

Chapter 5

RULE 1: *-bi-* (seen sometimes as *-bo-* and *-bu-*) is the future tense sign.

RULE 2: *-ba-* is the imperfect tense sign.

I. Grammar

A. The Future Tense

The formation of tenses by the insertion of tense signs into the verb itself may come as little surprise to those who have studied other languages, but it will bowl those students who've not seen it before. Be sure to make this seemingly simple point explicitly clear. It is also advisable to explain succinctly what "tense" and "future" mean. ["Tense" comes into English through French, ultimately from Latin *tempus*.]

At first glance, the Latin verb may seem to English speakers to be constructed backwards: base/meaning + tense sign + person/number marker (e.g. *serva+bi+t*). We're used to thinking in the reverse order: pronoun (person/number marker) + tense modal + base/meaning (e.g. "he + will + save"). But this can be useful in teaching Latin verbs. To wit, everybody likes to hear how foreigners do things "backwards" (cf. Book 2 of Herodotus) so you can tell them to think of Latin verbs as "backwards" from English and the rules may fall more easily into place.

I put on the board the following diagram:

BASE/THEMATIC VOWEL	TENSE SIGN	PERSONAL ENDING

Then I enter a base (with its proper thematic vowel), a tense sign (use *-bi-* form of the future) and then a personal ending (choose one that follows *-bi-* without contraction or vowel change). For instance—it's a good opportunity to use new vocabulary:

<i>remane-</i>	<i>-bi-</i>	<i>-imus</i>
BASE/THEMATIC VOWEL	TENSE SIGN	PERSONAL ENDING

Then I ask a student to translate, guiding him/her backwards through the verb. Next, I change the personal ending and show how the change affects translation. I change that component several times to reinforce the function of that component. [Note that two forms in the future are irregular, the *-bo* of the first sing. and the *-bunt* of the third plural.] Then I move to the other two components and change them. Finally, I reverse the process and ask students to give the Latin component that would be necessary to effect a certain change, e.g. "Make the verb first person singular!", "Make the verb present!" or "Change the meaning to 'love!'".

As with the present, there's more than one possible English translation for the Latin: "I will X, I will be X-ing."

B. The Imperfect Tense

This chapter is an excellent opportunity to lay the groundwork for your students' future success and introduce the imperfect tense. If you do, Chapter 15 will entail nothing more than review, coming at a time when an easy chapter will be very welcome. The Latin future and imperfect tenses are formed in a similar fashion, and what little difference there is helps reinforce both through their contrast. In any case, you will have to introduce the concept of the imperfect tense

in the next lesson, where the students encounter the imperfect forms of *sum*. Though it would be unfair to put imperfect forms on tests and quizzes before Chapter 15, you can still reinforce the formation of the imperfect now and make life easier down the road.

C. Handout

Click [here](#) for a worksheet on the future and imperfect tenses.

II. The History of Indo-European Tenses

A. The Future Tense.

The existence of a future tense in Indo-European is doubtful. To wit, there is no true future tense in English, that is, no single verb form which expresses the future as there is for the present and past, e.g. *see* and *saw* versus *will see* (formed with a modal instead of changing the verb itself). Futurity in Indo-European was expressed in various ways: "I am going to . . .", "I may (subjunctive) . . ." or by the use of certain s-forms which had desiderative force, "I desire to . . ." (cf. the Greek regular formation of the future with sigma and early Latin future forms like *faxo* and *capso*).

Latin derived its future tense in large part from the subjunctive mood in its short-vowel form (short *i/e*). Third and fourth conjugations use the *-a/-e-* subjunctive markers for the future tense, avoiding as much as possible the vowel used for the subjunctive itself (*-a-*). But that's not possible in first and second conjugation, where *-a-* and *-e-* are already in use as present indicative and subjunctive markers. A reasonable substitute, *-bi-* appeared with necessary variations (*-bo-*, *-bu-*). However, the origin of this form is uncertain. It may have arisen from a source similar to the imperfect *-ba-* marker. (See below.)

B. The Imperfect Tense

The Indo-European imperfect was formed much like the Greek, with augment and secondary endings. Italic languages, however, lost this form. Instead, they used a *-f(u)a-* marker attached to the present stem. The *-f(u)a-* may be from the *fu-* base seen in *fui* and Greek *phy-* (e.g. *physis*), meaning "to be", with the *-a-* signifying past action (cf. *eram*). This original *-fa-*, attested as such in Oscan, changed to *-ba-* in Latin. In simple terms, the Latin imperfect may originally have been formed the way English forms the imperfect: "was/were (*-fa-*) V-ing (*V-ns* = participle)". However, exactly which verbal unit was attached before *-fa*—was it the participle perhaps?—is uncertain. By analogy, the future was formed with *-bi-* which employed the *-i-* associated with the future (cf. *eris*) in place of the *-a-* associated with past action.

III. Adjectives ending in *-er*.

Here is a good chance to reiterate the need to seek the proper base of the noun in the genitive singular, since *-er* adjectives contract or not, just as *-er* nouns do. Each must be memorized accordingly. Derivatives help considerably.

IV. Vocabulary

- **animus**: Not infrequently do Latin nouns exhibit different meanings in the plural and the singular, just as in English *spirit* carries a different connotation from *spirits* and several words referring to parts of the body: *wit* vs. *wits*, *gut* vs. *guts*. In Latin just as in these English examples, the plural often connotes an abstract principle associated with the singular; thus, if you have a strong "gut," you are seen to have "guts." Latin *animus* does much the same. The singular means "spirit" (lit. "breath", cf. Greek *anemos*), whereas the plural means "pride, courage" (originally, "(high) spirits").
- **gloria**: This word is closer to English *fame* than *fama*. Wheelock is again forcing students not to rely too heavily on derivatives.
- **noster**: This adjective contracts to a *nostr-* base.

- **igitur**: This conjunction is **postpositive**. Students should learn the term postpositive, since they will encounter quite a few postpositive conjunctions in Latin. A postpositive conjunction is "placed (-positive) after (post-)" the first word of a sentence, thus its name. Postpositive, however, does not always mean the second word explicitly. It can mean after the second word-thought (noun + adjective, prepositional phrase, etc.), just like *however* and *though* in English.
- **-ne**: This particle is called an **enclitic**, literally a thing which "hangs on." An enclitic is attached to the back of a word and in terms of pronunciation becomes part of the word, cf. the English slang expression "ya know" as in "He's the kinda guy-ya-know who'd do that." In Latin *-ne* is attached to the first word of the sentence and signifies that the sentence will be a question. When *-ne* is attached to *Non* at the front of a sentence, the combination (*Nonne*) serves the same function as English ". . ., isn't it?", expecting the answer "Yes". In contrast, Latin *Num* expects the answer "No" (see Wheelock, Supplementary Syntax, pp. 378-9).
- **propter**: This preposition takes an **accusative** object. [= *prope* ("near") + *-ter*. The *-ter* ending is an adverbial ending, cf. *-iter* as in *breviter*, related to the adjective form *-ter-*, as in *dexter*, *alter*, *noster* and *vester*, used in words of contrasted relations or with separative sense (right vs. left, one vs. the other, ours vs. theirs, yours vs. ours), cf. English *-ther*, as in *other* and *further*, and the Greek comparative form *-oteros* originally signifying one of two things, only later having the idea of the greater of the two. Several Latin prepositions originally having association with pairs show this form: *inter* (between two things or one thing inside another), *praeter* (one thing beside or before another), and *subter* (one thing beneath another). After the *-ter* form lost its original sense of duality, the Romans used it freely to form adverbs. Like the other prepositions ending in *-ter*, *propter* has a literal sense "near" (two things near each other), but subsequently took on a figurative meaning "because of." This new meaning arises, no doubt, from an extension of the original geographical sense of the preposition to a causal sense. That is, proximity to the Romans suggested cause, in much the same way that we say "X follows Y".]
- **satis**: It is very important to stress that *satis* does not function as an adjective in Latin, but as a noun. Therefore, it does not agree with a noun, as the English adjective *enough* does, e.g. enough money. Instead, Latin uses the genitive case after *satis* to complete its meaning, e.g. *satis pecuniae*, "enough (of) money." *Nihil* operates much the same way: *nihil pecuniae*, "nothing of (= no) money." This type of genitive is called a partitive genitive and I make it a requirement for students to know this use of the genitive, if for no other reason than that it gives them two uses of the case and thus something to choose between when asked why a noun is genitive. Remember to stress that Latin always says "enough of X", never just "enough X." Like *nihil*, *satis* is indeclinable.
- **tum**: [Apparently, it was originally an accusative form (showing time at which) of the Indo-European demonstrative pronoun, *so*sâ*tod. When this form entered Greek, it converted the initial s- to h- along a well-documented pattern of phonetic change (cf. Greek *hex* vs. Latin *sex*) and created the Greek article, *ho hê to*. Related to this form, then, Latin *tum* must originally have meant something like "at that (time)". Several Latin adverbs originate as nouns in the accusative case: *primum*, *multum*, *verum*. It's best, however, not to mention this to beginning students, many of whom are still wrestling with which forms decline and which don't. Reinforce that *tum* is an adverb and, like all Latin adverbs, doesn't decline.]
- **remaneo**: Point out to students that the *re-* prefix is redundant, cf. English *stay* and *stay behind*.

V. Sentences

Practice and Review

[Stress sentences with future verbs (1, 2, 4, 5, 8), and be sure to ask students what case the object of a preposition is and why.]

1. *Officium* must be the subject, because *viros* can be only the direct object here.
 2. *animorum* is a genitive of description (see Wheelock, pp. 374).
 3. I suppose the translation "The dangers of a handsome man are not small" is not impossible, but unless the referent is Paris of Troy, that translation seems less likely than "The dangers of war . . ."
 4. Note position of genitive coming after the noun it goes with.
1. "Beautiful women are not our fault(s)"? See sentence 3.
 2. Note the important idioms: in *culpâ* = at fault; *dare poenas* = pay a penalty.