

Introduction

Thank you for reading the first installment of what I will now call a “Latin pamphlet for beginners.”

Contrary to the name that I have just given, it is more of a four-page information sheet releasing on the Kalends and Ides (see the meanings of those terms on page 3). Should those dates fall on a date when school is not in session, they will be released on the next possible day.

This pamphlet will cover more basic topics

There will be multiple copies; <https://latin2u.github.io> will have them.

On that note, if you want to add suggestions, have any questions, or wish to comment privately about this newspaper, please use the link <https://tinyurl.com/feedingback> to do so.

Thanks once again!

Here we go...

1st and 2nd declension nouns (normal)

Latin has nouns, like almost all other languages. Nouns represent a person, place, or thing. Latin decides to be a bit tedious here into separating them into five declensions, each with its own gender - masculine, feminine, or neuter. There are exceptions: for example, “nauta” is masculine, but it is declined as a first declension noun. Similarly, this can be applied the other way for Aegyptus. Take the genitive singular and remove the “ae” or “i” for the root.

Endings

1st: feminine	Singular	Plural	Translation
Nominative	a	ae	[noun]
Genitive	ae	arum	of the [noun]
Dative	ae	is	to/for the [noun]
Accusative	am	as	[noun]
Ablative	a	is	by/with the [noun]
Vocative	ā	ae	[noun]!

2nd: masculine	Singular	Plural
Nominative	us	i
Genitive	i	orum
Dative	o	is
Accusative	um	os
Ablative	ō	īs
Vocative	e	i

2nd: neuter	Singular	Plural
Nominative	um	a
Genitive	i	orum
Dative	o	is
Accusative	um	a
Ablative	ō	īs
Vocative	um	a

(See p.2 for meanings of “nominative”, “genitive”, and “dative”)

Side note

For second declension masculine, there are many endings, not just the ones provided above in the chart. For example, “ager” is a 2nd declension masculine noun, but its root is “agr”, to give a nominative plural of “agri”, and the vocative singular is “ager.”

Etymology

These Latin words have shaped English as we know today; listed below are some English words, their Latin roots, and the meaning of the Latin word.

English	Latin	meaning
portal	porta	gate
century	centum	hundred
vulpine	vulpes	fox
incarceration	carcer	prison
force	fortis	strong
filial	filia	daughter
lunar	luna	moon
finish	finis	boundary
furtive	fur	thief
vocal	vox	voice
manual	manus	hand
mortal	mors	death
forum	forum	marketplace
capital	caput	head
bovine	bos	cow
dorm	domus	home
part	pars	part
purple	purpureus	purple
fortified	fortis	strong

What I meant about those cases (nominative, ablative, etc.)...

Latin, along with a few other languages, gives nouns “characteristics” - a case, a number, and a gender (mostly, there are exceptions, many for the lattermost) for each noun.

Here, a case shows a noun’s role in a sentence.

Nominative: subject

Genitive: possession

Dative: indirect object

Accusative: direct object

Ablative: means, separation, movement away, among others (this case is notorious for having so many functions)

Vocative: direct address

Numbers say if an object is singular or plural, and a gender is like the “masculine/feminine/neuter” terminology that defines the type of chart. “Masculine” nouns typically refer to nouns considered masculine in nature back in Rome, like “boy”, “man”, and “sailor”, but surprisingly also “bed”, “book”, and “stylus”. Grammatical gender does not always match with real-world gender, and thus that is the result. In the same way, feminine nouns typically refer to nouns considered feminine in nature, and neuter nouns refer to neuter-considered objects. There are some nouns that have both genders, but that’s a story for another time.

Calendar Months

Earlier, I mentioned the Kalends and the Ides in the Introduction. I also said that the Kalends are the first day of the month and the Ides are the thirteenth/fifteenth day of the month, depending on the month. However, I haven't mentioned what the Nones were, nor the history of the calendar.

The calendar that we have and use today is the Gregorian calendar, modified by Pope Gregory XIII in the late sixteenth century due to the inaccuracy of the Julian calendar - the one that the Romans used after 45 BCE. This had twelve months:

- Ianuarius (named after Janus)
- Februarius
- Martius (named after Mars)
- Aprilis
- Maius (named after Maia)
- Iunius (named after Juno)
- Iulius (named after Julius Caesar)
- Augustus (named after Augustus)
- September (named after "seven")
- October (named after "eight")
- November (named after "nine")
- December (named after "ten")

The lengths of the calendar are the same as we know today, even with the extra leap day in Februarius every four years. However, it was inaccurate due to the reason that it produced 365.25 days per year on average, a little more than the length of one rotation around the Sun.

That meant that soon after, the Julian calendar was off by a few days. As of this writing, it is off by thirteen (13) days. To solve this, Pope Gregory eliminated all century leap dates except for ones every 400 years (29 February 1900 didn't exist, but 29 February 2000 did) and leaped forward the date by ten days.

Before the Julian calendar came into effect, the previous calendar was a mess. They had "intercalary" periods where a period of 25-35 days was added to the year. Additionally, the year wasn't really fixed: officials could make a year longer or shorter to gain advantages for themselves. It was normally kept by priests, but sometimes they forgot to do so or made mistakes.

It is also needed to note that the months September to December are named such because in the old Roman calendar, September was the seventh month, and December was tenth, followed immediately after by an undefined "winter" period before the new year started with the first month "March." At the same time, Iulius and Augustus haven't been renamed to honor Julius Caesar and Augustus, so they were Quintilis and Sextilis respectively, named after the Roman cardinal numbers for "five" and "six".

Dates were written like "III Id. Mart.," where III is the number of days, inclusively counted (more about that later) from the next reference day, the Ides in the example, and "Mart" stands for "Martius" on which the reference day is in (here, the Kalends). The immediate day before the reference day would be shown as "Pridie Id. Mart.," and the reference day itself would be "Id. Mart." The day after would refer to the Kalends of April. Thus, the progression would be:

- 12 March; IV Id. Mart.
- 13 March; III Id. Mart.
- 14 March; Pridie Id. Mart.
- 15 March; Id. Mart.
- 16 March; XVII Kal. Apr.
- 17 March: XVI Kal. Apr.

The Kalends was the first day of the month, the Nones the fifth or seventh day of the month, and the Ides the thirteenth or the fifteenth. The Nones and Ides were only on the seventh and the fifteenth, respectively, when the month was Martius, Maius, Iulius, or October.

N.B.: Inclusive counting is a system where the start date and the end date are counted. Today, in the modern world, we say that the time between 2 January 2026 and 13 January 2026 is $13 - 2 = 11$ days through exclusive counting. However, the Romans would have counted 2 January, making 12 days.

The Deal About Numbers

The Romans didn't have the actual concept of negative numbers, decimals, nor "zero" in their numerals. Thus, the lowest denomination was one.

Basic Numerals

- I: one
- V: five
- X: ten
- L: fifty
- C: one hundred
- D: five hundred
- M: one thousand

To write two, you would write I followed by another I, making "II", meaning "one and one is two." You would do the same for three, writing "III". You could also do the same for four, writing "IIII", but the actual rules make you write "IV", which doesn't mean six - that's "VI" - but rather "1 subtracted from five." Then you would write V for five, VI for six, VII for seven, VIII for eight, and IX for nine.

Aha! So you *can* write IC for $-1 + 100 = 99$, right? No, that didn't work that way. Only I can subtract from V and X, and X can subtract from L and C, and C can subtract from D and M. In other words, you can only subtract powers of ten from the next two higher letters, also making monstrosities like "VL" invalid.

That having been said, instead of writing "IC", you would write "XCIX", and breaking it down, "XC" is $-10 + 100 = 90$, and "IX" is $-1 + 10 = 9$, and $90 + 9 = 99$.

Since at most three of each number could be conventionally written, 3,999 is the largest number made.

History

Traditionally, Rome was founded around 753 BCE by twin brothers: Romulus and Remus. According to legend, their father was Mars, the god of war, and their mother was Rhea Silvia. They were abandoned and were supposed to be thrown in the Tiber, but the ones supposed to do so just set them nearby. It's said that a she-wolf suckled and nursed them, then a shepherd took them in and raised them. When they were building Rome, Romulus somehow killed Remus; some say that Remus was mocking Romulus's work, and others say that he was killed in a fight.

Barely anything is known from here other than the fact that a monarchy was established, which would last for around 250 years, with seven kings total - Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Tarquinius Superbus. However, this is disputed by historians now as each king would have ruled for an average of 36 years, and it would not have been so likely in the ancient world.

The seven kings in order are:

- Romulus: allegedly killed his brother Remus to found Rome
- Numa Pompilius: Religious reforms
- Tullus Hostilius: Expanded Rome through conquests
- Ancus Marcius: Grandson of N. Pompilius, built port of Ostia
- Tarquinius Priscus: built Circus Maximus
- Servius Tullius: made the census and built the Servian Wall
- Tarquinius Superbus: Tyrant, after his assault on Lucretia, he was deposed in 509 BCE

Crossword - all answers are in the format of one word

Across

2. Model of Roman virtue - stepped in as a dictator to defend Rome, then stepped back out
4. Was known for dying from an asp's bite
6. Proscribed people way before the 2d Triumvirate did
7. Was killed right after arrival in Egypt to appease Caesar (starts with P)

Down

1. The 2d triumvirate consisted of Antony, Augustus, and _____
3. Defended the Pons Sublicius (last name only)
4. Brutus and this person fought in the Battle of Philippi in 43 BCE.
5. The second of the Four Emperors (69 AD)

