

Capitulum XXVII - Res Rusticae

Subjunctive Mood

Previously, we have seen only the indicative mood (used to make statements or ask questions) and the imperative mood (used to issue commands). This chapter introduces the subjunctive mood.

The present subjunctive is formed by changing the characteristic vowel of the four conjugations. The 1st conjugation changes to *-e-* and the 2nd, 3rd and fourth conjugations change to *-a-*.

Active		Passive	
amem	amēmus	amer	amēmur
amēs	amētis	amēris	amēmini
amet	ament	amētur	amentur
moneam	moneāmus	monear	moneāmur
moneās	moneātis	moneāris	moneāmini
moneat	moneant	moneātur	moneantur
ducam	ducāmus	ducar	ducāmur
ducās	ducātis	ducāris	ducāmini
ducat	ducant	ducātur	ducantur
audiam	audiāmus	audiar	audiāmur
audiās	audiātis	audiāris	audiāmini
audiat	audiant	audiātur	audiantur

The present subjunctive of *sum*, *esse* is irregular:

sim	sīmus
sīs	sītis
sit	sint

Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood is used occasionally in an independent clause to express a wish, hope, or will of the speaker. But it is much more commonly used in subordinate clauses of different types.

This chapter introduces the present subjunctive used in subordinate clauses of command (called “indirect commands”):

Iulius colono imperat ut mercedem solvat. Julius commands the farmer that he pay his fee (to pay his fee).

Colonus eum orat ut patientiam habeat. The farmer begs that he have patience (to have patience).

Vos moneo ut industrie laboretis. I advise you that you work diligently (to work diligently).

Nota bene:

- (1) The subjunctive of “indirect command” covers the range from outright commands to begging or mere suggestions.
- (2) The *ut* used to introduce the subordinate clause is a subordinate conjunction (“that”) and is to be distinguished from the *ut* of comparison (“like, as”). To form a negative indirect command, *ne* or *ut ne* is used.
- (3) The verb *iubeo* does not regularly take an indirect command, but governs an accusative and infinitive construction (*Iubeo vos industrie laborare*).
- (4) The idiomatic translation in English is often a simple infinitive (to pay, etc.)

Ablative of Separation

An ablative (without preposition) is used to express *separation*:

Servis meis imperabo ut te agris meis pellant. I will command my slaves that they drive you from me fields.

Noli me officio meo prohibere. Do not hold me back from my duty.

Quam with the Superlative

Quam with a superlative expresses the highest degree possible.

Pastor quam celerrime potest ad oves suas currit. The shepherd runs to his sheep as quickly as possible.

Ne . . . quidem

The negation *ne* is used in *ne . . . quidem* (not even) to emphasize a word or phrase that comes between.

Ne in Campania quidem plures villae sunt. Not even in Campania are there many villas.

Ne assem quidem habeo. I don’t have even one penny.

Ne verbum quidem dic! Don’t say even a word!