

## 6.2. How do you set up a sentence with action in it?

### Parsing exercise

As you are very well aware by this point, the ending on a Latin noun has meaning related to how that noun is functioning with the other words around it in a sentence or a phrase. The ending also indicates whether a particular noun form is singular or plural.

If this were the whole story, it would be fairly easy to master Latin nouns. However, there is another angle: there are five categories of Latin nouns, and these categories each have their own endings for the various functions (with a singular and a plural form for each). I am not going to tell you what that is called—believe me, it’s better if I don’t for right now. In addition, I am not going to dump all five categories of nouns on you. We are going to look at only three of these categories in this *Peeking behind the Curtain*. You will still get a very good idea of how Latin works.

A word, before we begin this exercise: **You do not have to memorize any of the endings in the chart below.** The information here is only for reference, and you will use the chart to (1) figure out which category of noun you’re looking at and (2) decide which function the noun is serving and whether that noun is singular or plural. That’s it.

In the sentences below:

- Identify each noun (or predicate adjective).
- Look up the form on the chart, being careful to distinguish between those forms that show up in more than one place on the chart.
- Say whether the noun is singular or plural.
- Identify the function of the noun.

Here’s an example:

### **Discipulum magistra laudat.**

discipulum. noun, singular, direct object

magistra. noun, singular, subject

*The (female) teacher praises the (male) student.*

Notice that you can find the exact form *discipulum* on the chart. You have to decide whether that form is being used as a direct object or as the object of a preposition; since there is no preposition before *discipulum*, it must be a direct object. *Magistra* is not on the chart, but you can find the ending in the column with *discipula* and *fēmina* in the top box. *Magistra* is a singular form that could be a subject or a predicate noun. We already have seen a direct object in this sentence, so whatever the verb is, it will involve action. If there’s action in a sentence, there cannot be a predicate noun. That means *magistra* is the subject. So before we get to the verb, we can see that the student is receiving the action and that the teacher is the doer of the action.

In the sentences that follow, there will be some vocabulary you have not seen. You will find a vocabulary list on p. 9, but before you consult it, see if you can guess the meaning of the new

words. I wanted to give you a chance to explore some Latin on your own to get the thrill of discovery. All the nouns in the list are in the singular subject form. That's how they would appear in a Latin dictionary.

### Some endings of three types of Latin nouns

(discipulus, vir, liber; discipula, femina; canis, dux, mater)

	1 <sup>st</sup> category		2 <sup>nd</sup> category		3 <sup>rd</sup> category	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
<b>S./P.N.</b>	discipulus <sup>1</sup> vir liber	discipulī virī librī	discipula femina	discipulae feminae	canis dux mater	canēs ducēs mātrēs
<b>I.O.</b>	discipulō virō librō	discipulīs virīs librīs	discipulae feminae	discipulīs feminīs	canī ducī mātrī	canibus ducibus mātribus
<b>D.O./O.P.</b> (certain prepositions)	discipulum virum librum	discipulōs virōs librōs	discipulam feminam	discipulās feminās	canem ducem mātrem	canēs ducēs mātrēs
<b>O.P. (certain prepositions)</b>	discipulō virō librō	discipulīs virīs librīs	discipulā feminā	discipulīs feminīs	canē duce mātre	canibus ducibus mātribus

**S. = subject P.N. = predicate noun I.O. = indirect object D.O. = direct object O.P. = object of a preposition**



1. Discipulus parvus magnum librum legit.

<sup>1</sup> The form *discipule*, which you have seen so many times, is used for direct address, that is, when an individual male is being spoken to. When we are talking about a male student who is the subject or the predicate noun of a sentence, we use the form *discipulus*. You don't make this distinction for the forms *discipulī*, *discipula*, and *discipulae*, which you already learned for greeting, because they are used for the subject of a sentence as well as for direct address. Only *discipulus/discipule* is a cause for confusion.



2. Discipulī sunt doctī.

3. In pictūrā, vidēmus discipulās.  
Discipulae sunt doctae.  
Callidae sunt puellae.



4. Discipula discipulusque librōs legunt.  
Librōs legunt puer puellaque.



5. Senex legit.  
Senex multōs habet librōs.



6. Fēmina et vir legunt.



7. In pictūrā, fēminam virumque vidēmus.

Fēmina et vir ambulat.

8. Fēmina et vir currunt.



9. In pictūrā, alpācam vidēmus.

Alpāca dentēs niveōs habet.

Oculōs habet nigrōs.

10. In pictūrā, est hortus.

In hortō, sunt multae flōrēs et arborēs.

Est via inter flōrēs.





11. In pictūrā, virum et fēminam et canem vidēmus.

In hortō ambulat.

Vir et fēmina canem dūcunt in hortō.

12. In pictūrā, sunt fēmina et vir.

Fēmina et vir sedent in hortō.

Ubi est canis?

Canem nōn habent. Ergō, canem in pictūrā nōn vidēmus.



13. Haec fēmina canem habet. Fēmina cum cane in herbā sedet. Fēmina et canis sedent.



14. Canem canis videt.

15. Canēs per aquam currunt.  
Canis p̄imus baculum portat.



16. Canis parvus currit.  
Nihil portat.

17. Fīlia m̄trī rosam dat.





18. Fīlius mātrī rosās dat.

19. Fēmina dōnum virō dat.



20. Fēminae dōnum dat vir.

21. Fēmina virō viam monstrat.





22. Māter filiō nāvem monstrat.  
Fīlius māt̄rī nāvem monstrat.

23. Anser nat.



24. Anserēs nant.

25. Anserēs volant.







26. In pictūrā, sunt mons et lacūna.  
Sunt arborēs.  
Montem et lacūnam et arborēs in pictūrā vidēmus.  
Vir montem fēminae monstrat.

27. In pictūrā, virum et tigrem vidēmus.  
Vir et tigris in saxō sedent.  
Vir tigrī sēcrētum dicit.



## Vocabulary list

**alpāca** (not a Latin word, but it fits nicely into Latin morphology)  
**ambulant** *verb*, they walk/are walking; *ambulāre*, to walk  
**anser** *noun* goose  
**aqua** *noun*, water  
**arbor** *noun*, tree  
**baculum** *noun*, stick (this noun has the same form for the subject and the direct object)  
**callidus** *adjective* clever, resourceful  
**canis** *noun*, dog  
**cum** *preposition* with  
**currunt** *verb*, they run/are running; *currere*, to run  
**dat** *verb*, he/she/it gives; *dare*, to give  
**dēns** (sing.), **dentēs** (plural) *noun* tooth, teeth  
**discipulus** *noun* (male) student  
**doctus** *adjective* learned, wise  
**dōnum** *noun* gift (like *baculum*, this noun has the same form whether it is a subject or a direct object)  
**dūcunt** *verb* they lead, take; *dūcere*, to lead  
**dux** *noun* leader, general, commander  
**ergō** therefore  
**est** *verb* he/she/it is; *esse*, to be  
**et** and  
**fēmina** *noun* woman  
**filia** *noun* daughter  
**filius** *noun* son  
**flōs** (sing.), **flōrēs** (plural) *noun* flower/s  
**habet** *verb* he/she/it has  
**haec** *pronoun + adjective* this  
**herba** *noun* grass, herb  
**hortus** *noun* garden, park  
**in** *preposition* in, on  
**inter** *preposition* among, between  
**lacūna** *noun* lake, pool  
**legit** *verb* he/she/it reads; *legere*, to read

**liber** *noun* book  
**magnus** *adjective* great, large, big  
**māter** *noun* mother  
**mons** *noun* mountain  
**monstrat** *verb* he/she/it shows, indicates; *monstrāre*, to show  
**multī** *adjective* many (this adjective is used almost always with plural forms, for obvious reasons)  
**nat** *verb* he/she/it swims, floats; *nāre*, to swim, float  
**nāvis** *noun* ship  
**niger** *adjective* black  
**nihil** *pronoun* nothing (form same for subject or direct object)  
**niveus** *adjective* snowy-white  
**nōn** not  
**oculus** *noun* eye  
**parvus** *adjective* small, little  
**per** *preposition* through  
**pictūra** *noun* picture, painting  
**portat** *verb* he/she/it carries; *portāre*, to carry  
**prīmus** *adjective* first  
**puella** *noun* girl  
–**que** and  
**rosa** *noun* rose  
**saxum** *noun* rock (like *baculum* and *dōnum*, *saxum* has the same form for subject and direct object)  
**sēcrētum** *noun* secret (like *baculum* and *dōnum* and *saxum*, *sēcrētum* has the same form for subject and direct object)  
**sedent** *verb* they sit/are sitting; *sedēre*, to sit  
**senex** *noun* elderly man  
**sunt** *verb* they are; *esse*, to be  
**tigris** *noun* tiger  
**ubi?** where?  
**via** *noun* road, path, way

**vidēmus** *verb* we see; *vidēre*, to see  
**vir** *noun* man

**volant** *verb* they fly; *volāre*, to fly

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## *Peeking behind the Curtain: a gentle introduction to the mysterious language of Latin*

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