

FIRST DECLENSION NOUNS (-a)

Formation: Nouns of the First Declension are declined thus:

	Singular	Plural
Nom.	-a	-ae
Gen.	-ae	-arum
Dat.	-ae	-is
Acc.	-am	-as
Abl.	-a	-is

N.B.: The long -a of the ablative singular distinguishes it from the nominative singular, which has a short -a.

Example:

Nom.	<i>silva</i> (the forest)	<i>silvae</i> (the forests)
Gen.	<i>silvae</i> (of the forest)	<i>silvarum</i> (of the forests)
Dat.	<i>silvae</i> (to the forest)	<i>silvis</i> (to the forests)
Acc.	<i>silvam</i> (the forest)	<i>silvas</i> (the forests)
Abl.	<i>silva</i> (in or by the forest)	<i>silvis</i> (in or by the forests)

The Locative form for the singular ends in -ae and for the plural in -is. Thus, *Romae* (at Rome) and *Athenis* (at Athens). Remember, the Locative is used primarily for names of large cities and small islands.

N.B.: Because Latin has no article (*the* or *an*), *silva* may mean *the forest*, *a forest*, or simply *forest*.

Gender: Nouns of the first declension are overwhelmingly **feminine**.

A very few nouns in the first declension are masculine:

- 1) Some natural genders such as *agricola* (farmer), *nauta* (sailor), *pirata* (pirate), *poeta* (poet), *scriba* (scribe or clerk).
- 2) Some personal or family names: *Catilina*, *Murena*, *Dolabella*, *Scaevola*.
- 3) And *Hadria* (the Adriatic).

Even fewer nouns are of common gender: *incola* (inhabitant) and *advena* (stranger).

Adjectives, of course, will always agree with gender: *pirata malus* (evil pirate), *poeta clarus* (famous poet).

Dea and Filia: For the dative and ablative plural of *dea* (goddess) and *filia* (daughter) the endings -abus (*deabus* and *filiabus*) are used to distinguish these nouns from the second declension nouns *deus* (god) and *filius* (son).

Familias: An old genitive in -as is preserved in the word *familias* (of the family), often with *pater*, *mater*, *filius*, or *filia*. Thus, *pater familias* (father of the family = head of the household).