

# Jargon Busting Latin Terminology!



Lanesborough  
*Preparatory School*



# Jargon Busting!

Set out below under various headings are all the different linguistic terms we use when we talk about Latin words and sentences. Let's see if we can bust some of this jargon and master them all!

**Parts of speech**– From time to time your teacher may ask you “what part of speech is (Word X)?” By this he really means “what type of word is (Word X)?”, “what job does (Word X) do?” Many of the different parts of speech are laid out below:

**Noun**: A person, a place or a thing (e.g. a soldier, Rome, a table).

**Proper noun**: The name of a person or a place. These always have a capital letter (e.g. Julius Caesar, Rome).

**Pronoun**: A word which stands in place of a noun to prevent a story getting repetitive through use of the same nouns over and over again (e.g. he, she, it, them)

**Adjective**: A word which describes a noun to make it more interesting. Often these words are to do with size, colour or material (e.g. big, green, wooden).

**Verb**: A doing word. The action in a sentence. For example, in the sentence “the cat sits on the mat” the verb is “sits”.

**Adverb**: A word which describes the action of a verb to make it more interesting. In English these often, but not always, end in –ly. For example: “He works (verb) quickly/thoughtfully/often (adverbs)”.

**Preposition**: A word which stands before a noun or a pronoun to team up with it and show place, time or method by which something is done. In the following examples the prepositions are underlined: “under the table”, “during the night”, “by the soldiers”.

**Conjunction**: A joining word. Conjunctions are used to join together words or full sentences.

For example: “Bangers and mash”, “I enjoy eating bangers and mash, but I do not enjoy eating peas”.

In the first example we have one conjunction joining two words together.

In the second example the conjunction “and” is joining the two words together, whilst the conjunction “but” is joining two sentences together (without the conjunction we would have: “I enjoy eating bangers and mash. I do not enjoy eating peas”).

## Nouns

Nouns in Latin have various different terms of their own for us to learn. Here they are:

**Case:** The form of a noun in a given sentence which shows us the role that noun is playing in the sentence. Latin has 6 cases: nominative, vocative accusative, genitive, dative, ablative. These may be remembered with the sound advice “Never Visit Angry Gorillas During April”.

1. **Nominative:** The case a Latin noun goes in when that noun is the subject of a sentence (see page 7).
2. **Vocative:** The case a Latin noun goes in when it is being called to. For example, in the Latin for “oh Candidus, cook the dinner”, the Latin word for “Candidus” would be in the vocative case.
3. **Accusative:** The case a Latin noun goes in when that noun is the object of a sentence (see page 7).
4. **Genitive:** The case used to express “of” in Latin. For example, if we came across the Latin for “the book of the woman”, then the Latin word for “the woman” would be in the genitive case.
5. **Dative:** The case used to express “to” or “for” in Latin. For example, if we came across the Latin for “I gave the book to the woman”, then the Latin word for “the woman” would be in the dative case.
6. **Ablative:** The case used to express “by”, “from” or “with” in Latin. For example, if we came across the Latin for “I attacked the enemy with arrows”, then the Latin word for “arrows” would be in the ablative case.

**Number:** The number of a noun is whether it is singular or plural (i.e. one or more than one). In English “slave” is singular, but “soldiers” is plural.

**Gender:** Whether a noun is masculine, feminine or neuter.

**Declension:** There are 5 main patterns according to which most Latin nouns change their endings as they change their case (see above). These are called declensions.

## **Adjectives**

Describing words in Latin change their form based on degree (for example, whether something is big, bigger or biggest). Some of the names of these forms are explained below:

**Comparative:** The form of an adjective which makes it mean “more X” or “Xer”, for example “more scary” or “scarier”.

**Superlative:** The form of an adjective which makes it mean “most X”, “very X” or “Xest”, for example “most scary”, “very scary” or “scariest”.

## **Verbs**

Latin verbs can be a minefield of confusing terminology. Careful study of the definitions below will help clear things up!

**Stem:** The part of verb to which endings are added. For example, *am-* is the stem of *amo*.

**Person:** The person of a verb is a term which refers to the subject of the verb (see page 7). A verb must have one of 6 possible persons as its subject (three singular, three plural in the following order): **I, you (singular), he/she/it; we, you (plural), they**. The ending of a Latin verb tells us which person it is (i.e. who is doing the action).

For example, the person of the Latin word *amant* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural (meaning “they” are doing the loving).

**Tense:** Every Latin verb will be in what is called a tense. This means that the verb will have an ending which tells us when its action is taking place. For example, when we see the Latin word *amabam*, we know the loving is happening over a period of time in the past because the word's ending (-bam) is an imperfect tense ending. The most important tenses in Latin are laid out below:

1. **Present:** The tense used when we want to show that an action is happening now. If you can put the word "now" after a doing word and the sentence still makes sense, then the verb must be in the present tense. For example, the phrases "he is walking (now)" and "he walks (now)" contain verbs in the present tense, but "he walked (now)" does not.
2. **Imperfect:** The tense used when we want to show that an uncompleted action was happening continuously in the past over a period of time. Latin verbs in the imperfect tense have three possible translations ("I was Xing", "I used to X" and "I began to X"). For example, the phrases "he was walking", "he used to walk" and "he began to walk" contain verbs in the imperfect tense. The Latin word for all three meanings will be exactly the same.
3. **Perfect:** The tense of a verb used to convey a completed action in the past. In English this is either done with or without the word "has" or "have", as in the following examples: "I walked to school", "I have walked to school". The Latin word for each of these meanings will be exactly the same (e.g. *amavi* = "I loved" and "I have loved").
4. **Pluperfect:** The tense used to express the meaning "had", referring to an action already completed in the past before something else happened. For example, "I had eaten my dinner, when the lights went out".
5. **Future:** The tense of a verb used to show that something will happen in the future.

**Compound verb:** A verb formed by adding a prefix to a shorter, simpler verb. E.g. *adsum* = ad + sum = I am present/at hand (the “present/at hand” part is the additional meaning to *sum* = “I am” that is conveyed by *ad*).

**Infinitive:** The part of the verb in Latin which when translated into English is in the format “to X”, e.g. *amare* = to love. Infinitives in Latin usually end in –re.

**Principal parts:** The four elements of a Latin verb which give us all the information we need about that verb to form it in any of the various tenses. These are (in this order):

- 1) The 1<sup>st</sup> person of the present tense
- 2) The Present infinitive
- 3) The 1<sup>st</sup> person of the perfect tense
- 4) The supine (an often untranslatable form of the verb) from which lots of modern English words derive.

E.g. *audio, audire, audivi, auditum* (from which we get English words such as *auditory*)

**Conjugation:** There are four main patterns according to which Latin verbs change their endings. These are called conjugations. Once we know what conjugation a verb belongs to, we know which pattern its endings will adhere to across the various tenses. We can work out what conjugation a verb is in by going to its principal parts (see above) and looking at its 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> principal parts. The conjugations are identified as follows:

Conjugation	1 <sup>st</sup> person present ends in:	Present infinitive ends in:	Example
1 <sup>st</sup>	-o	-are	amo, amare
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-eo	-ere	moneo, monere
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-o	-ere	rego, regere
4 <sup>th</sup>	-io	-ire	audio, audire
Mixed	-io	-ere	capio, capere

## Terms which describe words' roles in a sentence

**Main clause:** The part of a sentence which can stand on its own and still make sense.

**Subordinate clause:** The part of a sentence which cannot stand on its own and still make sense because it requires some other part of the sentence to fulfil its meaning.

Consider the following example:

“Although he was tired, the runner kept going.”

Here “the runner kept going” can stand alone as a sentence if we take the first half away. That makes it the main clause.

“Although he was tired.” does not make sense as a sentence, making it the subordinate clause in our example above.

**Subject:** The noun or pronoun which causes the action of a verb in a sentence or clause. In the following two examples the subjects are underlined: “The cat attacked the mouse”, “It ran away”.

**Object:** The noun or pronoun which has the action of a verb done to it in a sentence or clause. In the example “the cat attacked the mouse”, the mouse is the object because it has the attacking done to it.