-* collapses in on itself and comes out as *nōnus*, with a long *ō* where the *ove* used to be. Two ordinals running have now bent the shape in two different ways.

November is this number in a name.

And then *nōna hōra*. Counting from sunrise, the ninth hour is the

middle of the afternoon, and it was the hour of a fixed prayer. Over centuries that prayer crept earlier and earlier in the day, until it was being said at midday — and the **name went with it**. English **noon** is *nōna*, still meaning “the ninth”, attached now to an hour three hours away from the one it was named for. The word stayed put; the clock moved under it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nōnus*, *nōna*, *nōnum*
- the squeeze — *novem* → *nōnus*
- *nōna hōra* — the ninth hour, once mid-afternoon

Before you move on

How is *nōnus* made out of *novem*? (**By squeezing it shut**, not by adding — *noven-* to *nōn-*.) Which English word is *nōna hōra*? (**Noon.**) And what moved, the word or the hour? (**The hour** — the name stayed and the time it named drifted to midday.)

56.5 decimus — the tenth, and the ten complete

Recalls first, then the tenth, which closes the series.

- *Recall*: say *nōnus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *quīntus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *focus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *tuus* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *pater and mater* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *frater and soror* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

decimus, decima, decimum — “tenth.”

Decem is **ten**, and the ending goes on with the same worn-down middle you met in *septimus*: *decem* → *decimus*. Remember that *c* is hard — *DEK-imus*.

December is this number in a name, and it is the last of the four the calendar froze.

Decima on its own means “a tenth part”, and that noun did a great deal of work. **Decimate** is the Roman army’s punishment: a unit that broke was made to draw lots and one man in ten was killed by the other nine. A **dime** is a tenth of a dollar. A **tithe** is a tenth of a harvest, and *décima* is still the word for it in Spanish.

That is the ten. Say them in order and you have a series that no cardinal count gives you: the place a thing holds, not how many of it there are.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *decimus, decima, decimum* — *DEK-imus*
- the join — *decem* → *decimus*
- all ten in order, *pr̄mus* to *decimus*

Before you move on

How is *c* said in *decimus*? (**Hard** — *DEK-imus*.) What did the Roman army actually do when it decimated a unit? (**Killed one man in ten**, chosen by lot.) And how many of the ten ordinals have their own number visible inside them? (**Eight** — every one but *pr̄mus* and *secundus*.)

Chapter 57

Ante et Post

Modes: ⇄ voice (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put one thing before or after another with ante and post, and place an event in a Roman day.

The hours and the halves of the day put together: prima, sexta and nona hora against ante and post meridiem.

57.1 ante — before, in place and in time

Recalls open the chapter, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall:* say *decimus* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *sextus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *terra* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *iterum* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *caput* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *nox* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *bonam noctem* — **R4**, a third word from that distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

ante — “before”, “in front of”.

The ordinals tell you which place a thing holds. This word and its partner tell you how two things stand relative to each other, which is the other half of putting anything in order.

Ante does both senses at once, and Latin does not separate them. In space it is “in front of”: *ante portam*, “in front of the gate”. In time it is “before”: *ante merīdiem*, “**before midday**” — which you have already seen on a clock face, because that phrase is the **a.m.** you write every day. You have been reading this word for years in an abbreviation.

English borrowed it whole and left it visible: an **antechamber** is the room in front of the room, an **antecedent** is what went before, **anterior** means towards the front, and a poker player who **antes up** puts the money in beforehand.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ante*
- *ante portam* — in front of the gate
- *ante merīdiem* — before midday

Before you move on

What two senses does *ante* carry at once? (**In front of**, in space, and **before**, in time.) What everyday abbreviation is *ante merīdiem*? (**a.m.**) And what is an antechamber? (**The room in front of the room.**)

57.2 post — after, and the pair completed

Recalls first, then the word that finishes the pair.

- *Recall*: say *ante* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *septimus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back

- *Recall*: say *ignis* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *magister* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *māne* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *bonum māne* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

post — “after”, “behind”.

The mirror of *ante*, and the same double life. In space it is “behind”: *post mūrūm*, “behind the wall”. In time it is “after”.

This book has quoted it once already and walked past it. The afternoon greeting was given as *salvē* (*post merīdiem*), and *post merīdiem* was translated without the word ever being taught — which is exactly the sort of debt a course collects when a phrase is more useful than its parts. Now the phrase comes apart: *post* + *merīdiem*, “after midday”, the **p.m.** that stands opposite the **a.m.** you had one lesson ago.

English keeps it everywhere and rarely notices: **posterior**, **posterity**, **postpone** (“to place after”), **post mortem** (“after death”), **post-war**, and a **postscript**, the thing written after the writing. With *ante* and *post* you can now put two things in order without counting them at all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *post*
- *post mūrūm* — behind the wall
- the pair — *ante merīdiem*, *post merīdiem*

Before you move on

What are the two senses of *post*? (**Behind**, in space, and **after**, in time.) What is *post merīdiem* on a clock face? (**p.m.**) And what can you do with *ante* and *post* that the ordinals do not do for you? (**Put two things in order** without counting them.)

57.3 Putting a day in order — *prīma*, *sexta*, *nōna*, *ante* and *post*

Recalls first, and then the chapter's work: everything in one place.

- *Recall*: say *post* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *octāvus* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ventus* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *discipulus* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *vesper* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *Hesperia* and *vispera* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *the vesper triage* — **R4**, a third word from that distance

You'll want to know: the three chapters, on one clock

You have the hour. You have the ordinals. You have *ante* and *post*. That is enough to say when something happens, and this is what the three chapters were for.

A Roman day ran sunrise to sunset and was cut into twelve, so an hour was a twelfth of the **daylight** — long in June, short in December, and never the same length twice. Three of those hours now have names you can say:

- *prīma hōra* — the first hour, beginning at sunrise.

- *sexta hōra* — the sixth, the middle of the day. Its name is in **siesta**.
- *nōna hōra* — the ninth, mid-afternoon. Its name is in **noon**, which moved.

And the day splits in two at the middle: everything up to *merīdiēs* is *ante merīdiem*, everything past it *post merīdiem*.

Now place three things. Say *prīma hōra* and then *ante merīdiem*, and you have said early morning twice over, once by counting and once by dividing. Say *nōna hōra*, *post merīdiem*, and you have said mid-afternoon the same two ways. That is the whole point of having both.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the three hours — *prīma hōra*, *sexta hōra*, *nōna hōra*
- the halves — *ante merīdiem*, *post merīdiem*
- all ten ordinals in order, *prīmus* to *decimus*

Before you move on

How long was a Roman hour? (**A twelfth of the daylight** — so it changed with the season.) Which hour was the middle of the day, and which word still carries its name? (**The sixth; *siesta*.**) And say mid-afternoon two ways. (*Nōna hōra* — and *post merīdiem*.)

Chapter 58

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read a Latin word cold and know its job from its ending, follow a line whose subject lives inside the verb, and hold a whole passage without translating it word by word.

Forty-two words of Latin with no new word in them, where the verb goes last, the subject hides inside it, and bonus changes to bona without anyone explaining agreement.

58.1 (reading) — six words, each one already a claim

Every word below you have met. Not one is new.

What is new is that nothing surrounds them.

Read this

aqua liber schola magister discipulus oculus

Read down the list once, without stopping.

Again, and notice that five of the six end in **-us**, **-a** or **-er**, and that you know what that ending means.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

An English word standing alone tells you almost nothing about its job. *Book* could be the thing doing or the thing done to.

Liber cannot. That ending says it is the one doing, before any sentence has been built around it. A Latin noun carries its job with it. That is what makes Latin readable in a way its word order is not. The endings do the work English does with position, and they do it one word at a time.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the six words down the list, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

What does a Latin ending tell you that an English word cannot? (**Its job** — before the sentence exists.)

58.2 (reading) — six lines, two of them one word

The last lesson gave you words alone. These are whole lines.

You have said every one of them.

Read this

Salvē! Valē! Nōmen meum est Marcus. Ego sum discipulus.
Iterum! Bonus est.

Read down once, without stopping.

Again — and notice that two of the six are a single word, and that both of them are things you say to somebody.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Salvē and **Valē** are commands. *Be well. Be strong.* A Roman greeting and a Roman farewell are both orders, which is why neither needs anything around it.

Bonus est has no subject on the page at all. Latin puts the person in the verb, so *est* is already *he is* or *it is*, and the sentence is complete with two words.

That is the second thing reading Latin asks of you: expect the subject to be missing, and expect the verb to have it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six lines, once, in order, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

Where is the subject of **Bonus est**? (**Inside the verb.**)

58.3 (reading) — the first passage

Six words, then six lines. Now twelve of them together.

Forty-two words, and not one of them is new.

Read this

Salvē! Nōmen meum est Marcus. Ego sum discipulus.
Magister meus bonus est. Liber meus bonus est. Ego legō
et bibō. Amīcus meus est discipulus. Schola bona est.
Prīmus liber bonus est. Sextus liber bonus est. Iterum legō,
quia liber bonus est. Valē!

Read it once without stopping. Do not translate as you go — let the sentences arrive.

Now read it again, and look at where **est** falls.

The word, taken apart — its English and Romance children

Nearly every line ends in **est**. That is not a habit of this passage; it is how Latin was written. The verb goes last, and the reader holds everything before it open until it arrives.

Two lines break the pattern on purpose. **Nōmen meum est Marcus**

puts *est* in the middle, because the name is the point and Latin moves what matters. And the last full line is the longest, because **quia** hangs a whole reason off a sentence that was already complete.

Notice also **bonus**, **bona**, **bonus** — the same word three times, changing to match what it describes. You are reading agreement, not being told about it.

This is the first whole passage the book has asked you to hold at once, and it works because everything in it was paid for.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the passage aloud, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

Where does a Latin sentence usually keep its verb? (**Last.**)

Why is it **schola bona** and not **schola bonus**? (**The adjective agrees** — and you read it before anyone explained it.)

Chapter 59

Reading — Objects, Places, and a Day

Modes:  voice (4)  eyes (1)  Hands-free start: first 1 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can track direct objects and place phrases through a social exchange and a short first-person account without translating sentence by sentence.

A 140-word adapted account whose time anchors, place phrases and visible object endings let a beginning reader follow one full day.

59.1 aqua -> aquam — when the action reaches the thing

You already know **aqua**: water. Read one new sentence.

Aquam bibō. — I drink water.

Nothing new has happened to the water. Its ending changed because it is now the thing the action reaches.

You'll want to know: -a becomes -am

Latin marks the direct object with the accusative case. For the familiar nouns ending in **-a**, the first useful move is small:

- **aqua -> aquam** — I drink **aquam**
- **epistula -> epistulam** — I write **epistulam**

- **porta -> portam** — I open **portam**

The **-m** is a reading signal. It tells you that this word receives the action even if Latin moves the word somewhere English would not.

Grammar Lens: actor, action, object

In **epistulam scribō**, the verb **scribō** already says “I write.” The ending **-am** tells you what I write.

Read from the endings rather than from position: **portam aperiō** and **aperiō portam** mean the same basic thing.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **aquam bibō** — the water receives the action
- **epistulam scribō** — the letter receives the action
- **portam aperiō** — the gate receives the action

Twice through:

Before you move on

What does **-am** tell you here? (This familiar **-a** noun is the **direct object**.)

Change **epistula** for “I write a letter.” (**Epistulam scribō**.)

59.2 amīcus -> amīcum — a second road to the same object marker

You saw **-a -> -am**. Now read **amīcum videō** — I see the friend.

The noun changed more visibly, but the final signal is familiar: the word ends in **-m** because the seeing reaches it.

You'll want to know: -us and -er reach -um

Three known nouns give you the useful masculine pattern:

- **amīcus** -> **amīcum** — **amīcum adiuvō**, I help the friend
- **magister** -> **magistrum** — **magistrum audiō**, I hear the teacher
- **liber** -> **librum** — **librum legō**, I read the book

Magister and **liber** drop their nominative **-er** before **-um**. The genitives you learned — *magistrī*, *librī* — already showed the shorter stems *magistr-* and *libr-*.

Grammar Lens: the ending frees the order

Librum legō does not need English order to tell you what is read.

The **-um** has already done that work.

Put the two lessons together: **epistulam scrībō; librum legō**. Two actions, two objects, two visible endings.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- amīcum adiuvō
- magistrum audiō
- librum legō

Twice through:

Before you move on

What is the object form of **liber**? (**Librum.**)

What ending do **amīcum**, **magistrum** and **librum** share? (**-um**, ending in the accusative **-m.**)

59.3 ad scholam, in scholā, domum — toward, at, and homeward

The form **scholam** is no longer new. Read it after a tiny word: **ad scholam**.

Ad points toward an endpoint: **ad scholam ambulō** — I walk to or toward school.

You'll want to know: motion and rest do not look alike

These three short shapes carry a whole route:

- **ad scholam ambulō** — I walk toward school
- **in scholā sedeō** — I sit in school
- **domum eō** — I go home

Motion **toward** takes **ad** plus the accusative **scholam**. Rest **in** a place takes **in** plus ablative **scholā**, whose long final **-ā** matters. **Domum** is the old compact exception: homeward needs no preposition.

Grammar Lens: follow the case, then the journey

A reader can now follow three stages without translating every word: movement toward, rest inside, movement home.

Add the object from the last lesson: **in scholā librum legō**. The long **-ā** locates the action; **-um** shows what the reading reaches.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **ad scholam ambulō** — movement toward
- **in scholā sedeō** — rest inside
- **domum eō** — movement home

Twice through:

Before you move on

Which form means “in school”? (**In scholā**, with long -ā.)

Which destination needs no preposition? (**Domum** — homeward.)

59.4 (reading) — a whole meeting, one turn at a time

The first passage was forty-two words. This exchange is seventy-three.

Do not race. Follow who asks, who answers, and where the two people go. The endings will keep the objects visible.

Read this

— Salvē! — Salvē! — Quid tibi nōmen est? — Mihi nōmen est Iūlia. Quid tibi nōmen est? — Mihi nōmen est Mārcus.
 — Quōmodo valēs? — Bene valeō. Et tū? — Bene valeō.
 — Ubi schola tua est? — Schola mea ibi est. Ubi schola tua est? — Schola mea hic est. — Māne ad scholam ambulō. In scholā sedeō. — Ego māne librum legō. Post merīdiem epistulam scrībō. — Librum iterum legō. — Cūr? — Quia liber meus bonus est. — Bene. — Crās tē vidēbō. — Ita. Valē! — Valē!

Read once for the route: names, wellbeing, school, work, reason, farewell.

Read again and find the two things handled: **librum** and **epistulam**.

Grammar Lens: a dialogue is a chain of answers

You do not need to translate every turn. **Quid tibi nōmen est?** predicts a name. **Quōmodo valēs?** predicts wellbeing. **Ubi** predicts a place. **Cūr?** predicts **quia**.

That prediction is reading. It lets the shape of one turn prepare you for the next.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the exchange once, preserving each turn

Before you move on

Where does the first speaker's school stand? (**Ibi** — there.)
 Why is the book read again? (**Quia liber meus bonus est.**)

59.5 (reading) — diēs meus, my day

The exchange gave you seventy-three words in turns. This account gives you one hundred forty words in one voice.

First follow the day words. Then follow the objects. You already know every form.

Read this

Nōmen meum est Mārcus. Ego sum discipulus. Domus mea bona est. Canis meus hic est, et fēlēs mea ibi est. Māne prīma hōra est. Ego stō, lac bibō, et mel et ōvum edō. Portam aperiō et portam claudō, et ad scholam ambulō. Schola mea bona est. In scholā sedeō. Magister meus bonus est. Magistrum videō et audiō. Primum librum accipiō et legō. Secundum librum nōn accipiō, quia secundus liber malus est. Epistulam scrībō. Cōgitō et intellegō. Amīcum meum videō et adiuvō. Amīcus meus discipulus est. Sexta hōra est. Lac bibō, et mel et ōvum edō. Vīnum nōn bibō. Aquam bibō. Mare et caelum videō. Post merīdiem domum eō. Hic sedeō, et librum iterum legō. Cūr iterum legō? Quia liber meus bonus est. Vesper est. Nox est. Bene valeō. Dormiō. Crās iterum ad scholam veniō. Crās magistrum et amīcum meum videō.

Read once for time: morning, first hour, sixth hour, after midday, evening, night, tomorrow.

Read again for the route: home, toward school, in school, homeward.

Grammar Lens: the account has two maps

The time words make one map. The place phrases make another. Inside both, the object endings tell you what each action reaches: **portam, magistrum, librum, epistulam, amīcum, aquam**. The account repeats **librum** for a reason. The first book is read; the

second is refused; the good book is read again. That is a connected thread, not a list of unrelated sentences.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the account once, pausing only at full stops

Twice through:

Before you move on

Put the route in order. (**Domus — ad scholam — in scholā — domum.**)

What happens tomorrow? (**He goes to school again and sees his teacher and friend.**)

Chapter 60

Writing — My Own Line

Modes: ✍ pen (1) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can write one line of Latin about myself from a closed supply of known words and forms, choosing not only which word but which ending it wears.

Complete LA-W02-versus-meus: one line chosen rather than copied, using only forms the book has shown rather than forms guessed from a pattern.

60.1 Your own line — the first writing with no model

Everything you have written so far had something to reach for.

This does not. You choose the words, from a supply that is closed: only what this book has taught you.

Writing — controlled composition

Write **one line** in Latin about yourself.

And here is what makes this step harder in Latin than it is in most languages. Choosing the words is not enough. You must also choose **which ending each word wears**.

In English or French the shape of a word is given and its job comes from where you put it. In Latin the job comes from the ending, so a word you have only ever met in one form is a word you cannot yet place — you know it, and you still have to decide what it is doing.

Write the line. Use only forms the book has actually shown you, not forms you have guessed at from a pattern.

Before you move on

In Latin, what tells a reader what a word is doing in the sentence?
(**Its ending.**)

So what did you have to choose here that a French writer does not?
(**The form of each word**, not only which word.)

Chapter 61

Writing — With A Clock

Modes: ✍ pen (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can complete the Latin A1 writing paper's three parts inside its published thirty minutes and meet each part's word floor.

Complete LA-W03-cum-horologio: six minutes of dictation, ten of controlled sentences, fourteen for the personal note, then check each against its published range.

61.1 The same writing, with a clock

You wrote your own line with as long as you liked.

A task you can only do untimed is not yet a task you can do.

Writing — timed production

What this track's contract publishes. The Latin A1 writing paper runs **30 minutes** and holds **three** parts, which is one more than most:

- dictation and orthography — 5 items, **8 to 15 words**;
- controlled sentences — 4 items, **20 to 35 words**;
- a short personal note — 3 items, **35 to 50 words**.

Those numbers come out of `task-shapes/a1.json`, not from this page.

Split the clock the way the parts are weighted: **six minutes, ten minutes, fourteen minutes**. Start.

Stop when the time is up, even mid-word. An unfinished paper is information; an untimed one is not.

Before you move on

Now the rule this track states more sharply than any other, and the reason it does.

Latin is the language most people meet **only as reading**. Centuries of teaching it that way have made “I know Latin” mean “I can construe a page”, and a four-skill contract has to refuse that or it is not measuring the same thing at all.

So: each of the four papers is worth 25 points and **each must independently reach 15**. The aggregate must also reach 60 out of 100. Reading strength cannot hide absent writing. That is a project standard rather than an external certificate — Latin has no awarding body issuing one — and it is stated openly as this project’s own choice.

Count your words against the three ranges. Being under the floor on any one of them is the same as not having attempted it.

Chapter 62

Writing — Four Lines, And The Word That Has A Twin

Modes: ✍ pen (1) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can write four connected lines to a named reader, joining with **et**, **sed** or **aut** and giving a reason with **quia** rather than the ambiguous **quod**.

*Complete LA-W04-quattuor-versus: four lines to one reader, at least one joined and at least one reasoned with **quia**, then name which of Latin's two because-words can also mean which.*

62.1 Four lines, and the word that has a twin

The last lesson asked for writing **finished on time**. This one asks for writing that **holds together**.

Pick one person who will read it.

What to know first

Connected writing is not **longer** writing. Four short lines can be connected; one long line can fail to be. What makes it connected is that a sentence stops standing on its own.

You hold four joiners. **et** adds. **sed** sets against. **aut** offers. **quia** gives the reason.

Use **quia** for your reason, and use it deliberately, because Latin has a second word that also means *because* — **quod** — and that one is doing two jobs at once. **quod** is also the ordinary word for *which*.

So a sentence built on **quod** hands the reader a small decision the writer may not have noticed making: is this a reason, or is it a relative clause? **quia** hands them nothing to decide. At this level, write the word that can only mean one thing.

That is a real habit and not a beginner's crutch. Choosing the unambiguous word where one exists is most of what clear writing is, in any language.

Writing — connected composition

Write **four lines** to the person you picked.

At least one must use **et**, **sed** or **aut**. At least one must use **quia**.

Use only words and forms the book has shown you. This lesson adds no vocabulary; the whole exercise is the joining.

Before you move on

Cover your first line and read the second alone. Does it still make sense without the first? If it does, you wrote a **list** — which is where you were one lesson ago.

Which of Latin's two words for *because* can also mean *which*? (**quod**.) And which one did you write? (**quia** — the one that cannot be mistaken.)

How Latin sounds — a reference

A **reference**, not a chapter — the lessons teach the sounds through real words. This page gathers the classical scheme (the one this course uses).

The three facts

1. **Every letter is sounded, always the same way.** No silent letters and, in the classical scheme, no “soft” consonants: *c* and *g* are **always hard** (*Cicero* = *KIH-keh-ro*, not “SIS-er-o”), *v* is **w**, *s* is always hissed (never “z”), *r* is trilled.
2. **Vowels come long or short, marked by a macron.** *ā ē ī ō ū* are *held longer* than *a e i o u* — same quality, more time. Length can change meaning (*malum* “evil” vs. *mālum* “apple”), which is why teaching texts print macrons Romans never wrote.
3. **Diphthongs:** *ae* = “eye” (*Caesar* = *KYE-sar*), *au* = “ow,” *oe* = “oy”; otherwise adjacent vowels each keep their value.

Worth flagging

- *v* = **w**, *i* = **y** as consonants: *vīnum* (“wine”) = **WEE-noom**, *Iulius* = **YOO-lee-oos**. The “v as vee / soft c” you may have heard is *later Church Latin*.
- **Stress is predictable:** two-syllable words stress the first; longer words stress the second-to-last syllable if it is long, else the one before. No accent marks are needed once you hear vowel length.
- **No *j*, *u/v* split, or *w*:** classical Latin wrote **I** and **V** for both vowel and glide; *j*, *u*, *w* are medieval/modern additions.

Latin in the family

Latin is **Italic**, a branch of **Indo-European** — cousin to Greek, to the Germanic languages (English among them), and, further off, to Sanskrit. It was the speech of Rome, then of an empire, then of the medieval church and the learned world; as it fragmented in daily use it became Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, Romanian, and the rest. This curriculum treats Latin as a **taproot**: nearly every word has both English and Romance descendants, traced in the lessons — and its sister taproot, Sanskrit, shares the same Indo-European negative (*nōn* / *na*) and the family of *mother/father* words.

Glossary

This glossary collects every word and phrase taught in the book. Pronunciation appears when it differs from the written form; chapter numbers show where each entry is introduced.

accipiō, obtineō

“I get” — two verbs, each one a prefix bolted onto a verb you already know, and each one bent out of shape by the join

Introduced in Chapter 42.

adiuvō, adiuvāre

“I help” — the verb hiding inside English aid, aide and adjutant, and no relation to juvenile

Introduced in Chapter 39.

ambulō, ambulāre

“I walk” — the verb behind ambulance, preamble and the pram, and a rare case where the front half is clear and the back half is not

Introduced in Chapter 41.

amīcus, amīcī

the friend — from the verb to love, and the word the bread lesson pointed at and did not give

Introduced in Chapter 51.

amō, amāre

“I love” — the chapter’s fourth verb, the first thing generations of pupils ever chanted, and the word inside enemy

Introduced in Chapter 39.

ante

before, in front of — the word that puts one thing ahead of another

Introduced in Chapter 57.

aperiō, aperīre

“I open” — half of a matched pair, built from one root with two opposite prefixes

Introduced in Chapter 41.

aqua, vīnum

water and wine — one word French wore down to almost nothing, one that barely changed anywhere

Introduced in Chapter 10.

audiō, audīre

“I hear” — the verb inside audio, audience and audit, and, less obviously, inside obey

Introduced in Chapter 40.

auris, auris

the ear — and the reason a Roman listened by obeying

Introduced in Chapter 54.

aut

or — and the second or, which asks a different question

Introduced in Chapter 48.

avē / avēte

hail (a formal greeting)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

bene

“well” — a morphologically simple inheritance: French bien and Spanish bien are just bene plus one regular sound change (the same short-e-diphthongizes-to-ie shift as mel→miel), with no extra grafted-on suffix, unlike quōmodo’s more roundabout Romance history

Introduced in Chapter 27.

bibō, bibere

I drink — the verb inside beverage, bib and imbibe

Introduced in Chapter 54.

bonam noctem

“good night” — genuine Latin grammar (wishes take the accusative, not the nominative), though the fixed phrase itself may be a later/modern convention rather than a directly-attested ancient formula

Introduced in Chapter 30.

bonum mātne

“good morning” — a modern, pedagogical phrase (not classically attested); unlike bonam noctem, its grammar is genuinely invisible, since mātne is neuter and Latin neuters never distinguish nominative from accusative — Romans instead had a real, richly documented morning GREETING RITUAL, the salūtātīō, whose root is a doublet of salvē’s own

Introduced in Chapter 32.

bonum vesperum

“good evening” — a modern, pedagogical phrase (not classically attested), but unlike bonum mātne, this one CAN show the real Accusative-of-Exclamation grammar again, since vesper is masculine, not neuter

Introduced in Chapter 34.

caelum, caelī

the sky, and the heavens — the word under celestial, and under a ceiling painted like the sky

Introduced in Chapter 45.

canis, fēlēs, cattus

dog and (two words for) cat — canis is the “expected” ancestor Spanish’s perro mysteriously replaced; fēlēs was Classical Latin’s OWN word for cat, later pushed out by the newcomer cattus

Introduced in Chapter 17.

capiō, capere

“I take” — the verb the habeō lesson promised, and the true relative of English have

Introduced in Chapter 39.

caput

the head — the word French abandoned, but Spanish and English kept working hard

Introduced in Chapter 8.

claudō, claudere

“I close” — the word English calls *close*, and the fourth of four

Introduced in Chapter 41.

cōgitō, cōgitāre

I think” — the verb of *cōgitō ergō sum*, built from a word meaning “to shake together

Introduced in Chapter 38.

conveniō, occurrō

“I meet” — two verbs for meeting, each one a prefix on a verb you already know, and the verb hiding inside a phrase from chapter 21

Introduced in Chapter 43.

crās tē vidēbō

“see you tomorrow” — built from two genuinely classical pieces (*crās*, “tomorrow,” and *vidēbō*, already met last lesson) using the exact same pattern as the attested propedim *tē vidēbō*, though this specific combination isn’t itself pulled from one surviving letter

Introduced in Chapter 25.

cūr

why — and the two words that answer it

Introduced in Chapter 52.

currō, currere

“I run” — the verb inside current, curriculum, courier and corridor, and, by way of a Celtic wagon, inside car

Introduced in Chapter 41.

decimus, decima, decimum

tenth — and the tax that took one in ten

Introduced in Chapter 56.

dīcō, dīcere

“I say” — a verb that originally meant “point out”, which is why English got both dictionary and teach from it

Introduced in Chapter 37.

diēs

“day” — the word you’ve already been using all along, inside diēs Lūnae and medius diēs, now on its own

Introduced in Chapter 28.

diēs Lūnae, Mārtis, Mercuriī, Iovis, Veneris

the weekdays (Monday–Friday) — the full, un-worn-down planet-god phrases

Introduced in Chapter 5.

diēs Saturnī, diēs Sōlis

Saturday and Sunday — Rome’s own pagan names, and how Christianity later renamed them

Introduced in Chapter 5.

discipulus, discipulī

the pupil — from learning, and the reason discipline means what it does

Introduced in Chapter 53.

dō, dare

“I give” — the last of the chapter’s eight verbs, and the one that gave English data, date, tradition and dose

Introduced in Chapter 37.

domus, domūs

the house — the building a family lives in, and the root under domestic, dome and dominate

Introduced in Chapter 44.

dormiō, dormīre

“I sleep” — the verb behind dormitory and dormant, and the one word English may only look as though it borrowed

Introduced in Chapter 40.

edō, esse

I eat — and the infinitive that collides with to be

Introduced in Chapter 54.

emō, emere

“I buy” — a verb that once meant simply “I take”, which is the only reason redeem, example and premium mean what they do

Introduced in Chapter 43.

eō, īre

“I go” — the shortest verb in Latin, whose bare stem is a single vowel

Introduced in Chapter 37.

epistula, epistulae

a letter — a Greek word Rome borrowed, and the thing Cicero wrote in his letters

Introduced in Chapter 51.

et

and — and the enclitic -que, which does the same job glued to the back of a word

Introduced in Chapter 49.

exspectō, exspectāre

“I wait” — to wait, in Latin, is to look out for something, and the four verbs of this chapter together
Introduced in Chapter 42.

ferō, ferre

“I bring, I carry” — one verb built out of two unrelated roots, and the parent of transfer, refer, prefer, differ, offer and suffer
Introduced in Chapter 42.

focus, focī

the hearth — the fire in the middle of the house, and the reason a lens has a focus
Introduced in Chapter 44.

frater, soror

brother and sister — the words Vulgar Latin later abandoned in favor of germanus
Introduced in Chapter 7.

grātiās (tibi) agō

thank you (lit. “I give thanks to you”)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

habeō, habēre

“I have” — a verb that looks exactly like its English translation and is not related to it at all
Introduced in Chapter 37.

hic, haec, hoc

this, here by me — the near point of a three-way system Spanish still keeps
Introduced in Chapter 50.

hōra

hour — the source word itself, and the Roman hour was NOT a fixed length
Introduced in Chapter 13.

hortus, hortī

the garden — an enclosed piece of ground, and a true blood relative of English yard and garden
Introduced in Chapter 44.

Iānuārius, Februārius, Mārtius, Aprīlis, Māius, Iūnius, Quīntilis, Sextīlis, September, Octōber, November, December

the twelve months — and the two ORIGINAL names, Quintilis and Sextilis, before Rome renamed them
Introduced in Chapter 11.

ibi

there — the place word the corpus has gone fifty chapters without
Introduced in Chapter 50.

ignis, ignis

fire itself — the classical word, which the Romance languages abandoned and English kept
Introduced in Chapter 45.

ignōsce mihi

forgive me / I'm sorry (imperative of *ignōscere*, “to not-know, overlook, pardon”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

ille, illa, illud

that, over there — the far point, and the word that became the Romance article
Introduced in Chapter 50.

intellegō, intellegere

“I understand” — literally *inter* plus *legō*, “to read between”, and the ancestor of
intellect and intelligence
Introduced in Chapter 38.

is, ea, id

he, she, it — the pronoun Latin does not really have, doing the job anyway
Introduced in Chapter 50.

iste, ista, istud

that, near you — the middle point, and the one Latin used to sneer with
Introduced in Chapter 50.

ita / nōn

yes / no (lit. “thus” / “not”)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

iterum

again — and the repair move this book could not make
Introduced in Chapter 53.

lac, lactis

milk — the root of lactose, lettuce and, at one remove, of the Milky Way itself
Introduced in Chapter 47.

legō, legere

“I read” — a verb that first meant “to gather”, which is why English got collect,
elegant, lecture and legible from it
Introduced in Chapter 38.

liber, librī

the book — and the bark it was written on
Introduced in Chapter 53.

lūdō, lūdere

“I play” — a small verb with an outsized English family, most of which is about
being fooled rather than about play
Introduced in Chapter 42.

lūna, lūnae

the moon — the same root as *lux*, worn down to mean ‘the shining one’
Introduced in Chapter 46.

lūx, lūcis

light — the root of lucid, translucent and Lucifer, and a cousin of English light
itself
Introduced in Chapter 46.

magister, magistri

the teacher — the greater one, against minister, the lesser

Introduced in Chapter 53.

male

badly — the other end of the scale bene has had to itself all along

Introduced in Chapter 48.

malus, mala, malum

bad — the adjective under male, and the word Rome punned on for the apple

Introduced in Chapter 48.

māne

“morning, early” — the word already hiding inside dē māne (the source of French demain, Italian domani, and Catalan demà, all rebuilt “tomorrow” from this phrase) and, without the dē-, the direct base of Spanish mañana too, now standing alone

Introduced in Chapter 31.

manus

the hand — a rare feminine noun in an overwhelmingly masculine group of Latin words

Introduced in Chapter 8.

mare, maris

the sea — the word that finishes Mediterranean and names every marine thing in English

Introduced in Chapter 45.

medicus, medicī

the doctor — from measuring, not from healing

Introduced in Chapter 51.

medius diēs, media nox

noon and midnight — the source phrase daughters kept whole, wore down unevenly, or eroded almost entirely

Introduced in Chapter 12.

mel, mellis

honey — the root of mellifluous and marmalade, and of molasses by way of Portuguese

Introduced in Chapter 47.

merīdiēs

“midday, noon” — the same medius diēs you already know, contracted into one word; Romans split the day around IT (ante/post merīdiem), not into a separate colloquial “afternoon” the way Spanish’s tarde or French’s après-midi do

Introduced in Chapter 35.

meus, mea, meum

my — the possessive the name lesson did without

Introduced in Chapter 52.

mīles, mīlitis

the soldier — the noun every Latin narrative turns on
Introduced in Chapter 51.

mūrus, mūrī

the wall — the one that keeps things out, not the one that divides a room
Introduced in Chapter 44.

nesciō, nescīre

I do not know — and the rule the whole chapter turns on: nōn stands in front of the verb
Introduced in Chapter 48.

niger, albus

black and white — the source words for Spanish/French/Italian, each with a shine-vs-matte twin
Introduced in Chapter 6.

nihil est

“you’re welcome” — another honest gap: Classical Latin has no single fixed reply to thanks, and nihil est (“it’s nothing”) is a modern conversational-Latin convention built from genuinely real words, not a specific classical citation for this exact job
Introduced in Chapter 23.

nōnus, nōna, nōnum

ninth — and the hour that turned into noon
Introduced in Chapter 56.

nox

“night” — the word already hiding inside media nox (‘midnight’), one of the most rock-solid PIE roots in the whole Indo-European family
Introduced in Chapter 29.

octāvus, octāva, octāvum

eighth — the one that takes a different ending
Introduced in Chapter 56.

oculus, oculī

the eye — and the eye already hiding inside a word you know
Introduced in Chapter 54.

ōvum, ōvī

the egg — a cousin of English egg, with two sound changes that hide the relationship completely
Introduced in Chapter 47.

pānis

bread — the source of “companion,” and of the friendship-word every Romance daughter still shares with it
Introduced in Chapter 10.

pater, mater

father and mother — the PIE ancestor Latin and English both inherited, in parallel

Introduced in Chapter 7.

pecūnia, pecūniae

money — and the cattle it is named after

Introduced in Chapter 51.

pēs, pedis

the foot — the clearest Grimm’s Law pair in the book, and the last word of the tranche

Introduced in Chapter 54.

piscis, piscis

the fish — and the single clearest demonstration in this book of the sound law linking Latin to English

Introduced in Chapter 47.

porta, portae

the door or gate — and the reason a harbour, a porch and a portal are all the same word

Introduced in Chapter 44.

possum, posse

I can — potis plus sum, and the verb that will not sit still

Introduced in Chapter 49.

post

after, behind — the other half of a phrase this book quoted long ago and never taught

Introduced in Chapter 57.

prīmus, prīma, prīmum

first — the counting word for order rather than amount, and the one with no ūnus in it

Introduced in Chapter 55.

propediem tē vidēbō

“see you later/soon” — a genuine change of pace from the last few lessons: this one IS solidly attested, twice, in Cicero’s own letters

Introduced in Chapter 24.

quaesō

please (literally “I ask, I beg”)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

quandō

when — as a question and as the hinge of a clause

Introduced in Chapter 49.

quārtus, quārta, quārtum

fourth — where the series settles into a shape

Introduced in Chapter 55.

quī, quae, quod

who, which — the commonest word in Latin prose, and the one that joins two sentences into one

Introduced in Chapter 49.

quia

because — the answer cūr asks for

Introduced in Chapter 52.

quid agis?

how are you? — literally, what are you doing?

Introduced in Chapter 19.

quid tibi nōmen est? / mihi nōmen est...

what's your name? / my name is... — the genuinely classical dative of possession, literally what is the name to you?

Introduced in Chapter 20.

quīntus, quīnta, quīntum

fifth — and the month that was once called The Fifth

Introduced in Chapter 55.

quōmodo

how, in what way” — the genuine classical word behind Italian come, Spanish cómo, and French comment, which went one step further and double-marked

”manner

Introduced in Chapter 26.

respondeō, respondēre

“I answer” — literally “I pledge back”, from the verb Romans used for a solemn promise, and the reason a husband is a spouse

Introduced in Chapter 43.

rogō, rogāre

“I ask” — a verb probably built on “stretching straight out”, and a cousin of regal, direct and right

Introduced in Chapter 39.

ruber, caeruleus

red (rock-solid) and blue (surprisingly shaky) — Latin's clearest color word, and one of its weakest

Introduced in Chapter 6.

sāl, salis

salt — a cousin of English salt, and the word a Roman soldier's salary was named for

Introduced in Chapter 47.

salvē (post merīdiem)

why no two-word good-afternoon phrase exists — Latin has no simplex afternoon noun, and a grammatical three-word workaround is not attested as a greeting

Introduced in Chapter 36.

salvē / salvēte

hello (lit. “be well”)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

schola, scholae

the school — a Greek word that first meant leisure

Introduced in Chapter 53.

sciō, scīre

“I know” — one of Latin’s two verbs for knowing, and the one that gave English science and nice

Introduced in Chapter 37.

scribō, scribere

“I write” — a verb whose root means “to scratch”, and the fourth of this chapter’s four

Introduced in Chapter 38.

secundus, secunda, secundum

second — and the verb hiding inside it

Introduced in Chapter 55.

sed

but — the word that sets one thing against another

Introduced in Chapter 48.

sedeō, sedēre

“I sit” — the verb that is English *sit* by descent and English *session* by loan, and the clearest case of the difference

Introduced in Chapter 40.

septimus, septima, septimum

seventh — the ending wears the vowel down

Introduced in Chapter 56.

sex septem octō novem decem

six to ten — and the four that got frozen into the calendar

Introduced in Chapter 2.

sextus, sexta, sextum

sixth — and the nap named after the sixth hour

Introduced in Chapter 56.

somnus, somnī

sleep — the word under insomnia and somnolent, and a cousin of Sanskrit *svapna*

Introduced in Chapter 46.

stēlla, stēllae

the star — a cousin of English *star*, and the word inside constellation and disaster

Introduced in Chapter 46.

stō, stāre

“I stand” — the shortest verb in the chapter and the most productive in English, and the fourth of four

Introduced in Chapter 40.

sum, esse

“I am” — the verb every sentence leans on, and the one whose forms English still shares outright

Introduced in Chapter 37.

tempestās

weather or storm — a derivative of *tempus* that specialized for weather in Classical Latin, while *tempus* itself meant only time; later *tempus* widened to weather and *tempestās* narrowed to storm

Introduced in Chapter 15.

terra, terrae

the earth — dry land as opposed to sea, and the root under terrain, terrace and Mediterranean

Introduced in Chapter 45.

tertius, tertia, tertium

third — the first ordinal with its own number visible inside it

Introduced in Chapter 55.

tū / vōs

you (singular) / you (plural) — a PURELY grammatical number distinction in Classical Latin, with no politeness dimension at all; the polite-vous pattern (a Late Latin innovation) is *vōs*’s own direct descendant, unlike German’s *Sie*, which solved the same politeness problem independently via a completely different pronoun (3rd-person plural, not 2nd)

Introduced in Chapter 22.

tuus, tua, tuum

your — and the pair of forms the *tū / vōs* lesson promised

Introduced in Chapter 52.

ubi

where — the question the *quōmodo* lesson left half-finished

Introduced in Chapter 52.

umbra, umbrae

the shade or shadow — and the reason a little shade is called an umbrella

Introduced in Chapter 46.

ūndecim — vīgintī

11-20, the source numbers themselves — including Latin’s own genuine oddity, SUBTRACTIVE 18 and 19, which Spanish quietly regularized away

Introduced in Chapter 16.

ūnus duo trēs quattuor quīnque

one to five — the Roman originals that became every Romance number

Introduced in Chapter 2.

ut valēs?

how do you fare?

Introduced in Chapter 19.

valē / valēte

goodbye (lit. “be strong”)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

veniō, venīre

“I come” — a Latin verb that really is the same inherited word as English come

Introduced in Chapter 37.

ventus, ventī

the wind — and a true Germanic cousin, with the sound change that proves it

Introduced in Chapter 45.

vēr, aestās, autumnus, hiems

the four seasons — and why Romance languages often skipped the plain noun for an adjective phrase instead

Introduced in Chapter 9.

vesper

evening — a genuine everyday classical word sharing a deep root with English

west through the direction of sunset

Introduced in Chapter 33.

videō, vidēre

“I see” — the widest root in this chapter, because seeing and knowing were once one idea

Introduced in Chapter 37.

vīgintī annōs nātus sum

“I am twenty years old” — literally “I am, having been born, twenty years [so far]”; NEITHER Romance’s “have” NOR Germanic’s “be my years” — Latin used a THIRD construction, later abandoned

Introduced in Chapter 14.

viridis, flāvus

green and yellow — viridis is the direct, kept source of Spanish’s verde; flāvus is Latin’s own real word for yellow, and almost NO Romance language kept it as their everyday color word — most (French, Italian, Romanian) converged on a DIFFERENT shared Latin word instead

Introduced in Chapter 18.

volō, velle

I want — and the root inside voluntary, benevolent and will itself

Introduced in Chapter 49.

volup est convēnisse

“it is a pleasure to have met you” — an attested Plautine phrase that can fill a conversational slot for which Classical Latin has no single fixed idiom

Introduced in Chapter 21.

Review Questions

Try these without looking ahead. Every prompt comes from the same canonical lesson data as its chapter. Answers begin in the next section.

Chapter 1

1.1 *salvē — look, hide, write, check*

Cover the model and write the one-person Latin greeting meaning be well. Then uncover it and check every letter and the macron.

1.2 *Hear the greeting; write it independently*

From the cue SAL-weh, meaning be well to one person, write the Latin greeting with its long-vowel mark.

1.3 *Chapter 1 — Practice and Recall*

Which Latin root links vale to English valid and value?

Chapter 19

19.1 *Practice — open, check, answer, close*

Someone has just asked you ut vales? Type the one-word Latin answer.

Chapter 21

21.1 *Practice — two meetings, each with the right words*

You have been asked quid tibi nomen est? Type the first three Latin words of your reply.

Chapter 33

33.1 Practice — sort the evening words, then read the Latin

French *soir* and Italian *sera* descend from which Latin word?

Chapter 36

36.1 Practice — one whole day, in the words you have

You meet one person at three in the afternoon and want words a Roman would have used. Type them.

Chapter 58

58.1 (reading) — six words, each one already a claim

Which word is the teacher?

58.2 (reading) — six lines, two of them one word

Which line would you read as you leave?

58.3 (reading) — the first passage

Why does he read again?

Chapter 59

59.1 *aqua* -> *aquam* — when the action reaches the thing

Complete the sentence meaning I drink water: ____ bibo.

59.2 *amīcus* -> *amīcum* — a second road to the same object marker

Complete the sentence meaning I read the book: ____ lego.

59.3 *ad scholam*, *in scholā*, *domum* — toward, at, and homeward

Which two Latin words mean toward school?

59.4 (reading) — a whole meeting, one turn at a time

What does one speaker write after midday?

59.5 (reading) — *diēs meus*, my day

Which book is not taken, and why?

Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

Chapter 1

1.1 *salvē* — *look, hide, write, check*

Answer: *salvē*

1.2 *Hear the greeting; write it independently*

Answer: *salvē*

1.3 *Chapter 1 — Practice and Recall*

Answer: *valere*

Also accepted: *valēre*

Chapter 19

19.1 *Practice — open, check, answer, close*

Answer: *valeo*

Also accepted: *valeō*

Chapter 21

21.1 *Practice — two meetings, each with the right words*

Answer: *mihi nomen est*

Also accepted: *mihi nōmen est*

Chapter 33

33.1 *Practice — sort the evening words, then read the Latin*

Answer: *serus*

Also accepted: *sērus; serus (late)*

Chapter 36

36.1 *Practice* — one whole day, in the words you have

Answer: salve

Also accepted: salvē

Chapter 58

58.1 *(reading)* — six words, each one already a claim

Answer: magister

Also accepted: the teacher

58.2 *(reading)* — six lines, two of them one word

Answer: vale

Also accepted: Valē; Valē!; farewell

58.3 *(reading)* — the first passage

Answer: because the book is good

Also accepted: quia liber bonus est; the book is good

Chapter 59

59.1 *aqua -> aquam* — when the action reaches the thing

Answer: aquam

59.2 *amīcus -> amīcum* — a second road to the same object marker

Answer: librum

59.3 *ad scholam, in scholā, domum* — toward, at, and homeward

Answer: ad scholam

59.4 *(reading)* — a whole meeting, one turn at a time

Answer: a letter

Also accepted: epistulam; an epistle; letter

59.5 *(reading)* — *diēs meus, my day*

Answer: the second book, because it is bad

Also accepted: secundum librum, quia secundus liber malus est; the second because it is bad

Index

Look up an English meaning, a dedicated language topic, or a chapter topic. Each linked reference opens the chapter where the material is introduced; the focus labels name only explicitly typed lesson sections.

0–9

11-20, the source numbers themselves — including Latin’s own genuine oddity, SUBTRACTIVE 18 and 19, which Spanish quietly regularized away *ūndecim — vīgintī*
explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 16, p. 59

A

a letter — a Greek word Rome borrowed, and the thing Cicero wrote in his letters *epistula, epistulae*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 51, p. 225
ad scholam, in scholā, domum — toward, at, and homeward
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 59, p. 283
after, behind — the other half of a phrase this book quoted long ago and never taught *post*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 57, p. 273
again — and the repair move this book could not make *iterum*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 53, p. 241
amīcus -> amīcum — a second road to the same object marker
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 59, p. 283
Amicus, Pecunia, Medicus, Miles, Epistula
chapter topic; Chapter 51, p. 225
and — and the enclitic -que, which does the same job glued to the back of a word *et*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 49, p. 209
Answering, Meeting, Buying
chapter topic; Chapter 43, p. 171

Ante et Post

chapter topic; Chapter 57, p. 273

aqua -> aquam — when the action reaches the thing

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 59, p. 283

Asking Someone's Age

chapter topic; Chapter 14, p. 51

B**bad — the adjective under male, and the word Rome punned on for the apple *malus, mala, malum***

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 48, p. 201

badly — the other end of the scale bene has had to itself all along *male*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 48, p. 201

because — the answer *cūr* asks for *quia*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 52, p. 233

before, in front of — the word that puts one thing ahead of another *ante*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 57, p. 273

black and white — the source words for Spanish/French/Italian, each with a shine-vs-matte twin *niger, albus*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 6, p. 23

bread — the source of “companion,” and of the friendship-word every Romance daughter still shares with it *pānis*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 10, p. 39

Bringing, Getting, Playing, Waiting

chapter topic; Chapter 42, p. 163

brother and sister — the words Vulgar Latin later abandoned in favor of *germanus* *frater, soror*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 7, p. 27

but — the word that sets one thing against another *sed*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 48, p. 201

C**Colours**

chapter topic; Chapter 6, p. 23

D

Day

chapter topic; Chapter 28, p. 93

“day” — the word you’ve already been using all along, inside

diēs Lūnae and medius diēs, now on its own *diēs*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 93

Days of the Week

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 19

Dog and Cat

chapter topic; Chapter 17, p. 63

**dog and (two words for) cat — canis is the “expected” ancestor
Spanish’s perro mysteriously replaced; fēlēs was Classical Latin’s
OWN word for cat, later pushed out by the newcomer**

cattus *canis, fēlēs, cattus*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 17, p. 63

E

Earth, Fire, Wind, Sky, Sea

chapter topic; Chapter 45, p. 183

Edo, Bibo, Oculus, Auris, Pes

chapter topic; Chapter 54, p. 249

Eight Verbs at the Core

chapter topic; Chapter 37, p. 117

eighth — the one that takes a different ending *octāvus, octāva, octāvum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 56, p. 265

Evening

chapter topic; Chapter 33, p. 105

**evening — a genuine everyday classical word sharing a deep root
with English west through the direction of sunset** *vesper*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 33, p. 105

Exchanging Names

chapter topic; Chapter 20, p. 73

F

Family

chapter topic; Chapter 7, p. 27

father and mother — the PIE ancestor Latin and English both

inherited, in parallel *pater, mater*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 7, p. 27

fifth — and the month that was once called The Fifth *quīntus, quīnta, quīntum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 55, p. 257

fire itself — the classical word, which the Romance languages abandoned and English kept *ignis, ignis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 45, p. 183

first — the counting word for order rather than amount, and the one with no ūnus in it *prīmus, prīma, prīmum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 55, p. 257

forgive me / I’m sorry (imperative of ignōscere, “to not-know, overlook, pardon”) *ignōsce mihi*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 4, p. 17

Four lines, and the word that has a twin

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 62, p. 295

fourth — where the series settles into a shape *quārtus, quārta, quārtum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 55, p. 257

G

Good Afternoon

chapter topic; Chapter 36, p. 113

Good Evening

chapter topic; Chapter 34, p. 109

“good evening” — a modern, pedagogical phrase (not classically attested), but unlike bonum māne, this one CAN show the real Accusative-of-Exclamation grammar again, since vesper is masculine, not neuter *bonum vesperum*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 34, p. 109

Good Morning

chapter topic; Chapter 32, p. 101

“good morning” — a modern, pedagogical phrase (not classically attested); unlike bonam noctem, its grammar is genuinely invisible, since māne is neuter and Latin neuters never distinguish nominative from accusative — Romans instead had a real, richly documented morning GREETING RITUAL, the salūtātiō, whose root is a doublet of salvē’s own *bonum māne*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 32, p. 101

Good Night

chapter topic; Chapter 30, p. 97

“good night” — genuine Latin grammar (wishes take the accusative, not the nominative), though the fixed phrase itself may be a later/modern convention rather than a directly-attested ancient formula *bonam noctem*

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 30, p. 97

goodbye (lit. “be strong”) *valē* / *valēte*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

Green and Yellow

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 67

green and yellow — viridis is the direct, kept source of Spanish’s verde; flāvus is Latin’s own real word for yellow, and almost NO Romance language kept it as their everyday color word — most (French, Italian, Romanian) converged on a DIFFERENT shared Latin word instead *viridis*, *flāvus*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 67

Greetings

chapter topic; Chapter 1, p. 1

H

hail (a formal greeting) *avē* / *avēte*

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

he, she, it — the pronoun Latin does not really have, doing the job anyway *is*, *ea*, *id*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 50, p. 217

Head and Hand

chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 31

Hear the greeting; write it independently

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

Hearing, Sleeping, Sitting, Standing

chapter topic; Chapter 40, p. 147

hello (lit. “be well”) *salvē* / *salvēte*

explicit focus: pronunciation, writing, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

Hesperia, víspera, vespers — the root after Latin

etymology topic; explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 33, p. 105

Hic, Iste, Ille, Is, Ibi

chapter topic; Chapter 50, p. 217

honey — the root of mellifluous and marmalade, and of molasses by way of Portuguese *mel*, *mellis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 47, p. 195

hour — the source word itself, and the Roman hour was NOT a fixed length *hōra*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 13, p. 49

How

chapter topic; Chapter 26, p. 89

How Are You?

chapter topic; Chapter 19, p. 69

how are you? — literally, what are you doing? *quid agis?*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 19, p. 69

how do you fare? *ut valēs?*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 19, p. 69

how, in what way” — the genuine classical word behind Italian come, Spanish cómo, and French comment, which went one step further and double-marked ”manner *quōmodo*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 26, p. 89

I**“I am” — the verb every sentence leans on, and the one whose forms English still shares outright** *sum, esse*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I am twenty years old” — literally “I am, having been born, twenty years [so far]”; NEITHER Romance’s “have” NOR Germanic’s “be my years” — Latin used a THIRD construction, later abandoned *vīgintī annōs nātus sum*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 14, p. 51

“I answer” — literally “I pledge back”, from the verb Romans used for a solemn promise, and the reason a husband is a**spouse** *respondeō, respondēre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 43, p. 171

“I ask” — a verb probably built on “stretching straight out”, and a cousin of regal, direct and right *rogō, rogāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 139

“I bring, I carry” — one verb built out of two unrelated roots, and the parent of transfer, refer, prefer, differ, offer and**suffer** *ferō, ferre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 42, p. 163

“I buy” — a verb that once meant simply “I take”, which is the only reason redeem, example and premium mean what they**do** *emō, emere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 43, p. 171

I can — potis plus sum, and the verb that will not sit**still** *possum, posse*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 49, p. 209

“I close” — the word English calls *close*, and the fourth of four *claudō, claudere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 41, p. 155

“I come” — a Latin verb that really is the same inherited word as English come *veniō, venīre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

I do not know — and the rule the whole chapter turns on: *nōn* stands in front of the verb *nesciō, nescīre*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 48, p. 201

I drink — the verb inside beverage, bib and imbibe *bibō, bibere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 54, p. 249

I eat — and the infinitive that collides with to be *edō, esse*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 54, p. 249

“I get” — two verbs, each one a prefix bolted onto a verb you already know, and each one bent out of shape by the join *accipiō, obtineō*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 42, p. 163

“I give” — the last of the chapter’s eight verbs, and the one that gave English data, date, tradition and dose *dō, dare*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I go” — the shortest verb in Latin, whose bare stem is a single vowel *eō, īre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I have” — a verb that looks exactly like its English translation and is not related to it at all *habeō, habēre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I hear” — the verb inside audio, audience and audit, and, less obviously, inside obey *audiō, audīre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 40, p. 147

“I help” — the verb hiding inside English aid, aide and adjutant, and no relation to juvenile *adiuvō, adiuvāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 139

“I know” — one of Latin’s two verbs for knowing, and the one that gave English science and nice *sciō, scīre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I love” — the chapter’s fourth verb, the first thing generations of pupils ever chanted, and the word inside enemy *amō, amāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 139

“I meet” — two verbs for meeting, each one a prefix on a verb you already know, and the verb hiding inside a phrase from chapter 21 *conveniō, occurro*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 43, p. 171

“I open” — half of a matched pair, built from one root with two opposite prefixes *aperiō, aperīre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 41, p. 155

“I play” — a small verb with an outsized English family, most of which is about being fooled rather than about play *lūdō, lūdere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 42, p. 163

“I read” — a verb that first meant “to gather”, which is why English got collect, elegant, lecture and legible from it *legō, legere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 38, p. 131

“I run” — the verb inside current, curriculum, courier and corridor, and, by way of a Celtic wagon, inside car *currō, currere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 41, p. 155

“I say” — a verb that originally meant “point out”, which is why English got both dictionary and teach from it *dīcō, dīcere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I see” — the widest root in this chapter, because seeing and knowing were once one idea *videō, vidēre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 117

“I sit” — the verb that is English *sit* by descent and English *session* by loan, and the clearest case of the difference *sedeō, sedēre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 40, p. 147

“I sleep” — the verb behind dormitory and dormant, and the one word English may only look as though it borrowed *dormiō, dormīre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 40, p. 147

“I stand” — the shortest verb in the chapter and the most productive in English, and the fourth of four *stō, stāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 40, p. 147

“I take” — the verb the habeō lesson promised, and the true relative of English have *capiō, capere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 139

I think” — the verb of *cōgitō ergō sum*, built from a word meaning “to shake together *cōgitō, cōgitāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 38, p. 131

“I understand” — literally *inter* plus *legō*, “to read between”, and the ancestor of intellect and intelligence *intellegō, intellegere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 38, p. 131

“I wait” — to wait, in Latin, is to look out for something, and the four verbs of this chapter together *expectō, expectāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 42, p. 163

“I walk” — the verb behind ambulance, preamble and the pram, and a rare case where the front half is clear and the back half is not *ambulō, ambulāre*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 41, p. 155

I want — and the root inside voluntary, benevolent and will itself *volō, velle*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 49, p. 209

“I write” — a verb whose root means “to scratch”, and the fourth of this chapter’s four *scribō, scribere*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 38, p. 131

“it is a pleasure to have met you” — an attested Plautine phrase that can fill a conversational slot for which Classical Latin has no single fixed idiom *volup est convēnisse*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 21, p. 77

Iterum, Magister, Discipulus, Schola, Liber

chapter topic; Chapter 53, p. 241

L

Light, Shadow, and Going to Sleep

chapter topic; Chapter 46, p. 189

light — the root of lucid, translucent and Lucifer, and a cousin of English light itself *lūx, lūcis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 46, p. 189

M

Mārcus or Mārcō? — a real classical variation

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 20, p. 73

“midday, noon” — the same medius diēs you already know, contracted into one word; Romans split the day around IT (ante/post merīdiem), not into a separate colloquial “afternoon” the way Spanish’s tarde or French’s après-midi do *merīdiēs*

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 35, p. 111

milk — the root of lactose, lettuce and, at one remove, of the Milky Way itself *lac, lactis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 47, p. 195

money — and the cattle it is named after *pecūnia, pecūniae*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 51, p. 225

Months

chapter topic; Chapter 11, p. 43

Morning

chapter topic; Chapter 31, p. 99

“morning, early” — the word already hiding inside *dē māne* (the source of French *demain*, Italian *domani*, and Catalan *demà*, all rebuilt “tomorrow” from this phrase) and, without the *dē*-, the direct base of Spanish *mañana* too, now standing alone *māne*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 31, p. 99

my — the possessive the name lesson did without *meus*, *mea*, *meum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 52, p. 233

N**Nescio, Male, Malus, Sed, Aut**

chapter topic; Chapter 48, p. 201

Nice to Meet You

chapter topic; Chapter 21, p. 77

Night

chapter topic; Chapter 29, p. 95

“night” — the word already hiding inside *media nox* (‘midnight’), one of the most rock-solid PIE roots in the whole

Indo-European family *nox*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 29, p. 95

ninth — and the hour that turned into noon *nōnus*, *nōna*, *nōnum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 56, p. 265

Noon and Afternoon

chapter topic; Chapter 35, p. 111

Noon and Midnight

chapter topic; Chapter 12, p. 47

noon and midnight — the source phrase daughters kept whole, wore down unevenly, or eroded almost entirely *medius diēs*, *media*

nox

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 12, p. 47

Numbers Eleven to Twenty

chapter topic; Chapter 16, p. 59

Numbers One to Ten

chapter topic; Chapter 2, p. 11

Numerī Ōrdinis

chapter topic; Chapter 55, p. 257

O

one to five — the Roman originals that became every Romance

number *ūnus duo trēs quattuor quīnque*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 11

or — and the second or, which asks a different question *aut*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 48, p. 201

P

Please

chapter topic; Chapter 3, p. 15

please (literally “I ask, I beg”) *quaesō*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 3, p. 15

pluit, calor, sol — three pieces of weather language

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 15, p. 55

Possum, Volo, Qui, Et, Quando

chapter topic; Chapter 49, p. 209

R

Reading — Objects, Places, and a Day

chapter topic; Chapter 59, p. 283

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

chapter topic; Chapter 58, p. 279

red (rock-solid) and blue (surprisingly shaky) — Latin’s clearest

color word, and one of its weakest *ruber, caeruleus*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 23

S

salt — a cousin of English salt, and the word a Roman soldier’s

salary was named for *sāl, salis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 47, p. 195

Salt, Honey, Milk, Egg, Fish

chapter topic; Chapter 47, p. 195

salvē — copy one greeting with help

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

salvē — look, hide, write, check

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

salvē — the greeting that does not watch the clock

culture and usage topic; explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 36, p. 113

Saturday and Sunday — Rome’s own pagan names, and how**Christianity later renamed them** *diēs Saturnī, diēs Sōlis*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 5, p. 19

Seasons

chapter topic; Chapter 9, p. 35

second — and the verb hiding inside it *secundus, secunda, secundum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 55, p. 257

“see you later/soon” — a genuine change of pace from the last few lessons: this one IS solidly attested, twice, in Cicero’s own letters *propediem tē vidēbō*

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 24, p. 85

See You Soon

chapter topic; Chapter 24, p. 85

See You Tomorrow

chapter topic; Chapter 25, p. 87

“see you tomorrow” — built from two genuinely classical pieces (crās, “tomorrow,” and vidēbō, already met last lesson) using the exact same pattern as the attested propediem tē vidēbō, though this specific combination isn’t itself pulled from one surviving letter *crās tē vidēbō*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 25, p. 87

seventh — the ending wears the vowel down *septimus, septima, septimum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 56, p. 265

Sextus ad Decimum

chapter topic; Chapter 56, p. 265

six to ten — and the four that got frozen into the calendar *sex septem octō novem decem*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 2, p. 11

sixth — and the nap named after the sixth hour *sextus, sexta, sextum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 56, p. 265

sleep — the word under insomnia and somnolent, and a cousin of**Sanskrit svapna** *somnus, somnī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 46, p. 189

Sorry

chapter topic; Chapter 4, p. 17

T**Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving**

chapter topic; Chapter 39, p. 139

Telling Time

chapter topic; Chapter 13, p. 49

tenth — and the tax that took one in ten *decimus, decima, decimum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 56, p. 265

thank you (lit. “I give thanks to you”) *grātiās (tibi) agō*

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

that, near you — the middle point, and the one Latin used to

sneer with *iste, ista, istud*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 50, p. 217

that, over there — the far point, and the word that became the

Romance article *ille, illa, illud*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 50, p. 217

the book — and the bark it was written on *liber, librī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 53, p. 241

the doctor — from measuring, not from healing *medicus, medicī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 51, p. 225

the door or gate — and the reason a harbour, a porch and a

portal are all the same word *porta, portae*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 44, p. 177

the ear — and the reason a Roman listened by obeying *auris,*

auris

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 54, p. 249

the earth — dry land as opposed to sea, and the root under

terrain, terrace and Mediterranean *terra, terrae*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 45, p. 183

the egg — a cousin of English egg, with two sound changes that

hide the relationship completely *ōvum, ōvī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 47, p. 195

the eye — and the eye already hiding inside a word you

know *oculus, oculī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 54, p. 249

the fish — and the single clearest demonstration in this book of

the sound law linking Latin to English *piscis, piscis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 47, p. 195

the foot — the clearest Grimm’s Law pair in the book, and the

last word of the tranche *pēs, pedis*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 54, p. 249

the four seasons — and why Romance languages often skipped

the plain noun for an adjective phrase instead *vēr, aestās,*

autumnus, hiems

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 9, p. 35

the friend — from the verb to love, and the word the bread

lesson pointed at and did not give *amīcus, amīcī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 51, p. 225

- the garden — an enclosed piece of ground, and a true blood relative of English yard and garden** *hortus, hortī*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 44, p. 177
- the hand — a rare feminine noun in an overwhelmingly masculine group of Latin words** *manus*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 8, p. 31
- the head — the word French abandoned, but Spanish and English kept working hard** *caput*
explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 8, p. 31
- the hearth — the fire in the middle of the house, and the reason a lens has a focus** *focus, focī*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 44, p. 177
- The House, and Who Is Inside It**
chapter topic; Chapter 44, p. 177
- the house — the building a family lives in, and the root under domestic, dome and dominate** *domus, domūs*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 44, p. 177
- the moon — the same root as lux, worn down to mean 'the shining one'** *lūna, lūnae*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 46, p. 189
- the pupil — from learning, and the reason discipline means what it does** *discipulus, discipulī*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 53, p. 241
- The same writing, with a clock**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 61, p. 293
- the school — a Greek word that first meant leisure** *schola, scholae*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 53, p. 241
- the sea — the word that finishes Mediterranean and names every marine thing in English** *mare, maris*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 45, p. 183
- the shade or shadow — and the reason a little shade is called an umbrella** *umbra, umbrae*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 46, p. 189
- the sky, and the heavens — the word under celestial, and under a ceiling painted like the sky** *caelum, caelī*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 45, p. 183
- the soldier — the noun every Latin narrative turns on** *mīles, mīlitis*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 51, p. 225
- the star — a cousin of English star, and the word inside constellation and disaster** *stēlla, stēllae*
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 46, p. 189

the teacher — the greater one, against minister, the lesser *magister, magistri*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 53, p. 241

the twelve months — and the two ORIGINAL names, Quintilis and Sextilis, before Rome renamed them *Iānuārius, Februārius, Mārtius, Aprīlis, Māius, Iūnius, Quīntilis, Sextilis, September, Octōber, November, December*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 11, p. 43

the wall — the one that keeps things out, not the one that divides a room *mūrus, mūrī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 44, p. 177

the weekdays (Monday–Friday) — the full, un-worn-down planet-god phrases *diēs Lūnae, Mārtis, Mercuriū, Iovis, Veneris*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 5, p. 19

the wind — and a true Germanic cousin, with the sound change that proves it *ventus, ventī*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 45, p. 183

there — the place word the corpus has gone fifty chapters without *ibi*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 50, p. 217

Thinking, Reading, Writing

chapter topic; Chapter 38, p. 131

third — the first ordinal with its own number visible inside it *tertius, tertia, tertium*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 55, p. 257

this, here by me — the near point of a three-way system Spanish still keeps *hic, haec, hoc*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 50, p. 217

U

Ubi, Cur, Quia, Meus, Tuus

chapter topic; Chapter 52, p. 233

Useful phrase, honest context

culture and usage topic; explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 21, p. 77

V

valeō and valē — answer and farewell from one verb

etymology topic; Chapter 19, p. 69

W

Walking, Running, Opening, Closing

chapter topic; Chapter 41, p. 155

water and wine — one word French wore down to almost

nothing, one that barely changed anywhere *aqua, vīnum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 10, p. 39

Water, Wine, and Bread

chapter topic; Chapter 10, p. 39

Weather

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 55

weather or storm — a derivative of tempus that specialized for weather in Classical Latin, while tempus itself meant only time; later tempus widened to weather and tempestās narrowed to

storm *tempestās*

Chapter 15, p. 55

Well

chapter topic; Chapter 27, p. 91

“well” — a morphologically simple inheritance: French bien and Spanish bien are just bene plus one regular sound change (the same short-e-diphthongizes-to-ie shift as mel→miel), with no extra grafted-on suffix, unlike quōmodo’s more roundabout

Romance history *bene*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 27, p. 91

what’s your name? / my name is... — the genuinely classical dative of possession, literally what is the name to you? *quid tibi nōmen est? / mihi nōmen est...*

Chapter 20, p. 73

when — as a question and as the hinge of a clause *quandō*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 49, p. 209

where — the question the quōmodo lesson left half-finished *ubi*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 52, p. 233

who, which — the commonest word in Latin prose, and the one that joins two sentences into one *quī, quae, quod*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 49, p. 209

why — and the two words that answer it *cūr*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 52, p. 233

why no two-word good-afternoon phrase exists — Latin has no simplex afternoon noun, and a grammatical three-word

workaround is not attested as a greeting *salvē (post merīdiem)*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 36, p. 113

Writing — Four Lines, And The Word That Has A Twin

chapter topic; Chapter 62, p. 295

Writing — My Own Line

chapter topic; Chapter 60, p. 291

Writing — With A Clock

chapter topic; Chapter 61, p. 293

Y**yes / no (lit. “thus” / “not”)** *ita / nōn*

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

You’re Welcome

chapter topic; Chapter 23, p. 83

“you’re welcome” — another honest gap: Classical Latin has no single fixed reply to thanks, and nihil est (“it’s nothing”) is a modern conversational-Latin convention built from genuinely real words, not a specific classical citation for this exact job *nihil est*

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 23, p. 83

You, Singular and Plural

chapter topic; Chapter 22, p. 81

you (singular) / you (plural) — a PURELY grammatical number distinction in Classical Latin, with no politeness dimension at all; the polite-vous pattern (a Late Latin innovation) is vōs’s own direct descendant, unlike German’s Sie, which solved the same politeness problem independently via a completely different pronoun (3rd-person plural, not 2nd) *tū / vōs*

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 22, p. 81

your — and the pair of forms the tū / vōs lesson promised *tuus, tua, tuum*

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 52, p. 233

Your own line — the first writing with no model

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 60, p. 291