

Chapter V

Overview of the First Declension

Overview of the Present Imperfective Active Indicative

The Name Jesus

Aut and Vel

Overview of the First Declension

Nouns of the first declension are mostly feminine (with a few masculine nouns, denoting males). They are almost all completely regular, taking the following endings:

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-a	-æ
Vocative	-a	-æ
Accusative	-am	-as
Genitive	-æ	-árum
Dative	-æ	-is/-ábus
Ablative	-a	-is/-ábus

Only those nouns which have a masculine counterpart in the second declension use -ábus in the dative and ablative plurals.

As an aid to memory, pay attention to the forms which are similar. The nominative and vocative are the same. The genitive and dative singulars are the same, as are the dative and ablative plurals. The nominative and ablative singulars are the same in Ecclesiastical Latin (though there was a difference of vowel length in Classical Latin). There are also some general rules (true of all declensions) which we can see in the first declension. First, the dative and ablative plurals are always the same. Also, the genitive plural always ends in -um (though there may be more to the ending). By noticing patterns you will more easily learn the various forms of Latin words.

Overview of the Present Imperfective Active Indicative

The present active indicative is used for statements of fact where the subject is the actor or experiencer of the verb. Such verbs may take a direct, in which case they are called transitive. Those that do not take a direct object are called intransitive. Both transitive and intransitive verbs may take an indirect object, although it is rare for an intransitive verb to do so. The action described takes place at the same time as the sentence. Also, the present imperfective active indicative is an imperfective tense, so that the action described has one of the following aspectual modes with relation to the point of reference (the time frame described in the sentence):

- **Progressive:** the action is on-going across the point of reference, beginning before and continuing after.
- **Repetitive:** the action recurs often during a period of time including the point of reference.

- **Inceptive (rare):** the action begins at the point of reference.
- **Conative (rare):** the action is attempted, but not accomplished at the point of reference.
- **Aorist:** the action occurs only at the point of reference, extending neither before nor after it, or is a general truth with no particular time frame. (This aspectual mode is perfective in some tenses).

If the above is confusing, ignore it. Basically, the present imperfective is used whenever the action is not completed by the present. If it is happening in the present, the present imperfective is used.

The present indicative is also sometimes used (as in English) for the near future, but this is more common in poetry than in prose. However, the present is often used (especially with *dico* ‘to say’) for a vivid past narration. This is called the historic present, and often in English should be rendered by the simple past (e.g., ‘said’), although rendering it by the present may have a similar effect in English to the Latin.

Verbs fall into one of four conjugations. The first conjugation has a first person singular present imperfective active indicative in -o and an imperfective active infinitive in -áre. The second conjugation has a first person singular present imperfective active indicative in -eo and an imperfective active infinitive in -ére (with stress on the ending). The third conjugation has a first person singular present imperfective active indicative in -o and an imperfective active infinitive in -ere (with stress on the stem). There are also verbs of the third conjugation which take some endings from the fourth declension. These can be identified by a first person singular present imperfective active indicative in -io and an imperfective active infinitive in -ere. The fourth conjugation has a first person singular present imperfective active indicative in -io and an imperfective active infinitive in -íre.

The Name *Jesus*

Because the name ‘Jesus’ is Greek (derived from Hebrew) it follows a declension closer to its Greek original:

	Greek	Latin
Nominative	Ἰησοῦς	Jesus
Vocative	Ἰησοῦ	Jesu
Accusative	Ἰησοῦν	Jesum
Genitive	Ἰησοῦ	Jesu
Dative	Ἰησοῦ	Jesu
Ablative	Ἰησοῦ	Jesu

Aut and *Vel*

Both *aut* and *vel* mean ‘or’. Although the distinction between the two lessened during the Medieval period, originally *aut* connoted the exclusivity of the given options, where *vel* did not. In other words, *desideras panem aut pisces?* ‘do you want bread or fish?’ implies that you

cannot have both. *Desideras panem vel piscem?* does not imply that you are limited to one or the other, you may choose both. *Aut* is called an ‘exclusive disjunctive’ and *vel* an ‘inclusive disjunctive’.

Vocabulary

Nouns

família, familiæ (f)- family, household
Jesus, Jesu (m)- Jesus
lingua, linguæ (f)- tongue; language
pæniténtia, pæniténtiæ (f)- repentance
Sýria, Sýriæ (f)- Syria
turba, turbæ (f)- crowd

Verb

ædífico, ædificáre- to build
ascendo, ascēndere- to go up
surgo, súrgere- to rise up
trado, trádere- to betray
vado, vádere- to go; to hasten

Adverb

ígitur- therefore
íterum- again
mane- early
statim- immediately

Conjunction

ac- and
atque- and
aut- or [exclusive]
neque- and not
vel- or [inclusive]

Exercises

I. Translate into English:

- i. Ac dícitis sapiéntiam.
- ii. Íterum ascendámus cum turbis.
- iii. Venit aut vadit.

II. Translate into Latin:

- i. We are rising early.
- ii. Jesus is going upon (*in*) the way.

- iii. God (*Deus*) gives wisdom or justice.
N.B. A bonus point will be given for the correct disjunction.

III. Compose at least 8 original Latin sentences containing the following words and grammatical constructions, and give English equivalents.

Words: *at least 10 of the vocabulary words not used in the exercises above*

Grammar: *a verb in each person/number; a personal pronoun in the nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive; a verb from each of the five conjugations; one sentence with aut and one with vel; a first conjugation noun in the vocative, dative, and ablative; a postpositive; the verb sum in the imperfect and the future (any person or number)*