

## CHAPTER 3

### Second Declension; Masculine Nouns and Adjectives; Word Order

#### THE SECOND DECLENSION

A **declension** is a pattern of endings for the different cases and numbers which a noun falls through. Latin has five declension, though the great majority of nouns fall into the first three.

In this chapter, you'll learn one part of the second declension.

(You'll get the other part of the second declension in Chapter 4.)

Let's look again at a paradigm for the first declension endings and compare them to endings of the second declension.

Decline the noun "puella, -ae (f)".

	puella, -ae (f)	amicus, -i (m)
Nom.	_____	amicus
Gen.	_____	amici
Dat.	_____	amico
Acc.	_____	amicum
Abl.	_____	amico
Voc.	_____	amice
N/V.	_____	amici
Gen.	_____	amicorum
Dat.	_____	amicis
Acc.	_____	amicos
Abl.	_____	amicis

As you can plainly see, "-a-" is the dominant vowel of the first declension. With the exception of the dative and ablative plural, all the case endings have an "-a-" in them.

Now let's compare the first declension with the second.

Although it's a little more difficult to see in places, the dominant vowel of the second declension is "-o-". Once you see this difference between the first and second declension, you can detect some of the similarities.

- (1) the accusative singular of both declensions adds "-m" to the thematic vowel: "-am" and "-um" (originally "-om").
- (2) the ablative singular is just the long thematic vowel: "-a-" and "-o-".
- (3) the genitive plural is the ending "-rum" added to the thematic vowel: "-arum" and "-orum".
- (5) the dative and ablative plural are formed alike:  
First Declension: "a-" + "-is" = "-ais" = "-is"  
Second Declension: "o-" + "-is" = "-ois" = "-is"
- (6) the accusative plural in both declensions is the thematic vowel + "-s": "-as" and "-os".

So let's set out the cases endings for the second declension:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____

**2ND DECLENSION NOUNS IN -ER AND -IR; STEM CHANGES**

As I said, this is the basic pattern of endings for nouns of the second declension, and all second declension nouns will basically use these endings.

There are second declension nouns, however, which do not follow this pattern precisely, but which use slight variations of it.

To begin with, not all second declension nouns end in "-us" in the nominative singular.

Some end in "-er" and one common noun ends in "-ir".

So go back to the blank for the nominative singular and add the variant nominative endings "-er" and "-ir".

Let's have a look at a second declension noun that ends in "-er" in the nominative singular: "puer, -i (m)" (boy).

Just to review, how do you know that this noun belongs to the second declension?

The answer is the genitive singular ending listed as the second entry.

It's "-i", the genitive singular ending of the second declension.

So what will the form of "puer" be in the genitive singular?

That's easy too. It'll be "pueri", (stem + "-i").

Now let's decline "puer" through all its cases in both numbers.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____

Let's try another second declension noun which ends in "-er" in the nominative singular: "ager, agri (m)" (field).

The nominative is the "-er" type you saw in "puer", but look at the genitive singular. Instead of just giving you an abbreviation for the genitive singular ending - "-i" - the dictionary is telling you something more.

Here you have a full form, "agri", for the genitive entry of the noun.

The case ending obviously is "-i", so the noun belongs to second declension.

If you take off the genitive singular ending "-i" you're left with "agr-", and what's that?

We need to pause here and refine what we mean by a "**stem**" of a noun.

As you probably recall, the stem of a noun is the basic form of the noun to which you then add the case endings. But despite the attractive notion that the "stem" of a noun is the nominative singular minus the case ending, a stem of a noun is really the form which is the root of all cases except the nominative singular. This is not to say that the nominative singular will never be the true stem of the word. In some declensions it is. But not always.

Look at "ager" again. The stem of the word is found not by looking at the nominative entry, but by dropping the genitive singular ending from "agri", leaving "agr-".

So the true stem of this word is "agr-", not "ager-". Hence we say that "ager" is a stem changing noun, or that it has a stem change. This is because the stem is not apparent in the nominative entry. Let's decline "ager, agri (m)". Remember, the stem is "agr-":

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____

Can you see now why it's important that a dictionary begin to decline the noun for you by giving you the genitive singular? If you weren't given "agri", after "ager", you wouldn't know the declension of the noun, nor would you know that "ager-" is not the true stem. If a noun is not a stem-changing noun, then the dictionary will simply put the genitive ending in the second entry.

But if it's a stem changing noun, the dictionary must indicate that.

Examine the following nouns and see how the dictionary conveys the necessary information.

ENTRY	STEM	MEANING
gener, -i (m)	gener-	son-in-law
magister, -tri (m)	magistr-	teacher
socer, -i (m)	socer-	father-in-law
liber, -bri (m)	libr-	book
vesper, -i (m)	vesper-	evening
signifer, -i (m)	signifer-	standard bearer

The noun "vir, -i (m)" represents another class of second declension nominative singular endings. Is there a stem change indicated in the genitive singular?

No, there isn't, so it behaves just like "puer". Decline it.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____

## NOUNS ENDING IN -IUS

Nouns whose stem ends in an "-i-" need a closer look.

"Filius, -ii (m)" is a second declension noun and the stem is "fili-" ("filius" minus the "-i" of the genitive singular). But the second entry has an extra "-i".

What's that all about?

Don't be disturbed.

Often when a stem ends in an "-i-" the dictionary likes to reassure you that despite its odd appearance, the genitive singular form really ends with two "i's": "filii".

Similarly, the dative and ablative plurals: "filiis". It may look odd, but there was a noticeable difference in the way the two "i's" would have been pronounced. The first is short, the second is long, so "filii", would have been pronounced "FEE leh ee".

But in fact even the Romans weren't very comfortable with this arrangement, and often the "i's" were simplified to one long "-i-" to "fili" or "filis".

To be consistent, Wheelock always uses the double "i".

In the vocative singular, however, the "i" at the end of the stem does cause a change.

"Filius" is an "-us" ending second declension noun so the vocative singular should be "filie".

But short "i" and short "e" are so similar in sound that some simplification was inevitable.

The final form is not "filie" but "fili".

So also in the name "Virgilius": not "Virgilie", but "Virgili".

Decline "filius, -ii (m)".

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____

## ADJECTIVES

Let's review for a moment.

You remember that adjectives are words which qualify nouns, and that an adjective will "agree" with the noun it modifies. By "agreeing" we mean that it will have the same number, gender, and case as the noun it's modifying.

You also know that an adjective must be able to modify nouns of all three genders, and that to modify a feminine noun an adjective uses the case endings from the first declension.

For example, translate and decline "great wisdom".

"Wisdom" in Latin is "sapientia, -ae (f)", a feminine noun of the first declension, as you can tell from the entry.

"Great" is the adjective modifying "wisdom" so it must agree in number, gender and case with "sapientia".

The stem of the adjective is "magn-", and the case endings you must use are those of the first declension, since "sapientia" is feminine.

SINGULAR	
great	wisdom
N/V. _____	_____
Gen. _____	_____
Dat. _____	_____
Acc. _____	_____
Abl. _____	_____
PLURAL	
N/V. _____	_____
Gen. _____	_____
Dat. _____	_____
Acc. _____	_____
Abl. _____	_____

What happens when an adjective needs to modify a masculine noun?

To modify a masculine noun an adjective uses the case endings from the second declension. That's fine and good, but we have a problem.

Which of the three singular nominative forms of the second declension do they use: "-us", "-er", or "-ir?"

The answer is that some adjectives will use "-us" and some will use "-er". (None use "-ir".)

All the adjectives we'll be looking at for the next two chapters use the "-us" ending and decline after that pattern.

In chapter five you'll get the "-er" type, so I'll postpone discussion of that kind until then (although there's nothing really very complicated about it).

Let's suppose you want to modify the noun "poeta, -ae (m) with adjective for "great?"

Look up "great" in the dictionary and write down what you see.

(Make sure you look it up! I'll wait right here.)

great                    \_\_\_\_\_

Now what kind of an entry is this?

The convention for listing an adjective is different from that for a noun.

The first entry tells you how an adjective modifies a masculine noun, the second tells you how it modifies a feminine noun, and the third how it modifies a neuter noun (and we'll learn about that in the next chapter).

So let's look at the first entry:

"magnus" tells you that the adjective uses the "-us" type endings from the second declension to modify a masculine noun;

the "-a", which stands for the nominative singular of the first declension, tells you that it uses first declension endings to modify feminine nouns;

the "-um" tells you which endings to use for neuter nouns.

Now, how did you find the stem of "-us" type nouns of the second declension? Do you remember? You simply drop off the "-us" ending, and that's the stem.

What's the stem of the adjective "magnus, -a, -um?" I hope you guessed "magn-".

So an entry like this is a short-hand way of saying this:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
	-us	-a	-um
	-i	-ae	
	-o	-ae	
	-um	-am	
	-o	-a	
	-e	-a	
magn- +			
	-i	-ae	
	-orum	-arum	
	-is	-is	
	-os	-as	
	-is	-is	

So decline "great poet". (WARNING: Remember that agreement means same number, gender, and case; not form which look alike!)

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
	great	poet	great	poets
Nom.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Voc.	_____	_____	_____	_____

### APPOSITION

Consider this English sentence: "Daniel, my brother, you were older than me [sic]".

You can easily see that "brother" is giving you more information about "Daniel"; that is, "brother" is **modifying** or **qualifying** "Daniel". In this sense, at least, "brother" is acting like an adjective.

But since "brother" is a noun, not an adjective, it cannot qualify another noun in quite the same way an adjective does.

We call this modifying relationship between nouns "**apposition**". We would say "brother" is "**in apposition**" to "Daniel".

In Latin also, nouns can be set in apposition to each other for modification.

So one noun is modifying another noun - something like an adjective modifying a noun. But, obviously a noun cannot agree with the noun it's modifying the same way an adjective does.

And why not?

Nouns all have gender inherent in them, so a noun can never change its gender to agree in gender with a noun it's modifying.

But it can agree with the noun it's modifying in case, and it will.

In Latin, when a noun is in apposition to another noun, the noun doing the modifying will agree with the modified noun in case.

"*Gaium, meum filium, in agris video.*" (I see Gaius, my son, in the fields.)

"*Gaium*" is accusative because it's the direct object of the verb "*video*".

Therefore the word for "son" must also be in the accusative case, since it's telling us more about Gaius, and Gaius, as the object of the verb "to see", is in the accusative case.

## VOCABULARY PUZZLES

- de + abl.; in + abl.* Like English, prepositions in Latin will take the noun they're governing in a case other than the nominative. We wouldn't say in English "with I" or "to she:" we say "with me" and "to her".  
But in Latin, some prepositions will have to be followed by the accusative case; others by the ablative case. (And some can be followed by both, though the meaning changes slightly.) Therefore, whenever you learn a preposition, you must also memorize the case it takes.
- pauci, -ae* This is an adjective, but unlike others adjectives, the word for "few" has no singular forms. (That's logical.)  
So the dictionary starts its listing in the nominative plural.  
As you can see, the "-i" and the "-ae" endings are the second and first declension nominative plural endings. So this adjective declines like "*magnus, -a, -um*" with the exception that it has no singular forms.
- meus, -a, [-um]* The adjective means "my", and it agrees with whatever is being owned.  
The stem is "*me-*". It has an irregular vocative singular ending.  
Instead of "mee", you have "*mi*". So it's "*mi amice*" for "Hey, my friend".
- Romanus, -a, [-um]* This is an adjective, but it can be used as a noun.  
Like "American". It's an adjective - like "American Pie" - but it can also be used for a person: "she's an American", or "The Americans are coming". Hence, "*Romani*" can mean "the Romans", and "*Romana*" can mean a "Roman woman". On the other hand, we can also say "*Romana patria*": "the Roman fatherland"; or "*Romani libri*": "Roman books".

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