

Conjugation of Verbs

The inflection of a verb is called a Conjugation. Most verb inflections in English have disappeared, although we still distinguish between I *go*, he *goes*, etc. Latin, however, retains full inflections for most verbs, the forms of which must be mastered in order to distinguish meaning.

Through conjugation a verb expresses: **Person, Number, Tense, Mood and Voice.**

1. PERSON & NUMBER: A verb agrees with its subject in number and person. There are Three Persons and Two Numbers, arranged thus:

1st person singular (I)	1st person plural (we)
2nd person singular (you)	2nd person plural (you)
3rd person singular (he, she it)	3rd person plural (they)

In English person and number normally cannot be determined without the aid of pronouns (*I, you, we, they*, etc.) except in the 3rd pers. sing.: *I go, you go, we go, they go*; but *he goes*.

Latin always distinguishes number and person: *amo* (I love), *amas* (you love) *amat* (he loves), etc. Because person and number are contained in the endings themselves, the personal pronouns (*I, you, he*, etc.) are used mainly for emphasis.

The personal endings in Latin distinguish the person and number of the verb, and must be mastered early:

1st person singular	-o, -m	1st person plural	-mus
2nd person singular	-s	2nd person plural (you)	-tis
3rd person singular	-t	3rd person plural (they)	-nt

2. TENSE: Latin tenses have the same general meaning as the corresponding English tenses:

Continued action:	Present:	I love, I am loving, I do love.
	Imperfect:	I loved, I was loving, I did love.
	Future:	I will love.
Completed action:	Perfect:	I have loved, I loved.
	Pluperfect	I had loved.
	Future Perfect	I will have loved.

Note that the emphatic (I do love) and the progressive (I am loving) tenses do not exist as separate forms in Latin.

3. MOOD: Latin has four Moods: Indicative, Subjunctive, Imperative, Infinitive.

a) **Indicative:** The Indicative is used for statements and questions: *I love that book. Are you reading that book?*

b) **Subjunctive:** The Subjunctive has many uses, including commands, conditions, wishes, possibility, and dependent clauses. It is often translated by the English indicative; frequently by auxiliary verbs indicating uncertainty or wish (*may, might, would, should*); sometimes by the (now rare) subjunctive (*I wish I were in Rome*); sometimes by the Infinitive; and often by the Imperative.

c) **Imperative:** The Imperative is used to express command or exhortation: *Go! He shall be set free!*

d) **Infinitive:** The Infinitive is chiefly used as an indeclinable noun (*To err is human*) or as a complementary infinitive to complete the meaning of another verb (*I want to go*).

Note that the basic idea of a verb expressed by the Infinitive is not limited (*infinitivus*) by person or number (though it is limited by tense and voice).

4. **VOICE:** Latin has two Voices (Active and Passive) with uses corresponding to English: *I love* (Active); *I am loved* (Passive).

a) The **Active Voice** expresses what the subject of the verb is or does: *I am well. I love.*

b) The **Passive Voice** expresses what is done *to* the subject of the verb: *I am loved.* The subject "I" is no longer the actor in the sentence, but the recipient of the action.

Note that only transitive verbs can have a full passive voice. A little thought will show that such forms as "I live" or "we persevere" can have no meaning in the passive voice. But meaning *can* attach to 3rd person singular forms of some intransitive verbs: *His life was lived well.*

The Verb to Be: The verb "to be" is irregular in English and Latin. Learn the forms for the Present Indicative:

sum	sumus
es	estis
est	sunt

Principal Parts: The complete conjugation of a verb can be obtained from its Principal Parts, which must be memorized when a verb is first encountered. The Four Principal Parts are:

- 1) Present Indicative, 1st pers. sing.
- 2) Infinitive
- 3) Perfect Indicative, 1st pers. sing.
- 4) Perfect Passive Participle.

Thus: *amo* (I love)
amare (to love)
amavi (I loved)
amatus (loved)

Active and passive

Present Passive Voice: Latin use of the Active and Passive Voices corresponds generally to the English use. The passive forms for present, imperfect and future are based on present stems for all conjugations, with these *personal endings*:

-r	-mur
-ris	-mini
-tur	-ntur

Perfect Passive System

The perfect system for the passive voice (perfect, pluperfect and future perfect) is formed by adding a form of *esse* to the perfect passive participle (the 4th principal part). The perfect passive participle (always nominative) will agree with its subject in number and gender.

Perfect Passive (I was carried . . .): *present tense of esse* + the perfect passive participle:

portatus sum	doctus sum	missum sum	captus sum	auditus sum
--------------	------------	------------	------------	-------------

In the active voice, the verb expresses what the subject of the sentence (= the nominative) does. The object of the sentence most commonly stands in the accusative.

Homines deos colunt. People worship the gods.

In the passive, the verb expresses what is being done to the subject of the sentence (= the nominative). The doer of this action stands in the ablative, sometimes with the preposition *a / ab*.

Dei a hominibus coluntur. Gods are worshipped by people.

Caesar Gallos vicit. Caesar defeated the Gauls.

Galli a Caesare victi sunt. The Gauls were defeated by Caesar.

Translate the following sentences and indicate whether the verb is in the active or passive:

Lego librum.

Filiae a matre vocantur.

Rex ab omnibus amatur.

Liber a Petrarca scribitur.

Hostes urbem obsident.

PARTICIPLES

A participle is a form of a verb used as an adjective. The participle may be active or passive, but will always agree in number, case, and gender with the noun that it modifies.

The active participle has a present tense meaning:

Active: The man saw the *running* horse / *Vir equum currentem vidit.*

The passive participle has a past tense meaning:

Passive: The man saw the *captured* slave / *Vir virum captum vidit.*

A participle, like any other adjective, must agree with the noun it modifies in number, case, and gender. But the participle also has attributes of tense and voice: “running” is present active; “captured” (*i.e.*, “having been captured”) is perfect passive.

Because the participle retains verbal force, it may govern a direct object:

We saw Hercules drinking the wine: *Vidimus Herculem vinum bibentem.*

Formation:

1) **Present Active Participles** form off the first principle part of the verb, adding -ns to the stem. They decline as a third declension adjective of one termination. They are all i-stems.

<i>amans - loving</i>	<i>amantes / amantia</i>	<i>dicens - saying</i>	<i>dicentes / dicentia</i>
<i>amantis</i>	<i>amantium</i>	<i>dicentis</i>	<i>dicentium</i>
<i>amanti</i>	<i>amantibus</i>	<i>dicentibus</i>	<i>dicentibus</i>
<i>amantem / amans</i>	<i>amantes / amantia</i>	<i>dicentem / dicens</i>	<i>dicentes / dicentia</i>
<i>amanteli</i>	<i>amantibus</i>	<i>dicentibus</i>	<i>dicentibus</i>

In the case of -io verbs of the Third Conjugation, -ie- will appear: *capiens, capientis*

2) **Perfect Passive Participles** are the fourth principal part of the verb. As passives, they cannot take a direct object. There are regularly found in the ablative absolute construction. They decline as first and second declension adjectives.

visus, visa, visus - having been seen. *dictus, dicta, dictum* - having been said

The Perfect Passive Participle is used regularly in the Ablative Absolute construction:

His verbis dictis, vir discessit. With these words having been said, the man left.

3) **Future Active Participles** (the Future Active Periphrastic), are formed from the fourth principal part of the verb, adding -turus, -tura, -turum to the base. They are used to express action in the near future.

amaturus, -a, -um: about to love, going to love. They are often found in future indirect speech constructions.

Donum tibi daturus sum - I am going to give you gifts.

4) **Future Passive Participles** (the Future Passive Periphrastic) are verbal adjectives of the 1st and 2nd declension. They express both futurity and passivity: *e.g.*, *amandus, a, um* - having to be loved).

They can be used as pure adjectives with the notion of obligation, necessity, or propriety:

Marcus, vir laudandus, advenit. Marcus, a praiseworthy man, has arrived.

Or they can be used as the verb in complete and independent sentences:

Carthago delenda est: Carthage is having to be destroyed (must be destroyed).

Uses of the Participle:

The tense of a participle is always relative to that of the main verb. A present participle refers to action contemporaneous with that of the main verb (whether the main verb is past, present or future). A perfect participle refers to action prior to that of the main verb. A future participle refers to action subsequent to that of the main verb. The proper understanding of Latin participles must always bear in the mind their tense and voice.

Present Active Participle: contemporaneous action, active voice.

Femina clamans eum vidit. The shouting woman saw him.

Perfect Passive Participle: prior action, passive voice.

Femina territa clamavit. The woman, having been frightened, shouted.

Future Active Participle: subsequent action, active voice.

Femina dictura virum vidit. The woman, about to speak, saw her husband.

Future Passive Participle (gerundive): subsequent action, passive voice.

Libros legendos in mensa posuit.

He placed books (having) to be read on the table.

The Perfect Active Participle of Deponent Verbs: A perfect active participle (having seen, having done, having left, *etc.*) is a critical syntactical component. But in Latin they only exist for deponent verbs (which have passive forms but only active meaning. Take care to translate the perfect participle of a deponent verb actively (*locutus*, having said; *hortatus*, having encouraged; *secutus*, having followed, *etc.*).

The lack of a perfect active participle for regular verbs in Latin is made up for by the frequent use of the perfect participle of deponent verbs (which by nature must be active), the use of the ablative absolute, and the use of *cum* clauses.

Exercise - Participles

Determine whether the below participles are present active, perfect passive, future active or future passive.

laudantem

capta

vocatus

morituri

delendam

navigantibus

responsurus

cantantes

laudatae

condita

DEPONENT VERBS

There is a group of verbs in Latin which have passive forms but active meanings. They are called deponent verbs because they have “laid aside” (*dēpōnō, -ere*) their passive meanings but have retained their passive forms. They are translated only in the active voice.

Thus: loquor, loqui, locutus sum, *to speak, talk*
 loquor = *I speak*
 loquitur = *he, she, it speaks*
 etc.

The conjugation of deponent verbs is completely regular:

First conjugation:	cōnor, -ārī, -ātus sum, <i>to try, attempt</i>
Second conjugation:	polliceor, -ērī, pollicitus sum, <i>to promise</i>
Third conjugation:	loquor, loquī, locutus sum, <i>to speak, talk</i>
Fourth conjugation:	orior, orīrī, ortus sum, <i>to rise, arise</i>

Note 1: Deponent verbs, however, have retained a few regular active forms:

- The present active participle: loquēns, -entis = *speaking*
- The future active participle: locutūrus, -a, -um = *about to speak*
- The future active infinitive: locutūrus esse = *to be about to speak*

Note 2: Because deponent forms are translated actively, they can have no “4th principal part” (i.e., they have no perfect *passive* participle). Instead, the participle form contained in the 3rd principal part (conatus, pollicitus, locutus, ortus, etc.) is a perfect *active* participle. This participle fills a much needed gap in the language and accordingly is frequently used. Thus:

conatus = <i>having tried</i>	pollicitus = <i>having promised</i>
locutus = <i>having spoken</i>	ortus = <i>having arisen</i>

SEMI-DEPONENT VERBS:

Four verbs in Latin have active forms in the first two principal parts, but deponent forms in the third principal part (i.e., the perfect tense). They also are translated only in the active voice. These verbs are:

audeō, -ēre, ausus sum, <i>to dare</i>	gaudeō, -ēre, gāvīsus sum, <i>to rejoice</i>
fidō, -ere, fīsus sum, <i>to trust</i>	soleō, -ēre, solitus sum, <i>to be accustomed to</i>

COMMON DEPONENT VERBS:

1st Conjugation:

arbitror, -ārī, -ātus sum, *to think*
cōnor, -ārī, -ātus sum, *to try, attempt*
hortor, -ārī, -ātus sum, *to encourage, urge*
moror, -ārī, -ātus sum, *to delay*
mīror, -ārī, -ātus sum, *to wonder at, be surprised*

2nd Conjugation:

polliceor, -ērī, pollicitus sum, *to promise*
videor, -ērī, vīsus sum, *to seem*
vereor, -ērī, veritus sum, *to fear*
mereor, -ērī, meritus sum, *to deserve, earn*

3rd Conjugation:

loquor, loquī, locūtus sum, *to speak, talk*
patior, patī, passus sum, *to suffer; permit, allow*
proficīscor, proficīscī, profectus sum, *to set out, depart*
aggredior, -ī, aggressus sum, *to approach, attack*
 congrédior, -ī, congressus sum, *to meet, come together*
 ēgredior, -ī, ēgressus sum, *to go out, disembark*
 prōgredior, -ī, prōgressus sum, *to advance, go forward*
sequor, sequī, secūtus sum, *to follow*
ūtor, -ī, usus sum, *to use, make use of (+ abl.)*
moriōr, -ī, mortuus sum, *to die (fut. act. part. = moritūrus)*
nāscor, -ī, natus sum, *to be born; be found*
revertor, -ī, reversus sum, *to go back, return*

4th Conjugation:

orior, -īrī, ortus sum, *to rise, arise*
potior, -īrī, potītus sum, *to get possession of (+ abl.)*
oppetior, -īrī, oppertus sum, *to await, wait for*