

Chapter 34

RULE 1: Deponent verbs are **passive in form but active in meaning (and expectation)**, with the following exceptions:

1. **Active forms with active meanings:**
 - a) present active participle, e.g. *loquens* “speaking”;
 - b) future active participle (and infinitive), e.g. *locuturus (esse)* “(to be) about to speak.”
2. **Passive form with passive meaning:** future passive participle, e.g. *loquendus* “to be spoken.”

RULE 2: The present imperative singular of deponent verbs ends *-re* (singular) and *-mini* (plural).

RULE 3: Semi-deponents have active present-stem forms but deponent perfect-stem forms.

RULE 4: *Utor* takes an **ablative** object, as do *fruor* (“enjoy”), *fungor* (“perform”), *potior* (“acquire”) and *vescor* (“eat”).

I. Grammar

Deponents are very simple in theory but pose many problems in practice, not least of which is remembering which verbs belong to this category. If there are almost no new verb forms to learn in this chapter, the fact that deponents bridge the up-to-now inviolable boundary of passive and active voices will seem revolutionary enough to students. Worse yet, passive-looking forms will—*horrendum dictu!*—take direct objects. To assuage their shock and sense of betrayal, I tell students that, confusing as deponents may seem at first, they are really easier to learn than regular verbs, at least inasmuch as they have only half the number of forms. There’s that much less to memorize.

Review the formation of deponents with students briefly and move as quickly as possible to translation, first of isolated forms (see the [worksheet](#)) and then of deponent verbs in context (see the sentences at the bottom of page 164). Be sure to point out the following (see above, Rule 1):

1. Because of the limited numbers of participles available in Latin, deponents exhibit certain irregularities:
 - a. two “active” forms: the present active and future active participles, and
 - b. one true “passive” form: the future passive participle.
2. The imperative endings of deponents are *-re* (singular) and *-mini* (plural)
3. Some verbs are semi-deponent (see *audeo* in the vocabulary below).

A. History of Deponents

The origin of Latin deponents is not completely understood. The only certainty is that they arise in some way from the Indo-European medio-passive system (see [Chapter 18](#))—like Greek middles, they regularly take direct objects—but, if they do in fact derive from verbs which originally were middle in meaning, that sense is difficult to reconstruct in most deponents; see Wheelock, page 161, note 1. The imperative *-re* is the expected product of **-so*.

II. Vocabulary

- **aqua:** This noun comes from an uncommon base paralleled as the word for “water” only in a few Indo-European languages outside of Latin (Celtic, Germanic, Gothic [*ahwa* “river”]); see *insula* below. The more common Indo-European base for “water,” **wod-*, is represented much more widely: English *water*, Russian *vodka*, Umbrian *utur* and Greek *hudor*. In Latin, **wod-* evolved into *unda* (“wave”).
- **audeo:** A semi-deponent verb which expresses the active voice throughout its forms, *audeo* exhibits active forms in the present-stem tenses and passive ones in the perfect-stem tenses. For the base of *audeo*, see [Chapter 23](#) (s.v. *audio*).

- **loquor**: From a base **tloqu-* with loss of initial *t-* (cf. *latus* < **tlatus*, see Chapter 22 [s.v. *tollo*]), *loquor* is related to Irish *-tluchur* and possibly English *talk*.
- **morior**: This verb breaks the rhythmic rule for the distinction between third *-io* and fourth conjugation outlined in Chapter 10 (bases with one long or two short syllables become fourth; bases with one short syllable become third *-io*). According to this rule, *morior* should be fourth but appears as third *-io* in Classical Latin (*moriri* exists in Early Latin).
- **nascor**: Corresponding to a passive form in English (“be born”), *nascor* comes from a common Indo-European base **gn-* signifying birth or production (Greek *genesis*; English *kin*; Latin *gigno*). Latin regularly lost the *g-* in initial *gn-*, cf. *nosco* < *gnosco* (vs. *cognosco* with *-gn-* retained).
- **patior**: In its sense “permit” (see P&R #5), *patior* can take an accusative plus an infinitive. It has many important derivatives, e.g. *patience* (“suffering”); *passion* (“suffering; later, the agony associated with love”). To remind students of the original meaning of *passion*, I ask them what is meant by the **Passion of St. Matthew**. The answer is his “suffering,” of course, not his love for a woman.
- **proficiscor**: = *pro-* + *faci-* + *-sc-* (the inchoative suffix; see Chapter 29 s.v. *disco*), literally “to begin or keep on making forward.” The perfect stem (*profectus*) naturally discards the suffix where the sense of completion inherent in the perfect tense is anomalous to the inchoative’s sense of an action beginning or repeating.
- **sequor**: From the Indo-European base **seqw-* (“follow”), this verb is cognate with Greek *hepomai* (Greek *h-* = Latin *s-*; Greek *p* = Latin *qu-*, cf. *leipo* vs. *linquo*) and possibly also English *see* (the English verb developing from the sense “follow with the eyes,” cf. German *sehen*).
- **utor**: Takes an **ablative** object. *Uti* developed from early Latin **oiti* (*oeti*), cf. **oenus** > **unus**, **poen-a** > **pun-io**, **Poen-i** > **Pun-ici**. Students should also be aware that there are four other deponent verbs which take ablative objects, listed above (Rule 4) and in Wheelock (page 164, note 5). Only *utor*, however, will appear on tests.
- **insula**: Though the ancients explained the origin of this word as *in salo* (“in the salt sea”), the resemblance of *insula* and Greek *nesos* (“inland”) points to a common origin from some lost Mediterranean tongue, probably not Indo-European. English *island* comes from Old English *eig-land* (compound of Old English *eig* “island”), which is related to Germanic *au(e)* “brook” (< **aujo*) and Latin *aqua*.
- **egredior**: = *ex-* + *gradior* (“step, go”). Students should learn *gradior*, *gradi*, *gressus sum* and then deduce the meaning of compounds from the prefixes.

III. Sentences

Practice and Review

1. Future more vivid.
 2. Cum (causal) clause.
1. Temporal participle (“After having departed . . .”).

IV. Quiz 5

Quiz 5

NOMEN TUUM

I. VERBS. For the following verbs:

1. translate the verb;
 2. indicate the mood (Ind, S, Inf, Imp) to the left;
 3. tell whether the verb form will take an accusative object (ACC), an ablative object (ABL) or a personal agent (PA). If it takes nothing, leave it blank. (18 pts.)
1. conatur

2. usus
3. patêre
4. traditi essemus
5. proficiscerentur
6. nascêris

II. CONSTRUCTIONS. In the blank below, write the type of condition which each sentence represents. (12 pts.)

1. Si libertate utêris, beatus eris.
2. Nisi ab insulâ egredimur, ducem non sequi possumus.
3. Si loqui conatus essem, pessima passus essem.
4. Si alius iubeat, discedamus.
5. Nisi ipsi pateremur, te adiuvere conaremur.
6. Si Caesar locutus est, milites eum cum curâ audivit.

III. VOCABULARY. Give the **NOMINATIVE**, **GENITIVE**, and **GENDER** of nouns, and the **PRINCIPAL PARTS** (**PRESENT INDICATIVE**, **PRESENT INFINITIVE**, **PERFECT INDICATIVE**, **PERFECT PARTICIPLE**) of verbs. For adjectives, give the **NOMINATIVE** forms. (20 pts.)

1. think, judge
2. power, resources
3. undertake
4. follow
5. unless, if not
6. dare