

CHAPTER I

Verbs: the 1st conjugation

Verbs

Before we can begin in Latin, we need to understand how verbs work. The verb in a sentence tells us *what is happening*, and *who* is doing it. In Latin, verbs have a **stem**, which tells us what is happening, and an **ending**, which tells us who is doing it.

Verbs have three **persons**: 1st, 2nd and 3rd; and two **numbers**: singular and plural. The ending of the verb alters depending on the person and number of the verb. The person and number show us who is doing the verb.

Amō: present tense

The **tense** shows us *when* the verb is being done. In Latin there are six tenses. The first of these is the present tense, which tells us what is happening *now*.

The present tense of amō is as follows:

	Amō = I love, I like					
1st person singular	am-ō	I love				
2nd person singular	amā-s	You (sing.) love				
3rd person singular	ama-t	He, she or it loves				
1st-person plural	amā-mus	We love				
2nd person plural	amā-tis	You (pl.) love				
3rd person plural	ama-nt	They love				

*The present stem of amō is amā-. The present tense endings are -ō, -s, -t, -mus, -tis, and -nt. In the first person singular the stem of verbs like amō contracts from amā- to am-, but it quickly recovers the missing ā and is rarely to be seen without it again.

N.B. the present tense in English can be *love*, *am loving* or *do love*.

Verbs like amō

Verbs are divided into four main groups called **conjugations**. Verbs of the 1st conjugation go like amō. Thus cantō = I sing (present stem cantā-), and aedificō = I build (present stem = aedificā-), go:

cant-ō	I sing	aedific-ō	I build
cantā-s	You sing	aedificā-s	You build
canta-t	He, she, it sings	aedifica-t	He, she, it builds
cantā-mus	We sing	aedificā-mus	We build
cantā-tis	You sing	aedificā-tis	You build
canta-nt	They sing	aedifica-nt	They build

So you really want to learn Latin...

Exercise 1.1

Study the information on the left-hand page. Notice how cantō and aedificō, written out in the present tense, use exactly the same endings as amō. *All* 1st conjugation verbs copy amō in this way. N.B. The hyphen between the stem and the endings is only given on the left-hand page to help you recognise the two parts of the word. You do not need to use hyphens in the exercises that follow. Now write out the present tense of the following verbs, *together with their meanings*:

1. vocō = I call
2. nāvīgō = I sail
3. festīnō = I hurry
4. labōrō = I work

Exercise 1.2

Make a note of the seven Latin verbs you have met so far, with their meanings (e.g. aedificō = I build, etc.). Note how the present tense of amō can mean *I love*, *am loving* or *do love*. Then translate into Latin:

1. I am loving
2. You (sing.) are sailing
3. They are hurrying
4. He does sail
5. She is calling
6. You (pl.) like
7. We sing
8. It sails
9. You (pl.) build
10. He is singing

Exercise 1.3

Translate into English. Each Latin word has three possible English translations (e.g. I love, am loving or do love). Use whichever one you wish.

1. cantat
2. amās
3. nāvīgās
4. vocātis
5. aedificant
6. festīnātis
7. festīnās
8. aedificō
9. cantās
10. vocat

Exercise 1.4

Translate into Latin:

1. We are building
2. They do sing
3. She is hurrying
4. They sail
5. We are working
6. I do love
7. You (pl.) do call
8. He does sail
9. We call
10. You (sing.) are hurrying

Using Latin

N.B.

The letters N.B. stand for notā bene = note well!