

ABLATIVE OF ORIGIN

Origin means where something comes from or what something is separated from. It may be in reference to physical space: for example, "mountain" in "He came from the mountain". It may also be in a logical sense: for example, "foolishness" in "Disaster came from his foolishness". And it may be in a temporal sense: such as "April" in "Spring is the time from April to June". In English, some prepositions indicate that a noun is an origin. For example, in "The cup fell off the table." it is understood that "the table" is an origin because of the preposition "off". "From", "off", and sometimes "of" indicate origin. Often English uses more complicated phrases as well: "out of", "down from", "out from behind", etc.

In Latin, origin is always expressed with the ablative case:

1) Sometimes a noun with the idea of origin will stand on its own in the ablative case. This is frequent in poetry or where the meaning is obvious. The names of cities and small islands are normally put in the ablative on their own.

Consider the following examples:

Vir domo venit. ("The man comes from his home.")

Vir Hierosolymâ venit. ("The man comes from Jerusalem.")

2) Much more frequently, origin is indicated by an ablative noun along with one of a few prepositions: *a(b)*, *e(x)*, or *de* is used to indicate where something comes from; and *a(b)*, *sine*, or *absque* is used to indicate what something is separated from.

Consider the following examples:

Uvae a terrâ veniunt. ("Grapes come from the ground.")

Uva e mensâ cadit. ("A grape falls off the table.")

Vir sine feminâ bonum non est. ("Man with out woman is not a good thing.")

The prepositions that frequently attend the ablative of origin are so closely associated with origin that they *always* work with the ablative, even if their meaning in a particular sentence seems unrelated to origin. For example, *de* literally means "down from"; however, it also came to mean "concerning". Regardless of its sense in a particular sentence, it takes the ablative.

Consider the following example:

Homines de Deo dicunt. ("Men speak concerning God.")