

Translating from Latin: Golden Rules

Once you know what you are doing, translating into Latin is very simple. You put the subject in the nominative case, the object in the accusative case, and the verb at the end with the correct ending. Translating *out of* Latin can be a touch tricky at first, but it isn't really any harder. If you follow a few golden rules you should be fine:

Always look at the verb first.

The verb tells us what is happening, and who is doing it. Look at the ending of the verb to see which person it is (I, you, he, etc.) and which tense (present, future, etc.). The verb is often *but not always* at the end of the sentence.

Look for a noun in the nominative case.

Unless the subject is 'in the verb' there will be a noun in the nominative case. If the verb is singular (he, she or it), this noun will be nominative singular. If the verb is plural (they) the noun will be nominative plural (or two or more nouns in the nominative joined by 'and').

Look for a noun in the accusative case.

The object, if there is one, will be in the accusative case. As a general rule you should *never translate an accusative case before the verb*. If you do, you will probably have muddled your subject with your object, a crime for which in the good old days people would be shot!

It will help if you analyse the sentence by writing V over the verb, S over the subject, and O over the object. Remember, if the subject is 'in the verb', write V+S over the verb. Note that it is the *endings*, not the word order, which shows whether a noun is the subject or object.

S O V

E.g. puella agricolam amat

O S V

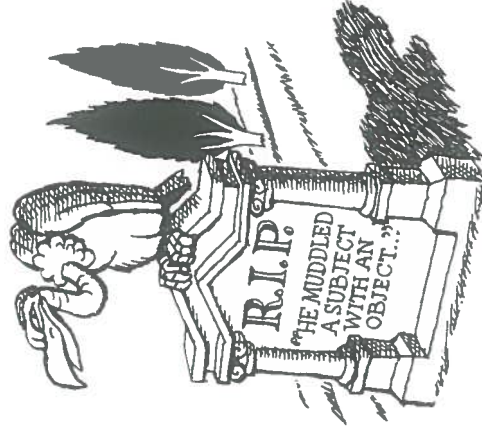
and agricolam puella amat

both mean *the girl loves the farmer*

Revision

You should now know by heart:

- amō in four tenses + their meanings
- mēnsa in the singular and plural
- The names and meanings of the six cases
- The words in Vocabularies 1 + 2



So you really want to learn Latin...

Exercise 2. 10

Read the information on the left-hand page about translating from Latin. Look carefully at the endings of the words, highlighted in bold. Analyse each sentence with the letters S, V and O. Do NOT assume that the first word will be the subject, as it usually is in English. Then translate into English.

1. agricola puellam amat. 6. fēmina aquam nōn parābat.
2. agricola nautās superāvit. 7. viam agricolae parāvērunt.
3. puellam fēmina amābat. 8. nauta sagittās parāvit.
4. nauta agricolam superāvit. 9. nautae īsulam amābant.
5. agricolam amābant puellae. 10. fāmam amant incolae.

Exercise 2. 11

Analyse and translate the following sentences. Again, remember that it is the endings that are important, not the word order. This time, some of the subjects are 'in the verb', so be very careful not to translate an accusative case before the verb.

1. incolae Rōmam oppugnant. 6. incolās nōn superābimur.
2. agricola terram parāvit. 7. viam parāvit.
3. Graeciam nōn amāmus. 8. patriam nōn amās.
4. puellae mēnsam parāvērunt. 9. agricolae fēminam superant.
5. sagittās nōn parāvistis. 10. Troiam fēminae amābant.

Exercise 2. 12

Look at the revision list on the left-hand page. Then, without looking up, translate the following, paying attention to whether the final a is long (ā) or short:

1. agricolam 6. pugna
2. fēminās 7. īsulārūm
3. nauta 8. incolārūm
4. fāma 9. sagittis
5. aquā 10. sapientiā

Exercise 2. 13

Revision: Without looking up, translate the following:

1. nāvigāre 6. labōrāverunt
2. aedificābis 7. cantābātis
3. sed 8. superāvistis
4. parant 9. festīnāvī
5. nōn pugnābō 10. amābat

R.I.P.

R.I.P. stands for requiescat in pāce
= may he/she rest in peace.

Using Latin