

III. Puer Improbus

Rēs Grammaticae Novae

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Sibling Quarrel

Now that you have been introduced to the family, you are going to watch some of their doings. We begin with the children—they are portrayed here as being much the same in ancient times as they are today. So, we are not surprised to learn that Julius and Aemilia's children cannot always get on together. Here, little Julia is the first to suffer, because her singing annoys her big brother. Peace is not restored until Mother and Father step in.

The chapter is divided up into three scenes (*scaena prima, secunda, tertia*).

Lēctiō Prīma (Section I)

The Latin Verb

Several of the new words in this chapter are verbs. A verb (Latin *verbum*) is a word that expresses an action or a state: that someone does something or that something exists or takes place. The first Latin verb you come across is *cantat* in the opening sentence: *Iūlia cantat*. Other verbs are *pulsat, plōrat, ridet, videt, vocat, venit*, etc. They all end in *-t*—like *est*, which is also a verb—and mostly come at the end of the sentence.

Verbs

-at	<i>cantat, pulsat, plōrat</i>
-et	<i>ridet, videt, respondet</i>
-it	<i>venit, audit, dormit</i>

Like nouns, verbs are grouped into categories, called conjugations (*coniugātiōnēs*); verbs in the 1st conjugation have stems ending in *-ā*, in the 2nd in *-ē*, in the 4th in *-ī*. In Cap. IV you will learn some verbs from the 3rd conjugation, which also have a 3rd person singular ending in *-it*; in that conjugation, some verbs have a stem ending in *-ī* and others ending in a consonant.

Nouns: Subject/Object

The first of the two words in the sentence *Iūlia cantat* denotes the person who performs the action. Other sentences of the same kind are:

<i>Iūlia plōrat.</i> (1.9)	<i>Aemilia venit.</i> (1.21)
<i>Mārcus ridet.</i> (1.10)	<i>Pater dormit.</i> (1.37)

But it is not always as simple as this. Take, for instance, the sentence that is illustrated by the little drawing in the margin: *Mārcus Iūliam pulsat* (1.8). Here, we are told not only who performs the action, but also at whom the action is aimed. The same pattern is seen in the following sentences, also illustrated by pictures:

<i>Quīntus Mārcum videt.</i> (1.11)	<i>Mārcus Quīntum pulsat.</i> (1.14)
<i>Quīntus Mārcum pulsat.</i> (1.13)	<i>Iūlia Aemiliam vocat.</i> (1.19)

Subject: The person who performs the action is called the subject of the verb. The subject has the ending *-us, -a* (or *-um* for neuter nouns); these forms are called nominative (Latin *nōminātīvus*).

Object: The person toward whom (or the object toward which) the action is directed, the object, takes the ending *-um* or *-am*. The forms *-um* and *-am* are called accusative (Latin *accūsātīvus*).

In other words: *Iūlia* is changed to *Iūliam* when we are told that Marcus hits her, just as *Mārcus* becomes *Mārcum* when he is the victim. In similar circumstances, *puella* changes to *puellam*, and *puer* to *puerum*, and qualifying adjectives get the same ending:

<i>Mārcus parvam puellam pulsat.</i> (1.59)
<i>Iūlius puerum improbum verberat.</i> (1.64)

subject	object	verb
<i>Mārcus</i>	<i>Iūliam</i>	<i>pulsat</i>

	m.	f.
nominative:	<i>-us</i>	<i>-a</i>
accusative:	<i>-um</i>	<i>-am</i>

Both the nominative (subject) and the accusative (object) are called *cases*: *cāsus nōminātīvus* and *cāsus accūsātīvus*.

Verbs: Transitive/Intransitive

Verbs like *pulsat*, *videt*, *vocat*, which can be used with an object in the accusative, are called **transitive**. Verbs without an object—e.g., *plōrat*, *dormit*—are **intransitive** verbs.

Iūlia plōrat (intransitive: no object) *et Aemiliam vocat* (transitive: accusative object). (I.9)

Mārcus nōn videt Quīntum (transitive). (I.11)

In the following sentence, the first verb (*pulsat*) is transitive and the second (*ridet*) intransitive:

Mārcus puellam pulsat—et ridet! (I.12)

Notā Bene: You need to pay attention to whether a word is transitive in Latin—which will not always be the same as its English equivalent!

Lēctiō Altera (Section II)

Personal Pronouns: Accusative Case

Instead of accusative nouns in *-am* and *-um*, you sometimes find the words *eam* and *eum*, e.g.:

Iūlia plōrat quia Mārcus eam pulsat. (II.27–28)

Cūr Iūlius Quīntum nōn audit? Iūlius eum nōn audit, quia dormit. (II.42–43)

On page 20, you will notice the marginal note “*eam: Iūliam*” means that here, *eam* stands for *Iūliam*.

A word of this kind, which takes the place of a name or noun, is called a pronoun (Latin *prōnōmen*, from *prō* “instead of” and *nōmen* “name” or “noun”).

Corresponding to *eum* (him) and *eam* (her), the pronoun *mē* is used when a person is speaking about himself or herself, and *tē* is used about the person spoken to (in English, “me” and “you”):

Aemilia: “*Quis mē vocat?*”

Quīntus: “*Iūlia tē vocat.*” (II.24–25)

	m.	f.
acc.	<i>eum</i>	<i>eam</i>
	<i>mē</i>	
	<i>tē</i>	

Implied Subject

In English, we use the pronouns “he” and “she”: Where is Julius? Why doesn’t he come? But in Latin, these pronouns are not needed. When the context shows who the subject is, it need not be repeated (or replaced by a pronoun):

“*Ubi est Iūlius? Cūr nōn venit?*” (II.35–36)

Similarly:

Iūlius eum nōn audit, quia dormit. (I.43)

“*Cūr māter Mārcum verberat?*” “*Mārcum verberat, quia puer improbus est.*” (II.58–59)

Adverbs: Interrogatives *cūr* and *quia*

The interrogative adverb *cūr* (“why?”) is used to ask about the cause (Latin *causa*). A question introduced by *cūr* calls for an answer with the causal conjunction *quia* (“because”):

Cūr Iūlia plōrat? Iūlia plōrat, quia Mārcus eam pulsat. (II.26–28)

Cūr Mārcus Iūliam pulsat? Quia Iūlia cantat. (II.30–31)

question: *cūr...?*

answer: ...*quia...*

Conjunctions: Negative

The conjunctions *et* and *sed* are not usually combined with a negation; instead of *et nōn* and *sed nōn*, the conjunction *neque* (*ne-que*) is used, i.e., *-que* attached to the original negation *nē* (= *nōn*):

Iūlius dormit neque Quīntum audit. In English, “and not”

Iūlius venit, neque Aemilia eum videt. In English, “but not”

ne-que = et nōn (sed nōn)

Lēctiō Tertia (Section III)

Pronouns: Relative and Interrogative

In the sentence *Puer quī parvam puellam pulsat improbus est* (I.63), *quī* refers to *puer* and is called a relative pronoun. The relative pronoun connects (“relates”) a subordinate clause to a main clause. The relative pronoun refers to a word in the main clause called an **antecedent**. The pronoun will agree with its antecedent in gender and number, but its case will be determined by the subordinate clause. In the preceding example, *quī* is masculine singular to agree with its antecedent *puer* and nominative because it is the subject of *pulsat* in its own clause.

More examples:

Puer quī ridet est Mārcus. (I.70)

Puella quae plōrat est Jūlia. (I.71)

As a relative pronoun *quem* is used in the masculine and *quam* in the feminine when it represents the verb's object in its own clause:

Puer quem Aemilia verberat est Mārcus. (II.75–76)

Puella quam Mārcus pulsat est Jūlia. (II.72–73)

The examples show that *quī* and *quem* (m.) refer to a masculine noun, and *quae* and *quam* (f.) to a feminine noun.

In Cap. IV (I.75) you will meet *quod*, which refers to a neuter noun:

baculum, quod in mēnsā est

At the end of the chapter (p. 23), you find sentences with both the **interrogative** and the **relative** pronoun, e.g.:¹

Quis est puer quī ridet?

Who (interrogative) is the boy **who** (relative) is laughing? (I.69)

In the feminine, the two pronouns are identical:

Quae est puella quae plōrat?

Who (interrogative) is the girl **who** (relative) is crying? (I.70)

The interrogative pronoun *quis* is *quem* in the accusative:

Quem vocat Quīntus? Quīntus Iūlium vocat. (I.77)

Points of Style: Writing Relative Sentences

Consider these sentences

- (from Cap. II) *Iūlius est vir Rōmānus. Iūlius est pater Mārci.*
These two independent sentences have equal value. Their common lexical link is *Iūlius*. Substituting the relative for one *Iūlius*, we can make two different complex sentences:

Iūlius, quī est vir Rōmānus, est pater Mārci.

Iūlius, quī est pater Mārci, est vir Rōmānus.

In the first sentence, Julius's being a Roman man is made subordinate to his being the father of Marcus, while in the second, his being Marcus's father is the subordinate, or dependent, idea.

- (from Cap. III) *Iūlius eum audit. Iam nōn dormit pater.* (I.48)
Pater, quī eum audit, iam nōn dormit. Father, who hears him, is no longer sleeping.

Iūlius, quī iam nōn dormit, eum audit. Julius, who is no longer sleeping, hears him.

1. See the explanation (p. xv) of when—and why—sentences will be translated.

Since *pater* and *Iūlius* both refer to the same person, we can substitute a relative pronoun for one of the occurrences. The meaning of the sentence changes a bit, depending on how the clauses are combined. The first one suggests (as did the original two independent clauses) that Julius is no longer sleeping because he hears Marcus wailing and that wakes him up. The second implies that he hears Marcus because he is no longer sleeping.

relative pronoun: connects a clause

puer quī...

puella quae...

	m.	f.	n.
nom.	<i>quī</i>	<i>quae</i>	<i>quod</i>
acc.	<i>quem</i>	<i>quam</i>	<i>quod</i>

interrogative pronoun: asks a question

nom.	<i>quis</i>
acc.	<i>quem</i>

Recēnsiō: Qu- words

<i>quis? quae? quid?</i>	who, what? (interrogative pronoun)
<i>quī, quae</i>	who (interrogative pronoun, plural)
<i>quia</i>	because (conjunction)
<i>quot</i>	how many? (interrogative adverb)

New Grammatical Terms

Case: The ending of a noun or adjective changes depending on the word's function; each of these alterations is called a "case" (Latin *cāsus*).

Subject: The person (or thing) that performs the action of the verb is called the subject, represented in Latin by the nominative case.

Object: The person (or thing) that completes the meaning of the verb is called the direct object, represented in Latin by the accusative case.

Conjugation: The ending of a verb's stem (*-ā*, *-ē*, *-ī*, *-ī*, or consonant) determines the group (conjugation) to which it belongs.

Transitive: A verb is transitive if an accusative direct object completes its meaning.

Intransitive: A verb is intransitive if its meaning is complete without an accusative direct object.

Implied Subject: If the subject is not directly stated, but needs to be supplied from the ending of the verb, it is called an implied subject.

Pronoun: A pronoun takes the place of a noun.

Lexical Entry: The way a word is presented in a lexicon (dictionary), for

example *mamma*, -ae, f. The vocabulary entry for verbs and some other words will change in the first part of this book as you learn more morphology (forms of words). For now, verbs are listed as 3rd person singular. Cap. X adds the present infinitive. The actual lexical entry for verbs begins with the 1st person singular, which you will first meet in Cap. XV.

Studia Rōmāna

In the second scene, we see Julius sleeping on a *lectus*, a Roman bed. While it looks pretty uncomfortable, such sleeping couches were common in the ancient world (other images on pp. 74, 78, 187). By our standards, Roman furniture could be sparse. The three most common pieces were the table (*mēnsa*), chair (*sella*), and couch (*lectus*). Storage places in the form of cupboards (*armārium*) and chests (*arca*) were also important. Containers for books (scrolls) went by various names: the *capsa* (also in diminutive form: *capsula*) was a cylinder that can often be seen at the foot of a statue of one who wants to mark himself as learned. The *scrīnium* was a portable chest for holding books and papers. The *cista* (also in diminutive form: *cistula*) was a woven basket used for holding various things, including books; a particular usage for the *cista* was to hold the sacred implements at a religious festival. Oil lamps (*lucernae*) were ubiquitous. They could be carried in the hand and placed on a lamp-stand (*lychnūchus*, λυχνούχος).

Furniture—especially tables, of which the Romans were particularly fond—could be a sign of wealth. The beginning of Cap. IV (p. 26) shows Julius sitting at a table that rests on ornately carved legs. Pliny the Elder (first century AD) writes about the Roman mania for tables (*mēnsārum insānia*) made of citrus (cedar) wood (*arbor citri*, *Historia Nātūrālis*, 13.29); elsewhere, he writes of table legs being made of ivory (12.3). You will see at the end of our story that Julius can afford to adorn his dining room with expensive linens for the dining couches (Cap. XXX). Romans sometimes brought their own napkin (*mappa*) or hand towel (*mantēle*) to dinner parties. Catullus (first century BC) complained in the first century BC that someone stole a napkin from him while dining out, which was both expensive and a gift from a friend (Poem 12). The complaint continues to the time period of our narrative. Martial (first century AD) writes about a recent diner, “No one had brought his napkin (*mappa*) since thefts were feared: Hermogenes stole the cloth (*mantēle*) from the table” (Book 12.28: *attulerat mappam nēmō, dum fūrta timentur: / mantēle ā mēnsā surpuit Hermogenes*).

Julius sits on a low stool (p. 22: *scamnum*), but the Romans had a variety of chairs (*sellae*)—including the high-backed chairs that we see in Cap. XIV (p. 110).

In the third scene, as father punishes his son, the sound is represented by *tuxtax* (ll.64, 65), a word meant to imitate the sound of being beaten. Corporal punishment for children was common. Some other colorful Latin expressions:

- *bombax*: an exclamation of surprise
- *babae*: an exclamation of joy and amazement

In the next chapter, you'll meet some other Latin exclamations:

- *fū*: an exclamation of dislike or aversion
- *st*: “shhhhh...”

Vocābula Disposita/Ōrdināta

Nōmina

1st		
	mamma, -ae	mommy
	persōna, -ae	character, person
	scaena, -ae	scene, stage
2nd		
	accūsātīvus, -ī (cāsus)	accusative
	nōminātīvus, -ī (cāsus)	nominative
	verbum, -ī	word, verb

Verba

-at (1)		
	cantat	sing
	interrogat	ask, question
	plōrat	cry
	pulsat	strike, hit, knock (at)
	verberat	beat, flog
	vocat	call, invite
-et (2)		
	respondet	answer
	ridet	laugh, make fun of
	videt	see
-it (4)		
	audit	hear, listen
	dormit	sleep
	venit	come

Adiectīva

1st/2nd (-us, -a, -um)		
	improbus, -a, -um	bad, wicked
	irātus, -a, -um	angry
	laetus, -a, -um	glad, happy
	probus, -a, -um	good, honest, proper

Prōnōmina

eam

eum

mē

quae (f.)

quam (acc. sing. f.)

quem (acc. sing. m.)

quī (m.)

tē

Adverbia

cūr?

iam

hic

Coniūctiōnēs

neque

quā

Alia (Cētera)

ō!

her

him

me

who, which, she who

whom, which, she whom

whom, which, he whom

who, which, he who

you

why?

now, already

here

and not, but not, nor, neither
because

oh!