GCSE Latin for Beginners Lesson 1 Handout

Learning Goals

- I can recognise and translate the present tense of verbs like *porto* (1st conjugation).
- I know what the terms *declension*, *case* and *gender* mean for Latin nouns.
- I understand the difference between the nominative and accusative case.
- I can translate a basic subject-object-verb sentence.

VERBS: PERSON ENDINGS

Latin verbs change their endings according to who is doing the action and when the action is happening.

This is different from English, which uses extra words before the verb to convey the information: pronouns (I, you, he, etc.) reveal who is doing the action and words like *will*, *was*, or *had* reveal when the action happens. Latin verb endings provide an efficient way of getting this information across; Latin often only needs one word where English needs two, three or even more.

The **person** is the grammatical name for the subject of the verb (i.e. who is doing the action).

The **person endings**, which appear in several different tenses and are therefore extremely important, are as follows:

Task 1: Fill in the table!

sg 1	I	
2	You (s.)	
3	He/She/It	
pl 1	We	
2	You (pl.)	
3	They	

sg stands for *singular* and *pl* stands for *plural.*

THE PRESENT TENSE

conjugation		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
		I carry	I warn	I drag	I hear
sg	1	port-o	mon-eo	trah-o	aud-io
	2	port-as	mon-es	trah-is	aud-is
	3	port-at	mon-et	trah-it	aud-it
pl	1	port-amus	mon-emus	trah-imus	aud-imus
	2	port-atis	mon-etis	trah-itis	aud-itis
	3	port-ant	mon-ent	trah-unt	aud-iunt

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Task 2: Fill in the table by translating the verb *porto (I carry)* in all its person forms.

sg 1	port-**o**	
2	port-a**s**	
3	port-a**t**	
pl 1	port-a**mus**	
2	port-a**tis**	
3	port-a**nt**	

Verbs like *porto* belong to the 1st conjugation. A conjugation is a family of verbs formed in the same way. Here are ten more verbs that go like *porto*:

ambulo I walk   *clamo* I shout   *navigo* I sail   *paro* I prepare   *saluto* I greet
amo I love, I like   *laboro* I work   *neco* I kill   *pugno* I fight   *voco* I call

Task 3: Translate into English:

1. salutatis   _____

2. portamus   _____

3. parant   _____

4. necat   _____

5. ambulas   _____

6. voco   _____

7. clamamus   _____

8. navigant   _____

9. laboratis   _____

10. pugnat   _____

Task 4: Translate into Latin:

1. They greet.   _____

2. We walk.   _____

3. You (sg) are working.   _____

4. We kill.   _____

5. They are calling.   _____

6. You (pl) carry.   _____

7. She loves.   _____

8. I prepare.   _____

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NOUNS: DECLENSION, GENDER, CASE

Just as there are fixed patterns of verb endings (conjugations), so there are fixed patterns of noun endings, which we call **declensions**. Initially we shall meet nouns in the first and second declensions. All Latin nouns have a **gender**: the great majority are either masculine or feminine, but some are neuter (literally 'neither'). Almost all nouns in the first declension are feminine.

There are different endings for different noun cases. A **case** is the form of a noun that shows the job it does in the sentence. Initially we will focus on two cases:

nominative   used when the noun is the <u>subject</u>
accusative   used when the noun is the <u>object</u> (on the receiving end of the action).

		1st declension **girl** *f*	2nd declension **master** *m*
sg	*nominative*	puell-**a**	domin-**us**
	accusative	puell-**am**	domin-**um**

Task 5: a) Underline the verb b) Highlight the *nominative* and *accusative* nouns in different colours *c*) Translate.

Latin to English

1. puella laborat.   _____

2. dominus clamat.   _____

3. puellam voco.   _____

4. dominum necatis.   _____

5. dominus puellam salutat.   _____

English to Latin

6. The girl is shouting.   _____

7. You (sg) greet the girl.   _____

8. The master is working.   _____

9. We kill the master.   _____

10. The girl calls the master.   _____

Extension: a) Turn these *nominative* nouns into *accusative* nouns b) Translate.

1. femina →   *feminam* (woman)

2. nuntius →   _____

3. equus →   _____

4. pecunia →   _____

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WORD ORDER: HOW TO TACKLE A LATIN SENTENCE

In Latin, as you will have spotted, the verb tends to come at the end. The subject, if present, usually comes first. The object, if present, is normally sandwiched in between.

e.g.   puella dominum amat.

Word order: *subject – object – verb*

literally: The girl – the master – (she) loves.
so: The girl loves the master.

When translating look for things in this order: SUBJECT – VERB – OBJECT. There is usually a noun present in a sentence as the subject, in the nominative case. In this situation, the verb will naturally be third person.

 e.g. dominus puellam vocat. _____

If you cannot see a nominative noun at the start of the sentence:

1. Look to see if the nominative noun comes later on:

e.g. pugnat dominus.   _____

2   If there is no nominative noun at all, the subject must be contained within the verb, so start with that. **Remember: You cannot start translating a sentence with an accusative**.

e.g. dominum vocas.   _____

   puellam amo.   _____

Task 6: Translate into English

1.   puellam vocamus.   _____

2.   puella dominum vocat.   _____

3.   ambulat dominus.   _____

4.   dominum puella necat.   _____

5.   dominus puellam portat.   _____

Task 7: Create your own subject-object-verb Latin sentences!

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____