

Chapter 20: Fourth Declension

Chapter 20 covers the following: the formation of fourth-declension nouns; the ablative of separation; and at the end of the lesson we'll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There is one important rule to remember here: fourth declension contains *u*-stem nouns which are almost all masculine in gender.

Fourth Declension. Fourth declension is Latin's *u*-stem declension in which almost all the nouns are masculine in gender. Ironically, the one major exception is probably the most commonly used fourth-declension noun, *manus, manūs*, f., meaning “hand.” This declension is unique to Latin. Among Indo-European languages, there really isn't anything exactly like it. Seen from the long view linguistically, it was a short-lived attempt by the Romans to create a distinctive *u*-stem declension, and the experiment didn't turn out well. By historical standards, fourth declension didn't last long. As early as the fourth century CE, fourth-declension forms were beginning to be subsumed into second declension, and by the end of the classical age the declension had begun to disappear altogether. But during the classical age, the period to which the Latin we are studying dates, it was a fully active form, so you have to know it.

Here are the endings for fourth declension. Let's recite them together: *-us, -ūs, -ui, -um, -u; -ūs, -uum, -ibus, -ūs, -ibus*. Notice the strong presence of *-u-*. It dominates eight of the ten forms, producing what has to be the most distinctive genitive plural ending in Latin: *-uum*. Only the dative and ablative plurals avoid this *-u-*, following third declension with *-ibus* in both forms. In fact, third declension is the key to memorizing fourth declension, if you think of it as nouns with a base ending in *-u-*, with third declension endings added on. Looking at it that way can save you some time memorizing endings.

A very important thing to note about fourth declension, masculine and feminine, are the three mandatory long marks it contains. These are found in the genitive singular, the nominative plural and the accusative plural. All of these distinguish those forms from the nominative singular. And here is a fourth-declension masculine noun fully declined. Its translation follows the pattern of other declensions: the nominative serves as the subject, the genitive shows possession, and so on.

Fourth declension also includes a very few neuter nouns. Here are the endings for the neuter: *-u, -us, -u, -u* (I just love saying those); *-ua, -uum, -ibus, -ua, -ibus*. And here's a fourth-declension neuter noun, *cornu, cornūs*, one of the very few attested in Latin, fully declined: *cornu, cornūs, cornu, cornu, cornu; cornua, cornuum, cornibus, cornua, cornibus*. Note the distinctive *-u* ending in the singular, and *-ua* ending in the plural preserving the tradition that neuter plurals in their nominative and accusative end in *-a*. And also note there are no mandatory long marks here. In fact, I added the long mark on the genitive singular in *cornūs* only to maintain a certain consistency with masculine and feminine fourth-declension forms. That long mark doesn't distinguish forms, and therefore technically it's not mandatory.

Now let's look at the only other piece of grammar in this chapter, the ablative of separation. The term “ablative” denotes “separation” in Latin: *ab-* means “from”; *-lat-* means “carry, go.” Thus,

the original use of the ablative was to indicate where something came from. Other uses like means and objects of prepositions developed later. In other words, the ablative of separation shows the oldest, the original, use of the ablative.

The ablative of separation naturally occurs with verbs that have a built-in sense of separation, like the verb *careo* which means “lack,” for example, *pecuniā careo*, “I lack money,” literally “I am separate from money.” Notice the lack of any preposition in this construction. So when a word in the ablative has no preposition and its meaning denotes that two things are apart from each other — for instance, “me” and “money” — then that use of the ablative is called “the ablative of separation.” The ablative of separation will occur mainly with verbs which imply depriving, stealing, freeing, and so on. So far the two verbs we've encountered which expect the ablative of separation are *careo* and *libero*, “lack” and “free.” Eventually when you start reading Latin poetry, you'll find that the ablative of separation is employed quite liberally by Roman poets. But that's far off down the road. For now, we'll deal only with the way prose authors employ this sense of the ablative.

One more thing to note here: when an ablative noun has a sense of “from” but has a preposition like *ab*, *ex*, or *de* in front of it, we won't call it an ablative of separation. We'll simply say it's the object of that particular preposition, whatever the preposition may be. While Mr. Wheelock calls that use of the ablative the “ablative of place from which,” the term is unnecessary. We won't use it in this class.

That's it for the grammar in Chapter 20. Now let's look at the vocabulary.

The first word is *fructus, fructūs*, m., meaning “fruit, profit, enjoyment.” It's a fourth-declension masculine noun. *-Us, -ūs* is the abbreviation used in many dictionaries to indicate fourth declension; (4) indicates the same. *Fructus* really means “the best part, the point” of something, as in the best part or the point of an apple tree is the apple, that is, its fruit. Similarly, “wisdom” could be called “the ‘fruit’ of experience.”

The next word is *Graecia, Graeciae*, f., meaning “Greece.” It's a first-declension feminine noun. We've already encountered another permutation of the base underlying *Graecia, Graec-*, when we learned the noun *Graecus, -i*, m., meaning “a Greek man.”

The next word is *manus, manūs*, f., meaning “hand.” It's a fourth-declension feminine noun, one of the few fourth-declension nouns that's feminine in gender. Its basic meaning is “hand,” but it also came to mean “a handful,” later “a handful of people,” thus “a band.” This word has other senses in Latin which will be familiar to many English speakers. For instance, it can also mean a type of writing, as in “a scribe's hand.” It can mean “the power of a father at home.” It can mean “the style or skill of a particular artist,” as in “a painter's hand.” And it can also mean “one side of the body,” as in “left or right hand.”

The next word is *metus, metūs*, m., meaning “fear, dread.” It's a fourth-declension masculine noun. What would be its nominative plural? That's right: *metūs*. That long mark on the *-ū-* is mandatory.

The next word is *scelus, sceleris*, n., meaning “evil deed, crime, sin, wickedness.” It's a third-declension neuter noun. What would be its nominative plural? It's neuter, remember. Good for you: *scelera*.

The next word is *senatus, senatūs*, m., meaning “senate.” It's a fourth-declension masculine noun. The base of this noun is *sen-* meaning “old” to which has been appended the suffix *-atus* meaning “legislative office.” You should already be familiar with the *sen-* base from another word that uses it: *senex*, meaning “old man.” Etymologically, then, *senatus* means “a legislative body consisting of elders or old men.” No comment.

The next word is *servitus, servitutis*, f., meaning “servitude, slavery.” It's a third-declension feminine noun. Please note, it's third-declension, not fourth. And it's feminine, as all nouns which go *-tus, -tutis* in third declension are.

The next word is *versus, versūs*, m., meaning “line of verse.” It's a fourth-declension masculine noun. *Versus* comes from a base seen also in the verb *verto, vertere*, meaning “turn.” We'll learn that verb later. *Versus* originally meant “the turn of a plow when a farmer begins a new furrow.” To the Romans, lines of poetry stacked up on top of each other looked like furrows, and thus the word *versus* came to have the meaning “a line of verse.”

The next word is *communis, commune*, meaning “common, general.” It's a third-declension adjective and, as is the rule with third-declension adjectives, it's *i*-stem. So, what is its ablative singular? Good! *Communi*. And its genitive plural? *Communium*.

The next word is another third-declension adjective, *gravis, grave*, meaning “heavy, weighty, serious, important, severe, grievous.” The Indo-European base underlying this word is seen also in Sanskrit in the word *guru*, meaning literally “a heavy man,” with the connotation “a wise man, a man who carries the weight of learning.” From the same base comes the Greek adjective, *barus*, also meaning “heavy,” and giving us words like “barometer,” a scientific instrument for measuring the weight of air, that is, the air pressure. What would be the accusative singular masculine and feminine of *gravis*? Good! *Gravem*. And what would be the accusative singular neuter? That's right, neuter nominatives and accusatives are always the same, so it must be *grave*.

The next word is a preposition, *contra*. It means “against.” It takes an accusative object. How would Latin say, “against evil men”? Think about it for a second. That's a substantive, so you don't need a word for “men.” All you need to do is take the adjective “evil” and put it in the masculine gender, but what case? That's right! Accusative. Singular or plural? Evil “men” so it's plural. And what's the adjective for evil? *Malus*. So, “against evil men” is *contra malos*.

The next word comes in two forms which are virtually interchangeable: *neque* or *nec*, both meaning “and not, nor.” This is a negative conjunction. It's a combination of *ne* (a negator) + *-que*, the enclitic we've already encountered which means “and.” Two *neque*'s in close succession — as in “*neque* something *neque* something else” — mean “neither...nor.” The same is true of *nec*.

And the final word in this vocabulary list is a verb: *careo, carēre, carui, cariturus*. It means “be without, be deprived of, want, lack, be free from.” It’s a second-conjugation verb. Because of its basic meaning (“be without”), *careo* implies separation, and thus it takes an ablative of separation after it. Please note that it does not ever take an accusative direct object, and that’s because this verb has no true passive. You can’t be “be without-ed, be lacked.” And that’s why the fourth principal part *cariturus*, no doubt, looks odd to you. It’s not a perfect passive participle — there are no passive forms for this verb, participle or otherwise — *cariturus* is, in fact, a future active participle, a form we’ll address in later chapters. So how would Latin say “we will lack”? What conjugation is this verb? Oh yes, it’s second. So, how do second-conjugation verbs form their future? Is it with *-e-*? No! Second conjugation uses *-bi-*, so “we will lack” is *carebimus*.

And that’s it! That’s the end of the presentation for Chapter 20. Does the rule that was cited at the beginning of this chapter now make sense to you? If not, please review this presentation. If so, please proceed to the next slide.

For the next class exercise, please print out a copy of the Practice-and-Review sentences for Chapter 20. You’ll find them on page 95 of Wheelock. There’s also a worksheet we’ll do in the next day or two which reviews pronouns. Here’s a link to that worksheet. Please print it out as well.

Valete O discipuli! Don’t forget: *-u, -ūs, u-, -u, -u!*