Looking at Latin

A Grammar for Pre-College

by
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NOUN TERMINOLOGY

CASE

ENGLISH	LATIN
Word order tells you what is going on in a sentence. ↓	Word endings tell you what is going on in a sentence. ↓
Flavia eats a bean. ←→ A bean eats Flavia. ←→	Flāvia fabam devōrat. Flāviam faba devōrat.
Subject: comes before verb Direct Object: comes after verb	Subject: ends in -a Direct Object: ends in -am
(Subject → Verb → Direct Object)	(Flexible word order)

CASES

CASE

Different word forms (Flāvia vs. Flāviam) are called "cases." The case of a word reveals its grammatical role in the sentence.

NOMINATIVE: SUBJECT
⁺Andrew⁺ likes ketchup.

GENITIVE: POSSESSION
⁺Courtney's⁺ hair is brown.

DATIVE: INDIRECT OBJECT
You gave a CD ⁺to Ashley⁺.

ACCUSATIVE: DIRECT OBJECT
You saw ⁺Matthew⁺ in the halls.

ABLATIVE: ---[Many different uses]---
André surprises Sue ⁺with flowers⁺.
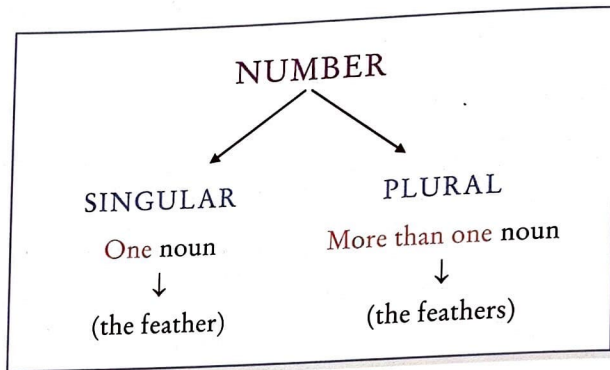Barney and Anne live ⁺in New York⁺.
Julian walks back ⁺from the bus stop⁺.

Fabam cupiō.
I want ⁺a bean⁺.

Jelly Beans

Noun Terminology

NUMBER

NUMBER

SINGULAR → ← PLURAL

SINGULAR	PLURAL
One noun	More than one noun
↓	↓
(the feather)	(the feathers)

plūma
nominative singular

plūmae
nominative plural

> The ending of a noun reveals its case and number.
>
> Every noun has a set of singular case forms and a set of plural case forms.

NOUN TERMINOLOGY

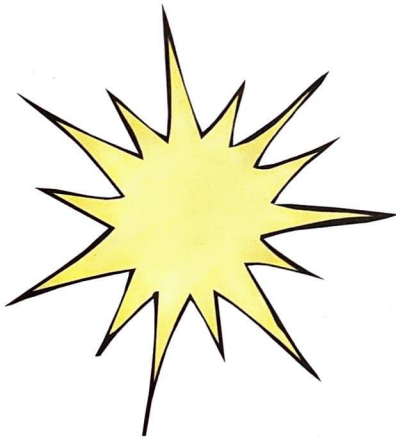GENDER

GENDER

↙   ↓   ↘

Masculine   Feminine   Neuter

The gender of a noun
is sometimes but
not always related
to the meaning
of the noun.

**RELATED
MEANING & GENDER**

puella - girl → feminine
puer - boy → masculine

**UNRELATED
MEANING & GENDER**

vīcus - village → masculine
urbs - city → feminine
oppidum - town → neuter

**IDENTIFYING A
NOUN'S GENDER**

Some genders are obvious
(*puer* - boy → masculine),
but in many cases, you must
look in the dictionary to find
the gender of a noun.

Typical noun
dictionary entries

stella, stellae, **f.** (star)

astrum, astrī, **n.** (star)

puerum (boy)
↓
masculine
↓
accusative singular

GENDER MATTERS!

Different genders use
slightly different endings,
so you may misunderstand
a noun's form if you do
not know its gender.

verbum (word)
↓
neuter
↓
nominative or accusative
singular

NOUN TERMINOLOGY

DECLENSION

DECLENSION

"Declension" is simply a word that means
"Noun Type."

There are 5 different types of nouns in the Latin language,
each of which has its own set of case endings.

IDENTIFYING A NOUN'S DECLENSION

Every declension has a
genitive singular form
that is different from the
genitive singular forms
of other declensions.

Look at a noun's dictionary
entry to find its genitive
singular form.

stella, stell**ae**, f. (star)

astrum, astr**ī**, n. (star)

GENITIVE SINGULAR ENDINGS

-ae	→	1st Declension
-ī	→	2nd Declension
-is	→	3rd Declension
-ūs	→	4th Declension
-eī	→	5th Declension

DECLENSION MATTERS!

It will be difficult to
interpret noun endings
correctly if you do not
know the noun's
declension.

SECOND DECLENSION

	SING.	PL.
Nom.	puer	puerī
Gen.	puerī	puerōrum
Dat.	puerō	puerīs
Acc.	puer**um**	puerōs
Abl.	puerō	puerīs

puer**um**:
Second
Declension
↓
accusative
singular

THIRD DECLENSION

	SING.	PL.
Nom.	pater	patrēs
Gen.	patris	patr**um**
Dat.	patrī	patribus
Acc.	patrem	patrēs
Abl.	patre	patribus

patr**um**:
Third
Declension
↓
genitive
plural

Introduction to Nouns – Noun Terminology – Declension

NOUN TERMINOLOGY

DICTIONARY ENTRY AND STEM

DICTIONARY ENTRY

puella,	puellae,	f.	(girl)
↓	↓	↓	↓
NOMINATIVE Singular	GENITIVE Singular	Gender	Meaning

PLURAL-ONLY NOUNS

Some nouns only use plural forms, so their dictionary entries give:

nom. pl., gen. pl., gender, meaning
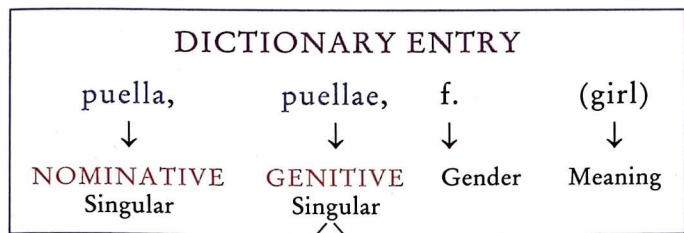
Use genitive to identify the declension of the noun.

Use genitive to identify the stem of the noun.

dēliciae, dēliciārum, f. (sweetheart)
castra, castrōrum, n. (battle camp)

GENITIVE SINGULAR ENDINGS

-ae → 1st Declension

-ī → 2nd Declension

-is → 3rd Declension
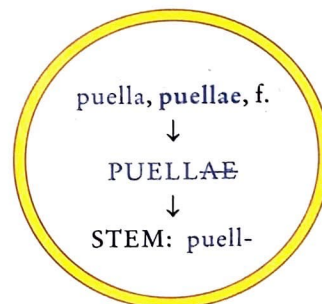
-ūs → 4th Declension

-eī → 5th Declension

STEM

Basic foundation of a noun - case endings are added to it.

↓

Remove genitive singular ending to identify the stem of a noun.

DICTIONARY ENTRY		STEM
agricola, agricolae, m. (farmer)	→	agricol-
ager, agrī, m. (field)	→	agr-
lībertās, lībertātis, f. (freedom)	→	lībertāt-
manus, manūs, f. (hand)	→	man-
diēs, diēī, m. (day)	→	di-

puella, **puellae**, f.
↓
PUELLAE
↓
STEM: puell-

NOUN TERMINOLOGY

CASE	Reveals *grammatical function* of noun.	Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Ablative
NUMBER	Indicates whether there is *one* or *more than one*.	Singular, Plural
GENDER	Plays a role in determining what *case endings* are used.	Masculine Feminine Neuter
DECLENSION	Type of noun: different declensions use different *case endings*.	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th
STEM	Basic *foundation* of noun: case endings are added to it.	Cut off ending of genitive singular form
DICTIONARY ENTRY	Reveals *declension, stem, gender,* and *meaning* of noun.	Nominative, Genitive, Gender, Meaning

FIRST DECLENSION

FEMININE (AND SOME MASCULINE) NOUNS

FIRST DECLENSION

Typical:
aqua, aquae, f. (water)

Genitive Singular: -AE

*LONG MARK

↓

Nominative Sing.: -A
Ablative Sing.: -Ā

STEM

↓

Cut off -AE from
Genitive Singular.

1ST DECLENSION ENDINGS	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-a	-ae
Genitive	-ae	-ārum
Dative	-ae	-īs
Accusative	-am	-ās
Ablative	-ā*	-īs

aqua, aquae, f. (water)

1ST DECLENSION aqua, aquae, f. (water)	Singular	Plural
Nominative	aqua	aquae
Genitive	aquae	aquārum
Dative	aquae	aquīs
Accusative	aquam	aquās
Ablative	aquā	aquīs

Most first declension nouns are feminine, but several are masculine:

agricola → farmer
nauta → sailor
poēta → poet

SECOND DECLENSION

MASCULINE NOUNS IN -*US*

SECOND DECLENSION MASCULINE (-US)

Typical:
animus, animī, m. (mind, heart, soul)
nūntius, nūntiī, m. (messenger)

Genitive Singular: -ī

Nouns in -US
↓
Masculine
(Plants, trees, cities are feminine.)

STEM
↓
Cut off -ī from
Genitive Singular.

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE ENDINGS (-US)

|	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-us	-ī
Genitive	-ī	-ōrum
Dative	-ō	-īs
Accusative	-um	-ōs
Ablative	-ō	-īs

nūntius, nūntiī, m.
(messenger)

Nouns in -IUS have an "i" at the end of their stems. Do not cut this off.

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE (-US)
animus, animī, m. (mind, heart, soul)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	animus	animī
Genitive	animī	animōrum
Dative	animō	animīs
Accusative	animum	animōs
Ablative	animō	animīs

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE (-IUS)
nūntius, nūntiī, m. (messenger)[†]

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	nūntius	nūntiī
Genitive	nūntiī	nūntiōrum
Dative	nūntiō	nūntiīs
Accusative	nūntium	nūntiōs
Ablative	nūntiō	nūntiīs

[†]See p. 11 for important information about an alternative genitive singular form for -ius nouns.
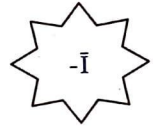
SECOND DECLENSION

MASCULINE NOUNS IN -*R*

**SECOND DECLENSION
MASCULINE (-R)**

Typical:
puer, puerī, m. (boy)
ager, agrī, m. (field)
vir, virī, m. (man)

Genitive Singular: -ī

STEM
↓
Cut off -ī from
Genitive Singular.

Nouns in -R
↓
Masculine

---

puer, puerī, m. (boy)

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE ENDINGS (-R)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-r	-ī
Genitive	-ī	-ōrum
Dative	-ō	-īs
Accusative	-um	-ōs
Ablative	-ō	-īs

NOTE:
Some nouns drop an "e" from their stems.

The dictionary entries below indicate that puer keeps the "e" in its stem but that ager drops it.

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE
puer, puerī, m. (boy)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	puer	puerī
Genitive	puerī	puerōrum
Dative	puerō	puerīs
Accusative	puerum	puerōs
Ablative	puerō	puerīs

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE
ager, agrī, m. (field)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	ager	agrī
Genitive	agrī	agrōrum
Dative	agrō	agrīs
Accusative	agrum	agrōs
Ablative	agrō	agrīs

SECOND DECLENSION

NEUTER NOUNS IN *-UM*

SECOND DECLENSION NEUTER (-UM)

Typical:
signum, signī, n. (sign)
auxilium, auxiliī, n. (help)

Genitive Singular: -Ī

Nouns in -UM
↓
Neuter

STEM
↓
Cut off -ī from Genitive Singular.

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gaudium, gaudiī, n.
(joy)

2ND DECLENSION NEUTER ENDINGS (-UM)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-um	-a
Genitive	-ī	-ōrum
Dative	-ō	-īs
Accusative	-um	-a
Ablative	-ō	-īs

★ NOMINUSATIVE ★

"Nominusative" is a made-up word to help you remember that neuter nominative and accusastive look the same. (It is *not* a separate case.)

For all neuter nouns, the "nominusative" plural is -A.

2ND DECLENSION NEUTER
signum, signī, n. (sign)

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	signum	signa
Genitive	signī	signōrum
Dative	signō	signīs
Accusative	signum	signa
Ablative	signō	signīs

2ND DECLENSION NEUTER
gaudium, gaudiī, n. (joy)[†]

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	gaudium	gaudia
Genitive	gaudiī	gaudiōrum
Dative	gaudiō	gaudiīs
Accusative	gaudium	gaudia
Ablative	gaudiō	gaudiīs

[†]See p. 11 for important information about an alternative genitive singular form for -ius nouns.

SECOND DECLENSION

-ī

2ND DECLENSION MASCULINE	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-us, -r	-ī
Genitive	-ī	-ōrum
Dative	-ō	-īs
Accusative	-um	-ōs
Ablative	-ō	-īs

MASCULINE VS. NEUTER

Differences appear in the nominative and the accusative.

2ND DECLENSION NEUTER	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-um	-a
Genitive	-ī	-ōrum
Dative	-ō	-īs
Accusative	-um	-a
Ablative	-ō	-īs

Virum vocāmus.
We call ⁺the man⁺.

This masculine form can only be accusative.

→ Direct Object
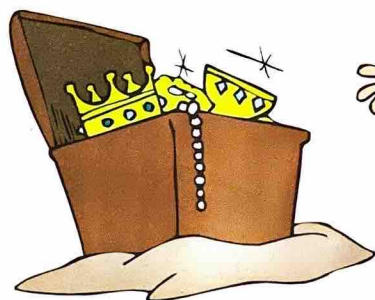
You must know the gender of a noun in order to identify its ending correctly.

Aurum fulget.
⁺The gold⁺ shines.

This neuter form can be nominative or accusative

↓ Subject   ✗ Direct Object

Aurum inveniō.
I find ⁺the gold⁺.

This neuter form can be nominative or accusative

✗ Subject   Direct Object

NOTE ON THE GENITIVE SINGULAR

For nouns with -ius and -ium in the nominative singular, there are two possible forms for the genitive singular:

nūntius, nūntī, m. - early form
nūntius, nūntiī, m. - Augustan form

This book will use the Augustan -iī.