

CHAPTER 8

Third Conjugation (duco): Present Infinitive, Present and Future Indicative, Present Imperative Active

PRESENT INFINITIVE AND PRESENT TENSE

You remember that Latin verbs are divided into groups called "**conjugations**", and the conjugations are distinguished from one another by their **thematic vowels**.

The thematic vowel of the first conjugation is "-a-";

the thematic vowel of the second is "-e-".

You can tell what the stem vowel (its thematic vowel) of a verb is - and thereby its conjugation - by dropping the "-re" ending from the infinitive, which is given to you in the dictionary.

laudo	laudare	stem : lauda-	1st conjugation
moneo	monere	stem : mone-	2nd conjugation

Now look at the dictionary entry for the verb "to lead" in Latin: "*duco, ducere*".

Simply by looking at the first entry, you might think that this verb is going to be a first conjugation verb - it looks like "laudo".

But the next entry looks something like a second. Find the stem : it's *duce-*.

You have to look closely, but the "-e-" of the stem is short.

This is the characteristic vowel of the third conjugation: short "-e-".

Even if you're not watching the long marks, you can still tell a second conjugation verb in the dictionary from a third.

The first entry for a second conjugation verb will always end in "-eo", and then the second entry will end "-ere".

The first dictionary entry of a third conjugation ends simply with "-o" and then the second entry is "-ere".

So if the first entry of a verb looks like a first conjugation verb in the first person singular and if the infinitive looks like a second conjugation verb, then you have a third conjugation verb.

Identify the conjugations of the following verbs:

ENTRY	CONJUGATION	ENTRY	CONJUGATION
doceo, docere	_____	audeo, audere	_____
amo, amare	_____	tolero, tolerare	_____
duco, ducere	_____	valeo, valere	_____
scribo, scribere	_____	ago, agere	_____

We'll use "duco" as our example (paradigm) of third conjugation verbs.

Now let's see about conjugating a third conjugation verb in the present tense.

You remember the formula for all verbs in Latin in the present tense :

it's just the stem plus the personal endings "-o", "-s", "-t", etc.

Fill out the following table, except for the conjugated form.

PRESENT TENSE OF "duco, ducere"

	STEM	+	PERSONAL ENDINGS	=	CONJUGATED FORM
1st	_____		_____		_____
2nd	_____		_____		_____
3rd	_____		_____		_____
1st	_____		_____		_____
2nd	_____		_____		_____
3rd	_____		_____		_____

What we need to know is what happens to the stem vowel when we start attaching the personal endings. In the first and second declensions this presented no problem, because the stem vowels are long and strongly pronounced.

But short vowels always cause difficulties in languages and are subject to changes.

You already have experience with what happens to the short "-e-" before personal endings.

Do you remember how you form the future tense of first and second conjugation verbs?

You insert the tense sign "-b-" in between the stem and the personal endings. And then the short "-e-" changes :

laudabo	-	laudabo	("-e-" disappears)
laudabs	-	laudabis	
laudabt	-	laudabit	
laudabmus	-	laudabimus	
laudabtis	-	laudabitis	
laudabnt	-	laudabunt	

This is what happens to short "-e-" before the personal endings.

In third conjugation verb, then, what is going to happen to the short "-e-" of its stem?

Right. It's going to undergo precisely the same changes.

Now go back to the table and fill out the conjugated forms of "duco".

(Check the answers in Wheelock, p. 35.)

FUTURE TENSE

Third conjugation verbs form the future tense in a way entirely different from that of the first and second conjugation.

First and second conjugation verbs insert a tense sign - "-be-" between the stem and the personal endings.

Third conjugation verbs do two things:

- (1) For the first person singular, they replace the stem vowel with an "-a-" and use the alternate personal ending "-m" - instead of the more regular "-o".
- (2) For all the other forms, they lengthen the short "-e-" of the stem to long "-e-". Since the "-e-" is now long, it no longer goes through any of the changes it went through in the present tense. It simply stays "-e-". (Except of course where long vowels normally become short : before "-t", and "-nt".)

Fill out the future tense of the verb "duco".

	STEM	+	TENSE SIGN	+	PERS. END.	=	CONJUGATED FORMS
1st	duc		_____		_____		_____
2nd			_____		_____		_____
3rd			_____		_____		_____
1st			_____		_____		_____
2nd			_____		_____		_____
3rd			_____		_____		_____

FUTURE OF THIRD CONJUGATION VS. PRESENT OF SECOND CONJUGATION

The way a third conjugation verb forms its future presents an interesting problem.

Write out the present tense of the second conjugation verb "moneo, monere", and next to it write out the future of the third conjugation verb "mitto, mittere" (to send).

	moneo PRESENT	mitto FUTURE
1st	_____	_____
2nd	_____	_____
3rd	_____	_____
1st	_____	_____
2nd	_____	_____
3rd	_____	_____

As you can see, except for the first person singular, the endings of both these verbs look the same: the personal endings in both these verbs are preceded by an "-e-".

The present tense of a second conjugation verb almost always looks like the future tense of a third conjugation verb, and this could cause you some problems when you're reading and translating.

But not if you keep your wits about you.

Suppose that you see a form like this in a text you're reading: "*legent*". What do you do with it?

First you recognize the "-nt" as an ending that's attached to verbs, so the word you're looking at is a verb. You want to look this verb up in the dictionary, so you must simplify it to its basic form, which is the first person singular.

You remember that a verb is conjugated by adding personal ending, so to reduce this form, you drop of the "-nt". This leaves you with "*lege-*".

Now the next thing you have to consider is the "-e-":

is it the stem vowel of a second conjugation verb,

or is it the lengthened "-e-" of a third conjugation verb as the tense sign for the future?

That is, is this a present tense form of a second conjugation verb (stem + personal endings), or is it a future of a third (stem + lengthened "-e-" + personal endings).

What do you do next to find out? You've gone as far as you can with your preliminary analysis of the form. Now you have to proceed provisionally.

Suppose that the verb is a second conjugation, what will the dictionary entry look like?

The first entry is the first person singular, the second is the infinitive, so, if this is a second conjugation verb, the entry will be "*legeo, legere*". Right? Because all second conjugation verbs end in "-eo" in the first person singular. So you've reduced the conjugated form "*legent*" to a form you can look up.

The next step is to look it up - but look for exactly what you've supposed the form to be.

Look for both "*legeo*", and "*legere*". Look it up.

You didn't find it, did you?

But if your analysis was correct, "*legeo*" must be there. But it's not. What does that tell you?

It tells you that "*legent*" is not a form of a second conjugation verb.

(If it were, you would have found "*legeo*" in the dictionary, but you didn't.)

Go back to the other possibility: "*legent*" could be the future of a third conjugation verb, where the "-e-" is the sign of the future. So if this is correct, what will the dictionary entry be? It'll be "*lego, legere*".

Check it out. This time you found what you were looking for: "*lego*" means "to read".

So how do you translate "*legent*?"

leg-	-e-	-nt
read	will	they

Or "they will read".

The moral of this is that your lives used to be fairly simple. An "-e-" before the personal endings always used to indicate a present tense of a second conjugation verb. Now it could mean a future of a third conjugation verb as well. You have to proceed cautiously now, and make sure you have thoroughly mastered your grammar before you start reading. You'll also have to use the dictionary more deliberately and intelligently than you had to before. And that means thinking your forms through before you turn to the dictionary.

IMPERATIVE

Do you remember the formulae you followed for forming the imperative of first and second conjugation verbs? It was this :

Singular : stem
Plural : stem + te

And so you came up with forms like this: "lauda", "laudate", "mone", "monete", etc. Third conjugation verbs follow the same formulae, but don't forget that pesky short "-e-" stem vowel. If there is something added to it, it changes to an "-i-" (or "-u-" before the ending "-nt"); if there is nothing added to it, it stays short "-e-". So how are you going to form the imperative of the verb "mitto?" Think.

Singular mitte = _____
Plural mitte + te = _____

This is how all third conjugation verbs will form their imperatives - except for four very common verbs. The verbs "duco", and three other verbs you'll get later, form their singular imperatives by dropping the stem vowel altogether: "duc" not "duce". But the plural imperatives are quite regular : "ducite".

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

- scribo, -ere* One way to memorize the conjugation of verbs is to learn them with the proper accentuation.
A second conjugation verb is accented on the stem vowel in the infinitive, so say "MOH neh o, moh NEH reh" for the second conjugation verb "*moneo, monere*".
The stress accent on a third conjugation falls on the syllable before the stem vowel. So say, "SREE boh, SCREE beh reh" for the third conjugation verb "*scribo, scribere*". Similarly "DOO keh re" for "*ducere*", "MIT teh re" for "*mittere*" and so on.
- copia, -ae (f)* Another one of those words which have a different meaning in the plural. In the singular "*copia*" means "abundance"; in the plural - *copiae, -arum (f)* - it means "supplies, troops, forces".
- ad + acc* Means "to" and "toward", always with a sense of "movement to". Students often "ad + acc". with the dative case of indirect object, which we often translate into English with the preposition "to". Contrast these two examples: "I am giving you a dollar ("you" would be dative case) and "I am running to you" ("you" would be in the accusative case governed by "ad").
- ex, e + abl.* Students sometimes get hung up on when to use "ex" or "e". Use "ex" before any word you like, but use "e" only before words which start with a consonant. If you wish, use "ex" only. That way, you'll always be right.
- ago, agere* An idiom with this verb which Wheelock is going use a lot is "*ago vitam*", which means "to live" (to lead a life). Another is "*ago gratias*" + dative, which means "to thank". The person being thanked is in the dative case: "*Populus hominibus gratias agent*".
- duco, ducere* Means "to lead", but can also mean "to think". This extension is logical: we want our leaders to be thinkers too, don't we?