

Greek and Latin Roots: Part I - Latin

Greek and Latin Roots for Science and the Social Sciences

PART I: LATIN

Sixth Edition (*Adapted*)
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**University
of Victoria**



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Preface to 5th Edition

It was at the end of the 1980s that I decided to produce an in-house manual for what was then called Classical Studies 250. At that time, the price of our commercial textbook had already soared beyond fifty dollars, and was still climbing. If only for economic reasons, a course manual seemed to make excellent sense.

But cost considerations were not the only factors. Although I regarded our former textbook¹ as the best of its kind on the market, it was over forty years old, and was hardly ideal for the Canadian undergraduate of the 1990s. Moreover, it contained too much detail for a thirteen-week course, and had some inaccurate and confusing features.

Probably all of us who teach language and etymology courses get the itch to construct a textbook that perfectly matches our own approach. A successful course manual will obviously reflect the instructor's methodology and academic priorities. However, a good one should also be well organized, clearly written, and interesting to read. That adds up to a tall order, and I can only hope that I've approached the goal.

I invite every student to offer criticisms and suggestions for change. Because this work has now gone through several editions, most of the glaring errors should have been caught; but there is still bound to be room for improvement. If any explanation is puzzling or confusing, please let me know. If more examples or more exercises are needed, that lack can be remedied. There are now also computer exercises available in the University Language Centre.

Part I of the book covers Latin material. **Part II**—shorter in length, but no less challenging—deals with Greek. Each section is designed to provide roughly six weeks of instruction, before and after Reading Break.

Students can rest assured that these materials are being sold at cost, with no financial profit to the author or the Department. Indeed, preparation expenses have been absorbed by the Department, and the price reflects only the actual cost of printing and distribution.

Peter L. Smith
University of Victoria
November 1997 (5th Edition)

Notes

1. Eli E. Burriss and Lionel Casson, Latin and Greek in Current Use, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1949).

Foreword

The legacy of Professor Peter L. Smith at the University of Victoria is great. Born in Victoria, Peter graduated high school with the highest marks in the province and took his undergraduate degrees at Victoria College and the University of British Columbia. Having won the Governor General's Award he attended Yale University where he wrote his PhD focused on the Roman poet and teacher of rhetoric Ausonius. He then had a brief teaching year in Ottawa, but by the early 1960s Peter was home again and began his professional career as a teacher and administrator with the newly formed University of Victoria. In addition to his Classical scholarship, which focused on Latin lyric poetry and drama, Peter wrote a history of the university, *A Multitude of the Wise: UVic Remembered* (1994) reflecting on the many transformations he witnessed here as UVic became a world-renowned university. Peter had an exacting but jovial manner that students and colleagues can never forget. His demand for excellence impressed anyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

The Department of Greek and Roman Studies is extremely happy to have assisted the University of Victoria library staff with the publication of this textbook which served one of the many popular courses Peter taught for our Department. This book would not be possible without the help and support of Peter's family, and we gratefully acknowledge his wife Mary Jean, his son Dr. Daniel Hinman-Smith, and daughter Sarah Smith.

The open-access publication of this book in digital format, freely available, follows very much in character with Peter's efforts to enrich the educational life of students of British Columbia. This book serves as a lasting memorial to one of the University of Victoria's most revered teachers and friends.

Dr. Brendan Burke
Associate Professor and Department Chair
Department of Greek and Roman Studies
University of Victoria

Chapter 1: Introduction

§1. The Fascination of Words

If the capacity for rational speech is the one feature that most distinctively sets us apart from other members of the animal kingdom, then the effective use of language should surely be among our highest individual priorities. Fortunately, most intelligent people do not have to be persuaded about the value of clear and precise communication. The message is more or less self-evident: if we wish to speak well, read well, and write well, we must gain control of words, the basic elements of all discourse. We need not aspire to professional careers as writers or scholars in order to profit from a good vocabulary. In practical terms alone, it is a plain fact that oral and written language skills are stepping-stones to advancement in almost every vocation that involves some intellectual challenge.

The good news is that it can be a wonderful adventure acquiring and honing verbal skills. Quite apart from any practical benefits, the study of words often becomes an absorbing quest, a compulsive game, a glorious obsession. Many of us become happy converts to the cause in childhood, and get hooked on words for life. Others, who perhaps had less encouragement at a tender age, will succumb to the enchantment of words as teenagers or adults. Incidentally, the phrase “enchantment of words” is more than just a metaphor, since words lie at the heart of all magical charms and incantations—they are the cherished tools of wizards and witch doctors. If you find words fascinating, you will be pleased to learn that *fascinate* is derived from Latin **fascinum**, a bewitching spell. The fascination of words can become a hard spell to break. Like peddlers of seductive drugs, purveyors of word magic should probably be required to flag their books and manuals with an ominous message: “WARNING: THIS COURSE OF STUDY MAY BE ADDICTIVE.”

§2. What is Greek and Latin Roots (GRS 250)

In the UVic Calendar, *Greek and Roman Studies 250* carries a reasonably clear and straightforward title: “Greek and Latin Roots of English in Science and Social Sciences.” Still, it may be a good idea to summarize what this course attempts to achieve, and what it does not. Although *Greek and Roman Studies 250* may vary in emphasis from one instructor to the next, its general aims and objectives can be stated as perennial goals.

The course will examine the systematic principles by which a large portion of English vocabulary has evolved from Latin and (to a lesser degree) from Greek. It will try also to impart some skill in the recognition and proper use of these derived words. Notice the stress on principles: although we shall be continually looking at interesting individual words, our constant aim will be to discover predictable general patterns of historical development, so that we may be able to cope with new and unfamiliar words of any type that we have studied. We shall often approach the problem by a procedure known as “word analysis,” which is roughly comparable to the dissection of an interesting specimen in the biology laboratory.

The course assumes no previous knowledge of Latin and Greek, and does not involve the grammatical study of these languages—except for a few basic features of noun and verb formation that will help us to understand the Latin and Greek legacy in English. (If you have already had some encounter with Latin and/or Greek, you are welcome in the course; but you may find the early chapters rather obvious and elementary.) When we turn to consider the Greek material, all students will be asked to learn the Greek alphabet. This skill is not absolutely essential for a general knowledge of Greek roots in English, and it is often not required in courses that deal only with medical and technical terminology. Knowing the alphabet, however, will help you understand a number of otherwise puzzling features of spelling and usage; moreover, it is a challenge that students always find interesting and appealing. (There have been cries of alarm on those occasions when we have asked, in year-end opinion surveys, whether the Greek alphabet requirement should be dropped.)

Although there will be some attention paid to the historical interaction of Latin and Greek with English, *Greek and Roman Studies 250* is definitely not a systematic history of the English language. Excellent courses on that topic are taught, from differing vantage points, by the Departments of English and Linguistics. It will be our concern to examine only those elements within English that have been directly or indirectly affected by the two classical languages.

In order to provide the broadest possible service to students, the course will emphasize standard English vocabulary in current use. The more exotic technical vocabulary of science and medicine can be extremely

interesting, but it will be explored in only summary fashion. Nevertheless, *Greek and Roman Studies 250* should be of considerable value, say, to a would-be botanist or medical doctor, if only by providing the foundation for further specialized enquiry.

Reflecting the design of *Greek and Roman Studies 250*, this book is divided into two parallel segments, one on [Latin](#) and one on [Greek](#). Each is intended to be completed in about six weeks.

§3. Why Latin and Greek?

If you have even the most general knowledge about the history of western civilization, you will be aware of the crucial role played by ancient Greece and Rome.

It was in the Greek city-states of the eastern Mediterranean, about 2,500 years ago, that many fundamental aspects of western culture had their origin. The Greeks virtually invented *politics* (from *monarchy* to *tyranny* to *democracy*); they gave us *epic* and *lyric poetry*, *theatrical drama* (both *tragedy* and *comedy*), *philosophy*, *rhetoric*, and *analytical history*; they excelled in *athletics*, *music*, *mathematics*, *physics*, and *astronomy*. Therefore it should be no surprise to learn that all the italicized English words in the last sentence are derived from classical Greek, a language most brilliantly exploited, perhaps, by the Athenian writers of the 5th and 4th centuries BC. Following the conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), the Greek language spread throughout the Near and Middle East; some four hundred years later, it would be the tongue in which the Christian apostles brought their message to the west (the very word *Christ* is Greek, as is *apostle*). Although the language of modern Athens is a far cry from that of Aristotle or St. Paul, Greek has not changed out of all recognition in over two millennia.

At the time of Aristotle and Alexander, Rome was still an obscure city on the world stage, though it was beginning to assume a dominant role on the Italian peninsula. Within two hundred years, Rome had conquered most of the Mediterranean, including the ancient city-states of Greece. By the first century of the Christian era, the vast Roman empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea, from Egypt to the British Isles. Latin, once merely a regional Italic dialect in and around the city of Rome, had become the spoken and written language for most of what is today western Europe. Boasting a major literature of its own, it was also the medium by which the great achievements of Greece would be transmitted to the west. As Christianity developed, the Hebrew and Greek Bibles were translated into Latin. Even after the fall of Rome and the emergence of medieval Europe, Latin continued to thrive, especially within the powerful Catholic Church. In those areas where the use of Latin had become well established over centuries of empire, regional dialects of Latin evolved into new and distinct vernacular languages, including Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.

Many Greek words would eventually come into English only because they had been borrowed by speakers of Latin. Similarly, vast amounts of Latin vocabulary entered English through French—and to a much lesser extent through Italian or Spanish. In the weeks ahead, we shall explore this process of transmission. Whenever possible, we shall go back to the source, developing analytical skills that will allow us to trace the Latin and Greek ancestry of countless English words.

§4. The Indo-European Family of Languages

The scientific study of linguistics began to gain momentum in the late 18th century. At this time, European scholars became fascinated with verbal similarities between their own historical languages, chiefly Latin and Greek, and the classical language of India, Sanskrit, which was just then becoming known in the west. There seemed to be little doubt that some historical link existed between almost all the languages of Europe and several major languages of western Asia. In some areas of vocabulary, such as family relationships and number concepts, the similarities were astonishing:

Sanskrit:	<i>mātár</i>	<i>pitár</i>	<i>tráya</i>
Greek:	<i>mētēr</i>	<i>patēr</i>	<i>treîs</i>
Latin:	<i>māter</i>	<i>pater</i>	<i>trēs</i>
French:	<i>mère</i>	<i>père</i>	<i>trois</i>
Spanish:	<i>madre</i>	<i>padre</i>	<i>tres</i>
German:	<i>Mutter</i>	<i>Vater</i>	<i>drei</i>
English:	<i>mother</i>	<i>father</i>	<i>three</i>
Old Irish:	<i>māthir</i>	<i>athir</i>	<i>trī</i>

How could one explain these startling resemblances? It was known, of course, that French and Spanish were directly descended from vulgar Latin,¹ and there was no mystery about Latin derivatives like *trois* and *madre*. By the same token, the historic kinship between German and English accounted for the closeness of *Mutter* and *mother*, of *drei* and *three*. The other similarities, however, could be explained only on the hypothesis of some common ancestral source, remote in time.

Eventually, scholars came to agree that there must have been an ancient prehistoric people—hypothetically identified as the “Indo-Europeans”—whose language was the ancestral source of many different linguistic streams. Even today, there is some dispute about the geographical origins of these people; but it is widely assumed that their homeland lay to the north of the Black Sea, in what is now southern Russia. Sometime around 3,000 BC, they must have begun dispersing in waves of migration—north and west into continental Europe, and east and south into Persia and India.

The result today, some 5,000 years later, is what we call the **INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES**, consisting of two main divisions (Western and Eastern), each comprising a number of major subfamilies or branches (Germanic, Italic, Indo-Iranian, etc.). The terminology and system of classification may vary somewhat from one authority to the next, but there is general agreement on all the essential features. For our present purposes, it is not important to know the details of this complex system, provided we grasp the basic principles and understand the relative positions of Greek, Latin, and English within the vast language family.

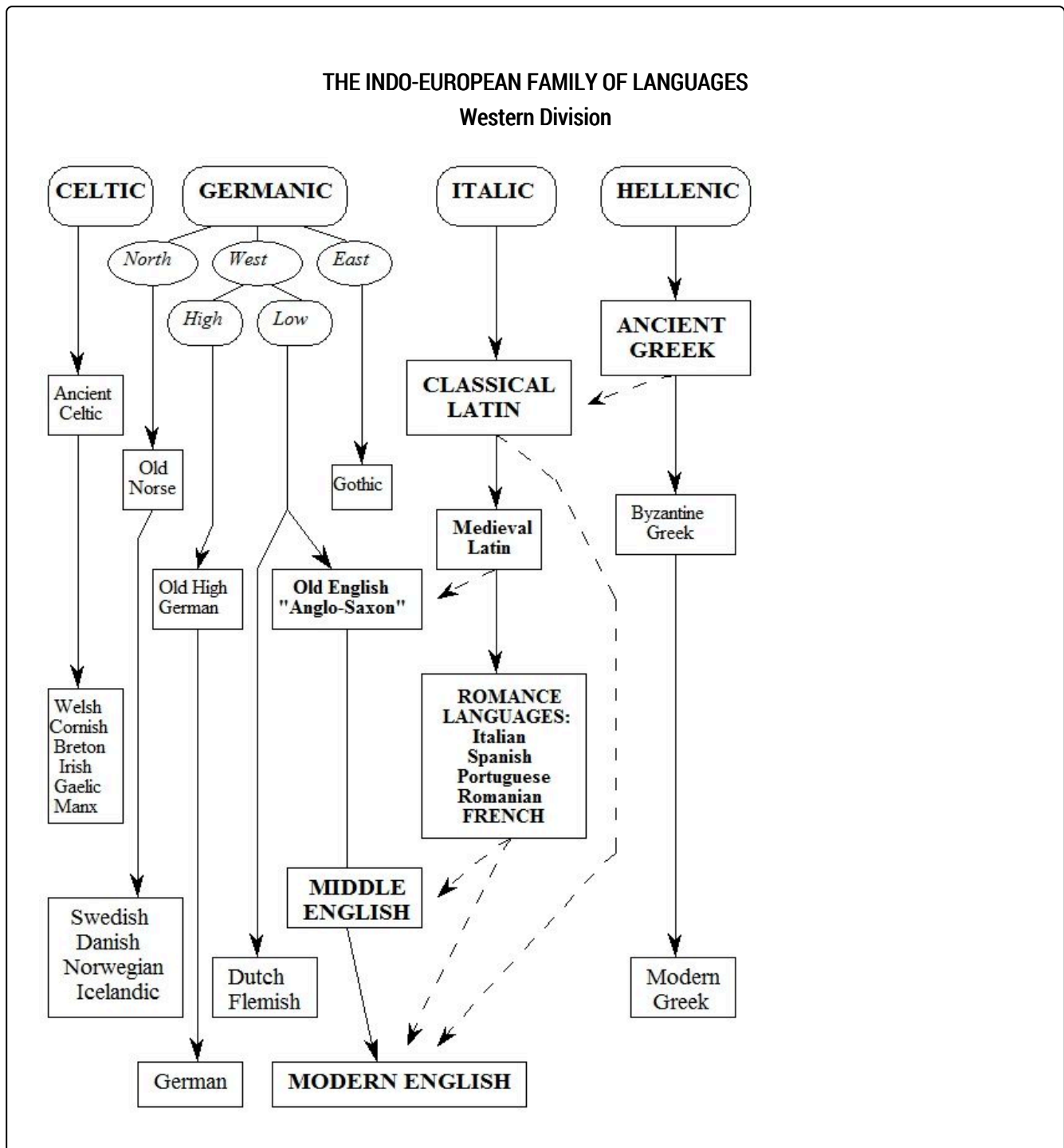
Let us leave to one side the **EASTERN DIVISION** of Indo-European, whose branches include Balto-Slavic (Russian, Polish, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, etc.); Indo-Iranian (ancient Sanskrit, modern Hindi, Bengali, Persian, Afghan, etc.); Armenian; and Albanian. Suffice it to say that English is at least distantly related to all these languages.

Our work in *Greek and Latin Roots for Science and the Social Sciences 250* will relate entirely to the **WESTERN DIVISION** of Indo-European, which comprises four parallel branches:

1. Hellenic:	Ancient Greek ; Modern Greek
2. Italic:	Latin ; <i>Romance languages</i> : Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Romanian, Provençal, etc.
3. Germanic:	English , German, Dutch, Flemish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic
4. Celtic:	Irish, Gaelic, Manx; Welsh, Cornish, Breton

These four branches or subfamilies developed, over many centuries, from four prehistoric proto-languages, which themselves had evolved from the common Indo-European tongue. There has often been contact among the subfamilies, and none of them has been immune to external influence. Still, this does not change the fact that English is a Germanic language, whereas Latin and French are Italic.

It will be more graphic to present this information as a kind of genealogical chart (though the biological analogy may somewhat misrepresent the continuous nature of linguistic evolution):



There is one important point that should be immediately apparent. Please notice that Greek, Latin, and English all belong to different language subfamilies. This means, in effect, that Greek vocabulary did not evolve into Latin, nor did Latin evolve into English. Native English words may have a **COGNATE** relationship with native words in Greek or Latin—*mother* is cognate with Greek *meter* and Latin *mater*; but a **NATIVE** English word, by definition, cannot be derived from a Latin or Greek word. This is simply because English is a Germanic language, and its native words are Anglo-Saxon in origin. When a Greek or Latin derivative appears in English, it must have been introduced, in the first instance, as a **LOAN-WORD**.² Although the loan-word may have become thoroughly naturalized in its new environment, it will always remain an alien, historically speaking.

In contrast, we can see from the chart why almost all French, Spanish, and Italian native vocabulary is directly **DERIVED** from Latin. The development of the **ROMANCE LANGUAGES** from vulgar Latin is a fascinating story, which we may explore from time to time later on. French *mère* (or Spanish *madre*) is in the direct line of descent from Latin *mater*; and may be regarded as its linguistic offspring or **DERIVATIVE**. Cognate words, such as *mother* and *mater*, are more like cousins, descended as they are from some remote common ancestor. Your dictionary may show this family link by using the phrase “akin to” when mentioning a cognate word or cognate root within an etymology.

Because languages cannot be sealed in a vacuum, the parallel branches of the Western Indo-European family have obviously not stayed pure and exclusive. Latin borrowed extensively from Greek over a period of many centuries. The highly adaptable English language has been borrowing words throughout its history, from every conceivable source. Latin words, in particular, have entered English by a variety of routes, most commonly by way of French. They are loan-words, but they are still Latin derivatives.

Notes

1. Do not be confused by the term *vulgar* Latin. It means simply “the people’s Latin” (from Latin *vulgaris*), the language of the army and the great masses of the uneducated. It does not imply that popular vocabulary was particularly coarse or offensive.
2. **LOAN-WORD** is the traditional term for a word taken over from another language, as opposed to a **NATIVE** word (one that has evolved within one’s own language, from its prehistoric origins). It is perhaps illogical to speak of “borrowing” a word from another culture, when there is no intention of ever repaying the “loan”; however, the meaning of the expression is clear enough.

§5. The Unique Nature of English

As we shall see in later chapters, the English language has had a most unusual history, having been subjected over the centuries (like the British Isles themselves) to waves of foreign influence. On account of this historical diversity, English is magnificently supplied with the raw material of words, often having several synonyms for a single concept. Because the grammatical structure of the language is Germanic, the functional linking words (prepositions, conjunctions, and articles) are solidly Germanic: *to, from, and, but, however, when, since, the, an*. So are the most common everyday nouns, verbs, and adjectives—for example, words for family relationships (*mother, father, sister, brother*), for number concepts (*one, two, ten, hundred*); and for fundamental aspects of daily life (*house, home, bread, water, hay, harvest, cow, horse, sun, moon; eat, drink, talk, laugh, make love; good, bad, old, young*). Not all Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is limited to words of one or two syllables; but we seldom have any problem understanding the longer Germanic forms, such as *wonderful, womanhood, lighthearted, nevertheless, overwhelmingly, and unfriendliness*.

Alongside this huge stock of native words, one finds at least an equal number of Latin (and/or Greek) loan-words, which entered English at various stages in its evolution. These can be very simple in form and obvious in meaning: *mile, wine, cheese, city, school, church, farm, joy, grief, nice, fine, poor*. (Here we see proof that not all short, blunt words are Anglo-Saxon.) Some common English words are spelled exactly as they were in the Latin of Julius Caesar: *area, focus, actor, index, forum, consensus, data, item, video, referendum*. Many others have been adapted to English morphology, but still clearly reveal their classical origins. As a general rule, words of this type tend to be longer than their Anglo-Saxon fellows, and they may often be learned or scholarly: *desiccated, exiguous, refulgent, concatenation*. Unless we have some knowledge of Latin roots, these may strike us as exotic aliens, polysyllabic and obscure.¹ When they are used skilfully and appropriately, Latin and Greek loan-words can vastly enrich our speech and writing, providing greater clarity and precision, adding subtle connotations that extend the boundaries of meaning, or creating images that could not otherwise be expressed. Unfortunately, the classical vocabulary in English is particularly subject to abuse, for these loan-words are the stock in trade of pedants, posers, and propaganda artists—indeed, of all who avoid plain language in order to hide or bend the truth.

The dual heritage of English, Anglo-Saxon and Latin, has given the language a great many **LEARNED VARIANTS**, synonyms that offer more scholarly, polite, or devious alternatives for ordinary concepts. Sometimes the variant may be needed in order to avoid any risk of ambiguity—in scientific and medical usage, for instance. In other contexts, the learned variant may be coy or pretentious. Here we meet the sub-class of **EUPHEMISMS**, expressions that stem from a desire to cloak ugly or embarrassing concepts in less offensive language. Consider the following pairs, where the blunt Anglo-Saxon word is followed by a more refined Latin counterpart:

<i>work</i>	<i>labo(u)r</i>	<i>smell</i>	<i>odo(u)r, fragrance</i>
<i>sweat</i>	<i>perspire</i>	<i>spit</i>	<i>expectorate</i>
<i>chew</i>	<i>masticate</i>	<i>drool</i>	<i>salivate</i>
<i>piss</i>	<i>urinate</i>	<i>shit</i>	<i>defecate</i>
<i>begin</i>	<i>commence</i>	<i>end</i>	<i>terminate</i>
<i>break</i>	<i>fracture</i>	<i>stitch</i>	<i>suture</i>
<i>womb</i>	<i>uterus</i>	<i>balls</i>	<i>testicles</i>

Quite deliberately, this list is a mixed bag. Some of the variants offer only a minor elevation in tone; others enable us to avoid a crude expression or a downright obscenity. (Almost all our English swear words are Anglo-Saxon.² Several of the less down-to-earth alternatives are clearly medical terms or technical jargon—does anyone ever *expectorate* outside the Baseball Rulebook? Still others, like *commence* and *terminate*, belong to the world of bureaucratic doublespeak. As a class, learned variants cannot be given blanket approval or condemnation; their appropriateness depends on the situation and the context.

The English language has often adapted Latin adjectives to fill an obvious need, where a simple Germanic noun has no suitable adjectival form. A case in point is suggested by the pair of synonyms listed above—*work* and *labor*. To find an English word that means “full of work” or “involving work,” we must resort to the Latin-derived *laborious*, because there is no *workful* or *worksome* or *workly*. Although there is a Germanic *smelly*—not to mention *stinking*—the connotations are negative; if we want an adjective to describe a pleasant “scent” (Latin) or “aroma” (Greek), we can use *odorous* or *fragrant*.

Compare these four Germanic nouns with their Latin adjectival companions:

<i>sun</i>	<i>solar</i>	<i>moon</i>	<i>lunar</i>
<i>earth</i>	<i>terrestrial</i>	<i>sky</i>	<i>celestial</i>

Astronomers and space scientists would be lost without the Latin forms. Of course, we do have the Germanic adjectives *sunny* and *earthy* (as well as *earthly*); but they are very different in meaning from *solar* and *terrestrial*.

What percentage of English vocabulary is derived from Latin and Greek? There is really no easy answer to that question, because it makes a big difference whether we are talking about all the words in a huge dictionary (including the highly technical jargon of science and medicine), or the words that an educated person would recognize in reading, or the words that most of us use in daily conversation. Some idea of the debt can be gained from the following crude estimate: of the 20,000 most common words in English, approximately half (10,000 words) are derived from Latin, either directly or through French. A much lower number (but at least 2,000) can be traced back to Greek.

To say that roughly half our standard vocabulary is Latin does not mean that half the words in any given sentence will be Latin. That is because the plain and simple Germanic words are used far more frequently; there may well be two or three occurrences of a word like *the* or *and* in the same sentence. Any writer whose Latin word frequency is above 30%, even in a short passage, is likely to be writing complex or technical English.

Let us try a little experiment, analyzing a few sample passages of English in order to test actual practice.

If we are communicating with children, we naturally use words that are short and easily understood. These are likely to be of Anglo-Saxon origin:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
 All the King's horses, and all the King's men
 Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Latin derivatives are not all long and learned. The lone specimen in this little verse could hardly be less exotic: it is the plain-sounding *wall*, which came into the English language at a very early date.

See if you can spot the three non-Germanic words in this nursery rhyme:

Hey, diddle, diddle!
 The cat and the fiddle,
 The cow jumped over the moon;
 The little dog laughed
 To see such sport,
 And the dish ran away with the spoon.

You will agree, I think, that the alien words are well disguised. One of them, believe it or not, is *cat*, which is probably derived from Late Latin **cattus**. The other non-Germanic words are *sport* and *dish*—the last an interesting example, because the original source was the Greek **diskos** (δίσκος), which became the Latin **discus** (our word *discus*, and the source also of English *disc* or *disk*). For our present purposes, we can say that *dish* is derived from Latin. If it isn't too ponderous to apply statistics to Mother Goose, let us note that the frequency of Latin vocabulary in “Hey, diddle, diddle” is 10% (3 words out of 30).

In the great tradition of plain English style, best represented by the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible, Latin vocabulary is about as infrequent as in Mother Goose. Here is that 1611 version of the Twenty-third Psalm, with the Latin words highlighted in bold type:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green **pastures**: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He **restoreth** my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the **valley** of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they **comfort** me. Thou **preparest** a **table** before me in the **presence** of mine **enemies**: thou **anointest** my head with **oil**; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and **mercy** shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

In this clear and beautiful piece of English prose, the Latin frequency is 9.3% (11 words out of 118)—almost identical to that of our nursery rhyme. William Shakespeare, who was still alive when the King James Bible was published, had a similar preference for plain Anglo-Saxon diction, despite his enormous vocabulary. His famous Sonnet 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?”) has a Latin frequency of only 11.4 % (13 words out of 114); in florid theatrical passages, his Latin frequency may run to 20% or more.

John Bunyan (1628-1688) was profoundly influenced by the English Bible; one can hardly imagine simpler language than the opening paragraph of *Pilgrim's Progress*:

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a **certain place** where was a den, and I laid me down in that **place** to sleep: and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a **certain place**, with his **face** from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book and read therein; and, as he read, he wept, and **trembled**; and not being **able** longer to **contain**, he brake out with a **lamentable cry**, saying, "What shall I do?"

Here Bunyan's Latin frequency is exactly 10% (11 words out of 110).

In contrast, let us consider a selection from a great nineteenth-century stylist, Samuel Taylor Coleridge:³

As the **result** of all my reading and **meditation**, I **abstracted** two *critical aphorisms*, deeming them to **comprise** the **conditions** and *criteria* of *poetic style*; first, that not the *poem* which we have read, but that to which we **return**, with the greatest **pleasure**, **possesses** the **genuine power**, and **claims** the name of **essential poetry**. **Second**, that whatever **lines** can be **translated** into other words of the same **language**, without **diminution** of their **significance**, either in **sense**, or **association**, or in any worthy feeling, are so far **vicious** in their **diction**. (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817)

In this passage, which is obviously worlds removed from *Pilgrim's Progress* in purpose and tone, the combined frequency of Latin and Greek vocabulary is 31.9% (29 out of 91 words). The classical density of Coleridge's prose is over three times that of Bunyan.

You may find even higher frequencies in a modern textbook or technical treatise. Here, for example, is a job advertisement that appeared in a recent national publication:

Raptor Technician

Required by the **University** of **Alberta**,* **Department** of **Zoology** to work on **population ecology** of northern **raptors**. The **successful candidate** will become **part** of a **large research** team **studying** the **ecological organization** of the **boreal forest** in the southwestern Yukon. The **incumbent** would live full-time in an **isolated** field **camp**.

* Although *Alberta* is Teutonic in origin, the name of the Province has a Latin form

At a whopping 44.2% frequency (23 words out of 52), the passage proves that Latin and Greek derivatives are alive and well in contemporary English. But this is hardly a typical piece of English prose. In standard, non-technical writing, most good stylists today try not to sound too heavy and academic. Precise and unusual Latin words will be far more effective if they are met in plain Anglo-Saxon surroundings.

Notes

1. We shall meet a delicious label that is applied facetiously to words of this type—the Latin derivative “**sesquipedalian**.”
2. Exceptions are hard to find. **Bastard** is from Late Latin, through Old French. The plain-sounding **turd**, a four-letter classic, is a surprising Latin derivative. During the rebellious 1960s, there was a rather silly campaign to make all obscenities acceptable in “polite” everyday usage. Luckily the cause was doomed to failure, or we might now find ourselves speechless at moments of great stress.
3. Latin derivatives are here shown in bold type, Greek derivatives in bold italic.

§6. Dictionary Practice

Success in this course will depend, to a great extent, on your effective use of a good English dictionary. Before going any further, make sure that you are thoroughly familiar with the conventions and abbreviations used by **LEXICOGRAPHERS** (look that word up for starters, if necessary). This is really a matter of getting used to the dictionary of your choice, since the conventions vary somewhat from one authority to the next.

Because there are many fine English dictionaries on the market, you may already own a reliable one that gives you complete satisfaction. If not, here are two popular standards, one British and one American:

The Concise Oxford Dictionary
Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

Merriam-Webster's is the best bargain among substantial dictionaries; like its American competitor, *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, it lists the year (or at least the century) when each word is believed to have entered the English language.

That information, and much more, can be found in larger versions of the Oxford dictionaries. If you've never browsed in THE Oxford English Dictionary ("OED"), do so at your earliest convenience. This multi-volume set is available at the library (print and online). A useful compromise between the enormous *OED* and the small *Concise Oxford* is the highly regarded two-volume abridgement:

The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press

Obviously you'll be using your dictionary to find the definition of new and unfamiliar words, or to clarify the meaning of words about which you're a little vague. More often, however, you'll likely be tracing a word's **ETYMOLOGY** (the history of its development from the earliest known source). Usually the etymological entry appears in square brackets, immediately after the listing of the word. (But the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and some American dictionaries place the etymology at the very end of each definition.) You must make sure that you learn how to read these entries in your own dictionary. It is unfortunate that lexicographers have never adopted a standardized methodology, or even a common system of abbreviations.¹

In order to stretch your lexicographical muscles, use your dictionary to look up the following words, which have either been mentioned in this chapter or will be used constantly in the weeks ahead:

etymology, etymon, definition, derivative, cognate, semantic, hybrid

Pay particular attention to etymologies; notice, for instance, that the image behind the word *derivative* is that of the flowing stream, whereas the word *cognate* denotes a kinship relationship. In what sphere of activity did the word *hybrid* originate?²

Notes

1. If you're ever consulting the complete Oxford English Dictionary, don't be confused by the rather mysterious abbreviations used to describe the degree of change that words have experienced in entering English: **a.** = adopted without change of form; **ad.** = derived by adaptation, with adjustment to English speech-habits; **f.** = formed on (newly shaped on the basis of the foreign form).
2. As you may know, there are dictionaries entirely devoted to word etymologies. For example, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford University Press); *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Elsevier); and *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (Routledge).

§7. Latin Pronunciation

If this were a course in the Latin language, we could hardly proceed without devoting a great deal of time to the question of pronunciation. Since we are studying Latin word roots only, that concern is far less important. The best advice is to listen to Latin words as they are spoken aloud in class, so as to learn by imitation. Still, you will likely want to have a little theoretical information, in case your curiosity is later aroused. Please treat the next page as an elementary reference guide, and merely read it through quickly for now.

As a rule, we will be using the **CLASSICAL PRONUNCIATION OF LATIN**, insofar as it can be reconstructed some 2,000 years later. Surprising though it may seem, we do have a very good idea of how Cicero and Caesar expressed the sounds of Latin, in the first century BC; there is a wealth of evidence, both practical and theoretical. Here are a few general guidelines, with rough and ready English approximations:

A.	VOWELS	LONG	EXAMPLES ¹	SHORT	EXAMPLES
	A	like E <i>f<u>a</u>ther</i>	hi<u>ā</u>tus	like E <i>sof<u>a</u></i>	ant<u>e</u>nn<u>a</u>
	E	<i>th<u>e</u>y</i>	r<u>e</u>g<u>i</u>na	<i>th<u>e</u>m</i>	err<u>o</u>r
	I	<i>mach<u>i</u>ne</i>	cact<u>i</u>	<i>hol<u>i</u>est</i>	sen<u>i</u>or
	O	<i>h<u>o</u>ly</i>	ōmen	<i>h<u>o</u>lly</i>	hon<u>o</u>r
	U	<i>r<u>u</u>de</i>	acūmen	<i>f<u>u</u>ll</i>	fulcrum

B.	DIPHTHONGS	EXAMPLES
	AE like <i>ai</i> ... in E	<i>aisle</i> caelum, algai, praemium
	AU <i>ow</i> ...	<i>now</i> pauper, fauna, aurōra
	OE <i>oy</i> ...	<i>boy</i> foetus, proelium

C. CONSONANTS

1. Similar to English: **B, D, F, H, [K], L, M, N, P, Q, S, X, Z.**
 2. **C, G, T** were hard, as in E campus, gratis, torpor, never soft as in E census, genius, nation.
 3. **S** was always unvoiced, as in E similitudo (never as in rose); **R** was always trilled.
 4. The English sounds /j/ and /v/ did not exist; the Latin letters **J** (consonant **I**) and **V** (consonant **U**) represent the English sounds /y/ and /w/: **jūnior, victōria.**
-

As you may know, the pronunciation of Latin changed significantly from the classical to the medieval period; and we may sometimes use the **MEDIEVAL PRONUNCIATION** to explain the form of an English word. The most notable changes affected the consonants **C, G,** and **T(I)**, which were palatalized (softened) in some phonetic environments; and **V**, which was later pronounced as in modern English. In late antiquity, the diphthongs **AE** and **OE** both came to resemble long **E** (“ay”), with the result that **caelum** (“heaven”), previously pronounced “ky-loom,” was now “chay-loom” in spoken Latin. This change played havoc with spelling, and **caelum** was often spelled **coelum**.

Notes

1. The pronunciation of the Latin examples may be very different from that of their English derivatives.

Chapter 2: The Latin Noun (Declensions 1 & 2)

§8. Form and Meaning

If we were trying to explain precisely how a given English word had evolved from a source-word in the Latin language—that is, if we were giving its full **ETYMOLOGY**—we should be obliged, ideally, to list all the major changes in form that it had undergone in a thousand years or more of development. In doing so, we would be presenting its complete morphological and phonetic history. However, unless we were professional linguists or lexicographers, this would be an overwhelming task. In a few short months, we can't hope to acquire such advanced skills. It will be challenging and satisfying enough if we can merely identify the Latin word from which the modern English word derived, and perhaps draw some broad conclusions about how that word changed over the centuries so as to assume its present form. Unless you have a particular interest in the Romance languages, don't worry about remembering the French, Italian, or Spanish form that may have served as a transition from Latin to English, even if the Romance word is mentioned in this book.

In addition to identifying the original **form** of the Latin source-word, it will be essential to consider its original **meaning**. Few aspects of word study are more interesting than the question of **SEMANTIC CHANGE**. We shall often find that an English derivative has a meaning far removed from that of its Latin source.

Here is an example that will illustrate both aspects—form and meaning. There was an old Latin word **persona**, which meant “mask”; the identical form is still used in English, with its original meaning basically intact, when literary critics talk about the *persona* of a poet or novelist.¹ But that is hardly our common English derivative. Many Latin nouns that end in the vowel **-a** lose that final vowel in transmission through French. Therefore we can see that English *person* is derived from Latin **persona**, and we may wish to speculate about the interesting semantic change that has occurred. Here is a possible surprise: the English word *parson* also comes from exactly the same source, odd though the semantic connection may seem. Two English words like *person* and *parson*, which both derive from a common source-word in another language (here, Latin **persona**), can be described as **DOUBLET**S. We'll see many pairs like this.

Notes

1. Students of theatre will be familiar with the Latin phrase **dramatis personae**, used at the beginning of a play to identify the “characters of the drama.”

§9. What is a Noun?

In order to approach Latin word-roots systematically, we'll be looking in turn at three major grammatical parts of speech—noun, adjective, and verb. If you're a little vague about the names given to the various parts of speech, don't panic: each one will be defined and illustrated as it occurs.

The noun is probably the easiest and most obvious of all parts of speech. Quite simply, it is a **naming word**. If you look up the term in a dictionary, you will see that it comes from the Old French *nun* or *non* (the source of the modern French *nom*), deriving ultimately from the Latin **nomen**, “name.”

That last rather cumbersome sentence of explanation can be set out more neatly and economically in linguistic shorthand. If we want to express an etymology by moving back in time from present to distant past, we can do it this way:

E *noun* < OF *nun* or *non* < L **nomen**

(Here the symbol < means “derived from”; it has nothing to do with the mathematical symbol “is less than.”) Conversely, if we want to begin in the past and move toward the present, we can use the opposite symbol, > , meaning “derived into”:

L **nomen** > OF *nun* or *non* > E *noun*

This will be our way of presenting Latin etymologies in the briefest possible form, without wasting words. If you think of the symbol as a stylized arrow, and observe the direction in which it is pointing, the linguistic convention will not give you any trouble.

In Latin, as in English, nouns can be subdivided into general semantic classes, depending on the meaning they convey. For our purposes in this course, the two most useful classes are **CONCRETE NOUNS**, which name objects that we can see, touch or otherwise perceive (*woman, book, table, horse, friend, father*), and **ABSTRACT NOUNS**, which name intangible qualities or states (*truth, beauty, love, freedom, hopelessness*). In Latin, we'll find that many abstract nouns share common characteristics.

In terms of **MORPHOLOGY** (physical shape or form), there are five main types (“declensions”) of Latin noun, each showing predictable and consistent features shared by all words of that type. As you may know, Latin is a highly inflected language; every noun, for instance, has at least half a dozen different word-endings, depending on the grammatical role that it plays in its sentence. Each so-called “declension” consists of nouns that are all inflected in a similar manner, a fact that allows us to group them together conveniently by form. It will help you to understand Latin noun vocabulary if you learn the five declension types. Don't worry about the term **DECLENSION**: it simply means a classification **type** or **category**. And be thankful that we don't have to learn all the different word-endings for every noun! It's legitimate to take shortcuts when we are merely studying Latin roots, not the grammar of the whole Latin language.

§10. Latin Nouns of the First Declension

To prove that Latin is easy, we'll start with a straightforward group of words, all of which end in the vowel **–a**. We have already seen **persona**. You know many others, since quite a few have come into English without any change in spelling. Here is a sampling:

area	camera	arena	villa	antenna
larva	pupa	alga	nebula	lacuna

If you examine this list of ten nouns, you'll see that four or five of them are standard English words, while the rest have a rather technical flavour. What happens in English when we try to **PLURALIZE** these words? We would naturally say *areas*, *cameras*, *arenas*, and *villas*. We might pause over *antenna*, however; it would make a difference whether we were talking about automobile aerials (*antennas*) or about insect feelers (*antennae*). This phenomenon illustrates a fact that will often be apparent when we are dealing with Latin vocabulary: if the word has been thoroughly accepted as a naturalized citizen of the English language, it will be treated as a normal Germanic form (with a plural in **–s**, for example); but if it still has an aura¹ of learning or scholarly precision, it will be treated as an unassimilated immigrant or foreign alien. In the case of 1st declension Latin nouns, the “foreign accent” will appear in the non-Germanic plural ending **–ae**, as in *larvae*, *pupae*, *algae*, *lacunae*, etc. How do *you* pronounce that **–ae**, by the way? The traditional English pronunciation of *larvae* and *pupae* is “larv-ee” and “pewp-ee”; if you say “larv-eye” and “pewp-eye,” you have been influenced (whether you know it or not) by the classical pronunciation of Latin. The syllable is sometimes also pronounced “-ay,” especially in the case of the plural form *vertebrae*.

Regardless of English pronunciation, THE 1st DECLENSION LATIN NOUN CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS A FORM ENDING IN **–a** (SINGULAR) and **–ae** (PLURAL). That is a simple and entirely dependable fact. The unchanging part of the word that precedes the final **–a** can be described as its **BASE**. With very few exceptions, Latin 1st declension nouns were feminine in gender. Grammatical gender plays virtually no role in English word formation, affecting only a handful of pronouns (*he*, *him*, *his*; *she*, *her*, *hers*; *it*, *its*); but it is very important in many Indo-European languages. The original feminine gender of first declension Latin nouns is regularly maintained in the gender of their French, Spanish, or Italian derivatives. That knowledge can be quite helpful: if you remember the first-declension Latin nouns **arena** and **villa**, for example, you can be confident that French *arène* and *ville* are feminine.

Latin does not have an article like English *the* and *a(n)* or French *la* and *une*. Thus the Latin noun **femina** can mean either “the woman” or “a woman”—*la femme* or *une femme*.

You will now meet the first in a series of formal Latin and Greek word-lists. Each of these lists will be presented as a numbered table, so as not to be confused with other illustrative lists. You are expected to study the words on these tables until you are thoroughly familiar with their original form and meaning. It shouldn't be necessary to “memorize” the words in the way that you might have to learn foreign vocabulary; it ought to be enough to make an intelligent connection between the Latin source-word (ETYMON) and one or more English derivatives.

Table 2.1 LATIN FIRST DECLENSION NOUNS

aqua	water	gratia	favour, thanks
causa	reason, cause	lingua	tongue, language
cura	care, concern	lit(t)era	letter
fama	report, rumour	rota	wheel
forma	shape, form	tabula	tablet, list
fortuna	luck, fortune	via	way, road
gloria	fame, glory	vita	life

There are several points that you may have noticed at once about words on this list. First, it appears that the original Latin meaning can often be virtually identical to that of the obvious English derivative; this is true for the Latin words **causa**, **forma**, **fortuna**, and **gloria**. (If other English synonyms are sometimes given first, that is just to show that the Latin word may be translated in a variety of ways.) From this same list, however, we can see that the English derivative is not always a reliable guide to the original Latin meaning. The English derivative of **cura** is *cure*; but that is not at all what the Latin meant. Similarly, **fama** did not mean what we understand by *fame* (a concept far closer to Latin **gloria**), and **tabula** did not mean a three-dimensional *table* (the classical Latin word was **mensa**). If you recognize *grace* as the English derivative of **gratia**, you will see that this word, too, has changed in meaning. However, the Latin word **littera** had the same flexibility as its English derivative *letter* (< OF *lettre*): it could mean a letter of the alphabet or a letter written to a friend. The Latin spelling varied between one and two t's, as we can infer from the related English adjective *literal*.

Notes

1. In Latin, *aura* was a 1st declension noun that meant “breeze,” “(breath of) air.”

§11. Interesting Words

(Here is the first in a series of etymological discussions intended for casual reading and enjoyment, not for intensive study. The words chosen for comment will not necessarily be drawn from the assigned word lists. However, the discussion will always be directly related to the content of the current chapter.)

Though their roots are unrelated, **via** and **vita** are sometimes confused, on account of the fact that **vita** became *vie* in French. Neither word has given the English language a simple common noun: as we trudge along the *road of life*, we do so in plain Anglo-Saxon. However English uses *via* as a convenient term that means “by way of”; and when Canadians take a railway *voyage* (from Latin **viaticum**, “travel money”), they go by VIA Rail—if there are any trains left to ride.¹ The Roman road was a marvel of ancient engineering. The “layered” or “paved” road, **[via] strata**, gave us *street*, one of the oldest Latin words in English. The “broken” or “beaten” road, **[via] rupta**, came into English much later as *route*. Lexicographers can’t agree whether *viable* is derived from **vita** (“able to maintain life”) or from **via** (“able to be travelled”)—or possibly from both.

Arena (classical Latin **harena**) has had a curious semantic history. The original Latin word meant “sand”; then it was specialized to mean “the sand of the amphitheatre”; then it was applied to the scene of the contest, though not to the physical structure. When *arena* came into English in 1627, it was used to describe the ancient amphitheatre itself; considerably later it was broadened to suggest a battlefield or any other sphere of public action. In today’s Romance languages, the **harena** derivative may still be a general word for “sand”: this is true of Spanish *arena* and Italian *réna*, but not of French *arène*. In the 20th century, the form *aréna* has been borrowed by Quebec French as a loan-word from English, to mean a “hockey rink.”

Camera was a technical term in classical Latin—a Greek loan-word that meant “vault” or “arched roof.” In later Latin it came to mean a “room”; and through French it gave us *chamber*. Thus *camera* and *chamber* are perfect examples of English **DOUBLET** (§8). Our modern *camera* was originally called a *camera obscura* (“dark room”), from the little chamber where the photographic exposure takes place. When a political body goes behind closed doors to meet “inside the room,” it is said to be *in camera*. From the French adaptation of Spanish *camarada* and *camerado* (“roomful,” “roommate”), English acquired *camaraderie* and *comrade*. Thus we can say that the **ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING** of *comrade* is “roommate.” Because of semantic change, the etymological meaning will often be very different from the modern dictionary meaning.

The Latin word **area** also changed meaning with the passage of time. In antiquity it denoted a vacant space in or around a house, and in particular a “threshing-floor.” That is the etymological meaning of E *area*, which obviously has a much broader meaning today.

If you want an example of a simple Latin noun that has undergone some unlikely changes in form, how about **cauda** (“tail”)? Its descendants include the English words *coda*, *queue*, *cue*, and *coward*. As Ring Lardner said, you can look it up.

Notes

1. English idiom has been strained in this sentence, since the word *voyage* is now restricted mainly to sea travel; a trip by land

is better described as a journey (from Latin **diurnum**, “a day’s travel”).

§12. Latin Nouns of the Second Declension

Now that we're familiar with one type of Latin noun, the next category should create no problem. The **2nd declension** is subdivided into two different forms of noun, one ending in **-us** (predominantly masculine in gender) and a second ending in **-um** (invariably neuter). In each type, the **BASE** can be found by removing that final **-us** or **-um**. Let us consider them in turn.

Some 2nd declension nouns in **-us** still display their original form in modern English:

campus	circus	cactus	fungus	stimulus
bacillus	radius	focus	alumnus	asparagus

The Latin plural of **stimulus** was **stimuli**, originally pronounced “stimul-ee,” but in English normally pronounced “stimul-eye.” How we pluralize words like this will be a good test of their acceptance into everyday English speech. *Campus* and *circus*, for instance, are not considered exotic or technical; no one would dream of saying “*campi*” or “*circi*.” In contrast, most of the remaining words do retain that original Latin plural, like *bacilli*, *radii*, *alumni*. Sometimes there's a choice: *cacti* and *cactuses* are both correct, as are *fungi* and *funguses*. In the case of *asparagus*, we just avoid the problem altogether—though the Romans quite logically called the vegetable **asparagi**. This type of Latin plural can trick us into drawing false analogies. Though you may hear the form *octopi*, it is historically incorrect, since *octopus* is a Greek derivative meaning “eight-foot.” We can even invent pseudo-Latin singular forms: in Wayne and Shuster's famous Shakespearean television skit, when Julius Caesar asked for a double martini, he was told that he could have only one *martinus*.

Table 2.2 LATIN SECOND DECLENSION NOUNS IN -US

animus	mind, feeling	numerus	number
campus	level field, plain	oculus	eye
circus	circle, Circus	populus	people
deus	god	radius	staff, rod, spoke
equus	horse	stimulus	goad, spur
locus	place	terminus	boundary
modus	measure, manner	vulgus	mass(es), crowd

A few of these nouns (*campus*, *circus*, etc.) we've seen already. *Locus* and *terminus* have also entered English without change, and you may know *animus* as a word that suggests “hostile feeling” or “hatred.” Don't be bothered by the double U in **equus**; Latin **qu** was pronounced /kw/, virtually as in English, and the word-base here is **equ-**. From **modus** we get the doublets *mode* and *mood* (as in the “subjunctive *mood*”). If you look up *mood* in the dictionary, you will find that there are two quite different English words, identical in spelling—one Germanic and one Latin. Forms like this can be described as **HOMOGRAPHS**.

The other type of 2nd declension noun ended in **-um**. English has borrowed a number of these directly from Roman public and private life: *forum*, *atrium*, *rostrum*, *stadium* (originally Greek). Others are more complex words whose form we'll come to understand later in the course: *aquarium*, *auditorium*, *memorandum*, *referendum*. As you are surely aware, the Latin plural of words in **-um** is **-a**. In English, we can choose as we like between *forums* and *fora*, *auditoriums* and *auditoria*, *referendums* and *referenda*. But don't forget that *data* and *media* are plural forms; purists use them only with plural verbs.

Table 2.3 LATIN SECOND DECLENSION NOUNS IN -UM

fatum	fate, destiny	pretium	value, price
granum	grain, seed	signum	mark, token, sign
monstrum	evil omen, monster	taedium	weariness, disgust
odium	hatred	verbum	word
officium	service, duty	vitium	fault, vice

Spelled as it was in Latin, the English noun *odium* suggests the hatred that clings to a person who has become dishonored or disgraced; a close synonym is another Latin 2nd declension derivative, *opprobrium*. Our word *office* usually implies either a place of business (“I’m going to the office”) or a position in a hierarchy (“She was elected to high office”). The original Latin meaning can often be found in Elizabethan English, and is still alive in expressions such as “through your kind offices.”

In classical Latin, **officium** was pronounced “of-fee-kee-oom” and **pretium**, “preh-tee-oom”; there was no risk of confusing the sounds of **ci-** and **ti-**. In late Latin, however, both these syllables were pronounced [tsi], and **pretium** (now “preh-tsee-oom”) was often misspelled as **precium**. This fact helps explain the spelling of *price* and *precious*. In medieval Latin, the diphthong **ae** and the long vowel **e** also became almost identical in sound (“ay”); thus **taedium** was spelled **tedium**, and **praemium** (“reward”), **premium**.

The Latin word **signum** was amazingly flexible in meaning. Any kind of mark or indicator, it could be a military standard, a signal, a token, a symptom, a statue, a seal, or a heavenly constellation (a sign of the zodiac). The English derivative is almost as versatile.

§13. Interesting Words

As an English word, *campus* is a relative newcomer: it is first attested in the United States of 1774. From the original Latin **campus**, Middle English had only the French derivative *champ*, which was still used by Elizabethans in phrases like “the champ of battle.” Its link with *champion* is fairly obvious, but you may not easily see the connection with French *champagne* and *champignon* (“mushroom”—a delicacy that grows on the open field). In 1528 the word *camp* was borrowed (via French) from Italian *campo*; similarly, *campaign* (a doublet of *champagne*) came through French from Italian *campagna* (from Medieval Latin **campania**). Except in Norman dialect, Latin **ca-** always developed into French *cha-*, unless there was some other form of foreign influence. It is somewhat ironic that *campus* has recently made its way into French as an English loan-word.

Latin **populus** forms the P in the celebrated acronym SPQR (**senatus populusque Romanus**, “the Senate and the Roman people”). In French it became *peuple*, source of English *people*. The corresponding Italian form is *popolo*; by means of an expressive pejorative suffix, *popolo* was changed to *popolaccio* (“the bad people”), and English got the word *populace*. The Spanish derivative of **populus**, *pueblo*, came to mean a town or village, and is so used today in English.

There is a small sub-type of the 2nd declension **-us** noun where the nominative singular (the vocabulary form) ends in **-er**. *Minister* and *arbiter* are English words that have kept their original Latin form. Another Latin noun of this type was **magister**, “teacher,” “(school-)master.” Through Old French *maiestre* this word became *master*; the modern French *maître* is also used in English as *maître d’hôtel* or *maître d’*. Doublets of *master* are *mister*, *Mr.*, and *maestro*, the Italian derivative. A 1st declension feminine counterpart, **magistra**, became Old French *maiestresse*, whence English *mistress*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, and *Ms*.

§14. Patterns of Change in Form

The vocabulary of this chapter has shown various degrees of change that Latin nouns may undergo in becoming English words. We can establish a sort of spectrum of **MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE**, ranging from the least modified to the totally transformed.

1. The Latin word appears in English without any change in form:
arena, camera, campus, circus, forum, odium
2. The Latin noun base becomes the English derivative:
 L. **forma** > E *form*, L **campus** > E *camp*, L **signum** > E *sign*
3. The Latin word is modified on consistent principles:
 - a. The English word is the Latin base plus silent -e
 L **causa** > E *cause*, L **fortuna** > E *fortune*, L **modus** > E *mode*
 - b. Latin **-tia** or **-tium** or **-cium** becomes English **-ce**¹
 L **gratia** > E *grace*, L **vitium** > E *vice*, L **officium** > E *office*
 - c. Latin **-ia** or **-ium** becomes English **-y**
 L **gloria** > E *glory*, L **lilium** > E *lily*
4. The Latin word undergoes a major and unpredictable change in form:
 L. **camera** > E *chamber*, L **radius** > E *ray*, L. **granum** > E *grain*

As you may have surmised, most of the changes in types 2 to 4 occurred during and after transmission through French. Many 1st declension nouns, for example, survive as French words in *-e* (type 3.a); cf. L **terra** > F *terre*, L **luna** > F *lune*. In the Old French period (12th century), words like **gloria**, **memoria**, and **victoria** had assumed the form *glorie*, *mémoire*, and *victorie*, whence English *glory*, *memory*, and *victory* (type 3.c). Later they evolved into modern French *gloire*, *mémoire*, and *victoire*. At a fairly recent date, English borrowed the word *memoir* from modern French. Thus *memoir* and *memory* are English doublets.

Notes

1. Latin **-gium** might also become English *-ge*, as L **vestigium** (“footprint”) > E *vestige*, and L **collegium** (“guild”) > E. *college*.

§15. Patterns of Change in Meaning

Unlike morphological change, **SEMANTIC CHANGE** cannot be reduced to neat schemes like those in §14. Changes in form are governed, to some extent, by dependable phonetic laws; changes in meaning, on the other hand, result from social and cultural influences that may be absolutely unique. Scholars have identified and labelled several categories of semantic change, but we shouldn't expect to squeeze every shift of meaning into one of these pigeonholes.

1. GENERALIZATION:

A word's original meaning may be extended or enlarged, so as to have a wider semantic application than was originally the case. In Latin a **discus** was a specific athletic device; the derivative *disc* (or *disk*) may refer to anything round and flat. Augustus Caesar built a grand home on the Palatine hill that was called the **Palatium**; centuries later, the word *palace* denoted any royal or noble residence—just as **Caesar** (> *czar*, *Kaiser*) came to mean any autocratic ruler.

2. SPECIALIZATION:

The opposite semantic change occurred even more often in the development of English vocabulary from Latin. Time and again we meet English derivatives that have a much narrower meaning than their Latin source-words. Latin **fabula** was any kind of story, whereas English *fable* is more limited in scope. Latin **pulpitum** was simply a platform or scaffolding; English *pulpit* is a special structure in a church. The *sermon* delivered from the pulpit is more specialized than its Latin source-word **sermo** (3rd declension), which meant “a conversation.”

3. METAPHORICAL EXTENSION:

In many cases of semantic change, it is hard to say whether the derived meaning is broader or narrower than the original; the word seems rather to have acquired a figurative or metaphorical force. A **stimulus** was a goad or spur; the English term refers to a metaphorically sharp incentive that rouses us to action. A **radius** was, among other things, the spoke of a wheel (a meaning very close to its literal application today in geometry); the derivative *ray* can be viewed as a figurative spoke—though one could argue equally well that this is a case of generalization. One of the best examples of metaphorical extension is **focus**, which evolved from an original meaning of “hearth” or “fireplace.”

4. AMELIORATION and PEJORATION (also called ELEVATION and DEGENERATION):

Don't be cowed by these intimidating labels, which come from the Latin comparative adjectives **melior** (“better”) and **pejor** (“worse”). They describe semantic changes as a result of which the original word has either improved or deteriorated in meaning. **AMELIORATION** can be illustrated by the word **minister**—in Latin, a lowly servant or attendant, but in English a respected clergyman or senior politician. Again, the Latin adjective **nescius** (“ignorant”) has been substantially elevated in becoming *nice*. **PEJORATION** or degeneration of meaning was already evident in Latin **idiota** (“uneducated person”), which had begun life as the very respectable Greek word **idiōtēs** (“private person,” “individual”—compare E *idiosyncrasy*); the English derivative *idiot* has

sunk even lower in semantic respectability. A similar fate overtook the word *peculiar*, which meant “one’s own” in Latin.

§16. The Legacy of Latin: I. Old English

Although this course is in no sense a history of the English language, you should have some idea about the various historical circumstances that brought English into contact with Latin. Depending upon the chronological period when a Latin word came into English, it may be totally transformed in appearance, or, conversely, retain almost its exact original spelling. In some periods, Latin words were likely to have passed through another language before entering English; at other times, they tended to come directly from Latin to English. A knowledge of the historical context can provide insight into otherwise puzzling features of morphological change, enabling us to appreciate why Latin words assume such a diversity of forms in the English language. In three installments, therefore—here, and in parallel sections of Chapters 3 and 4—you will be given a broad summary of the interrelationship of Latin and English. The story is quite varied and fascinating: it involves military conquest; trade and commercial intercourse; invasions and other population movements; missionary activity; and a powerful cultural and intellectual influence that continues to this day.

You will have no trouble finding any number of books on the history of English, if you wish to pursue this subject in greater depth. One interesting and reliable study is C.M. Millward's, *A Biography of the English Language* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989).

In the first of these three sections, let us consider the impact of Latin on English in the era prior to the Norman Conquest of AD 1066.

Although the portion of the British Isles now called England had been conquered by the ancient Romans and made part of their empire, that conquest assumes very little importance in our present study. This is not because Rome's contact with Britain had been casual or superficial: after the Emperor Claudius decided in AD 43 to subjugate this island that had been first raided in 55 BC by his great-grandfather, Julius Caesar, the province of Britain was firmly established within the system of imperial government. It remained that way for some three and a half centuries, until the problems of a disintegrating empire forced the Romans to withdraw in AD 410. The archaeological heritage of the Roman occupation is most impressive, from the great baths and villas of southern England to Hadrian's Wall in the north. The linguistic legacy, however, is very meagre: it consists mainly of the word *mile*, derived from Latin **mille** ("a thousand"¹), and a number of English place names that are derived from Latin **castra** ("army camp")—*Chester*, *Manchester*, *Doncaster*, *Lancaster*, and the like. One reason is that the native population of Roman Britain appears not to have been as thoroughly assimilated as their counterparts in Roman Gaul or Spain. Also, we must remember that the Britons of this period were tribal Celts, a people later overwhelmed by successive waves of Germanic invaders. At the time of the Roman occupation, the language that we call "English" had not yet come into being.

Soon after the Romans withdrew, Britain was subjected to a series of invasions by Germanic tribes living along the north German coast, from Frisia in the Netherlands to Denmark. Mainly Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, these invaders brought with them closely related low German dialects that merged into the language popularly known as "Anglo-Saxon," which scholars prefer to call **OLD ENGLISH**. (*England* is "the land of the Angles.") The earliest of the Anglo-Saxon invasions is traditionally dated to AD 449.

Having come from a region that was close to the Roman imperial frontier, these Germanic peoples had already been in contact with speakers of Latin, through trade and commerce, and they brought with them a number of Latin loan-words that filled gaps in their native vocabulary. These are among the oldest Latin words in English, having likely been part of Anglo-Saxon speech as early as the 5th or 6th centuries AD. Because the first English manuscript written in the Roman alphabet dates only from c.737 AD, it is impossible to document these early words, let alone date them precisely. Probably they were carried to Britain by Anglo-Saxon tribes from the mainland, but they may have entered Old English at a somewhat later date.

Here is a selection, presented in their Modern English form:

ENGLISH	LATIN	ORIGINAL LATIN MEANING
<i>street</i>	[via] strata	“layered” or “paved” [road]
<i>wall</i>	vallum	“rampart,” “wall”
<i>wine</i>	vinum	“wine”
<i>cook</i>	coquus	“cook”
<i>kitchen</i>	coquina	“kitchen”
<i>chalk</i>	calx	“limestone”
<i>cheese</i>	caseus	“cheese”
<i>pitch</i>	pix	“pitch”
<i>post</i>	postis	“pillar,” “post”
<i>pound</i>	[libra] pondo	[pound] “by weight”
<i>mint</i>	moneta	“coined money,” “mint”
<i>inch</i>	uncia	“twelfth part,” “inch”

The above words all relate, in one way or another, to everyday secular life. However, there is another, rather different group of Latin derivatives that found its way into Old English at a somewhat later time; these are words that have to do with Christianity and aspects of Christian worship. In all likelihood, this terminology was adopted in Britain, during the seventh and eighth centuries, after the arrival of the first Christian missionaries around AD 600.² There is a considerable number of these words, many of which go back through Latin to a source in Greek—for Greek was the language in which early Christianity had spread throughout the Mediterranean world. The following is a sample only:

ENGLISH	LATIN	ORIGINAL GREEK FORM
<i>pope</i>	papa	papas (“father”)
<i>bishop</i>	episcopus	episkopos (“overseer”)
<i>hymn</i>	hymnus	hymnos (“hymn”)
<i>school</i>	schola	scholē (“leisure”)
<i>monk</i>	monachus	monachos (“monk”)
<i>minster</i>	monasterium	monastērion
<i>nun</i>	nonna	(Latin: “child’s nurse,” “nun”)
<i>creed</i>	credo	(Latin: “I believe”)

By the time of the Norman Invasion in 1066, there may have been as many as 300 Latin derivatives in Old English. By later standards, this was still a very low number.

Notes

1. The Roman mile comprised a thousand double paces of an army on the march; this worked out to 1,618 English yards, a little less than the later English mile of 1,760 yards. Even the word mile is not a certain legacy of the Roman conquest; many scholars think it entered Old English as a Germanic loan-word.
2. The missionary St. Augustine arrived at Canterbury in AD 597, bringing also the Roman alphabet. Before the end of the seventh century, England could be described as a Christian country.

§17. Chapter 2: Exercises

1. Underline the base of these nouns (e.g., FAMA):

TABULA, GRATIA, AQUA, MODUS, RADIUS, FATUM, VERBUM, OFFICIUM.

2. If you can identify the Latin base at the heart of a long English word, the meaning of that word will often be more precisely understood. Underline the noun base (e.g., INFORMALITY):

INGLORIOUS, PREVIOUS, GRANULAR, DEIFICATION, VULGARITY, PREDETERMINATION, COLLOCATION, INNUMERABLE, ASSIGNMENT, VITIATE.

3. Using the numerical scheme in §14, describe these changes in form:

a.	L scientia	(“knowledge”)	> E <i>science</i>	3b
b.	L matrona	(“married woman”)	> E <i>matron</i>	_____
c.	L prodigium	(“omen,” “potent”)	> E <i>prodigy</i>	_____
d.	L lacuna	(“hole,” “pond”)	> E <i>lagoon</i>	_____
e.	L nota	(“mark”)	> E <i>note</i>	_____
f.	L digitus	(“finger,” “toe”)	> E <i>digit</i>	_____
g.	L folium	(“leaf”)	> E <i>foil</i>	_____
h.	L lucrum	(“gain”)	> E <i>lucre</i>	_____
i.	L spatium	(“space”)	> E <i>space</i>	_____
j.	L norma	(“rule”)	> E <i>norm</i>	_____

4. What label might you apply to the semantic change of Latin **verbum** to English *verb*? _____
Of Latin **animus** to English *animus*? _____

5. For each of the following English words, find an English doublet—if possible, one that more closely resembles the Latin source-word:

a.	<i>crown</i>	_____	d.	<i>prize</i>	_____
b.	<i>genie</i>	_____	e.	<i>card</i>	_____
c.	<i>spectre</i>	_____	f.	<i>foil</i>	_____

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 3: The Latin Noun (Declensions 3, 4, 5)

§18. Latin Nouns of the Third Declension

By far the largest and most important category of Latin nouns is the 3rd declension, a group of words comprising all three genders and showing a great diversity of form. Your first reaction may be one of dismay, since this declension has no consistent word-ending, like the **-a**, **-us**, and **-um** of the 1st and 2nd, and appears to have little predictability of any kind. You'll soon learn that the situation is really not that chaotic, since the 3rd declension does operate on regular and consistent principles.

One subtype of the 3rd declension, a group of nouns ending in **-ex** or **-ix**, has given rise to several English words that are pure Latin in form:

index *vortex* *vertex* *cortex* *apex* *appendix* *matrix* *calix*

When we pluralize these rather technical words, we get English forms like *vertices*, *appendices*, *matrices*, and the like. These, too, are pure Latin, and illustrate the **-es** plural that is regular for all masculine and feminine nouns of the 3rd declension. (The hybrid plurals *indexes* and *vortexes* are correct English, but they differ in usage from *indices* and *vortices*.) Since Latin plural endings are always added to the **BASE** of a word, we can deduce that the base forms of **index** and **vortex** are **indic-** and **vortic-**. In dealing with the 3rd declension, we'll find that the base can be quite different from the nominative (vocabulary) form of the word. This is a major contrast with the 1st and 2nd declension, where we merely lop off the final ending to get the base.

Before pursuing this line of enquiry, let us first examine another 3rd declension subtype that may occur unchanged in English—nouns ending in **-or**. Here is a sampling, presented as Latin words:

1. **arbor, clamor, clangor, color, favor, fervor, honor, labor, odor, rumor, savor, vapor, vigor**
2. **error, horror, languor, liquor, pallor, squalor, stupor, terror, torpor, tremor**
3. **actor, factor, doctor, creator, spectator, victor, pastor**

The abstract nouns in group 1 are traditionally spelled *-our* in English, reflecting their French transmission; but ever since the reforms of the great lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843), they have been spelled *-or* in American usage.¹ For historical reasons, the parallel words in group 2 keep their original Latin form even in British spelling. Group 3, a list that could be greatly extended, consists of AGENT NOUNS—that is, they identify the person performing a verbal action. We'll see more of groups 2 and 3 when we deal later with the Latin verb. As a general subtype, the Latin **-or** noun is a particularly easy form, since the NOMINATIVE AND THE WORD BASE ARE IDENTICAL.

There is another subtype of the third declension where the base of the word can be regularly inferred from the nominative form. For a noun like **finis** ("end"), we merely remove the **-is** ending to get the base **fin-**. Similar to **finis** are **civis** ("citizen"), **hostis** ("enemy"), **testis** ("witness"), **vestis** ("garment"), and **navis** ("ship").

By and large, however, when we are learning a 3rd declension noun—even only for purposes of English word derivations—we must learn **TWO FORMS** of that noun. It is not enough to know that the Latin word for “king” is **rex**; we must know also that the base of this word is **reg-**, if we are to recognize *regal* as an adjective that means “kingly.” The base **reg-**, in fact, is considerably more important to us than the nominative form **rex**. In our tabular word lists, 3rd declension nouns will be presented in this fashion:

rex, regis	king
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The first of these forms, **rex**, is the **NOMINATIVE** or subject case, which is the standard vocabulary entry. The second form, **regis**, is the **GENITIVE** case (very much like the English possessive form, “king’s”). The reason we’ll be using the genitive is because it is the most dependable way of finding the **BASE** of every Latin noun or adjective. REMOVE THE **-is** ENDING OF THE GENITIVE FORM, AND YOU WILL HAVE THE BASE OF ANY 3RD DECLENSION NOUN.

In the vocabulary list that follows, do not be surprised that there are many different nominative endings; that is the way the 3rd declension works. As you study the genitive forms, try always to associate the Latin base with a memorable English derivative. Occasionally, as with **pars, partis** (base = **part-**) or **origo, originis** (base = **origin-**), the base may even provide the obvious English derivative.

Table 3.1 LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS (M. & F.)

labor, laboris	work	pes, pedis	foot
finis, finis	end	urbs, urbis	city
rex, regis	king	vox, vocis	voice
lex, legis	law	crux, crucis	cross
ars, artis	skill	hospes, hospitis	host, guest
pars, partis	part	miles, militis	soldier
mors, mortis	death	origo, originis	source, origin

As we saw above, it really isn’t necessary to list two forms for **labor** or **finis**, since these bases are predictable; but the second (genitive) form is needed for all the other words. Spelled like its original Latin source-word, English *crux* (plural *cruces*) means a “problem” or “critical point.” Most of the other nominative forms, however, are of little use to us. To repeat, it is the **BASE** forms like **leg-**, **ped-**, and **hospit-** that will play a key role in word derivation, both in Latin and in English. As we progress through the course, we’ll come to understand the links in form between Latin **mort-** and English *mortify* or *immortality*, between Latin **urb-** and English *suburban* or *conurbation*.

Once you feel familiar with [Table 3.1](#), turn to the next group of 3rd declension nouns. Their gender, in every instance, is NEUTER, as opposed to the MASCULINE and FEMININE 3rd declension words that we’ve seen so far. There are two reasons for pointing out this fact. First, neuter nouns of the 3rd declension fall, for the most part, into easily recognized subtypes. Second, it may be useful to know that 3rd declension neuter

nouns—like all Latin neuter words—have a plural ending in **-a** ; just think of our English phrase *per capita*, which means “by heads”).

Table 3.2 LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS (NEUTER)

caput, capitis	head	corpus, corporis	body
cor, cordis	heart	tempus, temporis	time
lumen, luminis	light	genus, generis	race, kind, sort
omen, ominis	omen	opus, operis	work, task
nomen, nominis	name	onus, oneris	load, burden

The shock here, no doubt, will be the discovery that there is more than one class of Latin nouns ending in **-us**. This 3rd declension subtype has nothing to do with words like **animus** or **campus**, and mustn’t be confused with that 2nd declension group.

The secret of learning these noun bases and remembering their spelling is to think of their adjective derivatives in English: *capital*, *cordial*, *luminous*, *ominous*, *nominal*, *corporal*, *temporal*, *general*, and *onerous*. That trick doesn’t work for **opus**, but there we can think of the English verb *operate*. The nominative form *opus* is an English word, of course, used mainly to identify a work of music; in Latin, it tends to suggest the tangible product of work, rather than the process (**labor**). **Corpus**, **omen**, and **genus** are other 3rd declension neuter nouns that have entered English without change; of these, only *genus* regularly keeps its original Latin plural—*genera*.

Notes

1. The Canadian spelling of these words, like many aspects of Canadian life, is a little indecisive. Canadian newspapers have been using the *-or* forms since the nineteenth century, but Canadian schools—at least, those schools that still teach spelling—cling to the British *-our* preference. One system is no more “correct” than the other. There are some *-our/-or* words, like *harbour* and *neighbour*, that are actually of Germanic origin. Others, like *endeavour*, are derived from Latin, but not from Latin *-or* nouns.

§19. Interesting Words

A third-declension Latin noun of the **labor** type was **umor**, source of English *humour* (*humor*) and *humorous*. It may puzzle you to learn that its original meaning was “moisture”—it’s related to *humid*—unless you know something about the ancient medical theory of the *humours*, the four fluids that were thought to control human disposition. These were blood, phlegm, choler (yellow bile), and melancholy (black bile). According to this longstanding belief, well-balanced people need a proper mixture (**temperamentum**) of the four fluids. If our temperament is out of balance, we may perhaps behave in an erratic or “humorous” fashion. By the way, this word *humorous* has nothing to do with the arm-bone or *humerus*, an adaptation of Latin **umerus**, “shoulder.”

Mention has already been made of the English word *crux*, which means a “problem” or “puzzle.” Latin **crux**, **crucis** has given us a variety of other words, too. Christian missionaries from Ireland brought *cross* into the language during the Old English period. Through Dutch we got *cruise*, and through Spanish, *crusade*. *Crisscross* comes from *Christcross*. Directly linked with Latin **crux** are *crucify*, *crucifixion*, *crucifix*, *crucifer*, *cruciform*, *crucial*, *cruciate*, *excruciate*, and *crucible*. In later chapters, we’ll see how some of these derivatives acquired their form.

Another Latin word that has been highly productive in English is **caput**, **capitis**, “head.” You will think at once of *capital*; but that is only the beginning. Here is a partial list of derivatives: *chief*, *chef*, *kerchief* (a “cover-head”), *handkerchief*, *mischief*, *cattle*, *chattel* (doublets from **capitalis**), *captain*, *chieftain* (doublets from **capitanus**), *cadet*, *cape* (a “headland”), *capitol*, *chapter*, *biceps* (“two-headed”), *decapitate*, and *precipitate*.

A “kind” or category in biological classification is a *genus* (plural *genera*)—pure Latin. As a result of French transmission, the same word has produced the English doublets *gender* and *genre*; both also mean “kind” or “class,” but with useful differences in application. As well as being the standard word for “time,” Latin **tempus** could also

denote the “temple” (of the head), especially in the plural form **tempora**. This is apparently because the human temples were viewed as the “timely” or fatal spots. In English, *temporal* can mean “pertaining to time” or “pertaining to the temples.” The English homograph *temple* (“shrine”) is derived from an unrelated Latin 2nd declension noun, **templum** (“sacred enclosure,” “shrine”).

Finally, let us consider the English word *host*, which is actually three different words. The *host* who provides *hospitality* is derived from **hospes**, **hospitis**; the *host* that is a *hostile* army or a vast multitude (Wordsworth’s “host of golden daffodils”) comes from **hostis**, **hostis**, “enemy” (a 3rd declension noun like **finis**); and the *host* that is eaten in Christian communion or mass comes from the 1st declension noun **hostia**, a sacrifice. If you check your dictionary, you will find that these three **HOMOGRAPHS** (§12) all appear as separate word entries.¹

Notes

1. None of the three is the source of E *hostage*, which is derived ultimately from **L obses**, **obsidis**, “hostage”; still, it appears

that E *hostage* was influenced by the unrelated Latin word **hospes, hospitis**.

§20. Latin Nouns of the Fourth Declension

The 4th declension consists of a relatively small but fairly important group of nouns, many of which were derived originally from Latin verbs. You may be perplexed to learn that they all have the ending **-us**; superficially, therefore, they can be confused with 2nd declension nouns like **focus** and **animus** or with 3rd declension neuter nouns like **corpus** and **onus**. However, there is one very useful rule-of-thumb for the 4th declension that will seldom let you down:

IF ANY LATIN **-us** NOUN HAS AN ENGLISH DERIVATIVE WITH A **-u-** BEFORE THE FINAL SYLLABLE, IT IS ALMOST SURE TO BE A 4TH DECLENSION LATIN WORD. To illustrate, if you are confronted with an unfamiliar **-us** noun—say, **manus** (“hand”)—and you can think of an English word in **-ual** like “*manual*,” assume that the word belongs to the 4th declension.

This rule works because the **-u-** vowel clings to the Latin base in forming Latin derivatives; and the Latin spelling is regularly maintained in English. For this reason, we shall say that the **BASE** of **manus** is **manu-**. (Contrast 2nd declension **foc-us**, E. *foc-al*; 3rd declension **corpus**, **corpor-is**, E. *corpor-al*.)

A few 4th declension nouns appear unchanged in English: **status**, **sinus**, **census**, **consensus**, **hiatus**, **apparatus**. If you should want to pluralize any of these words in English, and you mean to follow Latin practice, you will not change the word in spelling—the Latin plural of **census** is **census**. It would be correct to say, in English, “one apparatus, two apparatus;” but it would also be acceptable to anglicize and say, “two apparatuses.” Whatever you do, don’t say “two apparati,” since that is neither Latin nor English.¹

Latin **manus** has no simple noun derivative in English, though it is, of course, the source of French *la main*. As the French gender reveals, the Latin word was feminine, though most 4th declension nouns were MASCULINE. The following table presents a small sampling of these nouns; you will meet quite a few more when we come to examine the Latin verb, since most 4th declension nouns are derived from verbs.

Table 3.3 LATIN FOURTH DECLENSION NOUNS (M.)

gradus	step, grade	sinus	curve, fold
manus (F.)	hand	situs	position, site
ritus	ceremony, rite	spiritus	breath, spirit

Our **-us rule-of-thumb** works for all the words here. On the analogy of *manual*, just think of English *gradual*, *ritual*, *sinuous*, *situate*, and *spiritual*. Therefore, consider these Latin noun bases to be **gradu-**, **ritu-**, **sinu-**, **situ-**, and **spiritu-**.

Though Latin **sinus** could mean any curve or fold, English has limited the meaning of the word to a fold in the facial bone structure. That is an excellent example of the semantic change known as SPECIALIZATION (§15). The *sine* in trigonometry is a derivative of the same word. Latin **situs** is the source of English *site*; and if an artifact is still to be found in its original position, it is said to be **in situ** (a pure Latin phrase).

Notes

1. Exactly this mistake was made by CBC commentator Brian Williams, who referred to “the four *apparati* of rhythmic gymnastics,” in an Olympic telecast on August 9, 1984. **O tempora, o mores!**

§21. Latin Nouns of the Fifth Declension

The 5th Declension is a very small group of Latin nouns, only a few of which have any influence on English. Most of these actually retain their Latin spelling as English derivatives; for example, *species*, *series*, and *rabies*. All these words have changed in pronunciation: Latin **rabies** (“rage,” “madness”) had three distinct syllables, “rah-bee-ace,” which we have reduced to two, “ray-bees.” **Bona fides** was a Latin phrase meaning “good faith”; we use it in that form, as well as in the Latin ablative case—*bona fide* (“in good faith”). In their nominative or vocabulary form, Latin 5th declension nouns always end in **-es**, and the base is the part of the word that precedes that ending.

Table 3.4 LATIN FIFTH DECLENSION NOUNS (F.)

effigies	likeness, effigy	res	thing
facies	form, face	series	row, series
rabies	rage, madness	species	look, appearance

The base of **faci-es** appears in E *facial*. The origin of our word *face*, Latin **facies** suggested the “make” or “appearance” of a person. What is *prima facie* evidence? This word clearly had some semantic overlap with **species**, though **species** was less often used of the human countenance. English *species* (“spee-sheeze”) denotes the individual “appearance” of a variety of plant or animal life, as opposed to the broad class or *genus*. Its Latin plural is identical to the singular, as is the case with all 5th declension nouns.

§22. Summary of the Five Latin Noun Declensions

DECL. NO.	LATIN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH MEANINGS	LATIN BASE	ENGLISH NOUN DERIVATIVES (D = DOUBLETS)
1	camera forma persona	room shape mask, role	camer- form- person-	camera, chamber (D) form persona, person, parson (D)
2	modus radius terminus signum verbum vitium	manner rod, spoke boundary mark word fault, vice	mod- radi- termin- sign- verb- viti-	mode, mood (D) radius, ray (D) terminus sign verb vice
3	ars vox origo corpus genus omen	skill voice source body kind omen	art-[is] voc- origin- corpor- gener- omin-	art voice origin corpus, corpse, corps (D) genus, gender, genre (D) omen
4	manus (F) sinus spiritus	hand curve breath	manu- sinu- spiritu-	[manufacture] sinus, sine (D) spirit, sprite (D)
5	species series	appearance row	speci- seri-	species series

DECL. NO.	TYPICAL GENDER	LATIN SINGULAR / PLURAL	SECTION REFERENCE
1	F.	-a / -ae	§10
2	M. N.	-us / -i -um / -a	§12
3	M.F. N.	unpredictable / -es unpredictable / -a	§18
4	M.	-us / -us	§20
5	F.	-es / -es	§21

§23. The Legacy of Latin: II. Middle English

It is often said that the Norman invasion of AD 1066 was the single most important event in the history of the English language. After William the Conqueror defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings, French would be the spoken language of the English royal court and governing class for generations to come. English certainly did not die, or suffer any lack of speakers; it merely went “underground,” as it were. In the thirteenth century it would reassert itself and soon gain the upper hand, even among the aristocracy. When it re-emerged, however, it had been radically changed from Old English, having acquired (among other new features) a substantial stock of Latin-derived French vocabulary, as well as a considerable number of new words borrowed directly from Latin. Though Latin was no longer spoken by large numbers of people, it continued to serve all medieval Europe as the language of Christian religion and scholarship—within the emerging new universities, for example. Because the native Germanic vocabulary of English had become somewhat impoverished from disuse, English would continue to borrow very actively from French and Latin over the next two centuries.

The framing dates of the **MIDDLE ENGLISH** period are often given as 1066 and 1476—from William the Conqueror to William Caxton, whose establishment of the first printing press in England signalled a new era in the history of the language. We can round off these dates, and say that the Middle English period extended from 1100 to 1500 AD, encompassing the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. The era of Norman dominance covered only the first quarter of that period, and was not by any means the most productive in terms of Latinate vocabulary.

Because of the scarcity of written evidence before 1200, it is often hard to tell whether a loan-word entered English from Norman French in the early stage of the Middle English period, or was derived later from Central or Parisian French (Francien)¹. Nevertheless there is one area of vocabulary where we do have a very reliable indicator. If a Latin word began with **ca-**, it was still pronounced and spelled *ca-* in Norman French—whatever other changes it might have undergone. We know, therefore, that *cattle* (< L **capitalis**) must have entered English during the Norman supremacy, before 1200. In Central French, however, Latin **ca-** was pronounced and spelled *cha-*, as we see in *E chattel*, a DOUBLET of *cattle* that was borrowed at a later date. Accordingly, the following Latin derivatives must be Norman-French: *castle* (< L **castellum**, = modF *château*), *canker* (< L **cancer**, = modF *chancre*), and *cauldron* (< L **calidarium**, = modF *chaudron*). English has several other pairs of doublets like *cattle* and *chattel*: *canal* and *channel*, *catch* and *chase*, *car* and *chariot*. In every instance, the *ca-* form is Norman French.

Literally thousands of Central French words entered our language during the later Middle English period, and the vast majority of them, of course, came ultimately from Latin. Their numbers easily surpass the combined total of all Latin derivatives prior to 1200. Because these French loan-words occur in almost every area of social and economic life, they bear witness to the all-pervasive influence of French culture at that time. It is important to remember, however, that they were being brought into an English language that was now thriving at all levels of society; it was no longer the case that one class spoke only English, while another spoke only French.

Six or seven hundred years later, these borrowed words don’t seem at all alien or exotic. Most of them are as English as the *joint of beef* or *pork* on your *plate* at the *dinner table*. However, a few look every bit as learned and “correct” as derivatives that would later come directly from Latin, during the Renaissance; *medicine*, *audience*, *recreation*, *university*, *inquest*, and *evidence* are all French loan-words of the Middle-English period.

In *A Biography of the English Language*,² C.M. Millward provides an interesting list of short and familiar words that came into Middle English from French. Their Latin origins are often heavily concealed; many are explained elsewhere in this book:

age, blame, catch, chance, change, close, cry, dally, enter, face, fail, fine, flower, fresh, grease, grouch, hello, hurt, join, kerchief, large, letter, line, mischief, move, offer, part, pay, people, piece, place, please, poor, pure, rock, roll, save, search, sign, square, stuff, strange, sure, touch, try, turn, use.

Notes

1. Beware of a confusing problem of terminology. Most English dictionaries apply the label “Old French” to any French source-word from the 12th to the 14th century. In English lexicography, therefore, the term Old French (OF) corresponds far more closely to Middle English (ME) than to Old English (OE).
2. p. 173; see Chapter 2, §16.

§24. Chapter 3: Exercises

1. Underline the base of these nouns (e.g., FAMA; ORIGO, ORIGINIS):

MILES, MILITIS; MANUS; LEX, LEGIS; LUMEN, LUMINIS; SPECIES; ONUS, ONERIS; SINUS.

2. By underlining, identify the Latin noun base within the following English words (e.g., INFORMALITY):

REGICIDE, DECAPITATION, EXTEMPORANEOUS, SERIAL, MORTIFY, COLLABORATE, ABOMINATION.

3. Identify each of the following Latin nouns by **DECLENSION**, and give its **BASE** and **ORIGINAL LATIN MEANING**:

<i>Latin noun</i>	<i>Declension</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
e.g. corpus	3	corpor-	body
a. signum	_____	_____	_____
b. forma	_____	_____	_____
c. radius	_____	_____	_____
d. labor	_____	_____	_____
e. opus	_____	_____	_____
f. gradus	_____	_____	_____
g. modus	_____	_____	_____
h. via	_____	_____	_____
i. species	_____	_____	_____
j. ars	_____	_____	_____

4. For each of the following English words, find an English doublet—if possible, one that more closely resembles the Latin source-word:

a. <i>parson</i>	_____	d. <i>dish</i>	_____
b. <i>gender</i>	_____	e. <i>chef</i>	_____
c. <i>ray</i>	_____	f. <i>sprite</i>	_____

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 4: Simple Latin Adjectives

§25. What is an Adjective?

The Romans used the term **adjectivum** to identify a word that was “thrown beside” or added to a noun. It is a part of speech that denotes a quality or attribute of a noun: a *good* woman, a *warm* kiss, an *evil* person. Accordingly, we can define an adjective as a WORD THAT DESCRIBES OR MODIFIES A NOUN.

By the structural rules of English, an adjective may occur in two rather different environments: “my — friend” or “My friend is —.” Any of the following English adjectives may be used to complete either of those structural patterns:

1. *good, old, fat, late, wise, dear*
2. *better, older, best, oldest, dearest*
3. *manly, foolish, catlike, wonderful*
4. *smiling, forgotten, forgetful, bewildered*
5. *one, first, third*
6. *ill-mannered, left-handed*

All these English examples, as you may have guessed, are adjectives of Germanic descent. The words in group 1 are simple adjectives, whereas those in group 2 are forms in the comparative or superlative degree. Group 3 consists of adjectives that are derived from English nouns, while group 4 illustrates adjectives that are derived from English verbs. Numerals belong to the general category of adjectives, as we see from group 5; of course, if we used a plural number, we would have to pluralize the noun: “my five friends.” Finally, group 6 introduces a couple of compound adjectives.

In due course, you will learn that all these adjectival types existed in the Latin language, and that their various derivatives have had a profound influence on English. In this chapter, however, we are not going to worry about the more complex Latin forms; for the present, we’ll confine our survey to simple adjectives, like those in group 1 above, with a brief glance at the comparatives and superlatives of group 2.

§26. Latin Adjectives: 1st and 2nd Declension Type

The basic Latin adjective that meant “big” or “great” was a word with the base **magn-**; the ending that followed this base depended on a variety of factors, including the gender of the noun to which the adjective was linked. A “big page” was a **Magna Charta**; a man known as “Charles the Great”—we call him *Charlemagne*—had the Latin name of **Carolus Magnus**; a “big work” (the main achievement of one’s life, perhaps) can be described in Latin as a **magnum opus**. These are the three genders of the standard Latin adjective: **magnus** (m.), **magna** (f.), and **magnum** (n.). If it modifies a feminine noun, an adjective of this type will use first-declension endings; for example, when the adjective **firmus**, **firma**, **firmum** is combined with the feminine noun **terra**, it creates the phrase **terra firma** (“firm earth”). If attached to a masculine or neuter noun, an adjective of this type will use second-declension endings, as seen in the examples **Carolus Magnus** and **magnum opus** above.¹ For obvious reasons, then, this very common type is described as an adjective of the first and second declensions, or a 1ST AND 2ND DECLENSION ADJECTIVE.

For the purposes of this course, we seldom have to worry about questions of Latin gender; and we can blissfully ignore all problems of adjective-noun agreement, a topic that creates some anguish for students of Latin grammar. It will be enough for us to know that most Latin adjectives belong to the same class as **magnus**, **magna**, **magnum** and **firmus**, **firma**, **firmum**. For the sake of brevity, we shall usually refer to words of this type simply as **magnus** or **firmus**, assuming the existence of feminine and neuter forms to match the masculine. IF A LATIN ADJECTIVE IS LISTED WITH THE ENDING **-us**, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT IT BELONGS TO THE 1ST AND 2ND DECLENSION TYPE. As you would expect from the parallel nouns that we studied in [chapter 2](#), the base of these adjectives can be determined by removing the **-us** ending.

It is often possible to guess the meaning of a Latin adjective from obvious English clues. We have already met **firmus** (“firm,” “steadfast”), whose base provides the synonymous English derivative. The same principle applies to Latin adjectives like **justus**, **vastus**, **solidus**, **timidus**, **validus**, and **rotundus**. In meaning, these words may not exactly match their English derivatives, but the differences aren’t worth worrying about. Occasionally, however, semantic changes have occurred—the Latin word **crispus**, for example, meant “curly-haired.” If you know that Latin **curtus** meant “clipped” or “shortened,” you may have a better feeling for the connotations of the English word *curt*. Once in a while, appearances can be deceiving: Latin **longus** is not the origin of English *long*, which is a cognate word of Germanic descent.

Table 4.1 LATIN 1ST AND 2ND DECLENSION ADJECTIVES

aequus	even, equal	multus	much, many
bonus	good	pius	dutiful, good
justus	upright, just	planus	level, flat
longus	long	sanus	healthy, sound
magnus	big, great	solus	alone, only, sole
malus	bad, evil	vacuus	empty
medius	middle	verus	true

For hundreds of years, students of Latin have been learning 1st and 2nd declension adjective forms from the model of **bonus**, **bona**, **bonum** (**bonus** –a –um), one of the commonest words in Latin. It is the origin of the corresponding adjective in the Romance Languages—French *bon*, Italian *buono*, and Spanish *bueno*. Its main derivatives in English, however, are two nouns—*bonus* and *boon*. It is not uncommon for adjectives to evolve into nouns in this fashion. In English, as in Latin, we can refer to “the good” as an abstract concept; the Latin phrase *summum bonum* (“the highest good”) is sometimes used in English. Similarly, we can talk about a “happy medium,” using another Latin adjective as a noun. A *medium* may also be a physical substance “in the middle,” or a means of mass communication (plural, *media*), or a spiritualist who attempts contact with the dead. A *magnum* can be a large (two-quart) bottle—probably of champagne. Another example of the evolution of neuter adjective into noun can be seen in *vacuum*, an “empty space.”² This same Latin adjective has given us the English adjective *vacuous*.

You will surely spot the connection between **aequus** and English *equal*, *equity*, etc. Don’t be puzzled by the change in spelling: it is a regular development for the Latin diphthong **ae** to evolve into English *e*. Problems can arise, however, when this change blurs the contrast between two distinct Latin words. In English spelling terms, there is no difference between the Latin adjective **aequus** and the Latin noun **equus** (“horse”), since both of them appear in our language with the base *equ-*. If Julius Caesar should be suddenly brought back to life today, he might think that the mysterious English word *equator* referred to a horseback rider, or that *equidistant* meant that you had a cheap seat at the Kentucky Derby.

Solus and **sanus**, with their derivatives *sole* and *sane*, illustrate a fairly common type of morphological change, where the English word is the Latin base plus silent –e (see §14, 3.a). Further examples are **amplus**, **curvus**, and **pronus** (with its opposite, **supinus**). The development of Latin **sanus** to English *sane* shows also a semantic change: the meaning has been specialized, since Latin **sanus** involved both physical and mental health. The poet Juvenal said that all of us should pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body—**mens sana in corpore sano**.

Quite a few Latin adjectives ending in –**ius** and –**uus** have entered English as adjectives in –*ious* and –*uous*. **Vacuus** > *vacuous* is one case in point. Further examples include **varius** > *various*, **pius** > *pious* (and its opposite **im-pius**³ > *impious*), **spurius** (originally, “illegitimate”) > *spurious*, **noxius** (“harmful”) > *noxious*, **innocuus** > *innocuous*, and **strenuus** > *strenuous*.

As in the case of 2nd declension nouns in **–us** (see §13), there is a small subtype of 1st and 2nd declension adjectives with **–er** in the masculine singular:

liber, libera, liberum	free
miser, misera, miserum	wretched, miserable
pulcher, pulchra, pulchrum	beautiful
sacer, sacra, sacrum	sacred
integer, integra, integrum	untouched, whole

Some of these, like **liber** and **miser**, keep the vowel **–e–** in their base (and therefore in their English derivatives). Others drop the **–e–**, having bases like **pulchr–**, **sacr–**, and **integr–**. Notice that *miser* and *integer* are two English noun derivatives from this list. English *sinister* is the masculine form of a Latin adjective that meant “left-handed”; throughout human history, southpaws have always been abused linguistically.

Notes

1. The phrase **magnum opus** may help you remember that **opus** is a neuter noun. It also shows that a Latin adjective is not likely to rhyme with its noun if the noun belongs to a different declension.
2. We often use this noun adjectivally in expressions like “*vacuum* cleaner” and “*vacuum* bottle.” English is a language where words can jump casually from one grammatical function (part of speech) to another without any change in form. The word *home* is obviously a noun (“my old *home*”), but we use it as an adverb in “I’m going *home*,” and as an adjective in “*home* town” or “*home* run.” In highly inflected languages like Latin, words normally can’t switch functions without some change in form.
3. This is our first example of the negative **PREFIX in–**, of which we’ll see much more later.

§27. Latin Adjectives: 3rd Declension Type

Although the great majority of Latin adjectives are of the 1st and 2nd declension type, there is a substantial number that belong to the 3rd declension. (You can rest assured that all Latin adjectives are of one type or the other; the 4th and 5th declensions consist only of nouns.) Like 3rd declension nouns, 3rd declension adjectives lack a predictable, easily recognized ending. However, since their vocabulary forms never end in **–us**, **–a**, or **–um**, they aren't likely to get confused with the 1st and 2nd declension type. Most of the examples that we're going to meet share a common masculine and feminine **–is** ending, like **brevis**, “short” (> E *brief*). This particular subtype has a neuter singular form that ends in **–e** (here, **breve**); because that fact is not really essential for our purposes, only one form will be given in our word-lists for adjectives like **brevis** or **fortis**. As in the case of the noun **finis**, their BASE may be found very easily by taking off the final **–is**. If you ever see a 3rd declension adjective listed in this book with two forms, like **audax**, **audacis**, you can assume that the second form is the genitive, and that the base is the part of the word that precedes the final **–is**.

Table 4.2 LATIN 3RD DECLENSION ADJECTIVES

brevis	short, brief	grandis	great, large
levis	light	gravis	heavy, grave
fortis	strong, brave	similis	like

This straightforward list shouldn't cause much trouble. Notice the adjective **grandis** (> E *grand*), which is roughly synonymous with the 1st and 2nd declension **magnus**. Throughout antiquity, **magnus** was always the standard word for “big,” occurring far more often in Latin literature than **grandis**. In “vulgar” or popular Latin, however, **grandis** became the word of choice, gaining such currency that eventually it squeezed **magnus** out of common use. For this reason, it was **grandis** that supplied the everyday words for “big” in the Romance languages.

§28. Interesting Words

Let's begin with a few DOUBLETs. The adjective **planus** evolved into two English HOMONYMS, *plain* and *plane*, which both have clear semantic links to the meanings “level,” “even,” “flat.” Both *plain* and *plane* have various English uses, of course, and can be several different parts of speech. In Italian, where the initial **pl** of Latin regularly changed to *pi*-, **planus** became *piano*, an adjective that still means “plain,” “level,” or “flat.” As an adverb, *piano* suggests “softly,” a meaning it carries as a musical notation. A keyboard instrument that could be played either softly or loudly (“strongly”) was called the *pianoforte*, which we have shortened to *piano*. An Italian derivative also provides one of the doublets from Latin **rotundus**, in the form of *rotunda*, a round building or a round room. The English words *round* and *rotund* are perfect doublets; *rotund* has become rather specialized in meaning, since we use it only to refer to human girth. Another pair of doublets are *integer* and *entire* (< OF *entier*).

The Latin adjectives **pronus** and **supinus** meant “leaning forward” and “bent backward”; and their English derivatives *prone* and *supine* still express the literal image of lying face down or face up, respectively. If you are *prone* to do something, you are eagerly leaning forward (in a metaphorical sense, at least); if your attitude is *supine*, you are sluggish and inert—flat on your back, so to speak.

In Latin, **levis** and **gravis** are exact opposites in meaning (ANTONYMS): both refer to physical weight, but both can be used also in a moral or ethical sense (like our “light” and “heavy” reading). The English derivatives *levity* and *gravity* are similarly flexible, but the adjective *grave* (= “serious,” “solemn”) is not applied to physical weight. This word *grave*, derived from L **gravis**, has no connection with the *grave* in which one is buried; that is a Germanic homograph (§12), from OE *græf*.

§29. Comparative and Superlative Forms

Whether they were 1st and 2nd declension words like **planus** or 3rd declension words like **fortis**, most Latin adjectives took their comparative and superlative forms according to regular and consistent rules. Thus, “flat, flatter, flattest” was **planus, planior, planissimus**; and “strong, stronger, strongest” was **fortis, fortior, fortissimus**. This feature of Latin adjective morphology has had very little effect on English. However, in the forms **planissimus** and **fortissimus** you may recognize the origins of the Italian *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, musical terms (abbreviated as *pp* and *ff*) that mean “very softly” and “very loudly” (“very strongly”).

Several irregular Latin comparative and superlative forms have left their mark on English. In the Indo-European language family, irregular comparison is a feature of the most commonly used adjectives: consider E “good, better, best” or “bad, worse, worst.” A selection of irregular Latin comparatives and superlatives is given here:

IRREGULAR COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES IN LATIN

LATIN ADJECTIVES	ENGLISH MEANING	ENGLISH DERIVATIVES
bonus, melior, optimus	good, better, best	<i>ameliorate, optimist</i>
malus, pejor, pessimus	bad, worse, worst	<i>pejorative, pessimist</i>
magnus, major, maximus	big, bigger, biggest	<i>major, majority, maximum</i>
parvus, minor, minimus	small, lesser, least	<i>minor, minus, minimum</i>
multus, plus, plurimus	much, more, most	<i>plus, plural, plurality</i>

Read that list through for general interest; you are not expected to commit it to memory. Other irregular Latin comparatives have entered English without change; among these are **interior** (“inner”), **exterior** (“outer”), **superior** (“higher”), **inferior** (“lower”), **prior** (“former”), **posterior** (“later”), **ulterior** (“farther”), **junior** (“younger”), **senior** (“older”). Their corresponding superlatives include **extremus** (“outermost”), **supremus** or **summus** (“highest”), and **ultimus** (“farthest”).

§30. Latin Adverbs

As a postscript to our study of Latin adjectives, we shall take no more than a cursory glance at several Latin adverbs. If one were learning the Latin language, more attention to this topic would be needed; but the Latin adverb, as it happens, is one part of speech that has had very little impact on English.

English distinguishes between the adjective *good* (“We ate a good dinner”) and its corresponding adverb, *well* (“We ate well”). To say “We ate good” is still considered a mark of ignorance—though our ears are constantly bombarded with such statements as “Walker hit that ball real good.” Latin made a grammatical distinction between the adjective **bonus** (“good”) and its adverb counterpart, **bene** (“well”). **Malus** (“bad”) also had its corresponding adverb, **male** (“badly”). These two adverbs, **bene** and **male**, are among the relatively few in Latin that significantly affect English vocabulary ([Chapter 14, §94](#)).

The following English words were originally Latin adverbs. In some cases, they are now used as adjectives or nouns; and their meanings may differ from the ETYMOLOGICAL MEANINGS given here. You will find further examples in the Exercises ([§32](#)).

alibi	“elsewhere,” “in another place”	item	“likewise”
verbatim	“word for word” [Medieval Lat.]	tandem	“at last,” “at length”
gratis	“free of charge”	versus (vs.)	“turned toward,” “facing”

§31. The Legacy of Latin: III. Modern English

Just as Middle English greatly surpassed Old English in its adoption of words with Latin origins, so has Modern English far exceeded Middle English in this regard. When one considers the time frame, that is not surprising, since the term **MODERN ENGLISH** is applied to the entire period from 1450 or 1500 to the present day. This era is sometimes subdivided into “Early Modern English,” from 1500 to 1800, and “Present-Day English,” the language of the 19th and 20th centuries. The period as a whole is an era when English has become stabilized as a language that would be mutually intelligible to speakers—or at least to readers—from any time within those five hundred years.

If Middle English was heralded by the Norman invasion of AD 1066, the advent of Modern English was signalled by two not unrelated events, the invention of the printing press (by Johannes Gutenberg, a Mainz goldsmith, in 1450)¹ and the great intellectual and cultural movement known as the Renaissance. Arising in Italy in the 15th century and sweeping into northern Europe with full force in the 16th, this new way of looking at the world sparked a passionate reawakening of interest in the classical civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome. The movement was largely caused, of course, by the rediscovery of classical authors and the so-called “Revival of Learning”—a label that is perhaps a little unfair to the excellent Latin scholars of the late Middle Ages, who were the forerunners of the Renaissance. Great works of literature that had previously been accessible only to a learned few were now being keenly studied by a growing circle of literate readers, were being widely disseminated by the new technology of the printed word, and were being translated into English from the original Greek and Latin. The Protestant Reformation caused an upheaval in Christian worship and secular education, with consequences that had a profound effect on the language. During the reign of Elizabeth I, England enjoyed a period unprecedented in its intellectual energy and creativity. William Shakespeare and his fellow poets of the late 16th and early 17th centuries were riding a high crest of linguistic experiment and innovation.

As we observed in Chapter 3 (§23), there had been a certain amount of direct borrowing from Latin during the Middle English period. After 1500, however, the trickle of Latin words became a flood. Poets and scholars vied with each other in coining new English vocabulary that was inspired by their knowledge of the classics—Greek, as well as Latin, though the knowledge of Greek was still rather limited. Some of the results were solid and useful words that have survived to the present day; others were fantastic and preposterous inventions that deserved the early death that was their fate. Students of Elizabethan literature will be aware of the controversy that raged during the 16th century on the propriety of these bizarre and outlandish coinages (“inkhorn terms,” as they were scornfully known). Because scholars and poets on the continent were equally bold and inventive, it was not uncommon for an English writer to borrow a Latin or Greek adaptation that had recently become current in French

or Italian usage. If you have access to a dictionary that gives the date of a word's first attested use in English—for example, the current edition of *Webster's New Collegiate* or any of the larger Oxford dictionaries—notice how many Latin derivatives can be dated to the period between 1560 and 1620. That is roughly Shakespeare's lifetime, but Shakespeare was merely the most conspicuous representative of a widespread general trend.

The extraordinary number of Latin DOUBLETES in modern English can be explained by this activity during the high Renaissance. Though English already had words like *chamber* and *choir*, derived through French from Latin **camera** and **chorus**, the well-educated writers of the 16th and 17th centuries would go back to the original tongues to adopt forms like *camera* and *chorus* as new English words. More often than not, the new word became a naturalized adaptation, rather than an exact adoption: the Latin adjective **fragilis**, for example, was Anglicized as *fragile*, now coexisting with its earlier doublet *frail*. Whenever you are confronted with such a pair of English doublets, it is usually safe to assume that the form that looks less like the Latin original is the older English word, since it probably evolved through French in the Middle English period. The more Latinate form is almost certain to be the learned creation of some Modern English borrower.

In the next few chapters, we will be studying patterns of resemblance between relatively complex Latin words and their corresponding English derivatives. For the most part, our English examples will be drawn from these more learned adaptations of the Modern English period—vocabulary that is unmistakably Latin, once you have had some experience with Latin. There are thousands of words like this in our language, and they continue to be coined at an astonishing rate. The flood of classical neologisms subsided a little in the 17th and 18th centuries, but it began to swell again in the 19th century, as Latin and Greek both began to be exploited for scientific and technical terminology.

Because the English language is so thoroughly stocked with borrowed Latin roots and affixes, speakers of English are now able to invent new combinations of Latin word elements without actually knowing any Latin. Occasionally, a new coinage may cause the scholar some distress, if it violates the standard rules of Latin word formation. A harmless example is the word *societal*, which will still make a pedantic classicist wince, though it has been around since 1898; it is apparently here to stay, because it is a useful English adjective. No one is startled any longer by the word *humanitarian* (1831), though it, too, attaches an historically inappropriate Latin suffix to an abstract Latin noun. The great virtue of English is its flexibility and its receptivity to change. We can take Latin words and add Germanic suffixes, creating hybrids like *graceful*, *masterful*, *brutish*, and *scholarly*. It is an astonishing fact that there are more Latin derivatives in English today than the total number of Latin words in the largest dictionary of classical Latin. We have conquered the Romans on their own linguistic battlefield.

Notes

1. The celebrated Gutenberg 42-line Bible was printed in 1456; in 1476, William Caxton, who had learned his craft on the European continent, established the first printing press in England.

§32. Chapter 4: Exercises

1. What word-ending makes it certain that a Latin adjective must belong to the 1st and 2nd declension type?

2. List four Latin adjectives whose English derivative is the Latin word-base plus *-e*:

a. _____

c. _____

b. _____

d. _____

(Questions 3 and 4 will require the use of your English dictionary.)

3. For each of the following English adjectives, give the **LATIN ADJECTIVE** and its **ORIGINAL LATIN MEANING** (which may or may not be its current meaning today):

<i>English adjective</i>	<i>Latin adjective</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
e.g. <i>horrid</i>	horridus	shaggy, rough
a. <i>tepid</i>	_____	_____
b. <i>pristine</i>	_____	_____
c. <i>antique</i>	_____	_____
d. <i>fecund</i>	_____	_____
e. <i>vapid</i>	_____	_____
f. <i>clandestine</i>	_____	_____

4. Give the **ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING** of the following English words (all Latin adverbs):

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| a. <i>interim</i> | _____ | d. <i>seriatim</i> | _____ |
| b. <i>circa</i> | _____ | e. <i>ibid(em)</i> | _____ |
| c. <i>quondam</i> | _____ | f. <i>alias</i> | _____ |

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 5: Turning Latin Nouns into Adjectives

§33. The Process of Affixation

In all languages, a simple word may be expanded and changed in meaning by the attachment or insertion of one or more units of meaning called **MORPHEMES**. This is a process that often turns the word into a new part of speech. Consider, for example, the English adjective *true*, which can be converted into the noun *truth* by the addition of the morpheme *-th*. *Truth*, in turn, may become the adjective *truthful*, or its negative *untruthful*; similarly, the new adjective *truthful* may be expanded into the adverbs *truthfully* and *untruthfully*, or the new nouns *truthfulness* and *untruthfulness*.

So far in this course, we have been dealing only with simple nouns and adjectives. Now we'll discover how Latin nouns were converted by various morphemes into adjectives; or conversely (in [Chapter 6](#)), how simple adjectives were expanded to become nouns. Whatever changes of form occurred originally in Latin are sure to be reflected in English words derived from Latin. Eventually you will understand how a simple Latin noun like **via** ("way," "road") could give rise to English words like *impervious* [im-per-**vi**-ous], "not allowing a way through" or *deviation* [de-**vi**-at-ion] "a going off the road." It is at this more complex level of morphology that the study of word derivation becomes really interesting.

The process of adding a morpheme in order to modify the meaning of a word is given the name of **AFFIXATION**. Depending on its placement in relation to the original word, an **AFFIX** can be identified as a **PREFIX**, **INFIX**, or **SUFFIX**¹. We'll be dealing mainly with prefixes and suffixes, which are both extremely common in Latin. In this chapter, we are going to see how Latin used a variety of **SUFFIXES** to turn simple nouns into new and related adjective forms. In linguistic jargon, these new forms are called **DERIVED** adjectives. Do notice that the terms "derived" and "derivative" can be applied not only to new words in a different language, but also to new words in the same language. This chapter could have been entitled "Derived Adjectives in Latin."²

Notes

1. These terms are derived from the Latin verb **figere**, **fixus** ("fix," "fasten," "attach"), and the Latin prefixes **prae-** ("before"), **in-** ("in"), and **sub-** ("under").
2. One label that should not be applied to these derived adjectives is "compound," a term that is misused in several standard etymology textbooks. A compound adjective is one that has two or more base elements, like English *red-hot*, *down-to-earth*, *vociferous*, or *multifarious* (the last two derived from Latin).

§34. Adjective-forming Suffixes in English

By way of preamble, let us see what happens in English when we want to turn simple nouns into corresponding adjectives. What English word expresses the concept “like a man,” or “like a child,” or “like a horse”? How do we say that something resembles blood, or has the qualities of milk or water? How does our English language convey in one word an idea such as “full of sin” or “full of woe”? The following English examples will be drawn from Germanic word roots and Germanic suffixes, so as to provide useful parallels. If you understand the semantic and morphological process for native English words, you will cope more easily with the parallel situation in Latin.

There are at least five common methods for turning a native English noun into an adjective, all involving standard Germanic suffixes:

1. **Noun + suffix -Y** (< OE < OTeut.), “having the qualities of”
 - *heart-y, blood-y, milk-y, dirt-y, health-y, hand-y, horse-y*
 - *ic-y, sunn-y, angr-y, clay-ey*
2. **Noun + suffix -LY** (< OE < OTeut.), “having the appearance of”
 - *man-ly, woman-ly, king-ly, mother-ly, friend-ly, beggar-ly*¹
 - *hour-ly, dai-ly, year-ly*²
3. **Noun + suffix -ISH** (< OE < OTeut.), “having the nature or character of”
 - *boy-ish, mann-ish, woman-ish, book-ish, child-ish, freak-ish*
 - *Engl-ish* (< *Angl-ish*), *Brit-ish*, *French* (< *Frank-ish*), *Welsh*, *Dan-ish*
4. **Noun (or Adj.) + -SOME** (< OE < OFris.; cf. OS & OHG -sam), “full of”
 - *hand-some, burden-some, loath-some, wholesome, glad-some, ful-some*
5. **Noun + -FUL** = full), “full of,” “characterized by”
 - *woe-ful, wonder-ful, help-ful, sin-ful, meaning-ful*

Suffixes like *-y*, *-ly*, *-ish*, *-some*, and *-ful* do have subtle differences in meaning, but these historical distinctions would seem quite academic to the average speaker of English. The situation that we’ll encounter in Latin is closely parallel: slight variations in meaning or usage can be identified among the common adjective-forming suffixes, but these weren’t likely apparent even to educated Romans. The common functional purpose that the suffixes share—creating adjectives from nouns—is far more important than any semantic connotations they may have. Latin normally applied only one adjectival suffix to any given noun; there are few Latin parallels for English pairs like *manly* and *mannish*, *handy* and *handsome*, *awful* and *aw(e)some*. One feature that you will

find reassuring about Latin adjective-forming suffixes is that their English derivatives are mainly consistent and logical. To put it another way, you will be able to predict with confidence the Latin source-words for hundreds of English adjectives that have been derived from Latin.

Notes

1. Problems may be caused by the fact that these forms are adjectives, whereas most other English words in *-ly* are adverbs. We can say “She gave me a friendly kiss,” but we’re not likely to say “She kissed me friendly” or—as if trying to create a typical adverb in *-ly*—“She kissed me friendlily.”
2. These forms can be either adjectives or adverbs; compare “Give us our daily bread,” with “We are now travelling daily to Vancouver.”

§35. The Latin suffix -ALIS (> E -al) / -ARIS (> E -ar or -ary)

More than any comparable Germanic morpheme in English, one Latin suffix was supremely important in forming adjectives from nouns. This is the ending **-ālis**, which could be attached to the BASE of a great many Latin nouns—and even a few adjectives—to create new adjective forms. Since **vita** meant “life,” then **vitalis** meant “pertaining to life,”¹ “full of life,” “lively.” Since **mors**, **mort-is** was the Latin noun for “death,” then **mort-alis** could mean “pertaining to death,” “subject to death,” “deathly.” No matter whether the noun was 1st declension, like **vita**, or 3rd declension, like **mors**, **mortis**, the derived adjective was a 3RD DECLENSION type, as the ending **-ālis** should make self-evident. Latin adjectives in **-ālis** almost always evolved into English words in **-al**. In fact, if you set out to collect all the English words that end in **-al** (and there are thousands), you would find that virtually every one of them either is derived from a Latin adjective in **-ālis** or has used this Latin suffix to create a hybrid English form.

Table 5.1 SOME MORE LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS

navis, navis	ship	margo, marginis	edge
flos, floris	flower	ordo, ordinis	rank, order
mos, moris	custom	limen, liminis	threshold
os, oris	mouth	semen, seminis	seed

Table 5.1 presents a mixture of new masculine, feminine, and neuter words; their gender is not important for us now, though you may recognize **limen** and **semen** as neuter nouns like **lumen** and **nomen**. The regular suffix **-ālis** can be added to the base of these nouns so as to form Latin adjectives: **nav-is** > **nav-ālis** (“pertaining to a ship”), **flor-is** > **flor-ālis** (“pertaining to a flower”), etc. As the English language evolved, these Latin adjectives provided it with very useful derivatives: *naval* fills a gap caused by the lack of a native English adjective like *shippy* or *shippish*, and *floral* is a much more general word than the metaphorical *flowery*. (*Flower* itself is derived from **flos, floris**, as is its doublet, *flour*.) The Latin plural form *mores* is used in English to express its original meaning of “customs” or “character,” but the adjective *moral* is a far more common English word. Table 5.1 also produces English *marginal*, *ordinal*, (*sub*)*liminal* (“below the threshold”), and *seminal*. We’ll soon encounter other derivatives from the last three nouns.

The **-ālis** suffix is by no means limited to 3rd declension nouns:

1st	form-ālis (<i>formal</i>), caus-ālis (<i>causal</i>), person-ālis (<i>personal</i>)
2nd	foc-ālis (<i>focal</i>), radi-ālis (<i>radial</i>), termin-ālis (<i>terminal</i>), verb-ālis (<i>verbal</i>)
3rd	leg-ālis (<i>legal</i> ²), voc-ālis (<i>vocal</i>), corpor-ālis (<i>corporate</i>), gener-ālis (<i>general</i>)
4th	manu-ālis (<i>manual</i>), gradu-ālis (<i>gradual</i>), ritu-ālis (<i>ritual</i>)
5th	speci-ālis (<i>special</i>), re-ālis (<i>real</i>), seri-ālis (<i>serial</i>)

For some of these English derivatives, we can find almost exact Germanic counterparts, in terms of word structure, though their meanings may be quite dissimilar. For example, *formal* is closely analogous to *shape-ly*,

verbal to *word-y*, and *corporal* to *bodi-ly*. Even though they may not be synonyms, pairs of this kind are useful etymological parallels.

In special phonetic circumstances, the Latin suffix **-ālis** had a variant form **-āris**, which comes into English as **-ar** (sometimes **-ary**). If the Latin word base ended in L, the derived adjective was hard to pronounce, so words like ***sol-alis** and ***ocul-alis** were changed to **sol-aris** (*solar*) and **ocul-aris** (*ocular*).³ In fact, if there was an L anywhere in the last two syllables of a noun base, this variant was used, as can be seen from **lun-aris** (*lunar*) and **milit-aris** (*military*). Other examples from vocabulary that we have met include **popularis** (*popular*), **vulgaris** (*vulgar*), and **similaris** (*similar*). The English words *liminal* and *subliminal* were coined by psychologists in the 1880s; because the Latin adjective from **limen** was **liminaris**, the modern technical term should perhaps have been *liminar* or *liminary* (cf. *preliminary* < **prae-limin-aris**, “before the threshold”).

Notes

1. Although there is always more than one way of translating any Latin morpheme into English, you will find that “pertaining to” is a very useful general definition for all the adjective-forming suffixes in Latin.
2. *Legal* and *loyal* are doublets; so too are *regal* and *royal*, *focal* and *fuel*, *hospital* and *hostel* (= *hotel*).
3. The asterisk in front of a word like ***solalis** shows that it is a hypothetical form; no evidence has survived to prove its historical existence.

§36. The Latin suffix -ILIS (> E -ile or -il)

In contrast to the huge category that we have just met, there is a rather small number of Latin adjectives formed by adding the suffix **-ilis** to the noun base. These regularly appear in English as words ending in *-ile*, occasionally in *-il*. Most conspicuous, perhaps, are the adjectives relating to the periods of human life (especially, a man's life). The Latin word for a baby was **infans**, **infant-is**; "like a baby" was **infant-ilis**, whence English *infantile*. Because "boy" was **puer** (a 2nd declension subtype), "boyish" was **puer-ilis** (E *puerile*). From **juvenis** ("young man") came **juven-ilis** (E *juvenile*). The noun **vir** ("man") produced the adjective **vir-ilis** (E *virile*), and **senex**, **sen-is** ("old man") yielded **sen-ilis** (E. *senile*). There was also a Latin adjective to describe an old woman—**anilis**, from the noun **ānus** (pronounced differently in Latin from **ānus** [E *anus*], a word that the Romans considered crude). There does exist an English word *anile* ("like an old woman"), but its rareness is probably the result of its similarity to *anal* (< **analis**, < **ānus**).

Outside of this coherent little group, there are only a few important **-ilis** derivatives of this type in English: *servile* ("like a slave") < **servilis** < **servus**; *hostile* ("like an enemy") < **hostilis** < **hostis**; *civil* ("pertaining to a citizen") < **civilis** < **civis**; and *gentile* ("pertaining to the nations") < **gentilis** < **gens**, **gent-is** ("clan," "race"). The last, of course, has had its English meaning specialized to "non-Jewish," from the Biblical contrast between the Jews and the gentiles. *Gentile* has three rather curious DOUBLETs—*gentle*, *genteel*, and *jaunty*, all transmitted and influenced by French *gentil*.

§37. The Latin suffixes -ANUS (> E -an) and -INUS (> E -ine)

So far, we have met two Latin suffixes (**-ālis** and **-ilis**) that create 3rd declension adjectives. In this section we see two (**-ānus** and **-īnus**) that form adjectives of the 1st and 2nd declension, as we can recognize by the reliable ending **-us**.

The **-ānus** group is very small and will be dismissed with two examples:

Roma > **Romanus** (E *Roman*)
urbs, urb-is > **urbanus** (E *urban* and *urbane*)

The Latin word **hūmānus** (E *human*) is an odd case. Regardless of appearances, it is not related to **hūmus**, “earth,” but is an irregular derivative of the 3rd declension noun **homo, hominis**, “mankind,” “humankind,” “person” (to be distinguished from **vir**, the male human being).

The **-īnus** group is somewhat larger and more productive, from the English point of view. Here are some representative examples:

sal, sal-is (“salt”) > **salinus** (E *saline*)
mare, mar-is (“sea”) > **marinus** (E *marine*)
divus = deus (“god”) > **divinus** (E *divine*)
femina (“woman”) > **femininus** (E *feminine*)

The corresponding word *masculine* is derived from **masculinus**, whose etymology we’ll learn a little later in the course. Notice that the *-ine* of these **-īnus** derivatives can be pronounced at least three different ways in English.

You will be familiar with at least some Latin-derived adjectives that refer to animals. This was a consistent use of the suffix **-īnus**, forming words that regularly came into English as derivatives in *-ine* (here pronounced to rhyme with “mine”):

canis (“dog”) > **caninus** (E *canine*, “pertaining to a dog”)
feles (“cat”) > **felinus** (E *feline*, “pertaining to a cat,” “catlike”)
equus (“horse”) > **equinus** (E *equine*, “pertaining to a horse”)
porcus (“pig”) > **porcinus** (E *porcine*, “pertaining to a pig,” “like a pig”)

These animal words are mainly clinical and technical. We say “canine distemper,” but “doggy bag”; and no one would ever reverse the two adjectives. On the other hand, we can say that a person moves with *feline* grace, or that someone’s appearance is *porcine*. When we’re being uncomplimentary or rude, we generally use Germanic adjectives. To call a man “piggy” or “piggish” is a more direct insult than to call him “porcine”—unless he’s a

Latin scholar. You might describe a woman as “horsey,” referring either to her interests or to her appearance; in the second case, at least, that would be a “catty” remark.

How many English animal adjectives in *-ine* can you think of? How do they differ in connotation from their Germanic counterparts, such as “catty” or “piggish” or “doglike”? Search your own vocabulary honestly, and then consult the Bestiary in §41.

§38. The Latin suffix -ARIUS (> E -ary, -arium, -er)

Occasionally the Latin language attached the suffix **–ārius** to a noun in order to form a 1st and 2nd declension adjective with the usual general meaning, “pertaining to”:

rota (“wheel”) > **rotarius** > E *rotary*
honor (“honour”) > **honorarius** > E. *honorary* (and *honorarium*)
ordo, ordin-is (“rank,” “order”) > **ordinarius** > E *ordinary*
imago, imagin-is (“likeness”) > **imaginarius** > E *imaginary*

Notice, by the way, that we have already met the adjective **ordinalis**, yet here we find **ordinarius**. It is uncommon in Latin to have two alternative forms like these, and they will usually have arisen at different periods in history. Also, you should realize that it is hard to predict a Latin source for an English word in *-ary*, since this suffix may derive from either **–aris** (*military*) or **–arius** (*ordinary*). Of the two possibilities, **–arius** is by far the more likely original suffix for any word ending in *-ary*.¹

Latin adjectives in **–arius** were sometimes used as masculine or neuter nouns, creating two groups of words that have a good many English derivatives:

- The masculine form **–arius** often meant “a person working or engaged in —”. A person working in stones (**lapis, lapid-is**) is a *lapidary* (< **lapidarius**); a person entrusted with a secret (**secretum**) is a *secretary* (< **secretarius**); and a man who carries water (**aqua**) is **Aquarius**, a sign of the zodiac. In Middle English, this ending might be transformed into *-er*: L **plumbarius**, “a worker in lead” (**plumbum**) > *plumber*.
- The neuter form **–arium** came to suggest “a place for —”. Several of these words still survive in English in their original Latin spelling—**aquarium** (“a place for water”), **solarium** (“a place for sun”). Others have evolved regularly into words that end in *-ary*. An *aviary* is a place for birds, a *granary* a place for grain, an *ovary* a place for eggs, and a *mortuary* a place for the dead.

Notes

1. Even the Romans apparently found these suffixes confusing: **auxilium** (“help”) had two adjective derivatives, **auxiliaris** and **auxiliarius**, and E *auxiliary* (= “helpful”) is thought to have derived from the second. The similar English word *ancillary* is derived from **ancillaris**, “like a maidservant” (**ancilla**).

§39. The Latin suffix -OSUS (> E -ous, -ose)

Here, for the first time, we meet a Latin adjective-forming suffix that has a somewhat more precise meaning than “pertaining to” or “like a —.” It is a very productive Latin morpheme, creating a considerable number of English derivatives and influencing many others. The suffix is **-ōsus**, which regularly meant “full of.” Latin adjectives in **-osus** appear in English in one of two forms, *-ous* or *-ose*.

A. In the following examples, arranged by declension number, the English derivatives in *-ous* still convey the meaning “full of”; a few Germanic counterparts are supplied:

- 1st **fam-osus** (*famous*), **glori-osus** (*glorious*), **fabul-osus** (*fabulous*)
- 2nd **numer-osus** (*numerous*), **odi-osus** (*odious* = “hateful”), **taedi-osus** (*tedious* = “tiresome,” “wearisome”)
- 3rd **amor-osus** (*amorous*), **odor-osus** (*odorous* = “smelly”), **oner-osus** (*onerous* = “burdensome”), **gener-osus** (*generous*), **lumin-osus** (*luminous*)
- 4th **sinu-osus** (*sinuous*), **sensu-osus** (*sensuous*); cf. **sensualis** > *sensual*
- 5th **speci-osus** (*specious*); cf. **speci-alis** > *special*

The immediate predecessor of the English suffix *-ous* was the Old French *-os*, *-us* (Modern French *-eux*, *-euse*). Because *-ous* became so common an adjective ending in English, it was attached to other Latin derivatives that had never been **-osus** words—words like *aqueous* (L **aqueus**), *various* (L **varius**), *arduous* (L **arduus**) and *tenuous* (L **tenuis**). You can find out a lot about suffixes like *-ous* from a good English dictionary, especially the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Just look up the morpheme under *-ous*.

B. The other type of **-osus** derivative appears in English as an adjective in *-ose*:

E *verbose* (< L **verbosus** < **verbum**) = “full of words”

E *jocose* (< L **jocosus** < **jocus**) = “full of jokes”

E *lachrymose* or *lacrimose* (< L **lacrimosus** < **lacrima**) = “full of tears”¹

Notes

1. This word is traditionally spelled *lachrymose*, but Latin students may prefer the alternative and equally correct form, *lacrimose*, which is based on the original spelling of **lacrimosus**.

§40. The Latin suffix -LENTUS (> E -lent)

The last suffix of this chapter, **-lentus**, is very close in meaning to **-osus**, since it also conveys the meaning “full of.” When this element was added to the base of a Latin noun, it had to be joined by a CONNECTING or LINKING VOWEL, a device about which we’ll hear more later. For the suffix **-lentus**, the linking vowel was usually U or O.

E *virulent* (< L **virulentus** < **virus**) = “full of poison”

E *somnolent* (< L **somnolentus** < **somnus**) = “full of sleep”

E *corpulent* (< L **corpulentus** < **corpus**) = “full of body”

Can you guess the etymological meanings of *violent*, *turbulent*, *opulent*, *fraudulent*, and *flatulent*? What about *nebulous* and *facetious* (§39)?

§41. Summary of Adjective-forming Suffixes

LATIN	>	ENGLISH	LATIN	>	ENGLISH
1. -ALIS	>	<i>-AL</i>	-ARIS	>	<i>-AR (-ARY)</i>
2. -ILIS	>	<i>-ILE (-IL)</i>			
3. -ANUS	>	<i>-AN</i>			
4. -INUS	>	<i>-INE</i>			
5. -ARIUS	>	<i>-ARY (-ARIUM, -ER)</i>			
6. -OSUS	>	<i>-OUS, -OSE</i>			
7. -LENTUS	>	<i>-LENT</i>			

§42. Interesting words

As promised earlier, here is a list of animal adjectives, in Latin and in English:

A LATIN BESTIARY < **bestiarium** (< **bestia**); cf. E *bestial* < **bestialis**

Compound adjectives formed from a noun base and suffix **-īnus**

English meaning: “pertaining to a —” or like a —”

ENGLISH NOUN	LATIN NOUN	BASE	LATIN ADJECTIVE	ENGLISH DERIVATIVE
horse	equus (2)	equ-	equinus	<i>equine</i>
dog	canis (3)	can-	caninus	<i>canine</i>
cat	feles (3)	fel-	felinus	<i>feline</i>
pig	porcus (2)	porc-	porcinus	<i>porcine</i>
sheep	ovis (3)	ov-	ovinus	<i>ovine</i> ¹
ox	bos (3)	bov-	bovinus	<i>bovine</i> ²
bull	taurus (2)	taur-	taurinus	<i>taurine</i>
donkey	asinus (2)	asin-	asininus	<i>asinine</i>
lion	leo (3)	leon-	leoninus	<i>leonine</i>
bear	ursa (1)	urs-	ursinus	<i>ursine</i>
wolf	lupus (2)	lup-	lupinus	<i>lupine</i> ³
fox	vulpes (3)	vulp-	vulpinus	<i>vulpine</i>
eagle	aquila (1)	aquil-	aquilinus	<i>aquiline</i>
snake	serpens (3)	serpent-	serpentinus	<i>serpentine</i> ⁴
elephant	elephas (3)	elephant-	elephantinus	<i>elephantine</i>

If you are not surfeited with these words, see if you can identify the meaning of *caprine*, *hircine*, *corvine*, *cervine*, *leporine*, *piscine*, *murine*, *vespine*, *anserine*, *delphine*, *musteline*, *pavonine*, *hirundine*, and *psittacine*. (You can blame previous students in Greek and Roman Studies 250, who volunteered many of these.) There are still more to be found!⁵

English derivatives from Latin **-arius** or **-arium** can be quite surprising. Could anyone possibly recognize *ewer* (a pitcher) as a doublet for *aquarium*? The Latin root must have been carelessly pronounced in Gaul (cf. **aqua** > *eau*); in Italian, *acqua* is virtually unchanged, E *aquarium* is *acquario*, and *acquaio* refers to the kitchen sink! Once you’ve learned the etymology of *ewer*, you may be able to solve the mystery of *sewer*: it’s from **ex-aquarium**, a place to take water out. These heavily disguised derivatives are the great joys of word-sleuthing. There is nothing disguised about *seminary* (< **seminarium**), but its semantic evolution is remarkable—from

“seed-bed” to school for would-be priests. A *columbarium* is a dove-cote or pigeon-house (< **columba**); the original Latin word **columbarium** could also have this meaning, but more commonly suggested a sepulchre with niches (“pigeonholes”) for funerary urns, a meaning it still carries today. If you are *gregarious* (< L **gregarius**), you want to belong to the flock (**grex**, **greg-is**). If you are *egregious* (< L **e-gregius**), you stand “out from the flock”—not a good thing, apparently, since we talk only about an “egregious blunder,” an “egregious fool,” and an “egregious ass.” (Does an ass have a flock to stand out from?)

A person who has had a “coronary” (< L **coronarius**) has suffered a thrombosis in one of the *coronary* or “crown-like” arteries that join the aorta to the heart (from the Latin 1st declension noun **corona**, “crown”). Therefore English *crown* and *corona* are DOUBLETS, as are *coronary* and *coroner*—originally an officer of the crown. (But don’t describe *crown* and *coroner* as doublets of each other; their source-words, **corona** and **coronarius**, are related but not identical.)

Just as L **onerosus** (“full of burdens” < **onus**, **oner-is**) evolved into E *onerous*, so **ponderosus** (“full of weight” < **pondus**, **ponder-is**) evolved into E *ponderous*. We all know about “ponderous pachyderms.” The original Latin adjective survives in the feminine (*ponderosa*) to describe a species of pine—and to name Ben Cartwright’s ranch, so familiar to insomniacs reduced to watching late-night television reruns.

Ardent feminists will be amused to note the similarity between L **vir** (“man”) and **virus** (“poison”)—totally unrelated nouns, as any male linguist will tell you. English has *virile* (< L **virilis**), “manly,” and *viral* (a recent analogous coinage), “pertaining to a virus.” As we saw in §40, *virulent* (< **virulentus**) means “full of poison.” Strangely enough, classical Latin had another adjectival form, **virosus**, which could mean either “longing after men” or “full of slime.” Maybe this ambiguous little item should be revived.

The English adjectives *facetious* and *jocose* have virtually identical semantic meanings. How do they differ in modern connotation and usage? The two words conveniently illustrate the twin fates of Latin **-osus** derivatives in English.

Notes

1. Don’t confuse *ovine* with *oval* < **ovalis** < **ovum** (“egg”).
2. Although L **bovinus** meant “like an ox,” E *bovine* means also “like a cow.” From L **vacca** (“cow”) we derive the English word *vaccine*, which normally has a different pronunciation and meaning.
3. The flowering plant *lupin(e)* is a DOUBLET, similarly derived from **lupinus**.
4. Possible synonyms for *serpentine* are *colubrine*, *viperine*, and *reptilian*—but not *Draconian*!
5. Some animal adjectives use other Latin suffixes. “Like a monkey” (**simia**) is *simian* (**simianus**). The suffix **-anus** also explains *apian* (< **apis**, “bee”) and *avian* (< **avis**, “bird”). An apiary (< **apiarium**) and an aviary (< **aviarium**) are places for bees and birds, respectively. “Pertaining to a fowl” is **gallinaceous** < **gallinaceus** (**gallina/gallus**). The *columbine* is a pigeon-like flower. The *porcupine* doesn’t belong at all: he is a “thorny pig” (< **porcus** + **spina**).

§43. Word Analysis

Now that we are starting to meet more complex Latin derivatives, we need some conventional way to show our knowledge of their origins and our understanding of their form. Of course, we could write out a full professional etymology, but that would be next to impossible without years of linguistic training. Fortunately, there are rough-and-ready shortcuts that allow us to do the job fairly well, and in very few words. One method that we'll now be using constantly is called word **ANALYSIS**, from the Greek for “breaking up.” In essence, it involves a division of the complex word into its component parts, and an explanation of each element. Here, for example, is how one might **ANALYSE** the English words *glorious*, *capital*, and *asinine*:

<i>glorious</i>	< L <u>gloriosus</u> : noun base <u>glori</u> – (<u>gloria</u> , “fame”) + adj. suffix <u>–osus</u> (“full of”)
<i>capital</i>	< L <u>capitalis</u> : noun base <u>capit</u> – (<u>caput</u> , “head”) + adj. suffix <u>–alis</u> (“pertaining to”)
<i>asinine</i>	< L <u>asininus</u> : noun base <u>asin</u> – (<u>asinus</u> , “donkey”) + adj. suffix <u>–inus</u> (“like a”)

This is only one way of presenting an analysis; there are quite a few acceptable methods, and we will be looking later at some alternatives. Do notice, however, that you should begin with the full and exact Latin etymon (here, gloriosus, capitalis, asininus); you should give both the noun base and the full nominative form; and you should provide etymological meanings of both the base and the suffix. If you have learned your vocabulary assignments and the important suffixes introduced so far, you should be able to perform simple **ANALYSES** without the help of any reference book.

There is one aspect of this procedure that may sometimes bend historical truth, though it shouldn't be allowed to cause you any discomfort. If you were asked to analyse the English word *subliminal*—to take just one example—you might logically assume that it is derived from a Latin form **subliminalis**. Yet this is an adjectival form that never existed in spoken or written Latin, since the modern word sprang from the fertile mind of a nineteenth century German psychologist. Nonetheless, you are still advised to begin the analysis with the source-word subliminalis, since it must at least have been a hypothetical Latin form in the inventor's imagination. And some of these neo-Latin words have actually existed in technical treatises, though they are not listed in dictionaries. Just remember that you are not writing a definitive historical etymology: our type of rough-and-ready word analysis should not be mistaken for scientific lexicography.

§44. Chapter 5: Exercises

1. Identify the absolutely predictable Latin adjective from which each of the following English adjectives is derived (e.g., capital: **capitalis**):

a. <i>radial</i>	_____	d. <i>tabular</i>	_____
b. <i>famous</i>	_____	e. <i>urban</i>	_____
c. <i>senile</i>	_____	f. <i>virulent</i>	_____

2. Using the format given in §43, write out ANALYSES for the following English words:

- a. *popular* _____

- b. *equine* _____

- c. *corporal* _____

3. The ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING of *plumber* (**plumbarius**) is “worker in lead.” Using a dictionary, find the Latin etymon (source-word) and the etymological meaning of (a) *carpenter* and (b) *terrier*.

- a. _____
 Etymon Etymological meaning
- b. _____
 Etymon Etymological meaning

4. The Latin words **calidarium** and **frigidarium** referred to hot (**calidus**) and cold (**frigidus**) rooms in the Roman baths. An English derivative from **calidarium** (through Norman French) is *cauldron* or *caldron*, “a hot place.” What modern trademark cleverly suggests “a cold place”?

5. Identify the Roman deities behind the following English adjectives:

jovial

mercurial

martial

saturnine

venereal

cereal

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 6: Turning Latin Adjectives into Latin Nouns

§45. Noun-forming Suffixes in English

As the title suggests, this chapter is almost exactly the reverse of Chapter 5—but less complicated. There you encountered a wide variety of Latin suffixes that can turn nouns into adjectives. Now you will meet a much smaller number of Latin suffixes that convert adjectives into **ABSTRACT NOUNS**.¹ Again, you will probably find the Latin material easier to understand if you think first how English deals with this problem when Germanic roots and suffixes are involved. How are native English adjectives turned into nouns?

First, let us recall something that we learned about adjectives in Chapter 4. In English, as in Latin and in many other languages, an adjective can be used as a noun without any change of form at all. We saw examples like “the highest *good*” and a “happy *medium*” (§24). Adjectival nouns such as these may refer concretely to people (“the *bad* and the *beautiful*”) or to things (“Money is a necessary *evil*”). No suffix is required to create that kind of noun, which can be described as a simple adjective used substantively. In contrast, we are now looking for words that have been changed in form—so-called “derived” nouns.

What suffixes, then, does the English language use to turn adjectives into nouns? To find out, take a few common Germanic adjectives, such as *good*, *wicked*, *fat*, *short*, *hard*, *flat*, *broad*, *wide*, *long*, *high*, *free*, and *wise*. From this list you will soon identify three noun-forming suffixes, of which the first is by far the most common:

1. **Adjective + suffix -NESS**

good-ness, wicked-ness, fat-ness, short-ness, hard-ness, flat-ness

2. **Adjective + suffix -TH**

bread-th, wid-th, leng-th, heigh-t (originally *high-th*)

3. **Adjective + suffix -DOM**

free-dom, wis-dom

Apart from a few quirks of spelling and pronunciation (*broad* > *breadth*, *wise* > *wisdom*), there doesn’t seem to be anything very difficult or complicated here. Even the meaning of the suffix seems to be identical in every case—“the state or quality of being —”. Fortunately, Latin noun-forming suffixes are just about as easy and straightforward.

Notes

1. Remember that an abstract noun denotes a state or quality. The adjective *good* is a descriptive word, used to modify an English noun (a *good* book, a *good* woman); the abstract noun *goodness* denotes the quality of being good.

§46. The Latin suffix -ITAS (> E -ity); variant -ETAS (> E -ety)

In terms of frequency, this suffix is to Latin noun formation what **-alis** is to Latin adjective formation. The morpheme **-itas** was regularly attached to the base of Latin adjectives to form literally hundreds of abstract nouns, almost all of which, it seems, have survived as English derivatives ending in *-ity*. The historical process is so dependable that you can confidently reconstruct a Latin noun in **-itas** for almost any English word in *-ity*. What is more, you can then remove the **-itas** suffix from the Latin noun to uncover its adjective base. If you can then discern the meaning of that Latin adjective, you will know the ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING of the English word. This type of exercise is very good for building English vocabulary.

We'll begin with a group of ordinary Latin adjectives—some familiar to you, others presented here for the first time. As you see how each one became first a Latin noun and then (many centuries later) an English derivative, there should hardly be any need for comment or explanation:¹

L	sanus (“sound”)	>	sanitas (“soundness”)	>	E	<i>sanity</i>
	clarus (“bright”)	>	claritas (“brightness”)	>		<i>clarity</i>
	dignus (“worthy”)	>	dignitas (“worthiness”)	>		<i>dignity</i>
	vacuus (“empty”)	>	vacuitas (“emptiness”)	>		<i>vacuity</i>
	brevis (“short”)	>	brevitas (“shortness”)	>		<i>brevity</i>
	gravis (“heavy”)	>	gravitas (“heaviness”)	>		<i>gravity</i>

Conversely, then, we can reconstruct the ancestry of almost any English noun that ends in *-ty*, working back to an original Latin adjective and a useful etymological meaning:

E	<i>acerbity</i>	< L noun	acerbitas	< L adj.	acerbus (“bitter”)	? E	<i>acerbity</i> = “bitterness”
	<i>verity</i>	<	veritas	<	verus (“true”)	?	<i>verity</i> = “truth”
	<i>sanctity</i>	<	sanctitas	<	sanctus (“holy”)	?	<i>sanctity</i> = “holiness”
	<i>levity</i>	<	levitas	<	levis (“light”)	?	<i>levity</i> = “lightness”
	<i>maturity</i>	<	maturitas	<	maturus (“ripe”)	?	<i>maturity</i> = “ripeness”

Sometimes the English derivative has been further modified in form because of phonetic factors in its transmission. The noun *charity*, for instance, comes from Latin **caritas** (< **carus**, “dear”); it manifests the now-familiar change from **ca-** to **cha-** that occurred in the Old French period. English *cruelty* is even more transformed, having evolved from Latin **crudelitas** (< **crudelis**, “cruel”). In these cases, the source-word can hardly be predicted without prior knowledge of Latin. But there is nothing surprising about the development of

E *equity* from L **aequitas** (< **aequus**, “level,” “fair”), since the Latin diphthong **ae** is regularly reduced to *e* in English.

Here is an interesting feature of Latin nouns in **-itas**. Just as this suffix can turn a simple adjective into a derived noun (as we have been observing), so can it be added to the base of a *derived* adjective to create a new derived noun. Consider these examples:

L	vita	>	vitalis (base vital-)	>	vital-itas	>	E	<i>vitality</i>
	mors, mort-is	>	mortalis (base mortal-)	>	mortal-itas	>		<i>mortality</i>
	verbum	>	verbosus (base verbos-)	>	verbos-itas	>		<i>verbosity</i>
	urbs, urb-is	>	urbanus (base urban-)	>	urban-itas	>		<i>urbanity</i>
	vir	>	virilis (base viril-)	>	viril-itas	>		<i>virility</i>

This process (noun → adjective → noun) is not uncommon in native English word formation: Germanic *live-li-ness* is structurally parallel to Latinate *vit-al-ity*, *word-i-ness* to *verb-os-ity*, and *man-li-ness* to *vir-il-ity*.²

We saw in Chapter 5 that the adjective suffix **-alis** has a phonetic variant in **-aris**. The noun suffix **-itas** has two phonetic variants. Neither of these is very different from the main type, and both are reflected precisely in their English derivatives:

- If the adjective base ends in **-i-**, the suffix is not **-itas** but **-etas** (> E *-ety*):

L	vari-us (“diverse”)	>	vari-etas	>	E	<i>variety</i>
	pi-us (“dutiful,” “good”)	>	pi-etas	>		<i>piety</i> ³
	propri-us (“one’s own”)	>	propri-etas	>		<i>propriety</i>
	soci-us (“united,” “allied”)	>	soci-etas	>		<i>society</i>
	dubi-us (“doubtful”)	>	dubi-etas	>		<i>dubiety</i>
	sobri-us (“sober”)	>	sobri-etas	>		<i>sobriety</i>

- If the adjective base ends in **-r-** or **-t-**, the derived noun will end in **-tas** (> E *-ty*):

L	liber (“free”)	>	liber-tas	>	E	<i>liberty</i>
	puer (“adult”)	>	puer-tas	>		<i>puberty</i>
	honestus (“honourable”)	>	honestas	>		<i>honesty</i>

Notes

1. The examples given here represent a deliberate oversimplification. There were several important historical steps between, say, L **gravitas** and E *gravity*. The normal progression was Latin **-tatem** (accusative form) > Old French *-tet* > OF *-te* [mod F *-té*] > Middle English *-tie* > Modern English *-ty*.
2. Just because two English words are structural or etymological parallels, they will not necessarily be synonyms. Element for element, the Latin derivative *formality* is closely parallel to the native English word *shapeliness*, but they are not remotely similar in dictionary meaning.
3. The negation of **pious** is **im-pi-us** (“wicked”) > **im-pi-etas** > E *impiety*; similarly, the negation of **proprius** is L **im-propri-us** (“improper”) > **im-propri-etas** > E *impropriety*.

§47. The Latin suffix -ITUDO (> E -itude)

Although **-itudo** is a less productive Latin noun-forming suffix than **-itas**, it has exactly the same function and meaning. There appears to be no logical reason why the Latin language attached **-itas** to some adjectives and **-itudo** to others. You will easily recognize **-itudo** as the source of English nouns that end in *-itude*. Many of these have come directly from Latin, and others through French; a few are modern coinages on the analogy of those older forms. Again, the examples speak for themselves:

L	gratus (“thankful”)	>	gratitudo (“thankfulness”)	>	E	<i>gratitude</i>
	latus (“wide”)	>	latitudo (“width”)	>		<i>latitude</i>
	longus (“long”)	>	longitudo (“length”)	>		<i>longitude</i>
	altus (“high”)	>	altitudo (“height”)	>		<i>altitude</i>
	magnus (“great”)	>	magnitudo (“greatness”)	>		<i>magnitude</i>
	solus (“alone”)	>	solitudo (“loneliness”)	>		<i>solitude</i>
	fortis (“strong”)	>	fortitudo (“strength”)	>		<i>fortitude</i>
	similis (“like”)	>	similitudo (“likeness”)	>		<i>similitude</i>

Sometimes this suffix could be attached to a part of speech other than an adjective. The noun **servus** (“slave”) gave rise to the abstract noun **servitudo** (“slavery”) > E *servitude*. There is an odd-looking Latin adverb **vicissim**, that means “in turn”; this produced the Latin noun **vicissitudo** and the wonderful English word *vicissitude*, which is applied to the alternating turns of human fortune. *Plenitude* is a learned synonym for “fullness,” and is derived regularly from Latin **plenitudo** < **plenus** (“full”). It is also the trademark for a facial cream (to get that full-fed appearance?). In later antiquity, there was a variant noun form **plenitas**, which is the origin of E *plenty* (as modified by French). A declining awareness of Latin in our own day is perhaps rendering obsolete such English words as *rectitude* (“uprightness”), *pulchritude* (“beauty”), and *lassitude* (“weariness”)—though teachers can still be dismissed for *moral turpitude* (“foulness of character”). One polysyllabic Latin derivative is still widely used and understood, however; that is the compound noun *verisimilitude*, from **ver-i-simil-itudo** (“likeness to the truth”).

§48. The Latin suffix -ITIA (> E -ice)

This very small category of abstract nouns contains words formed by attaching the suffix **-itia** to Latin adjectives. Whenever the English derivative has evolved in a normal and regular fashion, it will have an ending in *-ice*. However, there are perhaps as many exceptions to that rule as there are regular examples. Here are three that run true to form:

L	malus (“bad”)	>	malitia (“badness”)	>	E	<i>malice</i>
	justus (“righteous”)	>	justitia (“righteousness”)	>		<i>justice</i>
	avarus (“greedy”)	>	avaritia (“greediness”)	>		<i>avarice</i>

The historical reason for the *-ice* spelling is to be found in the confusion of **-itia** and **-icia** during the late Latin period (cf. §12 and see §14.3.b). Within the French language, Latin nouns that had ended in **-itia** could also evolve into forms in *-esse*. Accordingly, English has *largess(e)* < **largitia** < **largus** (“abundant,” “bountiful”) and *caress* < ***caritia** < **carus** (“dear”). The word *caress* is closely related in form, if not in meaning, to *charity* (§45), since the hypothetical ***caritia** must have been a late Latin variant for **caritas**. But we have entered an exotic realm of historical morphology, and you certainly shouldn’t worry about remembering these unusual forms.

§49. Other Noun-forming Suffixes (-IA, -MONIUM)

In the three previous sections, you have seen the most important ways of deriving Latin nouns from Latin adjectives. Later in the course you will meet other noun-forming suffixes that are added to verb bases. There are two morphemes which Latin uses mainly to turn concrete nouns into abstract nouns, but does occasionally attach to adjective bases. One is the suffix **-IA**, joined to noun bases in **milit-ia** (< **miles**, **milit-is**, “soldier”), **custod-ia** (< **custos**, **custod-is**, “guard”; English *custody*), and **in-somn-ia** (< **somnus**, “sleep”). This morpheme is added to adjective bases in **memor-ia** (< **memor**, “mindful”) and **inert-ia** (< **iners**, **inert-is**, “sluggish”). Another suffix that has affected English is **-MONIUM**, which Latin usually adds (by means of a connecting vowel) to nouns: English *matrimony* and *patrimony* come from **matr-i-monium** and **patr-i-monium**; *testimony* from **test-i-monium** (< **test-is**, “witness”); and *acrimony* from **acr-i-monium** (< **acer**, **acr-is**, an adjective meaning “sharp”). *Alimony* and *parsimony* go back to Latin verb bases that mean “nurture” and “scrimp,” respectively. From the not-so-private life of actor Lee Marvin, English acquired the amusing BLEND¹ *palimony*. Needless to say, Latin had no “palimonium.”²

Notes

1. A BLEND, known also as a PORTMANTEAU word, runs two other words into a single combined form—here, *pal* + *alimony*; cf. *smoke* + *fog* = *smog*. It was Lewis Carroll, a master of the art, who coined the term “portmanteau” in *Through the Looking-Glass* (where Humpty Dumpty is explaining to Alice the strange words in “Jabberwocky.”)
2. Don’t try to force *pandemonium* into the **-monium** category. Its Miltonic source is a Greek compound noun that will be seen later. (And it doesn’t mean “a place for pandas”!)

§50. Interesting Words

Let's warm up with some derivatives of the **-tas** family. Latin has at least three adjectives that mean “empty”: **vacuus**, **vanus**, and **inanis** (E *vacuous*, *vain*, and *inane*). All three formed abstract nouns in **-itas**: **vacuitas**, **vanitas**, and **inanitas**. *Vacuity* and *inanity* are still close in meaning today, but *vanity* has acquired a specialized meaning associated with pride.

From the noun **animus** (“mind,” “spirit,” “passion”), Latin derived the adjective **animosus** (“full of passion”), and from **animosus** came **animositas** (E *animosity*). *Unanimous* and *magnanimous* derive from the Latin compound adjectives **un-animus** (“of one mind”) and **magn-animus** (“of great spirit”); *unanimity* and *magnanimity* are regular derivatives of **un-anim-itas** and **magn-anim-itas**. “Even-mindedness” is *equanimity*, from **aequ-anim-itas**.

The Latin language developed wonderful abstract nouns from adjectives of size and number. Just as **magnus** produced **magnitudo** (“greatness”), so **multus** yielded **multitudo** (“many-ness”).¹ As a derivative of **quantus** (“how big?”), **quantitas** should mean “how-big-ness”; but in Latin it came to suggest “how-many-ness,” and that meaning endured. What would English do without the words *quantity* and *quality*? It was the Roman statesman and writer Cicero who coined **qualitas** (“what’s-it-like-ness”), from the adjective **qualis** (“of what kind?”), to translate the Greek philosophical word ποιότης. To the chagrin of purists, many people today use *quality* as an adjective. If you’re going to enjoy a “quality experience,” you’d better make your peace with Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Though English (influenced by French) has the quasi-Latin adjective forms *maternal*, *paternal*, and *fraternal*, Latin in fact added the otherwise rare morpheme **-nus** to nouns of family relationship: **mater** > **maternus**, **pater** > **paternus**, and **frater** > **fraternus**. These adjectives led to the derived nouns **matern-itas**, **patern-itas**, and **fratern-itas**. In form, *mater-n-ity* corresponds to the native English *mother-li-ness*, whereas *matri-mony* more closely matches *mother-hood*. A “paternity suit” is, in a manner of speaking, about a motherhood issue—without benefit of matrimony. The brotherly adjective **fraternus** had no sisterly counterpart in Latin; did the Romans have something against sisters? In later Latin there was a noun **sororitas**, origin of E *sorority* (= “sisterhood”).

The rallying cry of the French Revolution was “Liberté, égalité, fraternité”—“Freedom, equality, and brotherhood.” E *equality* has its source in **aequus** > **aequ-alis** > **aequal-itas**, the same etymology as Fr. *égalité*!. That French form of the noun has no direct English derivative, though we have borrowed the French *egalit-arian*.

Notes

1. The University of Victoria motto, **Multitudo sapientium sanitas orbis**, means “A multitude of the wise is the health of the world.” It is a quotation from the Biblical Apocrypha (Wisdom of Solomon).

§51. Chapter 6: Exercises

1. By using one of the suffixes **-(I)TAS**, **-ITUDO**, or **-ITIA**, form a Latin abstract noun from each of the following Latin adjectives, and then show the English noun derivative:

<i>Latin adjective</i>	<i>Latin noun</i>	<i>English noun</i>
e.g. dignus (worthy)	dignitas	<i>dignity</i> (also <i>dainty</i>)
a. severus (stern)	_____	_____
b. beatus (blessed)	_____	_____
c. avarus (greedy)	_____	_____
d. socius (allied)	_____	_____
e. integer (whole)	_____	_____
f. aptus (fit)	_____	_____

2. The following English abstract nouns are of Germanic origin; can you think of parallel English nouns (semantic and structural counterparts) derived from Latin?

<i>Nouns in -(I)TY (< -(I)TAS)</i>	<i>Nouns in -ITUDE (< -ITUDO)</i>
a. freedom _____	f. height _____
b. wordiness _____	g. breadth _____
c. stillness _____	h. strength _____
d. darkness _____	i. loneliness _____
e. ripeness _____	j. greatness _____

3. Look up the etymology of the English word *city*, and write down the main stages in its evolution from the original Latin root:

4. The following English nouns have been disguised during their transmission through French. Find the Latin abstract noun and Latin adjective from which each is derived:

		<i>Latin Abstract Noun</i>		<i>Latin Adjective</i>	<i>(meaning)</i>
a.	<	<i>poverty</i>		<	
b.	<	<i>bounty</i>		<	
c.	<	<i>dainty</i>		<	
d.	<	<i>frailty</i>		<	

5. Give a schematic analysis for each of the following words:

e.g.	<i>vitality</i>	< L <u>vitalitas</u> : noun base <u>vit-</u> (<u>vita</u> , “life”) + adj. suffix <u>-alis</u> (“pertaining to”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>
a.	<i>femininity</i>	
b.	<i>originality</i>	
c.	<i>longitude</i>	
d.	<i>luminosity</i>	
e.	<i>acrimonious</i>	
f.	<i>spirituality</i>	

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 7: Latin Diminutives

§52. What is a Diminutive?

Standard dictionaries will tell you simply that a DIMINUTIVE is a word denoting something small or little—true enough, as far as it goes. Most languages in the Indo-European family have suffixes that “diminish” a word so as to create a smaller or younger version of that word. In English, a little book is a *booklet*, a tiny duck is a *duckling*, and a small dog is a *doggy* or *doggie*.¹ These native English suffixes seem particularly well suited to the farmyard, where we may find a *piglet*, a *lambkin*, or a *gosling*. Quite frequently such expressions become terms of endearment, without referring in any way to physical size: your *poochie* or your *honeybunny* could be a hulking lover of six-foot-five. An apparently sane man or woman may snuggle up to an enormous old hound, cooing fatuously, “*Izzums an ittums-bittums doggie-woggie?*” Curiously enough, diminutives can also express disparagement, conveying more than a hint of a sneer. The King of Tonga, Taufa’ahau Tupou IV, is a man of gargantuan proportions, who tips the scales at almost a quarter ton; still, for all his bulk, one might describe him as a *princeling*. (That would be bad manners, but good usage.) Clearly, then, diminutives can denote more than smallness, though smallness is certainly one aspect of their message.

The term DIMINUTIVE originated with the ancient Roman grammarians, who called a “diminishing” word of this sort a **deminutivum**. Greek scholars of an earlier period had used a rather different term, a word that comes into English as HYPOCORISTIC. This exotic label was derived from a Greek verb that meant “to address as a child,” or “to call a lover by a pet-name.” Therefore baby-talk and childish or amatory nicknames can be properly (if pedantically) described as HYPOCORISTIC. Nicknames that use a standard suffix—*Tommy* or *Willie* or *Johnny*—are also true diminutives. The Greek term helps to remind us that many diminutives are more appropriate to the nursery or the bedroom than to the barnyard. In discussing Latin examples, L. R. Palmer states the case with precision and economy:

Such formations do not, of course, merely denote smallness . . . , but, with the added connotations ‘dear little’, ‘poor little’ and the like, express a whole range of emotional attitudes—endearment, playfulness, jocularly, familiarity, and contempt.²

Unfortunately, the English language is not richly supplied with native Germanic diminutives, though modern German has a good repertoire of such words. The Scots dialect fares much better than Standard English, as almost any poem of Robert Burns will reveal. Of all modern European languages, Italian is the most expressive in this regard, for it is able to create double and even triple diminutives by employing a whole variety of suffixes. Probably the Italians inherited this gift from the ancient Romans, whose Latin language was extraordinarily fertile

in its capacity to diminish words. Many Latin diminutives have left their mark on English, though we may no longer recognize them all as “little” words. In this short *chapter* (< OF *chapitre* < L **capitulum**, “little head”), we’ll see the basic system by which Latin created diminutive forms, and we’ll acquire some ability to recognize their English derivatives. We won’t explore the subject exhaustively, since the aim for this topic is more general awareness than full linguistic control.

Notes

1. The -y spelling is English in origin, whereas the -ie is Scottish. The Scots dialect is particularly rich in words of this type; *laddie* and *lassie* are the most conspicuous and familiar examples.
2. *The Latin Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 77.

§53. The Regular Latin Diminutive Suffixes -ULUS and -CULUS

The standard rule for Latin diminutives is quite straightforward. For nouns of the first or second declension, the regular diminutive suffix is **-ulus** (M), **-ula** (F), or **-ulum** (N), depending upon the gender of the original noun; for words of the third, fourth, or fifth declensions, the suffix is **-culus**, **-cula**, **-culum**. As the suffix will suggest, the gender of the original noun is maintained in the gender of its diminutive.

Let's first consider the **-ulus -ula -ulum** type. If we take the Latin 1st declension feminine noun **forma** ("shape," "form"), we discover that its diminutive is **form-** (word base) + **-ula** (suffix) = **formula** ("little shape," "little form"). It was as simple as that, in Latin. From the English vantage point, it's often slightly harder, because there aren't many Latin diminutives that have come into English so totally unchanged as *formula*. Let's try the 2nd declension masculine noun **modus** ("measure," "manner"); a "little measure" is a **mod-ulus**, the transparent origin of the English word *module*. In the same fashion, Latin **nodus** ("knot," "node") produced the diminutive **nod-ulus** ("little knot"), and the English derivative *nodule*. To an ancient Roman, the word **circus** meant the great race-course in the city, the Circus Maximus; a "little circus" is a **circ-ulus**, only slightly disguised as English *circle*. For a 2nd declension neuter example we can choose **granum**, "a [kernel of] grain." Its predictable diminutive was **gran-ulum**, English *granule*.

What about the **-culus -cula -culum** suffix of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th declensions? Joined to the original word with or without the connecting vowel **-i-**, it presents no serious problems. If you diminish **pars**, **part-is**, F ("part"), you get **part-i-cula** ("little part"), English *particle*. From the 4th declension noun **artus**, M ("joint") comes the diminutive **art-i-culus** ("little joint"), English *article*.¹ For 3rd declension neuter nouns like **corpus** or **opus**, the suffix appears added to the nominative form, producing the diminutives **corpusculum** (E *corpuscle*), "a little body," and **opusculum** (E *opuscule*), "a small or trifling work." The most startling etymology, no doubt, is **mus-culus** (E *muscle*), "a little mouse." *Muscle* and *corpuscle* are just two of perhaps a hundred or more diminutives that occur in the language of anatomy and medicine.

Notes

1. In its root origins, **artus**, M ("joint") was related to **ars**, **artis**, F ("skill," "art"). Latin might conceivably have developed a noun ***artacula**, "little art"; but there is no evidence of such a word.

§54. The Variant Latin Diminutive Suffixes -OLUS and -ELLUS

For reasons of historical phonetics, a Latin diminutive word sometimes assumed a form that used a suffix other than the standard **-ulus** or **-culus**. These variants are too complicated to be explained here in full, but they can be summarized in general terms. You are advised to read this section quickly, and not worry about its technical content.

If the original noun had a base ending in the vowel **-e-**, **-i-**, or **-u-**, the suffix was not **-ulus**, but **-olus**. Therefore the diminutive of **are-a** was **are-ola**, and *areola* or *areole* is today an anatomical term that denotes the “little area” of colour around the nipple. If a Latin sword is a **gladi-us**, a little sword is a **gladi-olus**. (Many plants and flowers have been named on the basis of such vivid descriptive imagery.) Though classical Latin lacked a diminutive form of **vacu-um**, the biological word *vacuole* (from French) was correctly formed to mean “a little empty space.”

The **-ellus** variant is trickier, since it can have two very different explanations:

- Some nouns with **-r-** stems, like **liber** (“book”), underwent a series of phonetic changes that led to diminutive forms like **libellus** (“little book”);¹ and because little books can often be abusive or scurrilous, that form became the origin of our word *libel*. The same phonetic process lies behind the English words *castle* (L **castrum**, “fort” > **castellum**), *scalpel* (L **scalprum**, “knife” > **scalpellum**), and *cerebellum* (L **cerebrum**, “brain” > **cerebellum**).
- Especially in the language of the common people (“Vulgar Latin”), there was a tendency to take familiar diminutive words and diminish their form and meaning even further. This produced a group of double diminutives, which we can perhaps remember as the “itty-bitty” category. Here is an easy example. The basic Latin word for “pig” was the 2nd declension noun **porcus**; there was a corresponding 1st declension noun **porca** (“sow”). By the principle we met in §52, a “piglet” became **porc-ulus**, and a “she-piglet” (Miss Piggy?) was **porc-ula**. In popular speech, however, Roman farmers preferred the double diminutive **porc-ellus**—an “itty-bitty” word that corresponds roughly to English “piggy-wig.”² What is interesting about all this is the fact that **porcellus** became the standard late Latin word for “pig,” appearing in such Romance derivatives as Italian *porcello* and French *porceau*. Similarly we find **vitellus** (< **vitulus**, “calf”), source of It. *vitello*, Fr. *veau*, and E *veal*; and **agnellus** (< **agnus**, “lamb”), source of It. *agnello* and Fr. *agneau*. Any student of Romance linguistics

must come to terms with this Latin double diminutive, since it plays a rather important role in the vocabulary of French, Italian, and Spanish.

Notes

1. Here is the explanation, for those who are linguistically inclined. The diminutive suffix **-ulus** was originally a morpheme that can be shown as **-(ə)lo-s**; by the principles of syncope, samprasāraṇa, and assimilation, there occurred the development ***libr-əlo-s > *libr̥los > *liberlos > libellus**. There were parallel developments that led to a few diminutive forms in **-illus** (**-a, -um**) or **-ollus** (**-a, -um**).
2. The phonetic development was ***pork-os > *pork-əlo-s > *pork-əl-əlo-s > porcellus**.

§55. Diminutive Adjective Derivatives in -ARIS

If you think back to Chapter 5 (Turning Latin Nouns into Latin Adjectives), you will recall that any noun-base ending in L used the adjectival suffix **-aris**, rather than **-alis** (§35). As we have seen, every diminutive noun in Latin has a base that ends in L. Accordingly, if one wishes to derive a Latin adjective from a Latin diminutive, it will always end in **-aris**, and its English derivative will regularly end in *-ar*. These examples should make that situation clear:

L	circus	> L dimin. noun	circ-ulus	> L adj.	circul-aris	> E adj.	<i>circular</i>
	forma		form-ula		formul-aris		<i>formular</i>
	modus		mod-ulus		modul-aris		<i>modular</i>
	granum		gran-ulum		granul-aris		<i>granular</i>
	pars, part-is		part-i-cula		particul-aris		<i>particular</i>
	mus		mus-culus		muscul-aris		<i>muscular</i>

Notice that the English adjective derivatives *circular*, *particular*, and *muscular* reflect the original Latin source-words more precisely than their corresponding noun derivatives, *circle*, *particle*, and *muscle*.

§56. Interesting Words

Depending on your taste, you may prefer Latin derivatives like *formula*, which have remained pure and pristine, or others like *libel* and *veal*, which have been modified or wholly transformed. An example of the former group is *calculus*, “small stone,” “pebble” (< **calx**, **calc-is**, “[lime-]stone,” a word we met in §16 as the source of E *chalk*). *Calculus* is not only a branch of mathematics, pioneered by Sir Isaac Newton; the word is also applied in medicine to a kidney- or a bladder-stone. In a later chapter, we’ll see exactly how the words *calculate* and *calculation* came into being. Another pure Latin word in English is *uvula*, that “little grape-cluster” that hangs down at the back of your mouth, to help you gargle and pronounce your French *r*’s. Have you looked at your fingernails recently? See if you can find your *cuticle* (L **cuticula**, “little skin”) and *lunula* (L **lunula**, “little moon”). The word *molecule* is from **molecula**, a modern Latin diminutive of **moles**, “mass.” An *ovule*, “little egg” (L **ovulum** < **ovum**), gives rise to *ovular* and *ovulate*.

The neuter noun **vas** (“vessel”) appears in English as *vase* and *vas*—the *vas deferens* is the sperm duct from the testicles.¹ A “little vessel” was a **vasculum**, a word still used by botanists for the small tin box in which plants are collected. More familiar, however, is the adjectival derivative *vascular* (L **vascularis**), pertaining to the blood vessels.

Sometimes English may perfectly reflect a Latin diminutive adjective, but show no trace of the diminished noun from which it stems. Latin **jocus** (**iocus**) is the source of English *joke*. We make no direct use of its diminutive **joculus**, but we have adopted the derived adjective **jocularis** as English *jocular*, “in the manner of a little joke.”² Another example is *jugular*, L **jugularis**, “pertaining to the collarbone” (**jugulum** < **jugum**, “yoke”). Actually, **jugulum** is the old Latin word for the collarbone; today we call it the *clavicle* (L **clavicula**, “little key”).

There is probably a weird link between the English words *oral* and *oscillate*, though the Latin etymology is not certain. The regularly formed diminutive of **os**, **oris** (N.) was **osculum**, a “little mouth” that carried the special meaning of a “kiss.” The English words *osculate* and *osculation* refer to kissing, usually with pedantic humour. Latin also had an itty-bitty form **oscillum**, a double diminutive that was applied to a tiny mask or little face of Bacchus that was hung from a tree and allowed to swing back and forth in the breeze. This is the likely source of the Latin HOMOGRAPH **oscillum**, which denoted a more general kind of swing. From this curious origin arose the English words *oscillate* and *oscillation*, descriptive of actions that swing back and forth.

A *fascicle* or *fascicule* (both forms exist in English) is a “little bundle” (< L **fascis**)—for example, an unbound segment of a large book. In ancient Rome, the plural **fascēs** denoted the bundle of rods that symbolized consular power. In 20th century Italy, that symbolism was revived, and gave rise to the political label *Fascist*.

If you prefer the transformed and disguised kind of derivatives, English can roll out a fine supply. That four-letter word *roll* (both verb and noun) conceals the Latin diminutive **rotula**, “little wheel” (**rota**). A doublet for *module* (< L **modulus**) is *mould* (US *mold*), in the sense of “little measure”; the mouldy kind of *mould* is an entirely different word. Your *uncle* is descended from Latin **avunculus**, literally a “little grandfather” (**avus**); if he’s kind and jolly, like all good uncles, we’ll describe him as *avuncular*. A *carbuncle* is an unrelated little piece of coal (**carbo**)—and one guaranteed cause of a sore foot. From the Latin adjective **cavus** (“hollow”) comes **cavea** (“cage,” “coop”); a “little cage” is a ***caveola**, source of our word *jail* (which the British still spell as *gaol*, a form that is slightly closer to the Latin). A *seal* (the kind that you affix to a document) is derived from **sigillum**, the diminutive of **signum** (“sign,” “seal,” etc.).

There are two English homonyms, *buccal* and *buckle*, which are both derived from the same noun, though they are not exact doublets. **Bucca** was the classical Latin word for the human cheek, though it wandered chinward to become the mouth in French (*bouche*) and Italian (*bocca*). One can predict the adjective form **buccalis**, “pertaining to the cheek”; its English derivative, *buccal*, is a common word in dentistry, applied to the part of the tooth that is nearest the cheek (as opposed to *lingual*, on the side of the tongue). The medieval Latin diminutive **buccula** denoted the “cheek-strap” of the helmet and the boss of a shield; it was not too obscure a progression for the word to become generalized as any type of *buckle*.

If your appetite for Latin diminutives is undiminished, you can look up some of the following: *bottle*, *bugle*, *chapel*, *charter*, *model*, *novel*, *panel*, *pommel*, *pupil* (two kinds), *scruple*, *trestle*, and *vanilla*. The etymology of that last word may make you blush. If you are a French scholar, look up *soleil*, *chapeau*, *oiseau*, *abeille*, *oreille*, and *genou*.

Let us end with a quiet note of warning. Just when you think that you can spot a Latin “little word” at ten paces, you will learn that there is a deceptively similar group of nouns derived from verbs. In a later chapter we’ll meet such English words as *curriculum*, *vestibule*, *cubicle*, *vehicle*, *miracle*, *oracle*, *obstacle*, and *spectacle*—with not a diminutive in the bunch. Language study wouldn’t be any fun if it were too easy.

Notes

1. A *testicle* (L **testiculus**) is a “little witness” (< **testis**), proof of one’s virility. Without the diminutive suffix, **testis** had the same anatomical meaning; the comic poet Plautus puns on the double force of **testis**, “witness” and “sexual witness.” The English word *testes* is a 3rd declension Latin plural.
2. The word *juggler* was derived ultimately from **joculator**, “a person who does funny little things.” The Latin word is an agent noun from a denominative verb—a form explained in Chapter 11, §76.

Chapter 8: Latin Prefixes

§57. An Introduction to Prefixes

In the last three chapters, we have been learning how the Latin language could add SUFFIXES to its stock of nouns and adjectives in order to expand and enrich its vocabulary. Now it is time to examine the repertoire of Latin **PREFIXES**—those morphemes that are added to the beginning of words in order to alter their meaning. There are about twenty-five common prefixes in Latin, some of which are used almost exclusively with verb bases. Because you have not yet been introduced to the Latin verb, those particular prefixes may be hard to illustrate at this stage of the course. Experience suggests, however, that it is useful to present the general topic at this point, since a knowledge of prefixes will greatly facilitate the learning of Latin verb vocabulary.

Most of the common Latin prefixes had an independent existence as Latin prepositions. For example, you will know the Latin words for “before” and “after”—**ante** and **post**—from such phrases as *ante meridiem* (A.M., “before noon”), *post meridiem* (P.M., “after noon”), or *post mortem* (“after death”). Although they work as prepositions in those phrases, **ante** and **post** can also be attached directly to certain Latin words as prefixes, leading to such English derivatives as *antecedent* (“going before”), *antediluvian* (“before the flood”), *postpone* (“place after”), and *postscript* (“written after”). Again, **super** and **sub** were Latin prepositions of place that meant “over” (or “above”) and “under” (or “below”); as prefixes, they survive in the English words *supersede* (“sit above”) and *submarine* (“under the sea”). It is important to realize that if you know the meaning of a Latin prefix in Latin, you will almost certainly be able to observe that meaning at work in any English derivative that contains the prefix. There is one complication that makes the process just a little harder: in English derivatives, as in the original Latin words, some prefixes are occasionally disguised in form because of a phonetic process known as **ASSIMILATION**. We shall be examining that phenomenon as we *proceed* (“go forward”).

Before we attack a whole battery of Latin prefixes, let us become familiar with two of the most important of them, using straightforward English illustrations. We’ll start with **in-** and **con-**, and then move on to prefixes of place, which include **super** and **sub**.

One very common Latin prefix, which we have already seen in passing, was the negative morpheme **in-**, which corresponds with and is cognate with the Germanic prefix *un-*. Like *un-*, Latin **in-** cannot stand alone as an independent word, but is extremely useful when attached to other forms—adjectives, in particular—to negate their meaning.¹ Consider two synonymous Latin adjectives meaning “strong”: **firmus** and **validus** (*firm* and *valid*). The negative prefix creates two Latin adjectives meaning “weak”: **infirmus** and **invalidus** (*infirm* and *invalid*). Every mature speaker of English is surely aware of the negative force of this morpheme, but only the student of Latin is likely to realize how systematically it is used in derivative vocabulary. (As a rule, English prefers *in-* with

Latin word bases and *un-* with Germanic, though HYBRID forms like *unfamiliar* are not at all *uncommon*.) The principle of ASSIMILATION can be observed when **in-** is placed before certain consonants. In Latin, as in any language, the sequence of sounds **inp-** will inevitably change to **imp-**, because of the position of the human teeth and lips. Thus the negative of **pious** (E *pious*) is **impius** (E *impious*). By a full assimilation of consonants, ***in-legalis** became **illegalis** (E *illegal* = unlawful); ***in-mortalis** became **immortalis** (E *immortal* = undying); and ***in-regularis** became **irregularis** (E *irregular* = unruly; see §60). One should not learn the prefix as **in-** or **im-** or **il-** or **ir-**; it is much better to remember it as **in-**, and be prepared to cope with various forms of assimilation. A different type of phonetic change is apparent in pairs such as **amicus** (friendly) and **inimicus** (unfriendly; > E *enemy*); here the pronunciation and spelling of the word base was affected by the addition of the prefix. Another example of this type is **aptus** (“fit,” “proper”) and **ineptus** (“unfit,” “silly”).²

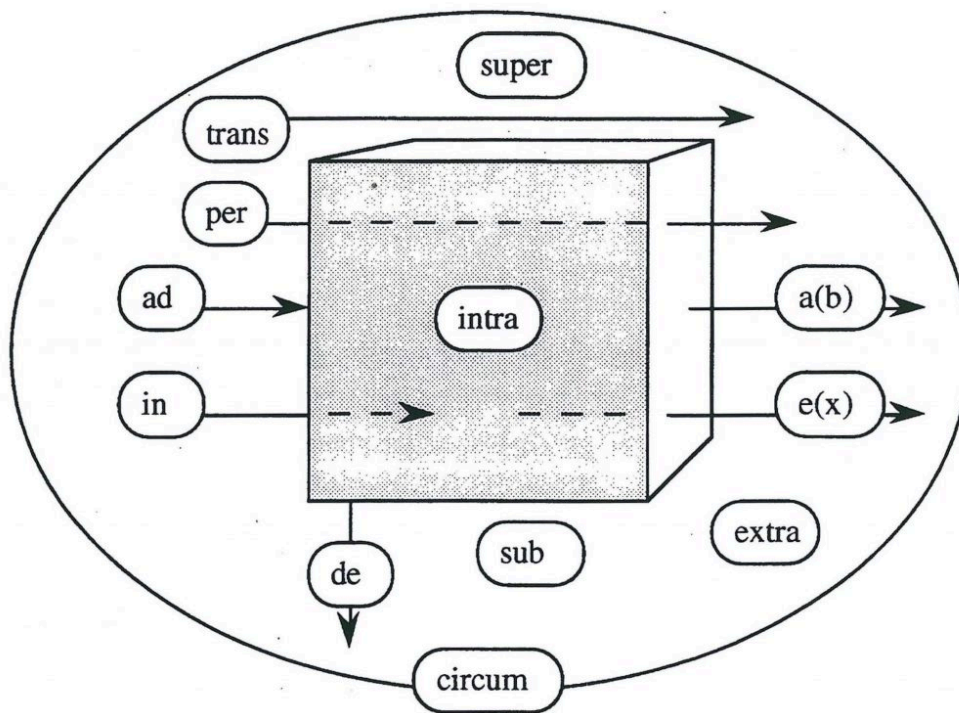
Another very common prefix was **con-** (“with,” “together with”), a combining form of the preposition **cum**. It appears in the Latin noun **con-cord-ia** (E *concord*), “sharing your heart with others,” and the adjective **con-tempor-aneus** (E *contemporaneous*), “together in time.” There are hundreds of English words that contain this Latin prefix, which sometimes appears as *co-*, and which may be changed by assimilation to forms like *com-*, *col-*, and *cor-*. You may already be aware that *cooperation* and *collaboration* both mean “working together,” but you probably didn’t realize that *company* and *companion* originally denoted the sharing of bread (**panis**). People who are *companionable* and *gregarious* (§42) may feel the urge to *congregate* (“flock together”).

Notes

1. The standard independent negative in Latin is **non**, which is usually placed before a verb. Although we have adopted *non-* as an English prefix, it never had that function in the Latin language.
2. In English, the adjectives *apt* and *inept* are not generally recognized as opposites; in fact, people will ask why the word “ept” does not exist. By a back-formation, English developed the adjective *inapt* to serve as the antonym of *apt*.

§58. Prefixes Denoting Place

Many Latin prefixes are derived from prepositions or adverbs that express spatial concepts. A similar principle can be seen at work in Germanic combinations like *intake*, *outlet*, *undermine*, and *overthrow*. If one can visualize the images that these prefixes convey, it is not necessary to memorize their meanings. The following schematic chart may provide some sense of the semantic picture. The shaded cube can be regarded as the representation of any space, affected by the various prefixes in the manner shown.



Just as **super-** and **sub-** can be viewed as a pair of semantic opposites, so can **ad-** (“to” or “toward”) be regarded as the opposite of **a(b)-** (“away,” “away from”). **Ad-**, which we won’t really be able to appreciate until we have some learned some verb vocabulary, has a bewildering tendency to assimilate with almost every consonant of the alphabet. It is present in the English words *accept*, *affect*, *aggression*, *alleviate*, *announce*, *apprehend*, *acquire*, *arrogant*, *attract*—and *assimilate* itself, which derives from **ad-** and **similis** (“liken toward”). Fortunately, **ab-** is much less prone to disguise, though it will appear sometimes in English as *a-* (*a-verse*) or *abs-* (*abs-tract*).

E- or **ex-** (“out,” “out of”), very common both in Latin and in English derivatives, is an easy prefix to recognize and remember. *Eject* is “throw out”; *expel* is “drive out.” In §42 we met *egregious* (L **e-greg-ius**), “standing out from the flock.” In classical Latin, **de-** meant “down (from)”;¹ the etymological meaning of *descend* is “climb down.” However, it could also suggest “off” or “away,” as in *deter*, “frighten off,” and *devious* (L **de-vi-us**), “going off the road.”

Although they may perhaps overlap slightly in meaning, **per-** (“through”) and **trans-** (“across”) are quite straightforward. A *perennial* flower blooms “through the years,” whereas a *transvestite* “dresses across.”¹ If a substance is *impervious* (L **im-per-vi-us**), it does not allow a way through. In addition to its spatial force, the prefix **per-** can also mean “thoroughly” (*perfervid*, *pellucid*); and occasionally it carries the strange meaning of “to the bad,” as in *pervert*, *perjure*, *perfidy*, *perfidious*, *perish*, and *perdition*.

The form **circum-** (“around”) may be the easiest of all Latin prefixes. Even a word as learned and polysyllabic as *circumnavigate* can be understood by young children, since the force of the prefix is so obvious. Still, we’ll find that **circum-** has produced some very interesting and unusual English derivatives. It is related to the Latin noun **circus**, and to the adverb **circa**, which appears in English dating formulas (c. 1950 or ca. 1950 = “around” 1950).

By now you have surely noticed the alarming fact that there are two separate Latin prefix spelled **in-**. Earlier we saw the negative form, which is actually less common in Latin than an identical morpheme with the very different English meaning of “in” or “into.” In conjunction with verb bases, **in-** will usually have this spatial force; thus *infer* and *import* both mean “bring in.” You must stay on guard to avoid being tricked by the two different meanings of **in-**. Sometimes English is downright mean, as in the case of *flammable* and *inflammable*, which are exact synonyms. If you want to say that something will not burn, you must call it *non-flammable*—though there is Christmas tinsel on sale in Victoria which describes itself, with admirable linguistic panache, as *inflammable*.

Notes

1. The word *travesty* is derived from a form of entertainment in which men dressed as women.

§59. A Summary of Latin Prefixes

The time has come to present a summary of the most common Latin prefixes, including several that have not yet been mentioned. The table on the next page is intended mainly for future reference, since Latin prefixes are most closely associated with verb vocabulary. You should learn to recognize them in a general fashion now; their use will become much clearer as you work through the chapters that follow.

LATIN PREFIX	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	Intensive? ¹	Altered form ²
a- ab- abs-	(away) from		
ad-	to, toward	yes	
ante-	before		
circum-	around		
con- co-	with, together	yes	
contra-	against		counter-
de-	down; off, away	yes	
di- dis-	apart, asunder, in two		
e- ex-	out (of)	yes	s-
extra-	outside		
in-	in(to), against; not		en-, em-
inter-	between, among		
intra- intro-	within, inside		
ob-	against, face-to-face	yes	
per-	through; to the bad	yes	
post-	after		
prae-	before, ahead; surpassing		pre-
pro-	before; forward		pur-
re- red-	back, again	yes	
retro-	back(ward)		
se-	apart		
sub-	under		
super-	over, above		sur-
trans-	across		

It may be helpful to comment on a few of the more important Latin prefixes not yet discussed. One of these is **prae-** (“before,” “ahead”), which always assumes the English form of *pre-*, as in the word *prefix* itself. In Latin, **prae-** is a close synonym of **ante-**, meaning “before” either in time or in place. When combined with the noun **via**, it provides the source of the English adjective *previous* (L **prae-vi-us**, “ahead on the road”).

Another common form is **ob-** (“against”), a prefix that suggests a collision course: if something is *obvious* (L **ob-vi-us**), it is on the road directly in front of you. Rather different in meaning is **contra-**; though it also means “against,” it suggests a deliberate opposition of will or purpose. Watch out for assimilation in the case of **ob-**: we have just met it in the word *opposition*, and we’ll see it also in words like *occur* and *offer*.

Notes

1. The Latin prefixes identified in this column can at times merely intensify or strengthen the meaning of a verb. If a prefix has this INTENSIVE force, its customary meaning will not likely be apparent.
2. This column shows the altered form that some prefixes may take after transmission through French.

§60. Interesting Words

Two Latin synonyms were **norma** (“pattern,” “rule”; > E *norm*) and **regula** (“wooden ruler,” “rule”; > E *rule*). “Departing from the rule” is *abnormal* (**ab-norm-alis**); “not according to rule” is *irregular* (**ir-regul-aris**). Both words are entirely *regular* Latin adjectives. Why is it quite *normal* for *irregular* to begin in *ir-* and end in *-ar*?

If you stand “outside your rank,” you can be described as *extraordinary* (**extra-ordin-arius**). However, if you are merely “over the number,” then you are a *supernumerary* (**super-numer-arius**). Other derivatives of **super-** are *superficial* (**superficialis**) and *supercilious* (**superciliosus**). The first comes from the Latin noun **superficies** (**super** + **facies**, “over the face,” “surface”¹); the second is from **supercilium**, “eyebrow” (**super** + **cilium**, “over the eyelid”). A *supercilious* sneer should be full of eyebrows!

Remember that the Latin source for English *pre-* is always **prae-**. In §35, we met the word *preliminary* (**prae-limin-aris**, “before the threshold”), where **prae-** is joined to the noun **limen**. The prefix is combined with an adjective in *premature* (**prae-maturus**, “ripe ahead of time.”)

Since *mundane* (L **mundanus**) means “pertaining to the world” (L **mundus**), *extramundane* is an old English word meaning “outside the world,” “not of this world.” Today it has been displaced by *extraterrestrial*, a modern formation based upon the Latin adjective **terrestris** (“earthly”). Another space-age word of excellent Latinity is *interstellar* (L **interstellaris**), “between [among] the stars.” Don’t confuse **inter-** and **intra-**. Unlike *intercollegiate* sport, *intramural* athletics are kept “within the walls.” Can you analyse the English word *intermediary*?

Do realize that there are other Latin prefixes not listed in §59. A synonym of **sub-** is **infra-** (“below,” “beneath”), occurring in the hybrid *infrared* and in the colloquial *infra dig* (L **infra dignitatem**, “beneath one’s dignity”). Partially synonymous with **super-** are **ultra-** and **praeter-**, both of which mean “beyond.” *Ultraviolet* rays are beyond violet in the spectrum; *praeternatural* events lie beyond the natural.

Notes

1. The word *superficies* (pronounced “super-FISH-eez”) exists also in English; it is a doublet of *surface*.

Chapter 9: The Latin Verb System

§61. What is a Verb?

In very general terms, we can define a verb as “an action word”—provided that it is the grammatical predicate of the sentence. For example, *run* is a verb in the sentence, “Your dogs *run* fast”; but it is a noun in the sentence, “Your dogs had a quick *run*.” Of course, a verb may also express a state, such as “she *is*,” “we *became*,” or “they *seem*.” By and large, however, it is the concept of action that is most characteristic: *eat, drink, bring, make, stand, walk, fall, look*. In English, verbs and nouns are often identical in form, and identifying parts of speech can be quite tricky. In Latin, verbs are very clearly delineated. Latin verb roots may be turned into nouns or adjectives by means of various morphemes, but when a verb is acting as a verb it cannot be mistaken for another part of speech.

It is a daunting task to learn the entire Latin verb system, with its complex variations of person, number, tense, mood, and voice. We must remember, however, that our sole purpose is to understand how Latin came to influence English vocabulary. From this point of view, we should need to learn only the root element of each Latin verb, ignoring all those tiresome grammatical aspects. Actually, it’s not quite that simple: because of the history of Latin morphology and of English word derivation, we shall have to learn two related stems or bases for each important verb. But that is still a relatively trivial task, compared to the challenge faced by the student who wants to read Latin.

§62. The Two Keys to the Latin Verb

From other language study, you are familiar with the concept of PRINCIPAL PARTS—that bare-bones set of information that enables us to predict how any given verb will perform. In French, for instance, if you want to control the verb that means “see,” you have to know the forms “*voir, voyant, vu, je vois, je vis.*” A foreigner learning English can solve the mysteries of our verb by learning the three forms “*see, saw, seen.*” For many centuries, Latin verbs have been learned by means of FOUR principal parts; in this case, **video, videre, vidi, visus**. You’re perhaps aware that our word *video* is the Latin for “I see”—though there may be more people alive today, using that word in English without knowing its source, than all the speakers of Latin in human history. If you have had any kind of a close encounter with the ancient world, you will know that Julius Caesar is supposed to have said, “**veni, vidi, vici**” (“I came, I saw, I conquered”); therefore **vidi** must mean “I saw.” But is there any practical reason for us to learn **video** and **vidi**? With very few exceptions—*video* (“I see”), *audio* (“I hear”), and *credo* (“I believe”)—1st person Latin verb forms are not reflected in English. Accordingly, of the four traditional principal parts, we need only concern ourselves with two: **vidēre**, the **PRESENT INFINITIVE** (“to see”), and **visus**, the **PERFECT PARTICIPLE** (“seen”). These two forms are the source of countless English words. From **videre**, the present infinitive, come such derivatives as *provide* and *evident*; from **visus**, the perfect participle, come *vision, visible, visual, proviso*, and the like. Because the one Latin form cannot be predicted from the other, we must learn them both as vocabulary items. That is not a hard task, however, given their clear resemblance to English derivatives; and it is well worth the effort in terms of the increase it will bring to your understanding of English vocabulary.

For the sake of convenience, we shall be using the terms **PRESENT INFINITIVE** and **PERFECT PARTICIPLE**, a verbal adjective that is often called the “past participle” by English lexicographers. Although you should be familiar with the labels, there is no reason to know how the two forms were used grammatically in Latin. In fact, all we really need are the present base (or stem) **vid(e)-** and the perfect base (or stem) **vis-**. For most verbs, the present base is obtained by dropping the **-re** of the infinitive, and the perfect base by dropping the **-us** ending of the perfect participle. Still, it is probably easier and more memorable to learn them as **videre / visus** than as **vid(e)- / vis-**.

If you want an almost infallible trick for remembering any Latin perfect participle, **THINK OF AN ENGLISH DERIVATIVE IN -ION**. By firmly associating **vis-us** with the English word *vis-ion*, you can learn it without any painful effort of memory.

§63. Latin Verbs of the First Conjugation

Like Latin nouns, Latin verbs can be grouped by pattern or type, so as to make them much easier to learn. In Chapters 2 and 3, we learned nouns in groups that we called **DECLENSIONS**. For some two thousand years, Latin verb groups have been known as **CONJUGATIONS** (literally, forms “joined together”). Don’t let the label alarm you; once again, we are merely talking about separate types or categories.

The 1st conjugation is an ideal place to begin, since it is the easiest and most regular. It is not the category to which **vidēre** belongs; all verbs in this first class will have a **PRESENT INFINITIVE** in **–āre**, like **vocāre** (“to call”) or **portāre** (“to carry”). Because the **–ā–** of that infinitive ending is a long vowel, we should pronounce the form as **vocāre**. (Don’t use those marks in writing the word; they are merely pronunciation guides.) The regular simplicity of the 1st conjugation is best seen in the **PERFECT PARTICIPLE**, which almost always assumes a form like **vocātus** or **portātus**. That reassuring fact makes this conjugation thoroughly predictable—a great blessing, since it is the source of at least a thousand English words. Remember it, then, as the “**vowel A**” conjugation, characterized by the two forms **-ARE** and **-ATUS**.

Table 9.1: LATIN FIRST CONJUGATION VERBS

cantare, cantatus	sing	putare, putatus	think, reckon
clamare, clamatus	shout	secare, sectus	cut
mutare, mutatus	change	servare, servatus	save
plicare, plicatus	fold	stare, status	stand
portare, portatus	carry	vocare, vocatus	call

This is a mere sampling of literally hundreds of Latin verbs that follow this pattern. Just to keep you honest, we have included one that departs from type: the perfect participle of **secare** does not show the usual **-atus** ending, but instead is **sectus**. If you apply the memory trick given in §62, you can easily remember **sectus** from the English word *section* (“something cut”).

At first glance, you may not spot a great many English derivatives from the verbs in Table 9.1. The real linguistic dividends start to accrue when you combine these verb bases with the prefixes of the last chapter (§59). Though **portare** by itself may suggest only the French-derived *portage* (< late Latin **portaticum**), the prefixes will soon bring to mind such words as *import*, *important*, *export*, *report*, *deportation* (a “carrying away”), *disport*

(to “carry apart” from work)—the source, believe it or not, of our common word *sport*. A similar assault on **putare** will yield *compute*, *computer*, *deputation*, *dispute*, *impute*, *reputable*, *disreputable*, and *reputation*, as well as more learned words like *putative*. In earlier chapters we saw that the scope of Latin noun and adjective derivatives is rich and varied; but the extent of Latin verb derivatives in English is simply mind-boggling.

If you know any French, you will recognize **cantare** as the source of *chanter*; indeed, it is usual for 1st conjugation Latin verbs in **-are** to become 1st conjugation French verbs in **-er**. Thus English *chant* can be seen as an Old French loan-word, whereas *recant* and *incantation* come directly from Latin.¹ Therefore *enchant* and *incant* are perfect doublets, while *enchantment* and *incantation* are closely related. You may be startled to realize that a sea *shanty* and a Bach *cantata* are brothers under the skin.

Don’t be surprised if you find spelling changes in Latin verb derivatives. Our verbs *claim* (“shout”), *exclaim* (“shout out”), *proclaim* (“shout forth”) and *reclaim* (“shout back”) are all derivatives of **clamare**. But observe how the corresponding noun derivatives, all from the perfect participle, show the correct Latin spelling: *exclamation*, *proclamation*, *reclamation*. A parallel is seen in derivatives of **vocare**. From the present stem we get *convoke* (“call together”), *evoke* (“call out”), *invoke* (“call in”), *provoke* (“call forth”), and *revoke* (“call back”), whereas the perfect participle provides us with *convocation*, *invocation*, and *provocation*. (We’ll meet later such interesting forms as *irrevocable*.) Notice, by the way, that *reclaim* and *revoke* are very close in etymological meaning, and do have some kinship in meaning today.

Sometimes the English derivatives can be thoroughly disguised. From **plicare** you would soon discover *complicate* (“fold together”), *implicate* (“fold in”) and *explication* (“a folding out”), and you might then track down *implicit* and *explicit*; but you would need an etymological dictionary to uncover *plait*, *pleat*, *ply* (all < **plicatus**), *imply*, *employ* (both < **implicare**), *deploy*, *display* (both < **displicare**), *apply*, *appliqué* (both < **applicatus** < **ad-plicatus**), and the noun *exploit* (< **explicatus**). If you then learned that the root **plic-** occurs also in *complex*, *accomplice*, *simplicity*, and *multiply* (= Germanic *manifold*), you would realize that you had unfolded a very complicated pattern.

The first time around, you are likely to make a few mistakes. You would be wrong to think that **servare** is the source of English *serve* (< L **servire**); but it is the origin of *conserve*, *conservation*, *preserve*, *reservation*, *reservoir*, etc. The important Latin verb **stare**, **status** is cognate with—but is not the source of—the Germanic English verb *stand*; it has given us the derivatives *status*, *station*, *stature*, *constant*, *instant*, *stance*, and *inconstancy*. There is absolutely no way that you can grasp all these words at once; some of them will be carefully explained in later chapters. The only expectation at present is that you will try to learn the two necessary Latin forms and the basic English meanings for each of the verbs on the table, making intelligent use of any English clues that you can spot.

To review and stress that all-important key to the perfect participle, here is an “**-ion**” guide to the ten 1st conjugation verbs on [Table 9.1](#): *incantation*, *exclamation*, *mutation*, *complication*, *deportation*, *reputation*, *section*, *conservation*, *station*, and *vocation*.

Notes

1. Sometimes English will “correct” or “re-Latinize” the spelling of a word taken from French. The term *descant*, for

instance, was derived from L **discantus** (“singing apart”) through F *deschant*.

§64. Latin Verbs of the Second Conjugation

In our original verb **vidēre**, we have already seen a Latin verb of the 2nd conjugation. Where the 1st conjugation featured an **-āre** present infinitive, the 2nd has a parallel **-ēre** form. Unfortunately, there is no predictable perfect participle; the second form for each verb on the following table must simply be learned as a separate vocabulary challenge.

Table 9.2: LATIN SECOND CONJUGATION VERBS

docere, doctus	teach	movere, motus	move
habere, habitus	have, hold	sedere, sessus	sit
[-hibere, -hibitus]		tenere, tentus	hold
monere, monitus	warn, advise	videre, visus	see

There are several points to notice about this group. First, be sure that you pronounce the infinitives with a stress on the second-to-last syllable: **docére**, **habére**, **monére**, etc. (You will soon learn why this is important.) If you have studied French, you may notice that some these verbs acquired French infinitives in *-oir*: *avoir*, *mouvoir*, *s’asseoir*, *voir*—but *tenir* does not conform. Our “-ion” guide will work for *premonition* (“forewarning”), *motion*, *session*, *retention* (“holding back”), and *vision*; for **doctus** and **habitus** you can remember *doctor* (“teacher”) and *habit* (something “had”). The forms in square brackets below **habere** show how the two bases are modified when prefixes are added. In this way we get *inhibit* (“hold in”) and *exhibit* (“hold out”), along with *inhibition* and *exhibition*.

Once again, you should take the prefix chart from §59 and see how many English derivatives you can quickly identify from Table 9.2. The first verb, **docere**, will not be productive; but you will soon find words like *admonish* and *admonition*, *emotion*, *commotion*, *promotion*, *contain* and *contention*, *detain* and *detention*. If you can’t get very far with **sedere**, try looking up *supersede*, *preside*, *president*, *reside*, *resident*, *residue*, and *dissident*. Like **habere**, its base vowel may be modified when prefixes are added.

§65. Latin Verbs of the Third Conjugation

The 3rd conjugation is a very large group of verbs that includes some of the most common and fundamental roots in the Latin language. Its present infinitive does not have a strong ending like the **-āre** of the 1st and the **-ēre** of the 2nd; it is spelled **-ere**, but the vowel is short, so that the accent is placed on the preceding syllable. Typical 3rd conjugation infinitives, therefore, will be **ágĕre, cédĕre, mĭttĕre, régĕre, scrĭbĕre**. Like the 2nd conjugation, the 3rd has no predictable perfect participles; but by studying those forms with English derivatives in mind, it is not an overwhelming task to learn them. If the following list looks intimidating, do at least read it through several times, linking the Latin verb bases with their English meanings and their more obvious English derivatives.

Table 9.3: LATIN THIRD CONJUGATION VERBS

agere, actus	do, drive	pellere, pulsus	drive
cadere, casus	fall	pendere, pensus	hang; weigh
[-cĭdere, -casus]		ponere, positus	place
caedere, caesus	cut	regere, rectus	rule, guide
[-cĭdere, -cĭsus]		scribere, scriptus	write
cedere, cessus	go; yield	solvere, solutus	loose
currere, cursus	run	tangere, tactus	touch
dicere, dictus	say	tendere, tensus¹	stretch, strain
ducere, ductus	lead	trahere, tractus	draw, drag
ferre (fer-), latus	bring, bear	vertere, versus	turn
frangere, fractus	break	volvere, volutus	roll
fundere, fusus	pour	<i>Deponent verbs:</i>	
jungere, junctus	join	sequi, secutus	follow
legere, lectus	choose; read	loqui, locutus	speak
mittere, missus	send	nasci, natus	be born

To illustrate how many prefixes can be used with some Latin verb bases, let us take a couple of verbs of motion, **cedere** and **currere**. When it stood alone, **cedere**, **cessus** tended to mean “yield,” a force that it has in our word *cede* and the legal term *cession*. With prefixes attached, it was a more neutral verb of going. *Intercede* and *intercession*, for example, suggest “going between”; notice again how our English verb derivative comes from the present infinitive and the noun from the perfect participle. It is distinctly confusing that some **cedere** derivatives are spelled *-ceed* and others *-cede*—but English is that kind of language. Thus we have *proceed* (“go forward”) and *procession*; *exceed* (“go out”) and *excess*, *excessive*; *succeed* (< **sub-cedere**, literally “go under”) and *success*, *succession*. Closer to the Latin spelling are *accede* (< **ad-cedere**, “go toward”), *concede* (“go together”), *precede* (“go before”), *recede* (“go back”), and *secede* (“go apart”), along with all their corresponding nouns in *-cession*. If flood waters are *receding*, that is happy news; if male chins or hairlines are *receding*, that is not so good. After we study Latin present participles, we’ll understand *antecedent* (“going before,” a word for grammarians) and *decendent* (“going down” [if not actually “long gone”], a word for Perry Mason fans). *Predecessor* and *ancestor* (L **antecessor**) also belong somewhere on this list.

We can perform the same exercise with **currere**, **cursus**, finding derivatives like *current*, *course*, *cursor*, *cursory*, *cursive*; *concur*, *concurrent*, *concurrence*, *concourse*; *discourse*, *discursive*; *excursus*, *excursion*; *occur*, *occurrence* (what is the prefix?); *precursor* (“forerunner”); *recur*, *recurrent*, *recurrence*, *recourse*; and *succour*. Can you relate all these words to running? *Succour*, for instance is “running beneath” (**sub-currere**) to offer help. (If you are drowning on the French Riviera, shout “*au secours!*”; in Italy, try “*soccorso!*”) Do you see any semantic link between the modern English meanings of *concur* and *concede*?

For other prefix exercises of this kind, try **mittere**, **missus** (“send”) and **trahere**, **tractus** (“drag, draw”). Here are some suggestions to get the juices flowing on **mittere**: *mission*, *missive*, *missile*, *admit*, *admission*, *admittance*, *commit*, *commission*, *dismiss*, *emit*, *emission*, *intermittent*, *intermission*, *permit*, *permission*, *permissive*, *promise*, *submit*, *submission*, *submissive*, *transmit*, *transmission*. Similarly, try these for **trahere**: *tractor*, *traction*, *abstract*, *contract*, *detract*, *distract*, *extract*, *protract*, *retract*, *subtract*—and all their counterparts in *-ion* (*abstraction*, etc.). Notice the virtual disappearance of the base **trah-** in English; its only survival is the mathematical term *subtrahend*. Other good verbs on which to practise are **ducere**, **ductus** and **scribere**, **scriptus**.

The close similarity of **cadere**, **casus** (“fall”) and **caedere**, **caesus** (“cut”) has been the bane of Latin students through the ages. **Cadere** has some recognizable derivatives that retain the vowel *-a-*: *cadence*, *case* (the grammatical kind, or “in *case* I see you”), *decadent* (“falling away”), and *occasion*. This verb often became **-cīdere** with prefixes, as we see in *accident* (**ad + cadere**), *incident*, *coincidence*, and *occident* (**ob + cadere**). In contrast, all the English derivatives of **caedere** contain prefixes, with the verb forms changed to **-cīdere**, **-cīsus**. Examples of its derivatives are *circumcision*, *concise*, *decide*, *decision*, *decisive*, *excise*, *excision*, *incision*, *incisive*, *incisor*, *precise*, *precision*.

It should be explained that deponents are unusual Latin verbs that do not have active forms—but **sequi**, **loqui**, and **nasci** are present infinitives, nonetheless. We can treat them the same way as any other verbs on our list, realizing that derivatives of **loqui** will have forms in *loque*—like *eloquent* or *eloquence*, whereas **locutus** gives us *locution*, *elocution*, and *interlocutor*.

At this point you probably need a word or two of gentle comfort and reassurance. The challenge of mastering Latin verb forms and their English derivatives is not the task of a single evening or even a single week:

it can take months or years to assimilate all this knowledge. The immediate goal is merely to introduce you to Latin verb vocabulary.

Notes

1. The verb **tendere** has an alternate perfect participle **tentus**, a form that overlaps with **tenere**.

§66. Latin Verbs of the Third I-STEM and Fourth Conjugations

In a course of this kind, where the sole objective is gaining insight into English words, it may not be crucially important to remember Latin verbs by conjugation number; that knowledge is admittedly of less practical value than remembering the declension groups of Latin nouns. However, when we come to look at other Latin verb forms, such as present participles and gerundives, you will probably find it helpful to be able to associate Latin verb vocabulary with these numbered categories.

The Latin 4th conjugation always has an infinitive in **–īre**, like **audīre** or **venīre**. This easily recognized form, therefore, makes it parallel to the 1st in **–āre** and the 2nd in **–ēre**. Once again, unhappily, there is no predictable perfect participle. What is most noticeable about the fourth conjugation is the persistence of that vowel **-i-** in many of its forms—in **audio** (“I hear”), for instance, and the English words *audiience*, *salient*, or *convenience*.

There is a small but important subtype of 3rd conjugation verbs that can be described as having an “i-stem,” because they also show that same persistent vowel.¹ To judge them by the evidence of their English derivatives, they appear more closely associated with the 4th conjugation than with the 3rd. For this reason, they are included on [Table 9.4](#) with the 4th conjugation type. They include **capere** and **facere**, which may be the most productive of all Latin verbs, from the standpoint of English vocabulary. The “i-stem” deponent verbs **gradi** and **pati** are also very important; it may help to remember them with words like *gradient*, *aggression* and *patient*, *passion*.

Table 9.4: LATIN THIRD I-STEM AND FOURTH CONJUGATION VERBS

<i>Third Conjugation, I-stem</i>		<i>Third I-stem deponent verbs:</i>	
capere, captus	take	gradi, gressus	step, go
[-cipere, -ceptus]		pati, passus	suffer, allow
facere, factus	make, do	<i>Fourth Conjugation:</i>	
[-ficere, -fectus]		audire, auditus	hear
jacere, jactus	throw	salire, saltus	leap, jump
[-jicere, -jectus]		sentire, sensus	feel
-spicere, -spectus	look	venire, ventus	come

Notes

1. If we were learning all four principal parts, the contrast between the regular 3rd conjugation verb and this special subtype would be more apparent. Compare the first principal part of **ago, agere, egi, actus** with that of **cipio, capere, cepi, captus**, or **facio, facere, feci, factus**.

§67. Interesting Words

You will need a little help in becoming acquainted with the verbs **capere** (“take”) and **facere** (“make,” “do”). You can remember their perfect participles by *caption*, *captor*, *capture*, and *fact*, *faction*, *factor*, *manufacture* (“making by hand”). When prefixes are added, phonetic changes produce forms like *concept*, *deception*, *exception*, *perception*, *interceptor*, *receptive*, *contraceptive*; and *affect*, *effect*—don’t confuse those two in English—*defect*, *infection*, *prefecture*, *perfection*. The *perfect* (“completed”) tense in grammar is a doublet of that cold *confection* known as a *parfait* (it must be “thoroughly made”). The present bases of **capere** and **facere** appear in *recipient*, *incipient*, *efficient*, and *sufficient*. There are many interesting derivatives from these two verbs that have been disguised by transmission through French. Observe, for instance, all the English verbs ending in *-ceive* that are semantic parallels to nouns ending in *-ception*. *Deceit* and *receipt* are closely akin to *deception* and *reception*—and note their inconsistency in spelling. The word *recipe* is a Latin command, meaning “Take it!”—or maybe “Take it back,” if you don’t admire the cook.¹ There are English synonyms like *receiver* and *receptor*, where one word comes from French and the other from Latin. The English nouns *fact* and *feat* are doublets; each is a “thing done,” in French a *fait accompli*. Similarly, *defect* and *defeat* are both derived from **defectus**. A *surfeit* is something “overdone” (< ***superfactum**).

Almost all the derivatives from **jacere** (“throw”) contain Latin prefixes: think of *abject*, *eject*, *interject*, *project*, *reject*, and *subject*. For practical purposes, **-ject** is the only base you need to remember.

With such obvious derivatives as *audience*, *audition*, *auditor*, *auditory*, and *auditorium*, the verb **audire**, **auditus** is not likely to cause any problem. The *audio* portion of our television set does for the ears what the *video* does for the eyes. Those of us who find television the ideal *soporific* (“sleep-maker”) may especially appreciate the *dormio* virtues of tv entertainment, whenever we are feeling *somnolent*.

The verb **salire**, **saltus** has some interesting English derivatives: in its root form, **salire** is related to words ranging from *salmon* to *Sault Sainte Marie*. As we’ll see in [Chapter 12, §80](#), the present participle *salient* means “leaping”; a *salient* fact is one that comes jumping out to hit you. Something *resilient* comes “leaping back” (**resilire**, **resultus**), with an obvious *result*. To *insult* is to jump upon someone—etymologically, at least. To *exult* is to leap out. There was an ancient circus rider called a **desultor**, who “leapt down” from horse to horse; hence *desultory* (“leaping about”). English *somersault* is derived from **supra** (“above”) and **saltus**, probably through Spanish. *Assail*, *assailant*, and *assault* have come from **ad** and **saltus**, by French transmission.

Because **sentire** is a general verb of “feeling,” it can be applied to any of the five *senses*. A *sentient* being (more correctly pronounced “sen-shunt” than “sen-tee-ent”) is one who has feeling. *Sentimental* and *sensational* are related words. A strong divergence of opinion may cause *dissension* (“feeling apart”), whereas a convergence of belief is *consensus* (“feeling together”)—a pure Latin word that is often misspelled in English, because it is confused with the unrelated noun *census* (“a reckoning”).

A 1st conjugation verb not included on Table 9.1 is **spirare, spiratus** (“breathe”), which is obviously related to the noun **spiritus** (“breath”). *Aspire* (< **ad-spirare**²) is “to breathe towards”—to desire eagerly—a verb that gave rise to the noun *aspiration*. In phonetics, the letter H is described as an “*aspirate*.” To *conspire* is “to breathe together,” and to *expire* (**ex-spirare**) is to exhale (**ex-halare**) one’s last breath. It should be easy enough to work out the etymological meanings of *inspiration*, *perspiration*, and *respiration*.

If you recall our exercise with **cedere** and **currere** in §65, you can perform similar *feats* of wizardry with the important verb **venire** (“come”). These forms will get you started: *advent*, *circumvene*, *circumvention*, *convene*, *convent*, *convention*, *contravene*, *event*, *intervene*, *prevention*, *subvention*. Another basic verb of motion is **gradi, gressus**. What is the difference, if any, between a *congress* and a *convention*? Between a *regression* and a *recession*? Would you consider them both *retrograde*? Is a *digression* likely to be *discursive*? And why is an *egress* not the opposite of an *invention*? (It is the same as an *exit*, which comes from an irregular verb of motion that we haven’t met.)

These reflections suggest both the advantages and shortcomings of knowing Latin etymologies. Once you even partially realize the etymological history of complex English words, your control over their use will be enormously improved. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to think that knowing an etymological meaning will provide a guaranteed understanding of any English word. Occasionally it may be actually misleading to know what an English word *should* mean, from the Latin point of view. In most cases, however, the verb root and the prefix, when considered together, will present a correct general image of the word. It will then be necessary to learn its precise connotations and typical usage by observing it in a good spoken or written context.

There are no formal **EXERCISES** included with this chapter. Spend any available time studying the four tables of verb vocabulary, along with the earlier chart of prefixes.

Notes

1. The pharmaceutical symbol of a letter R with a cross on the downstroke is the medieval druggist’s abbreviation for **recipe**, the command to take a prescription.
2. The Latin prefix **ad-** will normally lose its **-d-** before the combination of initial **s-** and a consonant stop. Compare **ascribere** (< **ad-scribere**), E *ascribe*, *ascription*, and **aspicere** (< **ad-spicere**), E *aspect*.

Chapter 10: Turning Latin Verbs into Latin Nouns

§68. How Can Verbs Become Other Parts of Speech?

As you will have come to expect by now, Latin has various systematic ways of transforming verbs into other parts of speech. In these new Latin words, the semantic action of the original verb will still be evident; but instead of having a purely verbal function, such as “carry,” “hear,” “teach,” “feel,” or “make,” the word will now convey some additional meaning, like “the act of carrying” or “able to be heard” or “the person who teaches” or “the state of feeling” or “a thing made.” In its native Germanic tradition, English is quite limited in its capacity to form new parts of speech this way. For just that reason, vast numbers of Latin verb derivatives have been borrowed over the centuries, to become basic and indispensable English words. If you can learn to understand the relationship between these words and the Latin verbs from which they arose, you will begin to control enormous categories of English vocabulary.

A good many of these verb-derived categories consist of standard Latin noun types, which English has borrowed with only minor adaptations. Because they are standard, they are consistent and predictable. If you know a particular Latin verb such as **capere**, **captus**, you will be able with some confidence to construct its related noun forms—**captio**, **captura**, **captor**; and then, no doubt, you will spot the connection between those forms and a variety of English words. Soon you will be able to reverse the procedure, predicting the Latin etymon of any English noun that belongs to a familiar type.

All this verb manipulation will involve one or other of the two key forms that we met in Chapter 9 (§62)—the present infinitive and the perfect participle. The **PERFECT PARTICIPLE** is particularly useful as an instrument for creating Latin nouns, either by itself or as a base to which various suffixes may be added. To obtain the base of any Latin perfect participle, just remove the **-us** ending. The Latin perfect participle is actually a 1st and 2nd declension adjective in **-us**, **-a**, **-um**. The form **mutatus**, for example, is a verbal derivative that means “changed”, and it can be used as a pure adjective in phrases such as **vir mutatus**, “a changed man,” or **femina mutata**, “a changed woman.”

§69. The Perfect Participle as 2nd Declension Neuter Noun

When we were discussing 1st and 2nd declension adjectives in §26, we saw that the neuter **–um** form of this type could be used in Latin as a noun; just recall the examples **medium**, **vacuum**, and **bonum** (E *boon*). It should not be surprising, therefore, that the perfect participle, a verbal adjective, can also work this way. The most prominent example, from the English point of view, is **datum** (“something given,” “a given”), from the verb **dare**, **datus**. This word is still treated in English as an alien Latin form: singular *datum*, plural *data* (a grammatical rule that makes a good many speakers of English feel uncomfortable or rebellious). A parallel form was the Latin word **stratum** (“something spread out”), from **sternere**, **stratus**, a verb seen in §11 as the origin of our word *street*. In English, *stratum*, *strata* (“layer”) should operate exactly like *datum*, *data*—and we mustn’t let ourselves be confused by *stratus* clouds and *strata* title.

It is rare to find English words like *datum* and *stratum*, which have kept their original Latin form. More commonly, words of this type have been anglicized in one of the standard ways we learned in §14. From the deponent verb **fari**, **fatus** (“speak,” “utter”), Latin derived the neuter noun **fatum** (“something uttered,” “a divine edict”)—our English word *fate*. *Edict* itself is from **edictum**, “something spoken out” (< **edicere**, **edictus**). From **tentus**, the alternative perfect participle of **tendere**, came the noun concept **tentum** (“a thing stretched”), English *tent*. From the familiar verb **facere**, **factus** (“make,” “do”) came **factum** (“a thing done”), English *fact*. And the other common verb that meant “do”—**agere**, **actus**—produced a Latin neuter noun **actum**, another “thing done,”: an *act*. (How would you define the contrast in modern English between a *fact* and an *act*?) The “things done” by Roman legislators were written down and circulated as **acta diurna**, “Daily Deeds,” the original newspaper of the western world.¹

Notes

1. The title of this ancient Hansard combines **acta** with **diurna**, an adjective from the noun **dies** (“day”). **Diurnus** is the origin of the French derivative *jour* and the Italian *giorno*; its longer variant, **diurnalis**, is the source of French *journal* and Italian *giornale*.

§70. The Perfect Participle as 4th Declension Noun

Just as Latin could turn the neuter (**-um**) form of the perfect participle into a 2nd declension noun, so could it convert the masculine (**-us**) form into a regular 4th declension noun. There was originally a contrast between these two, in that the neuter noun was felt to be concrete and the masculine somewhat more abstract; but that contrast is often hard to discern in practice. These fourth declension nouns look exactly like the perfect participle—**sensus**, **ductus**, **tractus**, etc. They are quite numerous, and easy to identify.

Here is a sampling of 4th declension Latin nouns that were derived from perfect participles of verbs. Some of them come from verbs that we met in the last chapter, while others will be less familiar:

LATIN VERB	LATIN NOUN	ENG. NOUN	(ADJ.)
agere, actus (“do”)	actus (“a doing”)	<i>act</i> ¹	(<i>actual</i>)
cadere, casus (“fall”)	casus (“a falling”)	<i>case</i> ²	(<i>casual</i>)
censēre, census (“reckon”)	census (“a reckoning”)	<i>census</i>	
ducere, ductus (“lead”)	ductus (“a leading”)	<i>duct</i>	
exire, exitus (“go out”)	exitus (“a going out”)	<i>exit</i>	
labi, lapsus (“slip,” “slide”)	lapsus (“a slipping”)	<i>lapse</i>	
sentire, sensus (“feel”)	sensus (“a feeling”)	<i>sense</i>	(<i>sensual</i>)
stare, status (“stand”)	status (“a standing”)	<i>status, state</i>	
trahere, tractus (“drag”)	tractus (“a dragging”)	<i>tract</i>	
uti, usus (“use”)	usus (“a using”)	<i>use</i>	(<i>usual</i>)

Several forms of this type, with prefixes attached, have come into English completely unchanged. We have already seen that a *consensus* is “a shared feeling.” What are the etymological meanings of *conspectus* and *prospectus*? (Like *status* and *state*, *prospectus* and *prospect* are English doublets.) *Convent* and *congress* come from the semantically similar Latin nouns **conventus** and **congressus**.

Notes

1. This English word is thought to derive both from the neuter noun **actum** and the masculine noun **actus**. The influence of the 4th declension **actus** is seen in the English adjective *actual* (< **actu-alis**).
2. There are two English homographs of this form; E *case* = “a container” comes from L **capsa** (whose diminutive **capsula** is the source of *capsule*).

§71. The Perfect Participle Base + suffix -IO as Abstract Noun

Of all ways to create abstract nouns from Latin verbs, the overwhelming favourite was the addition of the suffix **-io** to the perfect participle base (or less commonly to the present infinitive base). For example, from **dicere, dictus** (“speak”), Latin could create an abstract noun **dict-io, dict-ionis**, which meant “speech” (or “the act of speech,” “the process of speaking,” etc.). Notice that this is a perfectly regular 3rd declension noun, whose base is **dict-ion-**. Here, then, is the explanation for all those *-ion* derivatives that we noticed in the last chapter. Historically, English forms in *-ion* can be traced back through Old French to medieval accusative forms like **ditionem**, which were prevalent in vulgar Latin at a time when the nominative forms had all but disappeared. For practical purposes, however, we can equate the English *-ion* spelling with the BASE form of Latin nouns in **-io, -ionis**.¹ This is a valid historical approach, because the majority of the *-ion* forms came into Modern English after the Renaissance, drawn directly from Latin nouns on the analogy of the older *-ion* derivatives. New examples are still being coined today.

To the student of English vocabulary, this circumstance is nothing less than a godsend. Although you may never have stopped to think how many *-ion* nouns there are in our language, you can be sure that there are enough to keep you counting for hours on end. Almost without exception (**ex-cept-io**), they will have a Latin derivation (**de-rivat-io**), and that knowledge should be reason² for great satisfaction (**satis-fact-io**)—perhaps even be an occasion (**oc-cas-io**) for exultation (**ex-sultat-io**). There can be few aspects of English etymology that are more dependable: virtually every *-ion* noun that you meet can now send you scurrying in search of a Latin perfect participle, whose meaning is almost guaranteed to unlock the semantic secrets of that English noun.

If you want to test that assertion (**ad-sert-io**), you can take another quick tour of the Latin verbs on Tables 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4, applying the *-ion* test to the perfect participles. What you will now be uncovering is a series of Latin 3rd declension abstract nouns in **-io, -ionis**, probably the largest single category of Latin derivatives in English.

Notes

1. This **-ion** noun base may be further extended in Latin forms like **dition-arium**, E *dictionary*, “a place for words.” (There was also a medieval Latin expression, **liber dictionarius**, “word-book.”)
2. *Reason* is a word which has lost its *-ion* in the French *transmission* (< **trans-missio**, “a sending across”). The doublets *reason* and *ration* are both derived from **ratio**, a noun formed from the past participle of **rerī, ratus** (“think”). Similar doublets are *fashion* (Fr. *façon*) and *faction*, both from **factio**.

§72. The Perfect Participle Base + suffix -URA as Abstract Noun

Alongside these abstract nouns in **-io**, Latin could form other abstract nouns from the very same perfect participle bases, using the suffix **-ura** (> E *-ure*). Thus, from the perfect participle **captus**, there developed two nouns, **captio** and **captura**, both meaning “the act (or process) of taking.” In English, of course, *caption* and *capture* are very different words; but the semantic force of the **-io** and **-ura** endings is so similar in Latin that it is hardly worth while trying to see any contrast in connotation between those suffixes. For some perfect participles, we may have as many as three different Latin nouns, all extremely close in meaning. Just consider, from **stare**, **status** (“stand”), the forms **status**, **statio**, and **statura**, all of which denote some kind of “standing”; their derivatives *status*, *station*, and *stature* have become usefully differentiated in English. The perfect participle of **jungere**, **junctus** (“join”) is the source of English *joint* (**junctus**), *junction* (**junctio**), and *juncture* (**junctura**)—three synonymous words in English.

Here are some more familiar examples of this **-ura** suffix:

LATIN VERB	LATIN NOUN	ENG. NOUN
frangere, fractus (“break”)	fractura (“a breaking”)	<i>fracture</i>
gerere, gestus (“bear”)	gestura (“a bearing”)	<i>gesture</i>
legere, lectus (“read”)	lectura (“a reading”)	<i>lecture</i>
nasci, natus (“be born”)	natura (“a being born”)	<i>nature</i>
pascere, pastus (“feed,” “tend”)	pastura (“a feeding”)	<i>pasture</i>
rapere, raptus (“seize”)	raptura (“a seizing”)	<i>rapture</i>
rumpere, ruptus (“burst”)	ruptura (“a bursting”)	<i>rupture</i>
scribere, scriptus (“write”)	scriptura (“a writing”)	<i>scriptura</i>
struere, structus (“build”)	structura (“a building”)	<i>structure</i>

From **jacere, jactus** (“throw”) comes the form **conjectura**, E *conjecture* (“a throwing together”). **Aperire, apertus** (“open”) is the source of **apertura**, E *aperture*; a very different kind of “opening” is the surprising doublet *overture*.¹

Notes

1. Cf. L **apertus** > F *ouvert* > E *overt*. Similarly, L **co-opertus** (“covered over”) became E *covert*.

§73. The Perfect Participle Base + suffix -OR as Agent Noun

In the beginning of Chapter 3 (§18), we identified a group of Latin 3rd declension forms in **-or** as AGENT NOUNS. They comprise the easiest and most obvious group of Latin verb derivatives in English, since they almost always keep their original Latin form. An AGENT (< **agere**, **actus**) is a person “doing” something—here, performing whatever action is expressed in the verb base. From **spectare**, **spectatus** (“watch”), Latin derived the agent noun **spectator**, “watcher,” “one who watches,” a word that is used with exactly that form and meaning in English. From **audire**, **auditus**, came **auditor**, “hearer.” The verb **agere** itself had an obvious agent noun—**actor**, “doer.” If **docēre**, **doctus** meant “teach,” then **doctor** must have meant “teacher” (whatever its customary meaning today). These words could not be any simpler in form: perfect participle base plus suffix **-or**.

From the English equivalents given in the last paragraph, you will see that our Germanic equivalent to Latin **-or** is **-er**. These cognate suffixes are so close as to become rather confusing in spelling and usage. As a general rule, English uses the **-or** form for pure Latin derivatives and adds **-er** to native Germanic verbs or Latin verbs that have been modified in French transmission. Therefore the Latin derivative **victor** (**vincere**, **victus**, “conquer”) stands alongside the Germanic **winner**. (But we might have to consult a dictionary to confirm that **conqueror** is spelled **-or**, since it violates the rule just stated!) The rule is fairly reliable, although there are disputed forms like **adviser** and **advisor**.

In the following list of further examples, the agent noun is shown in Latin only. There is no need to repeat that form in English, since the English derivative will be identical.

LATIN VERB	AGENT NOUN
narrare , narratus , “tell”	narrator
creare , creatus , “create”	creator
curare , curatus , “care for”	curator
secare , sectus , “cut”	sector
monēre , monitus , “advise”	monitor
movēre , motus , “move”	motor
pascere , pastus , “feed,” “tend”	pastor
facere , factus , “make,” “do”	factor
capere , captus , “take”	captor
rapere , raptus , “seize”	raptor
sentire , sensus , “feel”	sensor

Notice that we have met a number of pairs like *captor/capture*, *pastor/pasture* and *raptor/rapture*. *Sculptor* is the person who carves (**sculperē**, **sculptus**), while *sculpture* is the act of carving or the product of the act. Latin had a corresponding pair of nouns, **pictor/pictura** (< **pingere**, **pictus**, “paint”); but **pictor** got displaced by the Anglo-French *painter*, which actually comes from **pingere**. (Yet English still has *pictorial*.)

The forms shown above are all taken from simple verbs; Latin could form even more interesting agent nouns when it started adding prefixes. Try working out the etymological meanings of the following English words (e.g., *protractor* = “one who drags forward”):

conspirator, depositor, interceptor, projector, transgressor, refractor.

§74. Other Noun-forming suffixes

If we were resolved to master all the noun-forming suffixes used with Latin verb stems, we would have to learn perhaps ten more types. The three that we have seen in §71, §72, and §73 are the most important. Five more are given here, for **REFERENCE PURPOSES** only:

- Present-infinitive base + **-or** (§18): **terrēre** > **terror**; **torpēre** > **torpor**; **horrēre** > **horror**; **candēre** > **candor**; **fervēre** > **fervor**; **languēre** > **languor**. This is an entirely different **-or** suffix from the agent type of §73. Notice that all these verbs belong to the second conjugation.
- Present-infinitive base + **-men**. A number of these nouns have come into English without change: *acumen* (< **acuere**, “sharpen”¹), *stamen* (< **stare**, “stand”), *semen* (< **serere**, “sow”), *specimen* (< **specere**, “look at”), *regimen* (< **regere**, “rule”). *Regimen* has two English doublets, *regime* and *realm*.
- Present-infinitive base + **-mentum**. A *document* (L **documentum**) was originally a device for teaching (**docēre**). An *ornament* is a thing used for decorating (**ornare**). A mere sampling of this type might include *argument* (< **arguere**, “prove”), *augment* (< **augēre**, “increase”), *complement* and *supplement* (< **plēre**, “fill”), *figment* (< **figere**, “invent”), *pigment* (< **pingere**, “paint”), and *sediment* (< **sedēre**, “sit”). *E movement* and *momentum* are doublets, both derived from L **movimentum** (< **movēre**, “move”).
- Present-infinitive base + **-bula**, **-bulum**, or **-culum**. These nouns appear in English as *-ble*, or *-cle*; they were mentioned at the very end of Chapter 7 (§56) as a group of words that can be quite easily confused with Latin diminutives. Their force is very concrete: a *stable* (L **stabulum** < **stare**) is a “stand-place”; and a *vehicle* (L **vehiculum** < **vehere**, “carry,” “convey”) is a “carry-thing.” *Fable* (L **fa-bula** < **fari**, “speak”) is directly related to *fame* (L **fa-ma**) and *fate* (L **fa-tum**). A few other examples are *curriculum* (< **currere**, “run”), *spectacle* (< **spectare**, “watch”), and *miracle* (< **mirari**, “marvel”). A *tentacle* is a “try-thing” (< **temptare**). Closely akin to this group are words with slightly different suffixes—the doublets *spectrum* and *spectre* (L **spectrum**, “look-at-thing,” “image” < **specere**²), *fulcrum* (L **fulcrum**, “prop-thing” < **fulcire**), and *sepulchre* (L **sepulcrum**, “bury-place,” < **sepelire**, **sepultus**).
- Present-infinitive base + **-ium**. Second-declension neuter nouns can be formed from verbs by the addition of this simple suffix, examples of which we met in §12. Some of these have entered English with the suffix unchanged: *odium* (“hatred”), *tedium* (“boredom,”) [L **taedium**, “disgust”], and *delirium* (“raving”). A *compendium* (“something weighed together”) has come to mean an abridgement or a shortcut. As we saw back in §14, words like this may take other forms in English: L **studium** > E *study*, L **refugium** > E *refuge*, L **sacrificium** > E *sacrifice*, L **solstitium** > E *solstice*.

Notes

1. Cf. E *acute* (“sharpened”), from the Latin perfect participle **acutus**. Its antonym, *obtuse* (“blunted”), is from **obtundere**, **obtusus**.
2. We saw another “look-at-thing” in **specimen**, from **specere**. Latin also had a noun **specula** (“watch-place,” “tower,”) which lies behind our verb *speculate*, and yet another noun **speculum** (“mirror”).

§75. Chapter 10: Exercises

1. By following the theoretical principles of Chapter 10, reconstruct the LATIN ETYMON for each of the following English words, and identify the basic LATIN VERB:

<i>English word</i>	<i>Latin etymon</i>	<i>Latin verb</i>
e.g. <i>incursion</i>	incursio	currere, cursus (“run”)
a. <i>premonition</i>	_____	_____
b. <i>conservator</i>	_____	_____
c. <i>adventure</i>	_____	_____

2. Using a dictionary if necessary, give the ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING etymological meaning of the following English words:

a. <i>retrogression</i>	_____
b. <i>interlocutor</i>	_____
c. <i>dissension</i>	_____
d. <i>obstacle</i>	_____

3. Analyse each of the following words:

e.g. *prescription* < L *praescriptio*: prefix *prae-* (“before”) + perf. part. base *script-* (*scribere*, “write”) + noun suffix *-iō* (*-iōnis*)

a. *introspection*

b. *contradict*

c. *manufacture*

d. *compositor*

e. *inspirational*

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 11: Turning Latin Nouns into Latin Verbs

§76. What is a Denominative Verb?

Despite its fancy label, the denominative verb is among the easiest and most predictable forms in the Latin language. From the English point of view, it is also one of the most useful. In this short chapter, you will discover the key to hundreds of English words—words that might otherwise be somewhat obscure, if not totally mystifying.

A DENOMINATIVE VERB is, quite logically, a verb that is derived from a noun (L **nomen, nominis**). In its etymology, *denominative* (**de-nomin-are, de-nomin-atus**) means “taken from a noun”; and the word is a perfect example of the principle that it describes. At the heart of every Latin denominative verb should lie a NOUN BASE, upon which the verb has been constructed. Thus **radi-are, radi-atus** (E *radiate*) is clearly formed on the base of **radi-us**, “rod,” “spoke,” etc. This is in contrast to standard verbs, where the word root expresses an action: **curr-**, **vid-**, **ven-** (“run,” “see,” “come”).

To the ancient Roman grammarians, the class of nouns (**nomina**) included both *nouns* and *adjectives*, in our modern terminology.¹ That historical detail is of no great importance, but it can explain why the denominative label is applied also to verbs that are formed from adjective bases. They are a far less numerous group, but they include verbs like **medi-are, medi-atus** (E *mediate*), from the adjective **medi-us, -a, -um**: “to play a middle role.” In this chapter, we’ll focus mainly upon denominatives that have noun bases, in our modern sense of the word.

Notes

1. What we refer to today as a “noun” or “pronoun” was a **nomen substantivum**; an “adjective,” a **nomen adjectivum**.

§77. Denominative Verbs in -ARE, -ATUS, and their nouns
in -AT -IO

For the sake of illustration, let us begin with a simple noun concept, like **forma**, “shape.” The base of this 1st declension noun, as we learned in Chapter 2 (§10, [Table 2.1](#)), is **form-**. Let us assume, then, that you want to express the action concept “to give something a shape,” “to shape.” In Latin, this idea can be easily conveyed by inventing a 1st conjugation verb—**form-are**, **form-atus**. It’s as simple as that. Now, if you want to express the notion “to shape again,” add a common prefix so as to get **re-form-are**, **re-form-atus**. Attach a suffix, and in three steps we have arrived at the *Reformation* (L **re-form-at-io**), a “re-shaping” that was one of the most profoundly important events in European history.

Notice some of the delightfully regular features of the Latin denominative and its English descendants. A cause for rejoicing is the fact that the vast majority of these verbs belong to the **FIRST CONJUGATION**, a pattern that we know to be straightforward and predictable. What we’re dealing with, in effect, is the addition of **-are**, **-atus** to a vast number of Latin nouns. “To get into a mask” (L **persona**) is **im-person-are**, **im-person-atus**: to *impersonate*. As in this particular example, a great many of the English derivative verbs will end in *-ate*; that is to say, they will be derived from the 1st conjugation Latin perfect participle in **-atus**. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 10 (§71), it will be an incredibly easy step to turn that perfect participle into a noun: “the act of getting into a mask” is an **im-person-at-io**, English *impersonation*. Because the Latin noun that meant “wheel” was **rota**, the verb “to wheel” is **rot-are**, **rot-atus**, and we can fully understand the etymology of *rotate* and *rotation* (**rot-at-io**). You will likely be amazed at the number of English words that can be explained by those few obvious principles.

Here are a few examples that use familiar noun vocabulary from Chapters 2 and 3:

LATIN NOUN OR BASE	LATIN DENOMINATIVE VERB	ENG. VERB	ENG. NOUN
tabula (“list”)	tabulare, tabulatus	<i>tabulate</i>	<i>tabulation</i>
locus (“place”)	locare, locatus	<i>locate</i>	<i>location</i>
populus (“people”)	populare, populatus	<i>populate</i>	<i>population</i>
stimulus (“spur”)	stimulare, stimulatus	<i>stimulate</i>	<i>stimulation</i>
terminus (“end”)	terminare, terminatus	<i>terminate</i>	<i>termination</i>
officium (“duty”)	officiare, officiatus	<i>officiate</i>	
vitium (“fault”)	vitiare, vitiatus	<i>vitiate</i>	
labor (“work”)	e-laborare, e-laboratus	<i>elaborate</i>	<i>elaboration</i>
milit- (“soldier”)	militare, militatus	<i>militate</i>	
origin- (“source”)	originare, originatus	<i>originate</i>	<i>origination</i>
capit- (“head”)	de-capitare, de-capitatus	<i>decapitate</i>	<i>decapitation</i>
lumin- (“light”)	il-luminare, il-luminatus	<i>illuminate</i>	<i>illumination</i>
opus, oper- (“work”)	operare, operatus	<i>operate</i>	<i>operation</i>
gradu- (“step”)	graduare, graduatus	<i>graduate</i>	<i>graduation</i>
situ- (“position”)	situare, situatus	<i>situate</i>	<i>situation</i>

The English nouns in the fourth column, of course, all come from Latin nouns of the type **tabulatio**, **tabulation-is**; **locatio**, **location-is**, etc. Not every **-io** word of this kind actually existed in real Latin use, at any time in history; many of them were created in modern English (or French) as the result of inventiveness and analogy. (It is a curious and paradoxical fact of English that our language has more Latin derivatives than the sum total of all known Latin words!) In addition to producing the **-io** type nouns, Latin denominative verbs could be the source of AGENT NOUNS like **terminator**, **originator**, and **operator**, which maintain their exact Latin form in English. (§73).

We could devise another long list of denominative verbs from familiar Latin adjectives. **Firmus** is the source of the verb **con-firm-are**, **con-firm-atus** and its derived noun **con-firm-at-io** (E *confirmation*); compare **ad-firm-at-io** > *affirmation*. *Acceleration* is derived from **ad-celer-at-io** (< **celer**, “fast”), and *abbreviation* from **ad-brevi-at-io** (< **brevi**, “short”). *Alleviate* (**ad-levi-are**) and *aggravate* (**ad-grav-are**) are etymological opposites, from **levis** (“light”) and **gravis** (“heavy”). These last few examples illustrate the principle of *assimilation* (< **ad-simil-at-io**). From **longus** come **e-long-at-io** and **pro-long-at-io**, (E *elongation* and *prolongation*.). The adjectival base of *infatuated* is **fatu-us** (“silly”); of *desiccated*, **sicc-us** (“dry”); and of *extenuated*, **tenu-is** (“thin”).

§78. Interesting Words

As you may have begun to notice, the most intriguing denominatives are those that involve Latin prefixes. To *exonerate* (**ex-oner-are**, **ex-oner-atus**) is “to get someone out from under a load.” To *inseminate* (**in-semin-are**) is “to put seed into”; and to *disseminate* (**dis-semin-are**) is “to spread seed apart (in different directions).” To *ejaculate* (**e-jacul-are**) is to hurl out verbal or seminal missiles (a **jac-ulum** is a “throw-thing”). People with a good knowledge of Latin are likely to understand such words by calling to mind their etymological meanings, either consciously or unconsciously. Those etymological meanings may be quite straightforward, like *rejuvenation* (**re-juven-at-io**), “becoming a young man again”; or less obvious, like *elimination* (**e-limin-at-io**), “[casting] out of the threshold.” *Eradication* (**e-radic-at-io**) is “a rooting out” (**radix**, **radic-is**¹)—a *radical* solution, whereas *annihilation* (**ad-nihil-at-io**) is a reduction “to nothing” (**nihil**). *Evisceration* (**e-viscer-at-io**) means tearing out the guts (**viscera**); *excoriation* (**ex-cori-at-io**) is ripping off the skin or hide (**corium**)—metaphorically flaying alive. Some denominatives seem to be brutally *in-timid-at-ing*!

Even without prefixes, denominatives can be *fascin-at-ing* (“spellbinding”). Does everyone know that *insulation* creates an island (**insula**)?² It is a doublet of *isolation*, which came into English from Italian (through French). *Fluctuation* is the motion of a wave (the 4th declension noun **fluctus**). To *fulminate* is to wield Jupiter’s thunderbolt (**fulmen**, **fulmin-is**), when you are aroused to Olympian fury. To *fornicate* is to play around under the vaulted arches (**fornic-es**), a popular locale for ancient Roman brothels; don’t confuse it with the rare word *formicate*—to swarm with ants (**formic-ae**).³

Some interesting things can happen with the **-atus** ending of the perfect participle, when it is modified by various Romance languages. In Spanish, the feminine form **-ata** regularly became **-ada**, as we see in the Spanish *armada*, an “armed” fleet. (The Latin noun **arma**, “arms,” produced the denominative **arm-are**, **arm-atus**.) The **-ata** > **-ada** change occurred also in Old Provençal, which is the ultimate source of English *salad* (“something salted,” < **sal-are**, **sal-atus**) and *ballad* (originally “something danced,” < Late Latin **ball-are**, **ball-atus**). In French, however, that same **-ata** ending regularly evolved into **-é** or **-ée**, the form of the 1st conjugation French past participle. Therefore **armata** became *arme!e*, the etymon of English *army*. This means that *army* and *armada* are doublets.

Notes

1. Here is the source of the English word *radish*.
2. When the development firm of Cadillac-Fairview was planning the new Eaton’s Centre in Victoria, a senior representative proudly announced, with grand solemnity, that the complex would feature both insulation and “outsulation.” He should have been excoriated, if not eviscerated, on the spot.
3. The Latin word for “oven” or “kiln” was **fornax**, **fornacis** (> E *furnace*). In classical Latin, there was actually a denominative agent noun **fornacator**, which meant “stoker.” It is probably just as well that we don’t have to distinguish in English between *fornicator* and *fornacator*. (The *fornicator* may end up stoking furnaces in the great hereafter.)

§79. Turning Diminutive Nouns into Verbs

By way of a postscript to this chapter, notice how Latin could make denominative verbs out of the “little” nouns that we met in Chapter 7 (§52, §53, §54, §56). Once **forma** (“shape”) had been diminished to **formula** (“little shape”), there could be a verb **formul-are**, **formulatus**—whence English *formulate* and *formulation*. Similarly, **circulus** (< **circus**) produced **circul-are**, **circul-atus**, English *circulate* and *circulation*. From **unda** (“wave”) came the diminutive **undula** (“little wave”); to *undulate* is “to make little waves”—a synonym of *fluctuate*. Examine this progression: **calx**, **calc-is** (“stone”) > **calc-ulus** (“little stone”) > verb **calcul-are**, **calcul-atus** > noun **calculat-io** > E *calculation*. If we are to analyse *calculation*, we should identify and explain each of the elements in **calc-ul-at-io**. Here is an analysis of *capitulation*: < L. capitulatio: capit- (caput, “head”) + -ul- (diminutive suffix) + -at- (perfect participle of denominative verb capitulare) + -io (noun suffix).

Chapter 12: Latin Present Participles and Gerundives

§80. How to Recognize a Present Participle (Latin -NT-)

When you first met the Latin PERFECT PARTICIPLE (**portatus, visus, auditus**), it was identified as a verbal adjective, very much like the English past participle (*carried, seen, heard*) in that it describes a completed action. It is obviously a verb form; indeed, it is one of the key principal parts of the verb. However, it has an adjectival ending and performs the grammatical function of an adjective. (This adjectival function is not so obvious with the English past participle, though Keats's "*heard* melodies" are parallel grammatically to *loud* or *sweet* melodies.)

The Latin form that we are now about to examine is called the PRESENT PARTICIPLE. Like the perfect participle, it too is a verbal adjective, but it describes an action that is still going on in present time. The similarities between Latin and English are here unusually close, and you will not go astray if you think of the Latin present participle as matching almost exactly our adjectival forms in *-ing*: "a *working* woman," "a *leading* man," "a *sleeping* child," "a *burning* desire." Those italicized words are English present participles, a form that always ends in *-ing*. The Latin present participle will have a similarly dependable form, and its etymological meaning can be best expressed by an English *-ing* word. You will always be able to recognize this Latin PRESENT PARTICIPLE by the letters **-NT-**, letters that come at the end of its base and appear at the end of its English derivatives. In fact, the English word *present* is derived from a Latin present participle, and it is a useful reminder of the *-nt* that characterizes this verbal form.

The Latin present participle was a 3rd declension adjective of the form **currents** (nominative), **currentis** (genitive): > English *current* ("running"). As *current* illustrates, the English derivative will regularly be the Latin participle base, which is the genitive form minus its final *-is* ending. That base in **-nt** is the only form of the Latin present participle that there is any useful reason for you to know.

The Latin base ends in **-ent** in all verb conjugations except the first, which always shows **-ant**. In the two **i**-verb classes (the 4th conjugation and the 3rd conjugation **facere** type), the present participle base ends in the letters **-ient**.

That situation can be best summarized by an illustrative table:

Verb conjugation		Lat. present participle	Lat. base	Eng. deriv	Etym. meaning
1st:	-ANT	mutans, mutantis	mutant-	<i>mutant</i>	changing
2nd:	-ENT	ardens, ardentis	ardent-	<i>ardent</i>	burning
3rd:	-ENT	currents, currentis	current-	<i>current</i>	running
3rd (i):	-IENT	patiens, patientis	patient-	<i>patient</i>	suffering
4th:	-IENT	sentiens, sentientis	sentient-	<i>sentient</i>	feeling

§81. Participial Abstract Nouns in -NTIA (> E -nce or -ncy)

There is another very predictable aspect of Latin present participles that is good to learn at the outset. In the Latin language, abstract nouns were often formed from present participle bases, by the addition of the common suffix **-ia**.¹ If the base **patient-** denoted “suffering” in an adjectival sense—as today a *patient* person is a (long-)suffering person—then the derived noun **patient-ia** denoted the act or state of suffering—English *patience*. Way back in Chapter 2 (§14), we saw that Latin **-tia** often evolves into English *-ce*; *patience* is only one of many words to have undergone that change. Thus we can associate the verbal adjective **eloquent-**, “speaking out” (> E *eloquent*) with its abstract noun **eloquentia** (> E *eloquence*). There is a slightly different phonetic change that sometimes occurs in the transmission to English: the **-ntia** of the abstract noun may become, not *-nce*, but *-ncy*. A good illustration is the Latin noun formed from the present participle **constant-** (“standing together”)—**constantia** (“a firm stand,” “steadiness”), which comes into English as *constancy*.² Without the prefix, however, Latin **stantia** was the source of English *stance*, which joins *status*, *station*, and *stature* as yet another abstract noun that means a “standing.”

To summarize, then, we can expect to find English adjectives in *-ant* or *-ent* that have kept the original base form of Latin present participles, alongside corresponding nouns in *-ance* (*-ancy*) or *-ence* (*-ency*) that are derived from Latin abstract nouns in **-ia**. These patterns are very regular and dependable; once you understand the basic formation of the Latin present participle, you will start recognizing countless English words that come from that source. If you have learned Latin verbs by conjugation type, you may even know whether to spell these English words with an *a* (1st conjugation) or an *e* (all the rest).

Notes

1. This will be another category of DEVERBATIVE (= verb-derived) noun, to be added to the various types introduced in [Chapter 10](#).
2. The form *Constance* does exist in English as a woman’s name.

§82. English Derivatives from Latin Present Participles

LATIN VERB	English derivatives from Latin pres. participle in –ant-/–ent-/–ient–	English derivatives from Latin noun in –antia/–entia/–ientia
1ST CONJUGATION		
portare	<i>important</i>	<i>importance</i>
stare	<i>constant, instant, distant, extant</i>	<i>stance, constancy, instance, substance, circumstance¹</i>
2ND CONJUGATION		
sedere	<i>dissident, president, resident</i>	<i>presidency, residence</i>
tenere	<i>abstinent, (in)contient, (im)pertinent</i>	<i>abstinence, (in)continence, (im)pertinence</i>
videre	<i>evident, provident (= prudent)</i>	<i>evidence, providence (= prudence)</i>
3RD CONJUGATION		
agere	<i>agent, cogent, exigent, intransigent</i>	<i>agency, cogency, exigency</i>
cadere	<i>decadent, accident(al), incident(al), coincident(al), occident(al)</i>	<i>cadence, decadence, incidence, coincidence</i>
cedere	<i>antecedent, decedent</i>	<i>antecedence, precedence</i>
currere	<i>current, concurrent, recurrent</i>	<i>currency, occurrence, recurrence</i>
ferre	<i>afferent, efferent, different, preferent</i>	<i>circumference, conference, inference, interference, preference, transference</i>
ponere	<i>component, deponent, exponent, opponent, proponent</i>	
loqui	<i>eloquent, grandiloquent</i>	<i>eloquence, grandiloquence</i>
sequi	<i>consequent, subsequent</i>	<i>sequence, consequence</i>
3RD CONJUGATION (I-BASE)		
capere	<i>incipient, percipient, recipient</i>	
facere	<i>deficient, (co)efficient, proficient, sufficient, abortifacient, rubefacient</i>	<i>efficiency, proficiency, etc.</i>
gradi	<i>gradient, ingredient</i>	
4TH CONJUGATION		
salire	<i>salient, resilient</i>	<i>salience, resilience, resiliency</i>
sentire	<i>sentient</i>	<i>sentience, sentence [irreg.]</i>
venire	<i>(in)convenient</i>	<i>(in)convenience</i>

These illustrations of the Latin present participle and its English derivatives have been drawn entirely from the verb vocabulary that you met in [Chapter 9](#). In the table, the original Latin forms are not listed, because the English word in *-ant* or *-ent* exactly matches the base form of the Latin present participle. Notice that English derivatives of this type are sometimes used as nouns: *agent* usually means a person “doing”; *president*, a person “sitting before” (**prae-** + **sedere**). For the most part, however, the participial derivatives in *-ant* or *-ent* continue to be used as English adjectives, and their etymological and dictionary meanings are often surprisingly close. It is very helpful to know that *abstinent* means “holding away from,” and that *incontinent* means (“not holding together”). If you realize that *afferent* and *efferent* mean “bringing to” and “bringing from” (**ad-** and **ex-** + **ferre**, with assimilation), you won’t confuse those precise neurological terms. The etymological meaning of *provident*, “looking forward,” is exactly what that adjective means today; *prudent* is a doublet—a contraction that goes all the way back to classical Latin. What are the etymological meanings of *distant*, *recurrent*, and *inconvenient*?

Notes

1. From the Latin noun **circum-stant-ia** (“a standing around”) came the adjective **circum-stant-i-alis**, source of the English word *circumstantial*.

§83. Interesting Words

Once you have grasped this concept of the Latin present participle and its kinship with modern English vocabulary, you will start finding participles on every page. Some are common everyday words, while others are erudite and unusual.

The 4th conjugation Latin verb **scire** meant “to know.” The present participle **scient-** did not become an English adjective, but the derived noun **scientia** (“knowledge”) is our word *science*. A *prescient* person is someone “knowing ahead” (< **prae-scient-**), and *prescience* is “foreknowledge.” If you are *omniscient*, you know everything.

The 3rd conjugation verb **fluere** meant “to flow.” Thus *fluent* is simply “flowing.” *Affluent* suggests money “flowing toward” (prefix **ad-**), and *effluent*, sewage “flowing out” (prefix **ex-**). *Influence* comes from Latin **influentia**, which is also the source of *influenza*.¹ A *confluence* is the place where two rivers “flow together”; the German city Coblenz (< **Confluentia**) is at the confluence of the Mosel and the Rhine.

In plane geometry, a *secant* is a line “cutting” a circle, whereas a *tangent* is a line merely “touching.” The word *crescent* referred originally to the “growing” moon (< L **crescere**); and then the image of the crescent moon gave its name to that distinctive shape wherever it occurs (including the *croissant*, which is a French doublet). The verb **crescere** belongs to a 3rd conjugation group called INCEPTIVE or INCHOATIVE verbs; all contain the infix **-sc-**, which suggests “beginning to” or “becoming.” These verbs provide a remarkable set of present participles: *liquescent* (“becoming liquid”), *tumescant* (“beginning to swell”), *pubescent* (“becoming adult”), *nascent*, *renascent*, *juvenescent*, *senescent*, *luminescent*, *incandescent*, *incalcent*, *iridescent*, *convalescent*, *effervescent*, *efflorescent*, *evanescent*, *obsolescent*, *recrudescent* (“becoming raw again”). What do the others mean?

Here is a list of present participles, arranged by conjugation type. Though it may seem interminable, it could be much longer. There is an amazing number of participial derivatives in English, some of them very expressive and evocative words. Each is a pure Latin participle stem; this means that the 1st conjugation derivatives will end in *-ant*, and the rest in *-ent*. Some etymological meanings are given; look up others if you wish.

1ST CONJUGATION:

ambulant (“walking”), *flagrant* (“blazing”), *fragrant*, *vagrant* (“wandering”), *errant* (“straying”), *aberrant*, *expectant* (“watching out”), *extravagant* (“wandering outside”), *ignorant* (“not knowing”), *infant* (“not speaking”), *migrant* (“moving”), *emigrant*, *immigrant*, *reluctant*, *repugnant*. From DENOMINATIVE VERBS (Chapter 11, §76 – §79) come many 1st conjugation present participles. Thus *dominant* is “mastering” (< **dominus**) and *deviant* is “going off the road” (< **via**). Identify the noun bases in these words: *militant*, *mendicant* (“begging”), *itinerant* (“travelling”), *operant*, *radiant*, *stagnant*, *stimulant*, *defoliant*, *exorbitant*, *consonant*, *dissonant*, *abundant*, *redundant*, *undulant*.

2ND CONJUGATION:

ardent (“burning”), *docent* (“teaching”), *latent* (“hiding”), *patent*, *penitent*, *student* (“feeling enthusiasm”), *torrent*, *abhorrent*, *absorbent*, *adjacent*, (“lying beside”), *complacent*, *despondent*, *deterrent* (“frightening off”), *innocent* (“not harming”), *insolent*, *resplendent*, *refulgent* (“gleaming back”), *adherent*, *coherent* (“sticking together”), *inherent*, *apparent*, *transparent*, *translucent* (“showing light across”), *ambivalent* (“being strong on both sides”), *prevalent*, *equivalent*, *detergent* (“wiping away”), *imminent* (< **imminēre**, “overhang”), *immanent* (< **manēre**, “remain”).

3RD CONJUGATION:

lambent (“licking”), *plangent* (“wailing”) *pungent* (“pricking” = *poignant*), *regent* (“ruling”), *rodent* (“gnawing”), *serpent* (“creeping”), *strident* (“grating”), *constituent*, *inadvertent*, *intelligent*, *intermittent*, *confident*, *diffident*, *incumbent* (“lying upon”), *recumbent*, *repellent*, *stringent* (“drawing tight”), *insurgent*, *resurgent*.

3RD CONJUGATION, I-BASE:

sapient (< **sapere**, “be wise”), *homo sapiens*.

4TH CONJUGATION:

lenient (“soothing”), *nutrient* (“nourishing”), *orient* (“rising”), *prurient* (“itching”), *ebullient*, *emollient* (“softening out”), *expedient*, *obedient* (< **audire**).

IRREGULAR:

absent, *present* (< **esse**, “to be”); *potent*, *impotent*, *omnipotent* (< **posse**, “to be able”); *transient*, *ambient*, *circumambient* (< **ire**, “to go”).

Notes

1. That Italian ending occurs also in *cadenza*, a doublet of *cadence* and *chance*—all types of “falling,” from **cadentia**—and in *credenza*, a doublet of *credence* (< **L credentia**).

§84. English Spelling Irregularities

At the end of §81, you were told that Latin 1st conjugation present participle derivatives should appear in English as words in *-ant*, *-ance*, and *-ancy*, and all the others as words in *-ent*, *-ence*, and *-ency*. That is true in theory, and it is usually true in practice (as we’ve just seen in §83). Unfortunately, the rule is slightly muddled by the influence of French, where all present participles are spelled in *-ant*. This means that there are some words in English that were transmitted through French with an *-ant* spelling, where one might expect an *-ent*. Only about a dozen Latin verbs were affected, but their derivatives can be tricky to spell correctly, especially for someone who knows Latin and is determined to follow the rule. In several bewildering cases, the same Latin verb has some English derivatives in *-ant* and others in *-ent*.

The verb **pendere** (“hang”) will illustrate this situation. Given the **-ere** of the present infinitive, we would expect derivatives in *-ent*; sure enough, the English ADJECTIVES *pendent*, *dependent*, and *independent* (“not hanging down from someone”) are spelled with an *e*, as are *dependence*, *dependency*, (both < L **dependentia**) and *independence*. However, the NOUN that means “a hanging ornament” is spelled *pendant*, and has a doublet *pennant*. Here is the French influence; if you find it confusing, you’re in good company. To their credit, the tax collectors at Revenue Canada know that the noun *dependant* is spelled with an *a*, even though the adjective *dependent* has an *e*.

In §82, we saw a number of **tenere** derivatives in *-ent* and *-ence*, as one would expect. However, *tenant* and *tenancy* show the French influence, as do *maintenance* (“holding in the hand”), *lieutenant*, and *lieutenancy*. The Anglo-Latin phrase *locum tenens* (used by doctors for a substitute “holding the place”) is precisely equivalent to *lieutenant*; it has a noun form *locum-tenency* that parallels *lieutenancy*.

English has two homonyms spelled *mordant* and *mordent*. Both come from the present participle of **mordere** (“bite”), and have the same etymological meaning “biting.” If wit is “biting,” it is *mordant*, but the musical embellishment is a *mordent* (via Italian). You can take your pick of *ambiance* or *ambience* (< L **ambire**), but the first should be spoken with a French accent. In the case of *Renaissance* and *renascence* (both “rebirth”), the first denotes a particular period in European history, and the second can be any *resurgence*.

Other spelling quirks include derivatives of **tendere** (*attendant* and *attendance*, as opposed to *superintendent* and *tendency*); **defendere** (*defendant*); **dormire**, “sleep” (*dormant*, *dormancy*); **servire** (*servant*, but *subservient*); **scandere**, “climb” (*ascendant*, *descendant*, but *transcendent*); **sistere**, “stand” (*assistant*, *assistance*, *resistant*, *resistance* alongside *consistent*, *existence*, *insistent*, *persistent*, *subsistence*). There’s *inconsistency* for you!

§85. The Latin Gerundive: the -ND- form

The GERUNDIVE is far less important than the present participle. You should be able to recognize its more obvious English derivatives, but there is no need to examine its Latin formation and grammatical use. In brief, it is a 1st and 2nd declension verbal adjective, which always has the characteristic morpheme **-nd-** in both Latin and English.¹ (It may help to remember this element by the *-nd-* of *gerundive*.)

In its most fundamental usage, the Latin gerundive conveys the idea of obligation or necessity. The name *Amanda* is a feminine gerundive, meaning “[a woman] to be loved,” “[a woman] who must be loved.” *Miranda*, similarly, is “[a woman] to be admired.” Two of the most familiar Latin gerundives in English are both 2nd declension neuter adjectives used as nouns: *memorandum*, “[a thing] that must be remembered,” and *referendum*, “[a thing] that should be brought back.” Again, an *addendum* is a thing that should be added, and a *corrigendum* one that should be corrected; a hastily edited book may contain a list of *addenda* and *corrigenda* (regular Latin plurals). Originally, *propaganda* were things to be propagated or disseminated. An *agenda* (L **agere**) is a list of “[things] to be done”; that form, too, is plural, though the singular *agendum* sounds very pedantic in English. How would you pluralize *memorandum* and *referendum*? (You have a choice in both cases.) The plural *pudenda* (L **pudere**) are things to be ashamed of—a rather coy and archaic euphemism for the human genitals.

Some gerundives have lost their Latin endings in English, thus sounding less alien. A *legend* is a thing “to be read” (L **legere**) and *reverend* means “to be revered.” If you have been exposed to traditional arithmetic, you will know all about the *subtrahend*, the *multiplicand*, and the *dividend*; the last, of course, is a word of broader application. Through Italian, English has acquired the musical term *crescendo* (L **crescendus**, “to be increased”), its opposite *diminuendo*, and *sforzando* (*sf* = “to be forced”).

If you want a few exotic and disguised gerundives, try *hacienda* (< **facienda**), *viand* (< **vivenda**), and *launder* (< late Latin **lavandarius** < **lavanda**, “to be washed”). At this point, we might just say, “q.e.d.” (**quod erat demonstrandum**: “that which was to be demonstrated”).²

Notes

1. If you’re curious about the original Latin form, you may wish to know that the gerundive, like the present participle, shows **-a-** for the 1st conjugation and **-e-** for all the rest, with **-ie-** for **-i-** verbs. Thus (1) **amandus**, (2) **reverendus**, (3) **agendus**, (4) **audiendus**, (3 i-stems) **faciendus**.
2. At the risk of causing confusion and panic, let us dare to mention that there is another Latin verbal form known as the GERUND—a noun, like its English counterpart in *-ing*. It appears in the Latin phrases **modus vivendi** (“way of living”) and **modus operandi** (“way of operating”), as well as in the word *innuendo*, which originally meant “by nodding”—thereby conveying a hint or insinuation.

§86. Chapter 12: Exercises

1. Reconstruct the LATIN ETYMON for the following, and identify the basic LATIN VERB:

<i>English word</i>	<i>Latin etymon</i>	<i>Latin verb</i>
e.g. <i>concurrence</i>	concurrentia	currere, cursus (“run”)
a. <i>abstinence</i>	_____	_____
b. <i>sufficiency</i>	_____	_____
c. <i>impatience</i>	_____	_____

2. Using a dictionary if necessary, give the ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING of the following English words:

a. <i>subtrahend</i>	_____
b. <i>defoliant</i>	_____
c. <i>exorbitant</i>	_____
d. <i>concatenation</i>	_____

3. What semantic link connects *flagrant*, *ardent*, *fervent*, *effervescent*, and *ebullient*?

4. Analyse the following words:

a. *opponent*

b. *resiliency*

c. *calculation*

d. *inconsequential*

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Chapter 13: Turning Latin Verbs into Latin Adjectives

§87. The Latin suffixes -BILIS (> E -ble) and -ILIS (> E -ile)

Before reading this chapter, you might be well advised to review [Chapter 5](#) (summary in [§41](#)), where you learned how a variety of suffixes can be attached to Latin NOUN bases in order to form derived adjectives. A closely parallel process occurs with VERBS, using an altogether different set of suffixes.¹ Once again, the Latin categories are reflected quite systematically in their English derivatives. Since the principle is one that we have now seen many times, the less important types will be presented with a minimum of comment.

There are two suffixes that convey the idea “able to be,” when joined either to a present or perfect verb base.

- The first is **-BILIS**, which is linked to the verb base by a stem vowel: **-a-** for the 1st conjugation, and **-i-** for the rest. Thus the 1st conjugation verb **laudare** (“praise”) gave rise to the adjective **laud-ā-bilis** (“able to be praised”) > English *laudable*. This Latin loan-word is very close in meaning to the English hybrid *praiseworthy*.² The 4th conjugation verb **audire** (“hear”) produced **aud-ī-bilis** (“able to be heard”) > English *audible*. Similarly, *portable* (< L **port-ā-bilis**) means “able to be carried”; and *visible* (< L **vis-ī-bilis**) means “able to be seen.” Notice that the suffix usually expresses a PASSIVE rather than an ACTIVE meaning; that is to say, *audible* conveys the notion “able to be heard,” not “able to hear.” Sometimes an active meaning is apparent, as in the adjective *stable* (< L **sta-bilis**), “able to stand.”³ Occasionally the suffix has a slightly different force, as in *horrible* (< L **horr-ī-bilis** < **horrēre**, “shudder”), which suggests “able to cause a shudder” (L **horror**).

From Latin present infinitive bases we get such English adjectives as *tangible* (L **tangibilis** < **tangere**, “touch”); *credible* (L **credibilis** < **credere**, “believe”); *con-vertible* and *in-contro-vertible* (L **vertibilis** < **vertēre**, “turn”). From Latin perfect participle bases come *visible* (L **visibilis** < **videre**, **visus**); *flexible* (L **flexibilis** < **flectere**, **flexus**, “bend”); and *risible* (L **risibilis** < **ridere**, **risus**, “laugh”). *Soluble* (late Latin **solubilis**) is a slightly irregular derivative of **solvere**, **solutus**, “loose.”

Unfortunately, a knowledge of Latin will not provide an *infallible*⁴ guide to English spelling. As we saw with Latin present participles, the process of French transmission can confuse the conjugation rules. Thus English has forms such as *tenable* and *movable*, both derived from 2nd conjugation verbs in **-ēre**. Moreover, in modern English usage *-able* is treated as a standard suffix that can be added to almost any verb, whether Latin or Germanic in origin; accordingly, we have *transferable*, *manageable*, *workable*, and a host of other adjectives that have no original Latin counterpart.

- The second suffix is **-ILIS**,⁵ identical in usage to **-bilis**. Alongside of *tangible*, we have the adjective *tactile* (L **tactilis** < **tangere**, **tactus**), which has exactly the same etymological meaning, “able to be touched.” In English, *tactile* has acquired a special meaning, “pertaining to the sense of touch.” Although the adjective *fragible* does exist in English, we more often use *fragile* (L **fragilis**, “able to be broken” < **frangere**, **fractus**, root **frag-**). Etymologically, *docile* (L **docilis** < **docere**, “teach”) means “able to be taught”; today it is a virtual synonym for *tractable* (L **tractabilis** < **tractare**), “able to be handled.” *Agile* (L **agilis**) has an active

meaning: “able to act” or “do” (**agere**). A *missile* is “able to be sent” (**mittere, missus**), whereas a *projectile* is “able to be thrown forward” (**pro-jicere, pro-jectus**). Can you work out the etymological meanings of *ductile, tensile, reptile, versatile, and volatile*?

Both the **-bilis** and **-ilis** adjective types could form nouns in **-itas**, as suggested by our words *portability, visibility, agility, and fragility* (= *frailty*). Many such English forms, however, are modern coinages, including all hybrids like *workability*.

Notes

1. This chapter deals only with DEVERBATIVE adjectives formed by the use of suffixes. Don't forget that the perfect participle, the present participle, and the gerundive are all verbal adjectives, as well; in their case, one may say that the verb stem itself is modified, rather than augmented by a suffix.
2. It is called a hybrid because the etymon of *praise* is Latin **pretiare** (“to value”), a denominative verb from **pretium**. The English words *praise, prize, and price* are all close relatives.
3. The *stable* in which farm animals are kept is a homograph derived from L **sta-bulum** (a “stand thing”); see §74, number 4.
4. < L **fallere**, “deceive.”
5. This morpheme did not have the same Latin pronunciation as the **-ilis** that was attached to nouns (e.g., **sen-ilis**, “like an old man”), since the deverbative suffix had a short **-ĭ-** (e.g., **agilis**).

§88. Adjectives from the Present Base (-AX, -UUS, -ULUS, -IDUS)

We can swiftly review a number of adjective-forming suffixes that were regularly added to the LATIN PRESENT INFINITIVE BASE.

1. **-AX**. This suffix could be combined with a present verb base (e.g., **ten-ere**, “hold”) to form a 3rd declension adjective of the type **tenax**, **tenac-is**, “inclined to hold,” with English derivatives like *tenacious* and *tenacity* (L **ten-ac-itas**).¹ Here is a sample:

LATIN INFINITIVE	LATIN MEANING	LATIN ADJECTIVE	ENGLISH DERIVATIVES
audēre	“dare”	audax	<i>audacious, audacity</i>
vivere	“live”	vivax	<i>vivacious, vivacity</i>
capere	“take”	capax	<i>capacious, capacity</i>
rapere	“seize”	rapax	<i>rapacious, rapacity</i>
loqui	“speak”	loquax	<i>loquacious, loquacity</i>
pugnare	“fight”	pugnax	<i>pugnacious, pugnacity</i>

2. **-UUS**. We met several of these adjectives in Chapter 4 (§26), though you weren’t told at the time that they derived from verbs. If **nocēre** is “to harm,” then **nocuus** (E *nocuous*) is “inclined to harm,” “harmful,” and **innocuus** (E *innocuous*) is its opposite. The root of **tangere** appears as **tig-** in **contiguus**; so English *contiguous* means “touching together.” From **con-tinere** (“hold together”) came **continuus**, whence *continuous* and *continuity*. **Deciduus** is derived from **de-cidere**, a compound of **cadere**; therefore *deciduous* leaves are “inclined to fall down.” What is the etymology of *conspicuous*?

3. **-ULUS**. Very similar in meaning, this suffix had limited use in Latin. **Bibulus** (< **bibere**) is the etymon of English *bibulous* (“tending to drink”), and **tremulus** (< **tremere**), of *tremulous* (“inclined to tremble”). Other English examples are *pendulous* (**pendere**, “hang”), *querulous* (**queri**, “complain”), and *garrulous* (**garrire**, “chatter”).

4. **-IDUS**. These adjectives often correspond with deverbative nouns in **-or**, of the type introduced in §74. Thus **timēre** (“to fear”) gave rise to the noun **timor** (reflected in E *timorous*) and the adjective **timidus** (“inclined to fear”) > English *timid*. Similarly,

pallēre (“to be pale”)	> pallor (noun)	pallidus (adj.), E <i>pallid</i>
rigēre (“to be stiff”)	> rigor	rigidus , E <i>rigid</i>
tumēre (“to swell”)	> tumor	tumidus , E <i>tumid</i> [cf. <i>tumescant</i> , <i>-ence</i>]

Other English adjectives of this type include: *fervid*, *liquid*, *livid*, *stupid*, *squalid*, *valid*, *vapid*, *lucid*, *rapid*, and *vivid*.²

Notes

1. The *-acious* ending on *tenacious* is derived from French *tenacieux*, which was influenced by the Latin **-osus** type of adjective. There was never a Latin form “**tenaciosus**.”
2. All but the last three have corresponding **-or** nouns, both in Latin and in English. Except for *rapid* (**rapere**) and *vivid* (**vivere**) all these adjectives are derived from 2nd conjugation verbs.

§89. Adjectives from the Perfect Base (-ORIUS, -IVUS)

1. Just as nouns can have an adjectival suffix in **-arius** (§38), so can the perfect participle base take a similar adjective-forming suffix in **-orius**; in its neuter **-orium** form, it too can mean “a place for.” The **-orius** adjective appears as English *laudatory*, *amatory*, *exclamatory*, *expository*, etc. The noun is seen in *auditorium*, *moratorium* (“delay”), *dormitory*, *laboratory*, *lavatory*, *conservatory*, *observatory*, and *purgatory* (“cleanse”).

2. The perfect participle could also assume the suffix **-ivus**, which originally meant “tending to.” Thus from **agere**, **actus** came **activus** (E *active*, “tending to do”), and from **fugere**, **fugitus** came **fugitivus** (E *fugitive*, “tending to run away”). The suffix is common in English: *motive*, *captive*, *decisive*, *incisive*, *evocative*, *deductive*, *inductive*, *seductive*, *putative*, *interrogative*, *infinitive*, *derivative*, *denominative*.

§90. Interesting Words

The **-bilis** and **-ilis** suffixes have given rise to many intriguing English words. Behind *impeccable* (L **impeccabilis**) lies the verb **peccare** (“sin”); behind *indefatigable*, **fatigare** (“weary”). The base of *inexorable* (L **inexorabilis**) is **orare** (“beg,” “pray”), so that the adjective means “unable to be prayed away.” The nouns **terminus** (“end”) and **radix, radicis** (“root”) underlie the denominatives *interminable* (L **in-termin-abilis**) and *ineradicable* (L **in-e-radix-abilis**). In *fate*, *fable*, *fame*, and *infant*, we have met the Latin verb **fari, fatus** (“speak”); *affable* (**affabilis**), now “polite” or “courteous,” originally meant “able to be spoken to” (**ad-**); *ineffable* still means “unable to be spoken out” (**ex-**). An appetite that is *insatiable* is “unable to get enough” (**satis**). A *dirigible* is an airship that can be directed or steered. What would you make of *imperceptible* and *incorrigible*?

Don’t confuse *incredible* and *incredulous*, which are both derived from **credere, creditus** (“believe,” “trust”). Whereas *incredible* (L **incredibilis**) means “not able to be believed,” *incredulous* (L **incredulus**) means “inclined to disbelieve.” If a department store bargain price is *incredible*, we should probably be *incredulous*.

Sometimes Latin verb stems could be modified by phonetic changes. Even in classical Latin, “able to move” (**movere, motus**) was **mobilis**, E *mobile*; and “something easily poured” (**fundere, fusus**) was **fut(t)ilis**, E *futile*. By now, you have probably wondered about *able* itself. It evolved from L **habilis** (**habere**), just as *ability* derived from Latin **habilitas**. (At this point, would it be *futile* to offer a little *re-hab-il-it-at-ion*?)

Chapter 14: Compound Words in Latin

§91. What is a Compound Word?

In correct linguistic use, the term “compound” describes a word that consists of two or more words or word bases. For the most part, prefixes and suffixes are morphemes that cannot stand alone as independent words; in contrast, the elements of a compound have that capacity.¹ The Germanic family of languages is strongly predisposed to compounding; modern German, in particular, can boast many words that stretch across half a line of print. Though not nearly so flexible, English is rich in compounds, most of them two elements in length: *milkmaid*, *sunbeam*, *firebreak*, *waterspout*, *goalkeeper*, *folktale*, *rattlesnake*, *dogcatcher*, *flashlight*, *brainwash*, *handmade*, *homesick*—one could go on indefinitely. When we come to the [Greek section](#) of our course, we’ll find that compounding plays an important role in word formation within that language. Compound words are not so conspicuous in the Latin tradition; but they do exist, and they do affect English vocabulary. For example, there are many English words that contain Latin numerical elements; these will be examined in a Part II [chapter](#) (e.g. [§125](#)) on Latin and Greek number words. The present chapter will look at some of the other types, with an emphasis on verbs.

Notes

1. In traditional Latin grammar, forms like **convocare**, **intermittere**, and **circumvenire** have been described for centuries as COMPOUND VERBS. Though one may argue that most Latin verb prefixes can stand alone as prepositions, modern linguists would not necessarily identify these words as compounds.

§92. General Principles of Latin Compounds

Most Latin compound words and their derivatives can be divided into two classes:

- In DESCRIPTIVE compounds, the first element (usually an adjective) describes the second (usually a noun). A good example is **aequ-i-libr-ium** (E *equilibrium*), where the first base is the adjective **aequus** (“even”) and the second is the noun **libra** (“balance”). Another is **mult-i-later-alis** (E *multilateral*), where the first base is the adjective **multus** (“many”) and the second is the noun **latus, lateris** (“side”). The English compound adjective *many-sided* corresponds closely to *multilateral*.
- In DEPENDENT compounds, the first element (typically a noun or adjective) is dependent on the second (usually a verb). For example, **carn-i-vor-a** (E *carnivora, carnivores*) are “eaters of flesh,” and a **con-i-fer** (E *conifer*) is a “bearer of cones.”

It doesn’t seem very profitable deciding whether a Latin compound is descriptive or dependent, since we don’t worry about these academic distinctions in English (where *housemaid* is descriptive, but *housecleaner* dependent; *homemade* descriptive, but *homemaker* dependent). In practical terms, it is more important to observe how Latin compounds are formed: the two bases are linked by a **CONNECTING VOWEL**, almost always **-i-**. That is a principle that was followed throughout the history of Latin, and is still observed today when new Latin loan-words are coined in science or medicine. In some old Latin compounds—especially numerical compounds—a different connecting vowel can be seen, like the **-u-** in **quadr-u-ped** (“four foot”). Normally, however, it will be **-i-**. No such vowel is needed if there is already a vowel at the juncture of the two bases; therefore **magn-anim-us** (E *magnanimous*), “great-spirited,” **aequ-anim-itas** (E *equanimity*), “level-mindedness,” and **bene-fact-or** (“well-doer”).

§93. Compounds Related to FACERE

Of all the verbs used to form Latin compounds, none has been more fruitful than **facere**, which appears in English in such forms as *pacific* (< **pac-i-fic-us**), *pacify* (< **pac-i-fic-are**), and *pacification* (< **pac-i-fic-at-io**). Here the first base is **pax, pacis** (“peace”), so that *pacific* means “peace-making.” The 1st conjugation verb **pacificare** is a regular denominative from the adjective **pacificus**; the English spelling *-fy* is a legacy of the French *-fier*. English hasn’t many adjectives in *-ific*: *terrific* (< **terror**, “fright”), *horrific* (< **horror**, “shudder”), *honorific* (< **honor**, “honour”), *beatific* (< **beatus**, “blessed”), *soporific* (< **sopor**, “sleep”), *prolific* (< **proles**, “offspring”), and *scientific* (< **scientia**, “knowledge”). We could easily produce a longer list of words in *-fy*, most of which have corresponding abstract nouns in *-fication*. In the following sample, notice that the compound may begin with a noun or an adjective; notice also the CONNECTING VOWEL.

LATIN NOUN or ADJ.	fic- COMPOUND	E DERIV.	ABSTRACT NOUN	E DERIV.
deus (“god”)	de-i-fic-are	<i>deify</i>	de-i-fic-at-io	<i>deification</i>
ramus (“branch”)	ram-i-fic-are	<i>ramify</i>	ram-i-fic-at-io	<i>ramification</i>
os, ossis (“bone”)	oss-i-fic-are	<i>ossify</i>	oss-i-fic-at-io	<i>ossification</i>
clarus (“clear”)	clar-i-fic-are	<i>clarify</i>	clar-i-fic-at-io	<i>clarification</i>
verus (“true”)	ver-i-fic-are	<i>verify</i>	ver-i-fic-at-io	<i>verification</i>
mollis (“soft”)	moll-i-fic-are	<i>mollify</i>	moll-i-fic-at-io	<i>mollification</i>

Our list would include *magnify*, *rectify*, *justify*, *stultify*, *ratify*, *nullify*, *modify*, *petrify*, *calcify*, and *personify*. The last word has a comic-opera doublet. On capturing the maiden daughters of Major-General Stanley, W.S. Gilbert’s *Pirates of Penzance* sing out in glee:

You shall quickly be *parsonified*,
Conjugally matrimonified,
By a doctor of divinity
Who is located in this vicinity.

From Latin **significare** (E *signify*) is derived the present participle *significant*.¹

Several unusual English *-fy* verbs come from Latin compounds in **-facere**, **-factus**. Thus *satisfy* (L **satis-facere**, “to make enough”), *satisfaction* (L **satis-fact-io**); *putrefy* (L **putre-facere**, “to make rotten”), *putrefaction*; and *liquefy* (L **lique-facere**, “to make liquid”), *liquefaction*.² The present participle *liquefacient* joins others of its type in §82: *rubefacient* (“making red”), *tumefacient* (“making swollen”), and *abortifacient* (“producing abortion”)—a modern medical coinage.

Before fleeing the fertile field of **facere**, we must tip our caps to some Latin compound nouns: **sacr-i-fic-ium** (E *sacrifice*), **art-i-fic-ium** (E *artifice*), and **or-i-fic-ium** (E *orifice*), “a mouth-making.” We can also salute **bene-fact-or** and its antonym **male-fact-or**, along with *art-i-fact* and *manufacture* (L **manū-fact-ura**, “making by hand”). English has two related nouns *benefit* (< **bene-fact-um**) and *benefice* (< **bene-fic-ium**); the second is the source of *beneficial* (< **bene-fic-i-alis**)—cf. *sacrificial* and *artificial*.

Notes

1. If you remember the **-fic-**, you’ll never misspell this word as “signifigant”—a persistent student error.
2. Though it seems a spelling quirk, the *-e-* in *putrefy* and *liquefy* is a 2nd conjugation stem vowel.

§94. Other Verbal Compounds

The verb **agere** (“do” or “drive”) has a set of well-disguised compounds. Here the original verb root has been reduced to **-ig-**, as in *navigate* (**nav-ig-at-us**) and *navigation* < **nav-ig-at-io** < **navis** + **agere**, “ship-driving.” From **lis**, **litis** (“lawsuit”) came **lit-ig-are** (E *litigate*, *litigant*) and **lit-ig-i-osus** (E *litigious*). So **fumus** > *fumigate* (“drive smoke”), and **castus** > *castigate* (“drive pure”; i.e., “rebuke,” “correct”). Even in Roman antiquity, *castigate* had acquired the force of its English doublets, *chasten* and *chastise*.

From **ferre** (“bring,” “bear”) came English compound derivatives in *-fer* and *-ferous*. We’ve already seen *conifer* (with its adjective *coniferous*). *Vociferous* is “voice-bringing”; *pestiferous*, “pest-bringing.” The epithet **Lucifer** (“Light-bearer”) was applied to the morning planet Venus long before the name acquired its Satanic connotations. In French, a “mammal” is a *mammifère* (“breast-bearer”). A classicist might misread the modern slogan *Prolifer* (*Pro-lifer*) as **prol-i-fer** (“bearer of offspring”), Latin source of the denominative verb *proliferate*. If prolific Pro-lifers proliferate, will they become aware of that highly appropriate coincidence?

In §83 we met the compounds *omn-i-scient* (“all-knowing”) and *omn-i-potent* (“all-powerful”). *Omn-i-vorous*, like *carn-i-vorous*, derives from **vorare** (“eat,” “devour”)—source of **vorax** (< E *voracious*), §88. The *-parous* part of *oviparous* (L **ov-i-par-us**), “egg-laying,” is the verb **parĕre**, **partus** (“bring forth,” “produce”). So, too, *viviparous* (L **viv-i-par-us**), “producing live offspring.”

Compounds with **bene-** and **male-** include the antonyms *benefactor* and *malefactor*, discussed under **facere**; *benevolent* (“well-wishing”) and *malevolent*; *benediction* (“blessing”) and *malediction* (“curse”).

§95. Interesting Words

The verb **sistere**, **status** (“cause to stand”), in its combining form **-stit-**, provides the key to *solstice* (< L **sol-stit-ium**), the “sun-standing” that occurs when the sun seems poised over the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn at the beginning of summer and winter. (For the **-ium** suffix, see §74) Did you realize that there is also a *lunistice* when the moon is farthest north or south each month? The end of a war brings about an *armistice*, a “standing of weapons.” From **inter-stit-ium**, a “standing between,” English gets *interstice* (usually pluralized as *interstices*).¹ The seasonal opposite of a *solstice* is an *equinox* (L **aequ-i-nox**)—not to be interpreted as an equine ox!

English has a set of descriptive compounds that use the noun base **forma** (“shape”). For instance, *multiform* (L **mult-i-form-is**) is “many-shaped,” while *cruciform* is “cross-shaped.” Ancient *cuneiform* writing uses symbols shaped like wedges. From **cancer**, **cancr-i**, “crab,” comes *cancriform*; from **caper**, **capr-i**, “goat,” comes *capriform*. The constellation *Capricorn* (L **Capr-i-corn-us**), mentioned just above, means “goat-horned.”

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Roman engineering was the *aqueduct* (L **aquae-ductus**), a “leading of water.” The English spelling reflects the Latin genitive case, since this compound is a grammatical unit. Our word *viaduct* is a modern coinage; if it had existed in Latin, it would likely have been “**viae-ductus**.”

Several **manu-** compounds are also syntactical units, where the ablative form **manū-** means “by hand.” We’ve seen *manufacture*; we can add *manuscript* (originally **manu scriptus**), and *manumit* / *manumission*, the formal act of freeing a slave. Our French loan-word *manoeuvre* (U.S. *maneuver*) goes back to **manu operari**, “work by hand.”

If you firmly associate *mitigate* with the adjective *mitis* (“gentle,” “mild”), you won’t make the mistake of confusing *mit-ig-ate* (“drive gentle”; i.e., “soften,” “mollify”) with *milit-ate*, “to soldier.” The commonly heard expression “mitigate against” is nonsense.

The verb **caedere**, **caesus** (“cut,” “kill”) appears in *matricide* (L **matr-i-cid-ium**), “mother-killing” and *homicide* (**hom-i-cid-ium**), “manslaughter.” There were two different Latin nouns—**hom-i-cid-ium**, the act of manslaughter, and **hom-i-cid-a**, the person committing the act; English dictionaries show two parallel words *homicide*. So we get *parricide*, *regicide*, *tyrannicide*, *infanticide*, and the like. Curiously enough, the word *suicide* is a modern coinage that does not follow Latin linguistic rules. The Romans certainly knew all about self-killing, an act praised by Stoic philosophers. However, if Seneca heard the word **su-i-cid-ium**, he would likely interpret it to mean “pig-slaughter” (< **sus**, **su-is**, “swine”).

This astonishing possibility may cause us to wonder whether there are other Latinate words in English that an ancient Roman might misunderstand. The problem of *equator* (a mysterious horseman?) was mentioned in §26. Julius Caesar would surely think that *edification* (**aed-i-fic-at-io**) referred to house construction.² Might he suppose that *ratification* meant raft-building?³ There's little doubt that he would take *mortify* to mean “kill,” since Latin **mortificus** conveys only one idea—“fatal.” All this just reminds us, once again, that words do undergo semantic change, and that a knowledge of etymological meanings does not guarantee absolute linguistic control.

Notes

1. As a postgraduate exercise, you can tackle Samuel Johnson's celebrated definition of NETWORK, in his *Dictionary* of 1755: “Any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.”
2. The noun **aedes** meant house, as did its compound **aed-i-fic-ium** (E *edifice*). Our word *edify* acquired its modern metaphorical meaning in the 16th century.
3. In Latin, **ratīs** is the noun “raft”; **ratus** (from the verb **reri**, **ratus**) is “fixed,” “settled.” Neither word was combined with any form of **facere** in classical Latin.

§96. Chapter 14: Exercises

As a final workout in the Latin section of the course, here is a series of word analyses. You may agree that the toughest part of this procedure can be just getting the hyphens in the right places; once you've identified the components, it is often a routine task to explain them. This time, therefore, let's hyphenate each Latin etymon. For example,

e.g. *artificiality*

< L art-i-fic-i-al-itas: art- (ars, artis, "skill") -i- (connecting vowel) -fic- (facere, "make") -i- (noun suffix -ium) adj. suffix -alis ("pertaining to") noun suffix -itas

1. *transfusion*

2. *equivocal*

3. *compulsive*

4. *accident*

5. *inexplicable*

6. *circulatory*

7. *pertinacity*

8. *insignificance*

9. *circumnavigator*

10. *animadversion*

For **Key to Exercises (Latin)**, see [Appendix I](#).

Appendices

I. Key to Exercises (Latin)

Appendix I

Key to Exercises (Latin)

§17. Chapter 2: Exercises

1. TABULA, GRATIA, AQUA, MODUS, RADIUS, FATUM, VERBUM, OFFICIUM.
2. INGLORIOUS, PREVIOUS, GRANULAR, DEIFICATION, VULGARITY, PREDETERMINATION, COLLOCATION, INNUMERABLE, ASSIGNMENT, VITIATE.

3.	a. L scientia	> E <i>science</i>	3b	f. L digitus	> E <i>digit</i>	2
	b. L matrona	> E <i>matron</i>	2	g. L folium	> E <i>foil</i>	4
	c. L prodigium	> E <i>prodigy</i>	3c	h. L lucrum	> E <i>lucre</i>	3a
	d. L lacuna	> E <i>lagoon</i>	4	i. L spatium	> E <i>space</i>	3b
	e. L nota	> E <i>note</i>	3a	j. L norma	> E <i>norm</i>	2

4. **verbum** to *verb*: specialization **animus** to *animus*: pejoration (and specialization)
5. a. corona; b. genius; c. spectrum; d. price; e. chart, carte (carte blanche); f. folio

§24. Chapter 3: Exercises

1. MILES, MILITIS; MANUS; LEX, LEGIS; LUMEN, LUMINIS; SPECIES; ONUS, ONERIS; SINUS.
2. REGICIDE, DECAPITATION, EXTEMPORANEOUS, SERIAL, MORTIFY, COLLABORATE, ABOMINATION.

- 3.
- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---------------|-------------------|----|---|---------------|------------------|
| a. | 2 | sign- | mark, token, sign | f. | 4 | gradu- | step, grade |
| b. | 1 | form- | shape, form | g. | 2 | mod- | measure, manner |
| c. | 2 | radi- | staff, rod, spoke | h. | 1 | vi- | way, road |
| d. | 3 | labor- | work | i. | 5 | speci- | look, appearance |
| e. | 3 | oper- | work, task | j. | 3 | art- | skill, art |
4. a. person, persona; b. genus, genre; c. radius; d. discus, disc, disk, e. chief; f. spirit

§32. Chapter 4: Exercises

1. What word-ending makes it certain that a Latin adjective must belong to the 1st and 2nd declension type? **-us (-a, -um)**
2. List four Latin adjectives whose English derivative is the Latin word-base plus *-e*: **solus, sanus, planus, amplus, curvus, pronus, supinus**, etc.

3.	<i>Latin adjective</i>		<i>Meaning</i>		<i>Latin adjective</i>		<i>Meaning</i>	
a.	tepidus		warm		d.	fecundus		fruitful, fertile
b.	pristinus		original, primitive		e.	vapidus		lifeless, flat
c.	antiquus		ancient		f.	clandestinus		secret
4.	a.	<i>interim</i>	meanwhile		d.	<i>seriatim</i>		in a row, serially
	b.	<i>circa</i>	around, about		e.	<i>ibid(em)</i>		in the same place
	c.	<i>quondam</i>	formerly, once		f.	<i>alias</i>		otherwise

§44. Chapter 5: Exercises

1.	a.	<i>radial</i>	radialis	d.	<i>tabular</i>	tabularis
	b.	<i>famous</i>	famosus	e.	<i>urban</i>	urbanus
	c.	<i>senile</i>	senilis	f.	<i>virulent</i>	virulentus

- a. *popular* < L popularis: noun base popul- (populus, “people”) + adj. suffix -aris (“pertaining to”)

2.

- b. *equine* < L equinus: noun base equ- (equus, “horse”) + adj. suffix -inus (“like a,” “pertaining to”)

- c. *corporal* < L corporalis: noun base corpor- (corpus, “body”) + adj. suffix -alis (“pertaining to”)

3.

	<i>Etymon</i>	<i>Etymological Meaning</i>
a.	carpentarius	“worker in [maker of] wagons”
b.	terrarius	“worker in the earth”

4. *frigidaire*

5. Jupiter(Jove), Mercury, Mars, Saturn, Venus, Ceres

§50. Chapter 6: Exercises

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. a. severus: severitas <i>severity</i> | d. socius: societas <i>society</i> |
| b. beatus: beatitudo <i>beatitude</i> | e. integer: integritas <i>integrity</i> |
| c. avarus: avaritia <i>avarice</i> | f. aptus: aptitudo <i>aptitude</i> |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. a. freedom <i>liberty</i> | f. height <i>altitude</i> |
| b. wordiness <i>verbosity</i> | g. breadth <i>latitude, amplitude</i> |
| c. stillness <i>tranquility</i> | h. strength <i>fortitude</i> |
| d. darkness <i>obscurity</i> | i. loneliness <i>solitude</i> |
| e. ripeness <i>maturity</i> | j. greatness <i>magnitude</i> |

3. L **civis** (“citizen”) + **-itas** (abstract noun suffix) > L **civitas** (“citizenship” > “city”) OF *cité* > E *city*

	English noun		Latin abstract noun		Latin adjective	Meaning
4.						
a.	poverty	<	paupertas	<	pauper	poor
b.	bounty	<	bonitas	<	bonus	good
c.	dainty	<	dignitas	<	dignus	worthy
d.	frailty	<	fragilitas	<	fragilis	breakable

a.	femininity	< L <u>femininitas</u> : noun base <u>femin-</u> (<u>femina</u> , “woman”) + adj. suffix <u>-inus</u> (“pertaining to”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>				
5.						
b.	originality	< L <u>originalitas</u> : noun base <u>origin-</u> (<u>origo</u> , “source”) + adj. suffix <u>-alis</u> (“pertaining to”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>				
c.	longitude	< L <u>longitudo</u> : adj. base <u>long-</u> (<u>longus</u> , “long”) + noun suffix <u>-itudo</u>				
d.	luminosity	< L <u>luminositas</u> : noun base <u>lumin-</u> (<u>lumen</u> , “light”) + adj. suffix <u>-osus</u> (“full of”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>				
e.	acrimonious	< L <u>acrimoniosus</u> : adj. base <u>acr-</u> (<u>acer</u> , “sharp”) + <u>-i-</u> (connecting vowel) + noun. suffix <u>-monium</u> + adj. suffix <u>-osus</u> (“full of”)				
f.	spirituality	< L <u>spiritualitas</u> : noun base <u>spiritu-</u> (<u>spiritus</u> , “breath”) + adj. suffix <u>-alis</u> (“pertaining to”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>				

§75. Chapter 10: Exercises

1.	a.	premonition	praemonitio	monere, monitus (“warn”)
	b.	conservator	conservator	servare, servatus (“save”)
	c.	adventure	adventura	venire, ventus (“come”)
2.	a.	retrogression:	a stepping back(wards)	
	b.	interlocutor:	one who speaks between <i>or</i> a speaker between	
	c.	dissension:	a feeling apart	
	d.	obstacle:	a thing standing in the way	

-
- a. *introspection* < L introspectio: prefix intro- (“within”) + perf. part. base -spect- (-spicere, “look at”) + noun suffix -io (-ionis)
-
- 3.
-
- b. *contradict* < L contradict-: prefix contra- (“against”) + perf. part. base dict- (dicere, “say”) [equivalent to Germanic “gainsay”]
-
- c. *manufacture* < L manufactura: noun base manu- (manus, “hand”) + perf. part. base fact- (facere, “make”) + noun suffix -ura
-
- d. *compositor* < L compositor: prefix con- (“with”) + perf. part. base posit- (ponere, “place”) + agent noun suffix -or
-
- e. *inspirational* < L inspirationalis: prefix in- (“into”) + perf. part. base spirat- (spirare, “breathe”) + noun suffix -io (-ionis) + adj. suffix -alis (“pertaining to”)
-

§86. Chapter 12: Exercises

-
- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | a. <i>abstinence</i> | abstinētia | tenere, tentus (“hold”) |
| | b. <i>sufficiency</i> | sufficiētia | facere, factus (“make,” “do”) |
| | c. <i>impatience</i> | impatiētia | pati, passus (“suffer”) |
-
- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. | a. <i>subtrahend</i> : | to be drawn (away) below |
| | b. <i>defoliant</i> : | taking away the leaves |
| | c. <i>exorbitant</i> : | going off (out of) the track |
| | d. <i>concatenation</i> : | a chaining together |
-
3. All five relate to heat (dry or wet): *flagrant* is “blazing”; *ardent*, “burning”; *fervent*, “glowing” or “boiling”; *effervescent*, “beginning to boil out (over)”; and *ebullient* “bubbling over.” All are used metaphorically of human actions or emotions.

-
- a. *opponent* < L opponent-: prefix ob- (“against”) + ponent- (present participle base of ponere, “place”)
-
- 4.
-
- b. *resiliency* < L resilientia: prefix re- (“back,” “again”) + -sili- (present participle base of salire, “leap”) + noun suffix -ia
-
- c. *calculation* < L calculatio: noun base calc- (calx, “stone”) + -ul- (diminutive suffix) + -at- (perf. part. base of denominative verb calculare) + noun suffix -io (-ionis)
-
- d. *inconsequential* < L inconsequentialis: prefix in- (“not”) + prefix con- (“together”) + sequent- (pres. part. base of sequi, “follow”) + -i- (noun suffix -ia) + adj. suffix -alis (“pertaining to”)

§96. Chapter 14: Exercises

1. <i>transfusion</i>	< L <u>trans-fus-io</u> : prefix <u>trans-</u> (“across”) + <u>fus-</u> (perf. part. base of <u>fundere</u> , “pour”) + noun suffix <u>-io</u> (- <u>ionis</u>)
1.	
2. <i>equivocal</i>	< L <u>aequ-i-voc-alis</u> : adj. base <u>aequ-</u> (<u>aequus</u> , “even”) + <u>-i-</u> (connecting vowel) + noun base <u>voc-</u> (<u>vox</u> , <u>vocis</u> , “voice”), + adj. suffix <u>-alis</u>
3. <i>compulsive</i>	< L <u>com-puls-ivus</u> : prefix <u>con-</u> (“together”) + <u>puls-</u> (perf. part. base of <u>pellere</u> , “drive”) + adj. suffix <u>-ivus</u>
4. <i>accident</i>	< L <u>ac-cident-</u> : prefix <u>ad-</u> (“to”) + <u>-cident-</u> (pres. part. base of <u>cadere</u> , “fall”)
5. <i>inexplicable</i>	< L <u>in-ex-plic-a-bilis</u> : prefix <u>in-</u> (“not”) + prefix <u>ex-</u> (“out”) + <u>plic-</u> (pres. infin. base of <u>plicare</u> , “fold”) + stem vowel <u>-a-</u> + adj. suffix <u>-bilis</u> (“able to be”)
6. <i>circulatory</i>	< L <u>circ-ul-at-orius</u> : noun base <u>circ-</u> (<u>circus</u> , “circle”) + <u>-ul-</u> (diminutive suffix) + <u>-at-</u> (perf. part. base of denominative verb <u>circulare</u>) + adj. suffix <u>-orius</u>
7. <i>pertinacity</i>	< L <u>per-tin-ac-itas</u> : prefix <u>per-</u> (“thoroughly”) + <u>-tin-</u> (pres. infin. base of <u>tenere</u> , “hold”) + <u>-ac-</u> (adj. suffix <u>-ax</u> , <u>-acis</u> , “inclined to”) + noun suffix <u>-itas</u>
8. <i>insignificance</i>	< L <u>in-sign-i-ficant-ia</u> : prefix <u>in-</u> (“not”) + noun base <u>sign-</u> (<u>signum</u> , “mark”) + <u>-i-</u> (connecting vowel) + <u>-ficant-</u> (pres. part. base of <u>-ficare</u> = <u>facere</u> , “make”) + noun suffix <u>-ia</u>
9. <i>circumnavigator</i>	< L <u>circum-nav-igat-or</u> : prefix <u>circum-</u> (“around”) + noun base <u>nav-</u> (<u>navis</u> , “ship”) + <u>-igat-</u> (perf. part. base of <u>-igare</u> = <u>agere</u> , “drive”) + <u>-or</u> (agent noun suffix)
10. <i>animadversion</i>	< L <u>anim-ad-vers-io</u> : noun base <u>anim-</u> (<u>animus</u> , “mind”) + prefix <u>ad-</u> (“to”) + <u>vers-</u> (perf. part. base of <u>vertere</u> , “turn”) + noun suffix <u>-io</u> (- <u>ionis</u>)

II. Summary of Vocabulary Tables (Latin)

Appendix II

Summary of Vocabulary Tables (Latin)

Table 2.1 LATIN FIRST DECLENSION NOUNS

aqua	water	gratia	favour, thanks
causa	reason, cause	lingua	tongue, language
cura	care, concern	lit(t)era	letter
fama	report, rumour	rota	wheel
forma	shape, form	tabula	tablet, list
fortuna	luck, fortune	via	way, road
gloria	fame, glory	vita	life

Table 2.2 LATIN SECOND DECLENSION NOUNS IN -US

animus	mind, feeling	numerus	number
campus	level field, plain	oculus	eye
circus	circle, Circus	populus	people
deus	god	radius	staff, rod, spoke
equus	horse	stimulus	goad, spur
locus	place	terminus	boundary
modus	measure, manner	vulgus	mass(es), crowd

Table 2.3 LATIN SECOND DECLENSION NOUNS IN -UM

fatum	fate, destiny	pretium	value, price
granum	grain, seed	signum	mark, token, sign
monstrum	evil omen, monster	taedium	weariness, disgust
odium	hatred	verbum	word
officium	service, duty	vitium	fault, vice

Table 3.1 LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS (M. & F.)

labor, laboris	work	pes, pedis	foot
finis, finis	end	urbs, urbis	city
rex, regis	king	vox, vocis	voice
lex, legis	law	crux, crucis	cross
ars, artis	skill	hospes, hospitis	host, guest
pars, partis	part	miles, militis	soldier
mors, mortis	death	origo, originis	source, origin

Table 3.2 LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS (NEUTER)

caput, capitis	head	corpus, corporis	body
cor, cordis	heart	tempus, temporis	time
lumen, luminis	light	genus, generis	race, kind, sort
omen, ominis	omen	opus, operis	work, task
nomen, nominis	name	onus, oneris	load, burden

Table 3.3 LATIN FOURTH DECLENSION NOUNS (M.)

gradus	step, grade	sinus	curve, fold
manus (F.)	hand	situs	position, site
ritus	ceremony, rite	spiritus	breath, spirit

Table 3.4 LATIN FIFTH DECLENSION NOUNS (F.)

effigies	likeness, effigy	res	thing
facies	form, face	series	row, series
rabies	rage, madness	species	look, appearance

Table 4.1 LATIN 1ST AND 2ND DECLENSION ADJECTIVES

aequus	even, equal	multus	much, many
bonus	good	pius	dutiful, good
justus	upright, just	planus	level, flat
longus	long	sanus	healthy, sound
magnus	big, great	solus	alone, only, sole
malus	bad, evil	vacuus	empty
medius	middle	verus	true

Table 4.2 LATIN 3RD DECLENSION ADJECTIVES

brevis	short, brief	grandis	great, large
levis	light	gravis	heavy, grave
fortis	strong, brave	similis	like

Table 5.1 SOME MORE LATIN THIRD DECLENSION NOUNS

navis, navis	ship	margo, marginis	edge
flos, floris	flower	ordo, ordinis	rank, order
mos, moris	custom	limen, liminis	threshold
os, oris	mouth	semen, seminis	seed

Table 9.1: LATIN FIRST CONJUGATION VERBS

cantare, cantatus	sing	putare, putatus	think, reckon
clamare, clamatus	shout	secare, sectus	cut
mutare, mutatus	change	servare, servatus	save
plicare, plicatus	fold	stare, status	stand
portare, portatus	carry	vocare, vocatus	call

Table 9.2: LATIN SECOND CONJUGATION VERBS

docere, doctus	teach	movere, motus	move
habere, habitus	have, hold	sedere, sessus	sit
[-hibere, -hibitus]		tenere, tentus	hold
monere, monitus	warn, advise	videre, visus	see

Table 9.3: LATIN THIRD CONJUGATION VERBS

agere, actus	do, drive	pellere, pulsus	drive
cadere, casus	fall	pendere, pensus	hang; weigh
[-cīdere, -casus]		ponere, positus	place
caedere, caesus	cut	regere, rectus	rule, guide
[-cīdere, -cīsus]		scribere, scriptus	write
cedere, cessus	go; yield	solvere, solutus	loose
currere, cursus	run	tangere, tactus	touch
dicere, dictus	say	tendere, tensus¹	stretch, strain
ducere, ductus	lead	trahere, tractus	draw, drag
ferre (fer-), latus	bring, bear	vertere, versus	turn
frangere, fractus	break	volvere, volutus	roll
fundere, fusus	pour	<i>Deponent verbs:</i>	
jungere, junctus	join	sequi, secutus	follow
legere, lectus	choose; read	loqui, locutus	speak
mittere, missus	send	nasci, natus	be born

Table 9.4: LATIN THIRD I-STEM AND FOURTH CONJUGATION VERBS

<i>Third Conjugation, I-stem</i>		<i>Third I-stem deponent verbs:</i>	
capere, captus	take	gradi, gressus	step, go
[-cipere, -ceptus]		pati, passus	suffer, allow
facere, factus	make, do	<i>Fourth Conjugation:</i>	
[-ficere, -fectus]		audire, auditus	hear
jacere, jactus	throw	salire, saltus	leap, jump
[-jicere, -jectus]		sentire, sensus	feel
-spicere, -spectus	look	venire, ventus	come

Notes

1. The verb **tendere** has an alternate perfect participle **tentus**, a form that overlaps with **tenere**.