

SINGULAR & PLURAL

description

Latin is a highly inflected language. This means that most Latin words will receive different endings depending on how they are being used in a sentence. In Latin nouns, these endings change according to different patterns called declensions. There are five noun declensions in Latin, but this lesson will only deal with the first three, which are most common.

The 1st noun pattern or declension includes nouns whose first form ends in the letter *a*, such as *uva*. In this course, 1st declension nouns are usually referred to as a-nouns, because the letter *a* appears in almost all of their forms. This lesson only deals with two forms (*uva* and *uvae*), but the following chart illustrates how the letter *a* is a theme that runs throughout all forms of the 1st declension. Do not worry. You do not need to learn all these forms yet.

1st declension

a-nouns

uva	uvae
uvam	uvas
uvae	uvārum
uvae	uvīs
uvā	uvīs

2nd-declension nouns have a stem that alternates between an *o* and a *u*. There are two major variations: nouns whose first form ends in *us*, which this course calls us-nouns; and nouns whose first form ends in *um*, which are referred to as um-nouns. There is no need to memorize all these forms for this lesson, as it only deals with the first row.

2nd declension

us-nouns		um-nouns	
caseus	caseī	poculum	pocula
caseum	caseōs	poculum	pocula
caseī	caseōrum	poculī	poculōrum
caseō	caseīs	poculō	poculīs
caseō	caseīs	poculō	poculīs

A few 2nd-declension nouns that otherwise have exactly the same forms as us-nouns have a first form that ends in *r* or *er*, such as *vir* and *culter*.

us-nouns in <i>r</i>		us-nouns in <i>er</i>	
vir	virī	culter	cultrī
virum	virōs	cultrum	cultrōs
virī	virōrum	cultrī	cultrōrum

virō	virīs	cultrō	cultrīs
virō	virīs	cultrō	cultrīs

There are three other noun declensions in Latin, but you will not learn them right away. If a Latin noun ends in anything other than an *-a*, *-us*, *-um*, *-r*, or *-er*: it is a noun of a different declension. Some of these words will come up in example sentences occasionally, but you will not need to know their forms until later in the course.

Singular and Plural

The first form of a-nouns (*a*) is singular. When it is replaced with *ae*, the word becomes plural. For example, *uva* is singular ("grape"), but *uvae* is plural ("grapes").

a-nouns

-a	-ae
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Similarly, the first form of us-nouns (*us*) is singular. When it is replaced with *i*, the word becomes plural. For example, *caseus* is singular ("cheese"), but *casei* is plural ("cheeses").

us-nouns

-us	-ī
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Even though um-nouns share the 2nd declension with us-nouns, they have different forms here. The first form of um-nouns is singular. When it is replaced with *a*, the word becomes plural. For example, *poculum* is singular ("cup"), but *pocula* is plural ("cups").

um-nouns

-um	-a
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The first form of is-nouns (*is*) is singular. When replaced with *es*, the word becomes plural. For example, *panis* is singular ("loaf of bread"), but *panes* is plural ("loaves of bread").

Stem Changes

When you memorize some nouns, you must memorize a second form (like *culter*, *cultr-i* and *caro*, *carn-is*). This second form is called genitive and will be important later. For this lesson, however, it is only important that it indicates a change in spelling called a stem change. The portion of the second form before the dash is the changed stem. (In the vocabulary flash cards, however, there will not be a dash.) Whenever you add different endings to a word with a stem change, you add endings to this changed stem. For instance, the plural of *culter* becomes *cultri*, and the plural of *caro* becomes *carnes*.