

PARTS OF SPEECH

Latin, as English, has eight parts of speech:

- . NOUN
- . PRONOUN
- . ADJECTIVE
- . VERB
- . ADVERB
- . CONJUNCTION
- . PREPOSITION
- . INTERJECTION

Noun - the name of a person, place, thing, or idea.

- . Gender: In English gender has faded for most nouns, except for special uses (e.g., ships). Latin retains gender distinctions for all nouns, some natural (e.g., *puella*) and some grammatical (*terra*).
- . Nouns are sometimes called *substantives* because they were once thought to denote the *substantia* (essential nature) of a person or thing.

Pronoun - a word used in place of a noun.

- . Personal pronoun - I, you, he, she, it, they, etc.
- . Reflexive pronoun - refers to subject of sentence (He saw *himself*).
- . Interrogative pronoun - Who, whom, whose, what?
- . Demonstrative pronoun - This, that, these, those.
- . Relative pronoun - Who, etc. (in subordinate clauses).
- . Possessive pronoun - My, your, his, etc.
- . Indefinite pronoun - Some(one), some(thing).

Adjective - a word that describes a noun or pronoun.

- . Descriptive - *terra pulchra* (a beautiful land).
- . Possessive - *mater tua* (your mother).
- . Interrogative - *quae dea . . . ?* (what goddess . . . ?)
- . Demonstrative - *hoc consilium* (this plan).
- . Indefinite - *aliqua spes* (some hope).

Verb - a word that expresses an action or condition.

- . *Transitive verb* - takes a direct object to complete its meaning. It necessarily affects some person or thing or produces some result. Thus, the statements *interficio* (I kill) or *aedificio* (I build) are not complete until it is clear *whom* I kill or *what* I build.
 - . The person or thing affected or effected by the action of the verb is the *direct object* and is always in the accusative case.
- . *Intransitive verb* - does not require a direct object to complete its meaning. The action of the verb does not "pass over" (*transire*) to another person or thing.

Thus, *sum* (I am), *sto* (I stand), *curro* (I run), *cado* (I am falling), *sol lucet* (the sun is shining) would all be nonsensical if given a direct object.

- . But many verbs can be both transitive and intransitive: I run/I run the race. I can stand/ I can stand it no longer. As is clear in the last example, this change from intransitive to transitive often is accomplished by a change in basic meaning (stand vs. endure, bear) that seldom corresponds to the Latin usage. Thus, *sto* means only "I stand" in Latin and is only intransitive.
- . Many verbs which are transitive in English were considered by the Romans to be intransitive in force. Thus, "I spare" is considered by us transitive and to require a direct object: "I spare my enemies". To the Romans, however, the idea was intransitive and the person affected must take an indirect object in the dative case: *parco meis inimicis* ("I am sparing to my enemies").

Adverbs - a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

He fights *well*.

The fight was *very* long.

He lost *too* easily.

Conjunction - a word that joins words, phrases, or clauses.

- . Coordinate - connects equal words, phrases, and clauses:

Over land *and* sea

Good *or* evil

I see *but* I don't understand.

- . Subordinate - joins dependent clauses to the main idea of a sentence:

Although the night was dark, we found our way.

We found our way *until* the sun set.

We found our way *because* there was a full moon.

Preposition - a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in the sentence (in, on, towards, with, by, etc.).

- . In Latin, as in English, prepositions are almost always placed before (*praeposita*) the words they define.

- . Many prepositions have become pre-fixed to verbs and modify their original meaning: *trans* (across) + *portare* (to carry) = *transportare* (to carry across).

- Often the preposition is modified for ease of pronunciation, as in *in + portare = importare = to carry in*. This is known as *assimilation*.

Interjection - an expression of emotion, thrown in (*interiecta*) among, but grammatically independent of, the other words of the sentence.

Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him.

Of the eight parts of speech in Latin, 5 are inflected (noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb); the other 3 (conjunction, preposition, and interjection) are invariable.