

*to revolt, promising that  
lp them. When the battle  
, however, Mettius helps  
e Romans nor the colonies,  
draws to see which side will  
ous. When Tullus and the  
in, they invite the Albans to  
iving ceremony. Tullus offers  
erent rewards to the Albans  
leader.*

# INTRODUCTION TO LATIN

**Revised First Edition**

**SUSAN C. SHELMEARDINE**

*pāx Albāna mānsit.  
ulgī, quod tribus  
fortūna pūblica  
erat, vānum ingenium  
corrupit, et quōniam  
silia nōn bene ēvēnerant,  
onciliāre populārium  
pēpit. igitur ut prius in  
em, sīc in pāce bellum  
quia suae cīvitātī animī  
nōn virōs bellum parat et*



---

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SUSAN C. SHELMERDINE

*Focus* Publishing  
R. Pullins Company  
Newburyport, MA  
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**Introduction To Latin**

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## Introduction to Latin

Preface .....	ix
Map of Italy .....	xii
The Latin Alphabet and Pronunciation.....	1
Chapter One .....	5
Introduction to the Sentence	
Parts of Speech	
What Different Words Do	
Sentence Patterns: Intransitive, Transitive	
The Verb	
First and Second Conjugations	
Present Active Indicative and Infinitive	
Principal Parts	
Indicative Uses: Statements, Questions	
Infinitive Use: Complementary Infinitive	
Chapter Two .....	13
Latin Cases	
Nominative and Accusative Case Uses	
The Noun	
First and Second Declensions	
Gender	
Dictionary Entry	
The Conjunction	
A Note on Reading Latin: Using Expectations	
Chapter Three .....	21
Genitive Case	
Uses: Possession, Part of the Whole	
Dative Case	
Uses: Indirect Object, Reference	
Expectations	
Sentence Pattern: Intransitive Verbs used with a Dative	
Chapter Four.....	27
The Adverb; Adverbial Modification	
Ablative Case	
Use: Means/Instrument	
The Preposition: Uses with the Accusative and Ablative	
Expressions of Place	
Word Order	

Chapter Five.....	33
The Adjective: First and Second Declensions	
Agreement	
The Gap	
Present Indicative and Infinitive of <b>sum</b>	
Sentence Pattern: Linking	
More Uses of the Ablative:	
Accompaniment	
Manner	
Reading Chapter I.....	41
Map of Troy and the Aegean.....	42
Chapter Six .....	45
Imperfect and Future Active Indicative	
First and Second Conjugations	
Commands	
First and Second Conjugation Imperatives	
Vocative Case	
First and Second Declensions	
Chapter Seven.....	51
Third Declension Nouns	
Imperfect and Future of <b>sum</b>	
Dative of Possession	
<i>i</i> -Stem Noun Reference Section	
Chapter Eight .....	59
Perfect Active Indicative and Infinitive	
First and Second Conjugations	
Historic Present	
Forms of <b>possum</b>	
Infinitive Use: As a Noun	
Chapter Nine .....	65
Third Conjugation	
Present Active Indicative and Infinitive	
Present Active Imperative	
The Pronoun: Part 1	
Personal pronouns: <b>ego, tū</b>	
Chapter Ten .....	71
The Pronoun: Part 2	
Demonstrative pronouns: <b>is, ea, id; hic, haec, hoc; ille, illa, illud</b>	
Special Adjectives in <b>-ius</b>	
Sentence Pattern: Factitive	
Reading Chapter II.....	79



Chapter Eleven.....	83
Third Conjugation: Imperfect and Future Active Indicative	
Numerals	
Expressions of Cause	
Chapter Twelve .....	89
Third Declension Adjectives	
Expressions of Time	
Chapter Thirteen.....	95
Fourth Conjugation:	
Present Active Indicative and Infinitive	
Present Active Imperative	
The Pronoun: Part 3	
Interrogative pronouns	
Reflexive pronouns	
Possessive Adjectives and Possession Using <b>eius</b>	
Ablative of Specification / Respect	
Map of Caesar's Gaul.....	100
Chapter Fourteen .....	103
Fourth Conjugation: Imperfect and Future Active Indicative	
Accusative of Degree and Extent	
Chapter Fifteen .....	109
Third and Fourth Conjugations	
Perfect Active Indicative	
Pluperfect and Future Perfect Active Indicative (All conjugations)	
Perfect Active Infinitives (All conjugations)	
Chapter Sixteen.....	115
Fourth Declension	
Fifth Declension	
Locative Case	
Reading Chapter III .....	123
Chapter Seventeen.....	127
Present, Imperfect, and Future Passive Indicative (All conjugations)	
Present Passive Indicative	
Sentence Pattern: Passive	
Ablative of Agent	
Chapter Eighteen .....	137
Dependent Clauses (1) - Adverbial	
Time, Cause, Condition, Place	
Dative with Adjectives	
Chapter Nineteen.....	143
The Pronoun: Part 4	
Relative Pronouns	
Dependent Clauses (2)	
Adjectival	
Noun	

Chapter Twenty.....	151
Perfect, Pluperfect, and Future Perfect Passive Indicative (All conjugations)	
Perfect Passive Indicative (All conjugations)	
Paradigm of <b>vīs, vīs, f.</b>	
Reading Chapter IV .....	157
Chapter Twenty-One.....	161
Irregular verbs: <b>volō, nōlō, mālō</b>	
Negative Commands with <b>nōlō</b>	
Infinitive Noun Clauses (1): Objective Infinitive	
Chapter Twenty-Two.....	167
Review of Infinitive Forms	
Future Infinitives (Active and Passive)	
Infinitive Noun Clauses (2): Indirect Statement	
Tenses of the Infinitive in Indirect Statement	
Chapter Twenty-Three.....	175
Intensive Pronouns: <b>ipse, idem</b>	
Indefinite Pronoun: <b>quīdam</b>	
Deponent Verbs; Semi-Deponent Verbs	
Special Intransitive Sentence Pattern: Verbs used with an Ablative	
Chapter Twenty-Four .....	183
Participles	
Participle Uses	
Ablative Absolute	
Chapter Twenty-Five .....	193
Irregular verbs	
<b>eō</b>	
<b>ferō</b>	
Reading Chapter V.....	201
Chapter Twenty-Six.....	205
Comparison of Adjectives	
Comparison of Adverbs	
Chapter Twenty-Seven.....	213
Present and Perfect Active Subjunctive	
Subjunctive of <b>sum</b>	
Independent Uses of the Subjunctive	
Exhortation / Command, Wish, Doubt	
Chapter Twenty-Eight .....	221
Imperfect and Pluperfect Active Subjunctive	
Use of Tenses in the Subjunctive	
Dependent Uses of the Subjunctive (1 - Adverbial Clauses)	
Purpose, Result, Circumstance, Cause, Concession	

Chapter Twenty-Nine.....	233
Passive Subjunctive (all tenses)	
Dependent Uses of the Subjunctive (2 - Noun Clauses)	
Indirect Question	
Indirect Command	
Noun Result	
<b>fiō</b>	
Chapter Thirty .....	241
Subjunctive of <b>possum</b>	
Dependent Uses of the Subjunctive (3)	
Clauses of Fearing	
Conditions	
Reading Chapter VI .....	249
Chapter Thirty-One .....	253
The Gerund	
The Gerundive	
Passive Periphrastic	
Chapter Thirty-Two .....	261
Points for Future Study	
Supine	
<b>ut</b> + Indicative	
More on Relative Pronouns	
Connecting Relative, Clauses of Characteristic, Clauses of Purpose	
Additional Uses of the Subjunctive	
Potential, Subordinate Clauses in Indirect Speech	
Impersonal Constructions	
List of Latin Sources.....	271
Morphology Reference Section.....	277
Vocabulary by Chapter.....	299
English-Latin Vocabulary .....	319
Latin-English Vocabulary .....	329
List of Intransitive Verbs.....	343
Index .....	345

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In memory of  
Gerda M. Seligson and Glenn M. Knudsvig,  
teachers, scholars, friends

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## Preface

There are many textbooks for learning Latin, and different approaches have worked for different students over the years. This book is primarily intended for college level students who do not have the luxury of time to explore the language through a true “reading” method and still gain exposure to the ancient authors. The aims of this book can be stated briefly:

- to provide a streamlined text that can be completed in one year, even for courses which meet only three days a week
- to provide brief explanations of English grammar as needed within the text itself so students will have an easy reference point for the Latin material
- to provide “real Latin” readings early and often, in the form of both sentences and short passages. In all but one or two cases the Readings in each chapter are unconnected to those in the previous chapter, so they can be easily used or skipped as each instructor wishes
- to offer a variety of different kinds of exercises, especially in the early chapters
- to get out of the way of the instructor. Rather than trying to explain every nuance of the grammar in detail, this text offers concise explanations and allows the instructor to expand those explanations as he or she wishes
- not to overwhelm the student. Some texts provide so much explanation, study hints, cultural sidebars, and the like that students have trouble distinguishing between the “need to know” and the “nice to know” material. This text tries to focus on the “need to know” material.

A few words of explanation about the style of the text and the presentation of vocabulary may also be in order. The writing is intentionally informal because college students have said they prefer this. Chapter Vocabulary is placed at the end of each chapter where it can be found easily, although students should be encouraged to memorize it before doing the chapter exercises. This vocabulary provides a core of common words for students to memorize and has been limited to a manageable 20-25 words in most cases, with the total number of words indicated in parentheses. Full listings of all forms are given in the Chapter Vocabulary and in the Latin to English Vocabulary at the end of the book. Intransitive verbs, with the exception of **sum** and **eo** with its compounds in Chapter 25, are listed without a fourth principal part to help students distinguish them from transitive verbs. A complete list of the intransitive verbs with the future active participle in the fourth principal part slot is included at the end of the Latin to English Vocabulary. Vocabulary help for Readings and Practice Sentences uses abbreviated listings of the kind students are likely to see in dictionaries and notes accompanying upper level texts. It is important that students learn basic vocabulary meanings and practice the skill of deciding what meaning is appropriate in different contexts. Therefore this book does not annotate many idioms or include many specialized meanings for Latin words. Words which can reasonably be guessed in the Readings and Practice Sentences are printed in bold to encourage students to make informed guesses.

This book uses traditional terms for the most part and avoids jargon wherever possible, but it also tries to incorporate advances in language pedagogy pioneered by several generations of scholars at the University of Michigan. So readers will occasionally see an unfamiliar but very useful term, such as Gap or Expectations, and will benefit from several types of exercises developed at Michigan, such as the Dictionary Practice exercises in the Reading Chapters. My debt to my own teachers and colleagues, Gerda M. Seligson and Glenn M. Knudsvig, will be obvious to many and is an honor to acknowledge here, even though this is not a book they would have written.

My colleagues at The University of North Carolina, Greensboro offered kind and helpful comments on many drafts of this text. My grateful thanks go to them, as well as colleagues at Bowdoin College, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Wake Forest University, and students at all four institutions for their willingness to try the text in its early stages. They have all helped to make the book better, as have colleagues elsewhere who offered suggestions along the way. John Traupman provided invaluable help with his careful reading of the final draft. Special thanks also go to Cynthia Shelmerdine for her help on the index, to Maura Heyn for the pictures and to Jeffrey Patton for creating the maps.

*Note:* The short narrative used in exercise 99 was adapted from part of a now defunct web page, so I am unable to give proper credit to the original author.



Italy

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# The Latin Alphabet and Pronunciation

## A. The Alphabet

The Latin alphabet has 24 letters, the same letters as in the English alphabet, but without **j** and **w**. Latin vowels are the same as in English: **a, e, i, o, u** and **y**. The letter **i** was used as both a vowel and a consonant; before another vowel in the same syllable, it is the consonant and is written as a **j** in some books: *Iūlius* = *Julius* (yule-ee-us), *adiuvō* (ad-you-oh).

## Pronunciation

## B. Vowels

Vowels in Latin are either long or short by nature. Long vowels are marked with a macron (a long mark - so called from the Greek for “long,” *makros*).

LONG		SHORT	
ā	father	a	alike
ē	they	e	pet
ī	unique	i	it
ō	obey	o	off
ū	rude	u	put

**y** occurs in words borrowed from Greek and is pronounced like French **tu**, a sound that doesn't occur in English dialects, but can be produced by putting your lips in place to say “ooo,” and saying “eee” instead.

## C. Diphthongs

Two vowels pronounced as one sound are called diphthongs. Latin has six diphthongs which are pronounced as follows:

ae	like the <b>ai</b> in <b>aisle</b>	<b>haec, aequor</b>
au	like the <b>ou</b> in <b>out</b>	<b>laudō, aut</b>
ei	like the <b>ei</b> in <b>weigh</b>	<b>deinde</b>
eu	<b>eh-oo</b> as in <b>feud</b>	<b>heu</b>
oe	like the <b>oi</b> in <b>soil</b>	<b>proelium, coepit</b>
ui	<b>oo-ee</b> as in <b>tweed</b>	<b>quī, huic</b>

## D. Consonants

Most Latin consonants are pronounced like their English counterparts. Note the following additional points:

<b>c</b> is always a hard sound like the <b>c</b> in <b>cat</b> , never as in <b>cent</b>	<b>c</b> ēna, <b>c</b> um
<b>g</b> is always a hard sound like the <b>g</b> in <b>goat</b> , never as in <b>gentle</b>	<b>g</b> lōria, <b>g</b> ēns
<b>i</b> ( <b>j</b> ) as a consonant is always like the <b>y</b> in <b>yellow</b>	<b>i</b> am
<b>r</b> is produced by tapping the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, and probably sounded like the <b>r</b> in <b>pearl</b> pronounced with a Scottish accent	<b>R</b> ōma, <b>f</b> ortūna
<b>s</b> is always like the <b>s</b> in <b>sea</b> , never as in <b>please</b>	<b>s</b> enātus, <b>pu</b> ellās
<b>t</b> is always like the <b>t</b> in <b>time</b> , never as in <b>nation</b>	<b>r</b> atiō
<b>v</b> sounds like English <b>w</b> in <b>wine</b> (not <b>vine</b> )	<b>v</b> īnum, <b>v</b> ērītās
<b>x</b> sounds like English <b>ks</b> ; like the <b>x</b> in <b>extinct</b> (not <b>exert</b> )	<b>ex</b>

## Combinations

<b>bs</b> is pronounced like <b>ps</b> in <b>eclipse</b>	<b>ab</b> stulit, <b>urb</b> s
<b>gu</b> , <b>qu</b> sound like <b>gw</b> , <b>qw</b> and the <b>u</b> is not counted as a vowel	<b>lingua</b> ; <b>inquit</b> , <b>qu</b> ī
<b>ch</b> sounds like English <b>k</b> in <b>backhand</b> , (not <b>cheese</b> )	<b>chorus</b> , <b>pulcher</b>
<b>ph</b> originally sounded like the <b>ph</b> in <b>shepherd</b> (not <b>philosophy</b> ) - but over time came to be pronounced like our <i>f</i> :	<b>philosophia</b>
<b>th</b> sounds like the <b>th</b> in <b>hothouse</b> (not <b>theater</b> )	<b>the</b> ātrum
<b>double consonants</b> were pronounced as two distinct sounds with a slight pause between the two: (e.g.) <b>out-take</b>	<b>ecce</b> , <b>puella</b> , <b>terra</b> , <b>mittō</b>

## E. Syllables

There are no silent letters in Latin, so a Latin word has as many syllables as it has vowels and/or diphthongs:

vē-ri-tā-te, con-ci-li-um	4
for-tū-na, pu-el-la	3
lau-dō, er-rat	2
mē, quī	1

Words are divided as follows:

- between two vowels, or a vowel and a diphthong:  
ā-ēr, vi-ae
- between double consonants (usually):  
an-nus, mag-nus
- a single consonant between two vowels goes with the second vowel:  
a-mor, me-mo-ri-a



## Syllable Quantity

Knowing the quantity of a syllable is important for accenting a word properly and for understanding verses in poetry later on.

A syllable is long by nature if it contains a long vowel or a diphthong:

Rō-ma, lau-dem

A syllable is usually long by position if it has a short vowel followed by **x** or by two (or more) consonants:

op-tō, sa-pi-en-ti-a

The letter **h** is not counted as a consonant when determining the quantity of a syllable.

## F. Accent

A Latin word is accented either on the second or third syllable from the end of the word.

Words of two syllables are accented on the next to last syllable:

a'-mor  
du'-cem

Words of more than two syllables are accented on the next to last syllable if it is long:

mo-nē'-mus  
for-tū'-na

otherwise on the third to last syllable:

re'-gi-tur  
a-gri'-co-la

Some little words, called *enclitics* (from the Greek because they “lean on” the preceding word), are added to and pronounced with other words. The most common enclitics are: **-que, -ve, -ne**. When one of these is added to another word, the accent is always on the syllable before the enclitic: po-pu-lus'-que, de-a'-ve.



Amphitrite on a Sea Horse. Mosaic from Ostia, 2nd c. A.D.

---

# CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Sentence  
Parts of Speech  
What Different Words Do  
Sentence Patterns: Intransitive, Transitive  
The Verb: First and Second Conjugations  
Present Active Indicative and Infinitive  
Principal Parts  
Indicative Uses: Statements, Questions  
Infinitive Use: Complementary Infinitive

## 1. The Sentence

A sentence in Latin, as in English, is made up of words which express a complete thought. The simplest form of a sentence includes only a subject and a verb:

The farmer works.            They walk.

In order to understand sentences in English, we depend on knowing some rules of word order, for example: subjects come before verbs. Latin, however, uses a system which adds different endings onto certain words to make their function and meaning clear, so you will need to learn those endings before you can read Latin. You will also need to understand the different types of words which make up a sentence and what each of those words does.

## 2. Parts of Speech

Latin does not have an article (*the, a, an*), but otherwise has the same parts of speech as English:

PART OF SPEECH	DEFINITION	ENGLISH EXAMPLES
• <b>verb</b>	a <b>verb</b> expresses existence, action, occurrence	is, hits, teaches, happens
• <b>noun</b>	a <b>noun</b> names a <i>person, place, or thing</i> (including an <i>idea</i> or a <i>quality</i> )	farmer, house, truth, Frank
• <b>adjective</b>	an <b>adjective</b> adds to (modifies) the meaning of a noun or pronoun to specify a quality	large, old, good, true

PART OF SPEECH	DEFINITION	ENGLISH EXAMPLES
• <b>adverb</b>	an <b>adverb</b> usually modifies a verb, giving information about time, place, manner or degree	today, often, here, well
• <b>preposition</b>	a <b>preposition</b> connects a noun or pronoun to another word and shows a relationship between the two	from, into, with, by
• <b>pronoun</b>	a <b>pronoun</b> substitutes for a noun, referring to something without naming it	he, who, it, this, that
• <b>conjunction</b>	a <b>conjunction</b> connects words or groups of words	and, but, if, when
• <b>interjection</b>	an <b>interjection</b> is an exclamation	oh!, alas, huh?

Each of the different parts of speech just listed has a function in the sentence which will be the focus of this and future chapters. Chapter vocabulary will be listed by part of speech. This chapter includes only verbs and nouns.

### 3. Function (What Words Do)

The **subject** of a sentence is the person or thing the sentence is about. To identify the subject, use the verb of the sentence and ask “who/what \_\_\_\_s?” — the answer will be the subject. It is usually a noun or pronoun.

The woman praises the boy. > who praises? > woman = subject

The **verb** of a sentence expresses what is being said about the subject (an action, occurrence, etc.). The same term, “verb,” names both the part of speech and its function.

The woman praises the boy. > what about the woman? > she praises = verb

The **direct object** of a sentence is the person or thing that receives the action of the verb directly. Like the subject, it is usually a noun or pronoun.

The woman praises the boy. > who receives praise? > the boy = direct object

### 4. Sentence Patterns

Reading Latin (or any language) becomes easier if you know what to expect in a sentence. It is therefore useful to recognize certain common sentence patterns and their core parts. This chapter will teach you two common patterns, and future chapters will add four more. While you don't need to know the names of these patterns to read Latin, it will be easier to talk about them if you learn the terms in bold below. Notice that each “sentence pattern” is really determined by the verb in the sentence.

This chapter began with a sentence pattern which included only a **subject** and a **verb**. This is the **intransitive** pattern:

The farmer works.	Subject = farmer	Verb = works
They walk.	Subject = they	Verb = walk

Verbs which do not take a direct object are called **intransitive verbs**.

Another type of sentence includes a **subject**, a **verb** and a **direct object (d.o.)**.

This is the **transitive** pattern:

The woman has a rose.	Subject = woman	Verb = has	D.O. = rose
We call the farmer.	Subject = we	Verb = call	D.O. = farmer

Verbs which take a direct object are called **transitive verbs**.

## 5. The Verb

Verbs in Latin fall into four regular groups, called **conjugations**. Each conjugation has a common set of endings which are added to the **stem** of the verb. The verb stem carries the meaning of the verb and a characteristic vowel:

1ST CONJUGATION [-ā-]		2ND CONJUGATION [-ē-]	
<b>amā-</b>	love	<b>docē-</b>	teach
<b>laudā-</b>	praise	<b>vidē-</b>	see

The endings are called **personal endings** because they carry information about who the subject of the verb is. These endings are traditionally identified by **person** (first, second, or third) and **number** (singular or plural) as follows:

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
<i>1st person</i>	<b>-ō</b>	I	<b>-mus</b>	we
<i>2nd person</i>	<b>-s</b>	you	<b>-tis</b>	you, you all
<i>3rd person</i>	<b>-t</b>	he, she, it	<b>-nt</b>	they

Verb forms with personal endings are called **finite** forms (from the Latin for “limit,” *finis*) because they are limited by identifying the subject.

Verbs are also identified by

- Tense - when an action happens (e.g., present, future)
- Voice - whether the subject is doing the action (active) or receiving the action (passive)
- Mood - whether the verb is a simple statement or question (indicative), or a command (imperative), etc.

These items will be discussed in future chapters.

This chapter introduces **present active indicative** verb forms of the first and second conjugations:

	1ST CONJUGATION		2ND CONJUGATION	
<i>1st sg.</i>	<b>amō</b>	I love	<b>doceō</b>	I teach
<i>2nd sg.</i>	<b>amās</b>	You love	<b>docēs</b>	You teach
<i>3rd sg.</i>	<b>amat</b>	He, she it loves	<b>docet</b>	He, she it teaches
<i>1st pl.</i>	<b>amāmus</b>	We love	<b>docēmus</b>	We teach
<i>2nd pl.</i>	<b>amātis</b>	You (all) love	<b>docētis</b>	You (all) teach
<i>3rd pl.</i>	<b>amant</b>	They love	<b>docent</b>	They teach

Notice that the personal endings are the same for both conjugations and are added directly to the stem of the verb in each form. In the “I” form (first person singular) of the first conjugation, the stem vowel **-a-** contracts with the personal ending to produce the form **amō** rather than **amaō**.

Two important points should be noted here:

- The present tense can be translated “I love,” “I am loving,” or “I do love.”
- Because the ending on the verb tells you who the subject is, Latin does not have to use a separate word for the subject as we do in English: **vident** = *they see*.

The **infinitive** is a form of the verb which is not limited (*infinitus*) by a personal ending. Here are the present active infinitive verb forms of the first and second conjugations:

1ST CONJUGATION		2ND CONJUGATION	
<b>amāre</b>	to love	<b>docēre</b>	to teach
<b>laudāre</b>	to praise	<b>vidēre</b>	to see

To find the present stem of a verb, drop the **-re** from the present active infinitive. The vowel on the verb stem will show what conjugation the verb belongs to:

**amā (re)** - first conjugation

**docē (re)** - second conjugation

## 6. Principal Parts

The dictionary entry for a verb includes the first person singular indicative form (*I love*) and the present infinitive form (*to love*), along with two other forms which will be introduced in future chapters. These forms are called **principal parts** because they contain the verb stems on which all other forms are built. Because it is not always possible to predict these stems, it is important to memorize all the principal parts for each verb. Here are some examples for the first and second conjugations:

1ST CONJUGATION			
<b>amō</b>	<b>amāre</b>	<b>amāvī</b>	<b>amātus</b>
I love	to love	I have loved	having been loved
<b>laudō</b>	<b>laudāre</b>	<b>laudāvī</b>	<b>laudātus</b>
I praise	to praise	I have praised	having been praised

## 2ND CONJUGATION

<b>videō</b> I see	<b>vidēre</b> to see	<b>vīdī</b> I have seen	<b>vīsus</b> having been seen
<b>doceō</b> I teach	<b>docēre</b> to teach	<b>docuī</b> I have taught	<b>doctus</b> having been taught

Some verbs do not have all four principal parts (and are often called “defective” because they are missing forms). You will notice this in the dictionary listing when it happens. This book also omits the fourth principal part for most intransitive verbs. (A list of these is included on p. 343)

## 7. Indicative and Infinitive Uses

**Indicative** verb forms are used to **make simple statements** and to **ask simple questions**:

Fēmina labōrat.	The woman works.
Fēmina labōrat? Labōratne fēmina?	Does the woman work?

Notice that Latin does not require any change of word order to signal a question. Often the enclitic **-ne** (§F) is added on the end of the first word of a question.

**Infinitive** verb forms have several different uses. One of the most common is to **complete the meaning of another verb**. This use of the infinitive is called the **complementary infinitive**:

<b>Labōrāre</b> debeō.	I ought to work.
Optatne <b>docēre</b> ?	Does he desire to teach?

EXERCISE 1. Identify each of the following forms by person and number, then translate into English.

*Example:* amant                      third person, plural; “they love” or “they are loving”  
or “they do love”

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. optat     | 6. vocās    |
| 2. vident    | 7. tacēs    |
| 3. habēmus   | 8. iacētis  |
| 4. labōrātis | 9. superant |
| 5. timeō     | 10. iuvāmus |

EXERCISE 2. Identify each of the following English verbs by person and number, then translate into Latin.

*Example:* they are afraid                      third person, plural; timent

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. he is working    | 6. am I silent?    |
| 2. do they love?    | 7. she teaches     |
| 3. it lies          | 8. you (pl.) call  |
| 4. you (sg.) desire | 9. they do see     |
| 5. we owe           | 10. you (sg.) have |

EXERCISE 3. Using the stem meanings given below, translate each of the following into English. Then, paying attention to the stem vowel in each form, see if you can write the first two principal parts which would appear in the dictionary for each verb.

*Example:* errant (wander) “they wander”; errō, errāre

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. pugnās (fight)   | 6. nāvīgāmus (sail) |
| 2. terret (terrify) | 7. tenēs (hold)     |
| 3. volant (fly)     | 8. servātis (save)  |
| 4. dolētis (grieve) | 9. rīdēmus (laugh)  |
| 5. audent (dare)    | 10. stat (stand)    |

EXERCISE 4. Some of the following sentences contain nouns which will be explained in Chapter 2. For now, if the noun ends in **-a**, it is the subject; if it ends in **-am**, it is the direct object. Translate each of the following sentences into English.

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Agricola labōrat.   | 6. Fēminam docent.       |
| 2. Agricolam vocāmus.  | 7. Labōrāre optās?       |
| 3. Fēmina rosam habet. | 8. Fortūna nautam iuvat. |
| 4. Tacētis.            | 9. Tacēre debeō.         |
| 5. Nauta aquam videt?  | 10. Fāmam amāmus.        |



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