

Chapter 33

RULE 1: Conditions consist of two parts, the **protasis** establishing a condition and introduced by *if* or *unless* (Latin *si* or *nis*) and the **apodosis** showing the (potential) result of the condition.

RULE 2: The less real the condition, the more likely it is to use the subjunctive.

I. Grammar

A. Conditions

Students should memorize the formulae for conditions and understand the terms, **protasis** (the “if” half of a condition) and **apodosis** (the “then” half of a condition). Those conditions which involve unreality and take the subjunctive (future less vivid, present and past contrary-to-fact) will require more explanation than the others (present and past simple-fact and future more vivid) which correspond with their English counterparts closely. There is, however, one important exception: the future more vivid condition in Latin uses the future tense in both protasis and apodosis (***si ab Graeciâ discedes, valebis***), whereas English uses the future in the apodosis but the present in the protasis (*If you depart from Greece* [n.b. present tense], ***you will fare well***).

It may help to remember the subjunctive conditions this way:

1. present subjunctive = “should/would” (future less vivid)
2. imperfect subjunctive = “were/would” (present contrary-to-fact)
3. pluperfect subjunctive = “had/would have” (past contrary-to-fact)

Go over the examples of conditions at the bottom of page 157. Some students, particularly those who are comfortable with algebra and chemical formulas, will have fewer problems with conditional sentences than constructions in which the “rules” are less straightforward. Of course, the reality is not as simple as the rules imply. Conditions in actual Latin are more often than not mixed, e.g.:

“If I had been there (past ctf), I would be dead now (pres ctf);”

“If you should do that (flv), I will reward you (fmv);”

“If he did it (past sf), he’s smarter than I thought (pres sf).”

B. The Linguistic History of Conditions

The protases of some conditions are, in origin, optative (“*I wish I were a man!* Then I would show them!”). In other cases, they are jussive (“*Let them come!* I would show them!”). It was natural, then, that these conditions be introduced by *si(c)*—originally, the locative (-i) of the demonstrative pronoun **so *sâ *tod, si(c)*, “in this place, in this case,” making it equivalent to the English expression “consider this” (see [Chapter 9](#))—as Plautus uses it: *meam rem non cures: sic recte facias* (literally “You would not take care of my business: in that case, you would do right,” implying “If you should do right, you would not take care of my business”). Exactly how the imperfect subjunctive came to represent an unreal present situation (“If it *were* true, . . .”) is not clear, but since Plautus employs the imperfect subjunctive this way, the use must have developed fairly early.

It should be noted that the delicate arrangement of moods and tenses for specific situations, real and unreal, was blurred in late Latin and even in popular usage in the Classical period. The imperfect subjunctive could represent past time instead of the present contrary-to-fact condition or the present subjunctive could represent present time instead of the future less vivid. Later also, the indicative began to supplant the subjunctive in unreal expressions.

II. Vocabulary

- **nox:** An *i*-stem noun (**noctium**). It is cognate with English *night*.
- **ops:** Not an *i*-stem noun! Like *vis* (plural, *vires*), the singular form of *ops* (“help, aid”) has a connotation different from its plural *opes* (“power, wealth”). [*Copia* = *co-* + *op-* + *-ia*, “collected wealth, abundance”]
- **salus:** This noun is cognate with Greek *holos* (“whole, entire, safe”), exhibiting the expected shift of *s-* to *h-* in Greek; cf. Latin *sex* versus Greek *hex*.
- **quis:** The rule that after certain subordinating conjunctions *alī-* forms lose their prefix is an important aspect of Latin which should be brought to the students’ attention. It would perhaps have been better included in the grammar rather than the vocabulary of this chapter. My students have always enjoyed the following jingle designed to help them remember the rule about *alī-* forms:
 - Before *si*, *nisi*, *num*, and *ne*
All the *alī*’s drop away! (OR *Alī-* takes a holiday!)
- **ullus:** If students were not required to learn this word back in [Chapter 9](#) (along with its grammatical counterparts *solus*, *alius*, *nullus*, and so on), it’s high time. Postponing *ullus* until this chapter, however, provides the opportunity to remind students of the irregular genitive singular *-ius* and dative singular *-i* seen in these pronoun forms.
- **si/nisi:** For the etymology of these words, see above (“The Linguistic History of Conditions”). Through “iambic shortening,” *nisi* came to have two short syllables; see [Chapter 30](#) (s.v. *primo*).
- **suscipio:** = **subs-* + *cipio*, with the expected vowel gradation of *-a-* to *-i-*. For change of *sub(s)-* to *sus-*, see [Chapter 23](#) (s.v. *ostendo*).
- **trado:** = *trans-* + *do*, see [Chapter 25](#) (s.v. *credo*).
- **plenus:** + genitive, “full (of . . .).” This adjective is a combination of the same stem which gives the verb base *-pleo* (“fill”) and the common adjectival *-no-* suffix (**magnus**, **dignus**). *Plenus* is cognate with Greek *pleres*, *plethos*, *polus* and English *fill*, *full*. [According to Grimm’s Law, Latin *p* = German *f*].

III. Sentences

Practice and Review. Focus on the type of condition evidenced in each sentence.

1. Future less vivid
 2. Cum concessive
 3. Simple fact present
 4. Future more vivid
 5. Present contrary-to-fact
 6. Future more vivid
-
1. Past contrary-to-fact
 2. Cum temporal or causal