

Let's Talk About Verbs!

Part 1 - Present

For most of your time thus far in Latin, the focus has been primarily on nouns; however, soon the focus will shift to verbs. We might say that you have been spending time in "Noun-land" and are getting ready to graduate into "Verb-land." This is a big accomplishment and you should be proud of all you have learned.

Verland can be difficult, so along the way, you will find pauses like this in the curriculum to more thoroughly explain how verbs work. You will also find guideline pages at the end of any chapter that introduces a new verb tense. These guidelines (as you see on the previous page) re-cap what you are learning and put all you need to know about that verb tense into one simple page. Each guideline page includes practice in all four conjugations as well!

So let's talk verbs! Unlike English, Latin is a highly inflected language; meaning that a change is made in the endings of the word to show its grammatical relations. This is something that is truly AMAZING about the Latin language. We especially see inflection in Latin verbs. For example, sometimes a verb is the only word in a sentence. Contained inside that verb you can discover who or what the subject is, whether the subject is doing the action or the action is being done to the subject, what the time frame of the action is, etc. When you parse a Latin verb you will deconstruct these things along with other facets of the language!

So far you have learned to identify the following when you look at a Latin verb:

1. Meaning/ translation
2. Person (1st person- I/ we, 2nd person- you, 3rd person- he/she/it/they)
3. Number (singular or plural)
4. Mood (Indicative - facts & Imperative - orders)
5. Voice (active or passive)
6. Tense (present)

As you enter into "Verb-land" you need to understand the following:

Tense, as listed above, is not something we have talked about much up until this point, so let's take a little time to understand it and look ahead. "Tense" refers to time. In Latin, there are three "simple" tenses and three "perfect" tenses. This means that there are a total of *six tenses* in the indicative mood (remember "indicative" simply means that the sentence is stating a fact) that you will learn by the end of this year. Each tense comes in both active and passive forms.

Present Tense

The first of the simple tenses is the present tense. The present tense has both active and passive voice. The key point to remember, whether the subject is doing the action or the action is being done to the subject, is that a *present tense verb shows action that is happening now*.

For example, *amo* = I love, I am loving
amas = You love, You are loving
amat = He/she/it loves, He is loving (*amatur* = he/she/it is being loved)
amamus = We love, We are loving
amatis = Y'all love, Y'all are loving
amant = They love, They are loving (*amantur* = they are being loved)

You have a few more chapters of gradual shift before you fully graduate to the land of verbs in Chapter 19. Enjoy the discoveries in this beautiful language as you continue on this journey!

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Part 2 - Imperfect

Welcome to Verbland! You have officially moved into the land of verbs on your Latin journey! Congratulations!

In Part 1 of "Let's Talk Verbs" you learned that Latin is a highly inflected language, meaning that the grammar is visible in the endings of a word! It's truly amazing what we can discover by carefully looking at one word. For example, in English the sentence "She is walking" takes us three words to say what Latin says in one, "Ambulat!"

You also learned in Part 1 that there are *six tenses* in the indicative mood. (Remember the word indicative simply means the sentence is a fact, not an order. Also remember that tense tells us time!) So when we learned more about the present tense indicative verb, we discovered that a *present tense verb shows action that is happening now*.

During this chapter you met the second of the simple tenses; it is called the imperfect tense. The word "imperfect" means incomplete or unfinished. *The imperfect tense conveys an uncompleted action in the past. It is used for both continuous and habitual actions in the past.*

One of the funny ways we encourage you to remember how to form this tense is to think of Old MacDonald and his sheep! First, we all know sheep are "imperfect" in the sense that they have blemishes, make mistakes, and wander away. We use this as a play on words to remember how to form our imperfect tense by remembering our "imperfect sheep"! Secondly, sheep also say "ba-ba" and to form the imperfect tense verb we need the letters "ba-". Lastly, the imperfect tense has characteristic vowels that need to be memorized with each conjugation that connect the verb stem to its "ba-" endings. If you modify the song a little you will remember how to form the imperfect tense. You can sing the "Old MacDonald" song like this...

*Old MacDonald had a farm "a - e - e - ie -ie" (stating the name of every letter)
And on this farm he had a sheep "a - e - e - ie -ie"
With a "bam-bas-bat" and a "bamus-batis-bant"
Here a "ba-" there a "ba-" everywhere a "ba-ba"
Old MacDonald had a farm "a - e - e - ie -ie"*

To translate an imperfect verb, the simple past tense sometimes works. Other times, "was" plus an "-ing" ending on the verb, "used to" plus the verb, or "did" will convey the uncompleted past action. Also don't forget that every verb tense has an active and passive voice!

For example, *amabam* (active) = I loved, I was loving, I used to love, I did love
amabar (passive) = I was loved, I was being loved

Again, welcome to Verbland! You will learn the remaining four tenses over the course of the next three chapters! Happy discovery!

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Part 3 - Future

You are journeying deep into the land of Verbs! So far you have met half of the indicative mood verb tenses! In Latin these are usually called the "simple" tenses, not because they are simple/ easy to learn, but because they are basic tenses that we even have in English! In English we call these tenses present, past, and future, but in Latin they are called present, imperfect, and future.

In Part 1 of "Let's Talk Verbs" it was explained that tense simple means "time". In chapters 15 & 17 we see that a *present tense verb shows action that is happening now*. In chapter 19 you were introduced to the second of the simple tenses, called the imperfect tense. *The imperfect tense conveys an uncompleted action in the past. It is used for both continuous and habitual actions in the past*. In this chapter you met the third tense, called the future tense!

The future tense is not a difficult tense to wrap our minds around because we use it all the time in our everyday English speech. *A future tense verb conveys an action that will happen in the future*. Usually when we use the future tense in English we will supply the auxiliary verb "will" to denote that something "will happen" at some future time.

For example, *1st/2nd Conj:*

amabit (active) = he/she/it will love
amabitur (passive) = he/she/it will be loved

3rd/4th Conj:

audiet (active) = he/she/it will hear
audiētur (passive) = he/she/it will be heard

The only semi-tricky aspect about translating a future tense verb from Latin into English is to remember that while we can use the auxiliary word "will" all the time, if you want to use the word "shall" instead, it can only be used in the first person. So for example, "*ambulabo/ ambulabimus*" can be translated as "I/ We will walk" or "I/We shall walk". It is not proper English to use the word "shall" in the second person (you) or third person (he/she/it/they).

The trickiest aspect about the future tense in Latin is actually forming the verb. It's the only tense that in the indicative mood has an entirely different set of endings depending on it's conjugation. (See previous pages for more detailed review of this.) So especially now we can see why it has been so important to learn the conjugation of each verb! Also like the Old MacDonald song for the imperfect tense and because both sets of endings must be memorized, we give you a little poem to help trigger your memory for those tricky future tense endings. The poem is as follows:

*With conjugations 1 and 2,
to form the future use -bo, -bi, -bu.
With conjugations 4 and 3,
to form the future use -a and -e*

So you WILL continue to dive deeper into Vermland and we WILL talk again soon. (Did you catch the corny humor in the last sentence! Ha!) Enjoy the discoveries that WILL come! (Ha, these futures are everywhere!)

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Part 4 - Perfect

You might ask why there are more than three tenses, since there are only three times, i.e., the past, the present, and the future. Simply put, the perfect system presents a different way of looking at time; focusing on actions that at some given point, have been completed. The name for the perfect tense comes from the Latin word *perfectum* meaning completed. Some might think of the perfect tense as taking a still photograph of something that happened in the past, whereas the imperfect is more like a video of an ongoing occurrence in the past.

The perfect system has three tenses. Because each of these tenses are within the perfect system, this means they are all expressing completed actions. However, we know the tense of a verb conveys time, so each tense within this perfect system will convey a different time. In this chapter you have met the first of the three tenses within the perfect system and the fourth tense in the indicative mood. This tense is called the perfect tense.

A perfect tense verb refers to an action that has been completed in the past. When translating either a simple past tense ending "-ed" or the auxiliary verb "have" conveys the perfect tense. One small tip for translating any verb, but especially as you move into the perfect system, is to work backwards (right to left). In other words, the ending conveys active or passive, what person, what number, etc. Then, if you keep moving left you could see, for example *-ba* which would indicate the imperfect or you might see a perfect stem change indicating the perfect tense. Finally you see the stem of the verb telling you the meaning. So for example, if you read *amavimus*, the *-mus* says "we", the *-av* tells you that it is perfect so you think "have", then *ama-* tells you "loved". When it's all put together you can translate it "We have loved!"

Forming a perfect tense is rather difficult and requires study. The first and foremost hurdle for understanding the perfect tense is to really make sure you can form the perfect active and passive infinitives for a given verb. There are general patterns that verbs fall into in their perfect infinitive forms, but the most commonly used verbs that do NOT change their stem according to the "rules," must be drilled and memorized. At the back of the curriculum workbooks you will find an infinitives list. Beginning with this chapter and continuing for every chapter through Latin 2, Chapter 30 you will need to drill the new infinitives for each chapter, because they will be on quizzes and tests from now on, not to mention that without this knowledge, you will really struggle to translate well. So drill, drill, drill these infinitives until you can write and say them with little effort. We really cannot overemphasize how critical this is for the rest of your Latin career! (See previous pages on specific details for forming the perfect infinitives.)

Secondly, let's talk about forming the active perfect tense verb, then move onto the passive since we form them in very different ways! After forming the perfect active infinitive for a given verb, you can simply add the correct perfect ending. (See previous pages for specific details on this.)

Lastly, we need to talk about forming perfect passive verbs. They are very different from any other verbs you have met thus far. They not only have a stem change that we already said must be memorized, but the passive infinitive stem change is often *very* different from the perfect active infinitive. (One side note though before continuing is to interject that the passive infinitives are especially intriguing and fun to learn because they are where we most often get our English derivatives! Check out the derivative column on your infinitives list and see if you can figure out why knowing those derivatives are so important for learning the Latin and not just a cool thing to know!) Okay back to forming the perfect passive after we found its infinitive. When you see a perfect passive verb you will notice two very important things. First, there are TWO words and the second word is always a form of "esse." The second thing you will notice is that the first word has an adjectival ending that will modify the subject even when it is in the infinitive form! So if we look at the verb *amatae sunt* first we note that this is two words so we are in the passive, we can work backwards with "sunt" meaning "they," the *-ae* adjectival ending tells us that the subject is a group of women, and *ama-* means "loved". So when fully translated it means "they (a group of women) were being loved". Now that's some detailed information all packed into one verb!

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Part 5 - Pluperfect

You may notice that unlike the previous four parts of "Let's Talk About Verbs" which are placed at the end of each chapter, you will find that Parts 5 and 6 come as stand-alone sections, and make up the primary teaching about the final two tenses in the indicative mood.

The fifth tense in the indicative mood and the second tense within the perfect system is called the pluperfect tense. *The pluperfect describes an action completed in the distant past with consequences on some action in the more recent past.* For example, you HAD STUDIED the material previously, and so by last Friday you already UNDERSTOOD it well. Do you see how this example shows that the verb HAD STUDIED is in the pluperfect and had happened in the distant past with consequences on the more recent past, UNDERSTOOD?

Now that you know how to form a perfect active by replacing the *-isse* in the perfect active infinitive with the perfect endings as well as how to form a perfect passive by replacing the *-um esse* with *us/a/ī/ae + sum/es/est/sumus/estis/sunt*, forming the pluperfect tense will be pretty easy. Forming the pluperfect follows the same pattern as the perfect tense but with different endings. Let me explain. To form a pluperfect active replace the *-isse* in the perfect active infinitive with the pluperfect endings *eram/eras/erat eramus/eratis/erant* and to form a pluperfect passive replace the *-um esse* with *us/a/ī/ae + eram/eras/erat eramus/eratis/erant*. So, take special note that when you see "*-era*" in a changed perfect stem, it is a pluperfect verb!

The word "pluperfect" comes from the Latin words "*plūs quam perfectum*" meaning "more than complete." It is translated with the auxiliary verb "had."

For example, <i>amaveram</i> (active)	=	I had loved
<i>amatus eram</i> (passive)	=	I had been loved

Do you see in the examples how both the active and passive verbs have the letters "era" in them! That is a pretty sure give away that you are dealing with the pluperfect and need to translate with the word "haD!"

Now it is time to review by working through the guidelines for the pluperfect tense and get a little practice conjugating verbs in this tense on the following pages. Only one more tense to learn! You've got this!

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Part 6 - Future Perfect

We set out in Chapter 15 to learn six tenses in the indicative mood. Today is the day you will learn about the sixth and final tense in the indicative mood, also known as the last in the perfect system. Today you will learn about an interesting tense called the future perfect.

The future perfect tense describes an act that will have been completed at some future point and its consequences will often affect a more distant point in the future. Let's look at this example: "By this weekend you WILL HAVE STUDIED the material, and so you WILL UNDERSTAND it thoroughly for Monday's quiz." Do you see how the act that will have been completed at some future point is the "WILL HAVE STUDIED" in the sentence? This is the future perfect. The consequences of that future studying being completed is that at some even more distant point in the future you "WILL UNDERSTAND." This tense takes some stretching of the mind muscles to wrap our head around it. It is not a tense you will see all the time, especially in the passive voice, so learn it well now so that when you do come across it you can translate it.

As you might have guessed from the previous paragraph, to translate the future perfect you will use the auxiliary verbs "will have." One way to remember this is to think that for the word "future" we already know to think "will," then when we see the word "perfect" we already think "have." Put it together and you have "will have (verbed)!"

Just like the perfect and pluperfect tenses, to form a future perfect active verb replace the *-isse* in the perfect active infinitive with the endings *"erō/eris/erit erimus/eritis/erInt*. (Take special note that 3rd person, plural ("they") has an "I" not *-erUnt* as you would expect.) To form the future perfect passive replace the *-um esse* with *us/a/ī/ae + erō/eris/erit erimus/eritis/erUnt*. (Again take special notice of the 3rd person, plural because here it is *-erUnt* as you would expect!) Let's look at a few examples of how to form this tense.

For example, <i>amaverō (active)</i>	=	I will have loved
<i>amatus eram (passive)</i>	=	I will have been loved

Now it is time to review what you have learned by completing the guidelines and exercises for the future perfect tense on the following pages.

You've made it through six tenses!! Let's practice what you've learned.

