

## “THESE (CRAZY) VERBS MAKE PEOPLE NUTTY —OR— How to “Parse” a Latin Verb

One of the most important considerations in studying the foundational elements of Latin must be given to the verb, that part of speech which affirms either *action* or *state of being*. The component elements of a verb are collectively referred to as its “parsing” (from the Latin noun *pars, partis* = part, piece, function). These components are:



1. **Tense**
2. **Crazy (Conjugation)**
3. **Voice**
4. **Mood**
5. **Person**
6. **Number**

You can remember the components via the acronym of the first letters of each of the above words: “**T**hese **C**razy **V**erbs **M**ake **P**eople **N**utty!”

The “parsing” of a Latin “model” 1st conjugation verb **laudo** (“I praise...am praising...do praise”) is: *Present, Active, Indicative, 1st Person, Singular*. Now, let’s take a closer look at what these “parsing” components represent—

1. **Tense** conveys the “time” of the action. So, for the above verb, *Present* tense would mean both present time and continuous “action” (that is, activity in real, present time). Of course, from your additional Latin studies, you also know these other Latin *tenses*: *Imperfect* (continuous “action” in the past), *Future*, and *the Perfect*. Other tenses include *the Pluperfect* and *the Future Perfect*.
2. **Conjugation** – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or even irregular.

3. **Voice** (“active” or “passive”) tells how the action of the verb is related to the subject. With the **active** “voice,” the subject of the verb is “active” through the verb, most often with a direct object. For example, *Deum laudo* = “**I am praising God.**” With **passive** voice, the subject is being acted upon. For example, *God is being praised.*” Observe the diagram below. Even the direction of the arrows will help you remember what is happening with “active” and “passive” voice verbs.

 <b>ACTIVE</b>	 <b>PASSIVE</b>
Subject is <i>doing</i> the acting.	Subject is <i>being acted upon,</i> <i>receiving</i> the action.

4. **Mood** tells what the verb is affirming, its relation to “reality.”

*Indicative* — declaratives, simple assertions, interrogations.

*Imperative* — commands or entreaties; mode of “volition.”

5. **Person** denotes who is acting as the subject. In Latin the *1st*, *2nd* and *3rd* personal pronouns (i.e., *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, *you*, and *they*) are included in the endings of the verb form.

5. **Number** is the “singularity” or “plurality” of the person or persons represented by the verb form, included in the verb’s personal endings.

One final word about a Latin verb’s “parsing.” Since a verb’s parsing contains all the information needed to translate the word—**providing you know its original root meaning, of course**—whether it’s *Present Active Indicative 1st person singular* **or** *Future Active Indicative 2nd person plural* **or** *Imperfect Passive Indicative 3 person singular*; no matter what it is.

**REMEMBER – LATIN IS A LANGUAGE OF ENDINGS**