

CHAPTER 2

Nouns of the 1st declension; subjects and objects

Nouns like *mēnsa*

In the same way that verbs in Latin have endings to show *who* is doing the verb, and *when*, **nouns** in Latin have endings to show what part the noun is playing in the sentence.

As with verbs, nouns are divided up into groups, and these are called **declensions**. Nouns of the 1st declension decline like *mēnsa*:

Singular	
Nominative	<i>mēns-a</i>
Vocative	<i>mēns-a</i>
Accusative	<i>mēns-am</i>
Genitive	<i>mēns-ae</i>
Dative	<i>mēns-ae</i>
Ablative	<i>mēns-ā</i>
Plural	
Nominative	<i>mēns-ae</i>
Vocative	<i>mēns-ae</i>
Accusative	<i>mēns-ās</i>
Genitive	<i>mēns-ārum</i>
Dative	<i>mēns-īs</i>
Ablative	<i>mēns-īs</i>

The six cases

Nouns in Latin can be put into one of six **cases** (nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative or ablative) and one of two **numbers** (singular or plural).

The **Nominative** case is used to show that the noun is the **subject** of the sentence, i.e. that the noun is the person or thing *doing the verb*.

The **Vocative** case is used for **addressing** the noun. Not so common with tables, I hear you say, but if the noun were a name such as Flavia we would put her into the vocative case when addressing her. 'O Flavia' we would say. 'O Flavia, how nice to see you!'

The **Accusative** case is used to show that the noun is the **object**, i.e., the person or thing *to which the verb is being done*.

The **Genitive** case is used for 'of'.

The **Dative** case is used for 'to' or 'for'.

The **Ablative** case is used for 'by', 'with' or 'from'. Note that the ablative singular ends in a long *ā*, which makes it sound different from the nominative and vocative singular.

N.B. Latin has no definite or indefinite article. Thus *mēnsa* = table or *the* table or *a* table — the choice is yours.

So you really want to learn Latin...

Exercise 2. 1

Study the information on the left-hand page about *mēnsa*. Notice how the ending of a Latin noun changes to reflect its meaning. All nouns of the 1st declension go like *mēnsa*. We could thus write out the 1st declension nouns *puella* = a girl, and *agricola* = a farmer, as follows:

Nominative	<i>puell-a</i>	<i>agricol-a</i>
Vocative	<i>puell-a</i>	<i>agricol-a</i>
Accusative	<i>puell-am</i>	<i>agricol-am</i>
Genitive	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>agricol-ae</i>
Dative	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>agricol-ae</i>
Ablative	<i>puell-ā</i>	<i>agricol-ā</i>
Nominative	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>agricol-ae</i>
Vocative	<i>puell-ae</i>	<i>agricol-ae</i>
Accusative	<i>puell-ās</i>	<i>agricol-ās</i>
Genitive	<i>puell-ārum</i>	<i>agricol-ārum</i>
Dative	<i>puell-īs</i>	<i>agricol-īs</i>
Ablative	<i>puell-īs</i>	<i>agricol-īs</i>

This is called writing out a noun in full. Write out the following nouns in full:

1. *incola* = inhabitant
2. *fābula* = story
3. *nauta* = sailor
4. *rēgina* = queen

Exercise 2. 2

Study the information on the left-hand page about the different meanings for each of the six cases. Then give the Latin for:

1. Of the farmer
2. To the sailor
3. Of a story
4. By a story
5. O farmers!
6. The farmers (subject)
7. The farmer (object)
8. For the sailors
9. O sailor!
10. Of the farmers

Using Latin

E.R.

The letters E.R. stand for Elizabetha Rēgina = Queen Elizabeth.