

Chapter 10

RULE 1: The thematic vowel for fourth conjugation is *-ī-*.

RULE 2: The future tense sign for fourth conjugation is *-e-*, just as in third.

RULE 3: Third conjugation *-io* resembles fourth more than third.

I. Grammar

Wheelock's diagram of verbs in this chapter may confuse some students. Point out that the conjugation of *duco* is included to highlight the contrast among third (*duco*), fourth (*audio*) and third *-io* (*capio*) conjugations. Reinforce that *duco* is third conjugation.

A. The Third Conjugation *-io*

The thematic vowel in third *-io* is a short *-i-* which naturally in Latin becomes *-e-* before *-r*, e.g. **capire > capere, *capiris > caperis, cf. cinis/cineris; genus/generis*. To the petty minds of grammatical minutiacrats, the past masters of parsical physics, it seemed best for some reason to classify Latin verbs by infinitives and not let common sense dissuade them from grouping *-io* verbs with the third conjugation, which it resembles much less than fourth. Rather, they opted to stick by their principles at all costs and call *-io* verbs "third conjugation," because verbs like *facio, facere* have infinitives—and little else!—which match those of third-conjugation verbs. Thus, we have ended up calling the *-io* verbs of Latin "third conjugation" when it would be far more useful to call them "fourth." In reality, they should belong to their own conjugation, the "i-stem verbs," as the history of Latin bears out.

B. The Fourth Conjugation

The thematic vowel in fourth conjugation is *-ī-* and operates in a manner comparable to the other thematic vowels, with one important difference: *-ī-* readily forms vowel clusters and does not become absorbed when it runs into other vowels, e.g. *-io* (*venio*), *-iam* (*veniam*) and *-ies* (*venies*).

C. The History of the Third *-io* and Fourth Conjugations

The distinction between the fourth and third *-io* conjugations stems a rather strange rhythmical principle which linguists have reconstructed in Latin. Verb stems with one long syllable (*aud-*, *sent-*, *serv-*) and those with two syllables (*reper-*, *exper-*, *aper-*) became fourth conjugation, using a long *-ī-* as their thematic vowel. Those with one short syllable (*fac-*, *cap-*, *iac-*, *fug-*) become third *-io* and their thematic vowel was a short *-i-*. However, there was an important exception: the presence of a nasal or liquid at the end of the base in one-syllable verb bases (*ferio, salio, venio*) led certain verbs to become fourth, though others not (*pario, morior*). The reason for this is not entirely clear.

D. Teaching the Third *-io* and Fourth Conjugations

Since students should by this point be familiar with personal endings and tense signs used with the Latin verb and because the only consistent difference between fourth (and third *-io*) and other conjugations is the thematic vowel, I have students close their books, get out a blank sheet of paper and together we construct fourth and third *-io* conjugations using the rules and a smattering of common sense. In this way I can introduce new material and at the same time drill endings and tense signs and reinforce the way Latin works. I find that if students understand the how and the why of Latin they are more likely later to reconstruct correctly a form they have forgotten.

Fourth-conjugation forms generally follow the predictable pattern of verb formation: verb stem + thematic vowel + tense sign + personal endings. Exceptions and irregularities to note are:

1. The *-io* in the first person singular of third *-io* and fourth conjugations should contract to *-o* on the analogy of the first person singular of first conjugation, **-ayo > *-ao > *-o*, but it doesn't. When that happens, a *-y-* sound intercedes in pronunciation to keep the vowel sounds apart: *veni(y)o*, *faci(y)o* (cf. second-conjugation *mone(y)o*).
2. As in first and second conjugations, the thematic vowel in fourth shortens in the third person forms (singular and plural): *audit*, *audiunt* (versus *audīs*, *audīmus*).
3. The future in fourth conjugation uses the same tense sign as the future in third, *-e-* (*-a-* in the first singular), but whereas the short thematic vowel in third (*-i-*) is absorbed by the tense sign (*-e-*), the thematic vowel in fourth is not lost but shortened: *audiam*, *audies*, etc.
4. The imperfect tense in fourth conjugation is formed like that in third but includes the thematic vowel, *-ieba-*, e.g. *audiebam*, *audiebas*, etc.
5. With the exception of long marks on the thematic vowel, of which it has none, the third *-io* conjugation differs from fourth in only two significant ways:
 - a. **infinitive**: *-ere* (*capere* vs. *audire*)
 - b. **imperative singular**: *-e* (*cape* vs. *audi*)

II. Vocabulary

- **natura**: The *-tura* suffix denotes the result of an action, here the result of being born (*nascor*), cf. *pictura* (literally, "the result of painting," from the verb *pingo*).
- **cum**: Takes an **ablative** object. If an adjective goes with the object, it often precedes the entire prepositional phrase, e.g. *magnâ cum laude*.
- **venio**: [From an Indo-European base, **gwemy-*, coming into Greek as *ba(i)no* and English as *come*.]
- **filia**: The dative/ablative plural is sometimes *filiabus* to distinguish it from *filiis* (masculine).
- **senectus**: Literally, "the quality of being (*-tus*) an old person (*senec-*)."

III. Sentences

Practice and Review

1. The "to" in this sentence must be represented by Latin *ad*, which shows motion toward. Steer students away from the dative case.
1. Remind students to rephrase the idiom: "He will give thanks to the whole people."

IV. Quiz 4

QUIZ 4

NOMEN TUUM

I. Grammar Questions. Fill in the blank. (5 points)

1. The object of the preposition *cum* will be in the _____ case.
2. The tense sign for the future tense in **fourth** conjugation is _____.
3. The genitive singular ending for *solus* is _____.
4. The base of the noun *senectus* is _____.
5. The object of *in*, when the preposition means "into," will be in the _____ case.

II. Translate the following verb forms. (15 points)

1. docent
2. venient
3. faciunt
4. fugiam
5. vivite

III. Give the NUMBER, GENDER, and CASE of the following nouns, and then give the proper form of the adjective in parentheses which agrees with them. (20 points)

Noun	NUMBER	GENDER	CASE	PROPER FORM OF ADJECTIVE
1. via (hic)				
2. loca (hic)				
3. periculi (ille)				
4. rationi (solus)				
5. tempus (ille)				

IV. Give the PRINCIPAL PARTS (that is, the present indicative and infinitive) of the following Latin verbs. (10 points)

1. make, do
2. do, drive
3. find
4. take
5. hear