

ABLATIVE CASE AND LOCATION

Location is a place where something is. It is not a place to which something is headed, or a place where something is coming from. In English, many prepositions can be used to show that a noun must be understood as a location. For example, in "The cup is on the table." it is understood that "the table" is a location because of the preposition "on".

In Latin, location may be expressed in one of two ways:

1) It may be expressed with a preposition that has a specific meaning of location, such as *super* ("on top of") or *ante* ("in front of"). Since objects of the preposition in Latin are put in the accusative case, the noun with such a preposition is accusative.

Consider the following examples:

*Vir domum **super petram** aedificat.*

*Uva **ante caseum** est.*

2) It may also be expressed with a new case called the ablative. For a-nouns, the ablative is *-â* in the singular and *-is* in the plural. Notice the macron in the ending *-â*. A macron indicates that a vowel is pronounced about 50% longer than otherwise. Many words and endings that you have already learned have some vowels with macrons. However, many texts do not mark them, and they rarely make a difference in meaning. This course only points them out when they make a difference in meaning. Since in a-nouns the ending *-a* (without a macron) is nominative and *-â* (with a macron) is ablative, it is always noted. For us- and um-nouns, the ablative singular is *-o*, and the plural is again *-is*.

The Five Major Cases

| | a-nouns | | us-nouns | | um-nouns | |
|------------|---------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | sg. | pl. | sg. | pl. | sg. | pl. |
| Nominative | a | ae | us | i | um | a |
| Accusative | am | as | um | os | um | a |
| Genitive | ae | arum | i | orum | i | orum |
| Dative | ae | is | o | is | o | is |
| Ablative | â | is | o | is | o | is |

A noun in the ablative case on its own may communicate a location. However, it is much more common in Latin prose to add one of a handful of prepositions to it. It is important to remember that the vast majority of prepositions take an accusative object; the only location prepositions that take the ablative are *in* ("in" or "on"), *sub* ("under"), *prae* ("in front of"), *pro* ("in front of"), *cum* ("with"), and *coram* ("before the eyes of").

Consider the following examples:

*Uvae in **mensâ** sunt.*

*Vir cum **feminâ** stat.*

*Caseus pro **uvis** est.*

Adjectives in the Ablative Case

-us -a -um adjectives look exactly like *us*-nouns, *a*-nouns, and *um*-nouns in the ablative case. Consider the following chart.

| | Masculine | | Feminine | | Neuter | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | sg. | pl. | sg. | pl. | sg. | pl. |
| Nominative | us | i | a | ae | um | a |
| Accusative | um | os | am | as | um | a |
| Genitive | i | orum | ae | arum | i | orum |
| Dative | o | is | ae | is | o | is |
| Ablative | o | is | ā | is | o | is |