

CHAPTER 20

Fourth Declension; Ablatives of Place from Which and Separation

FOURTH DECLENSION NOUNS

Let's review a moment. You know that a noun will belong to one declension and one declension only; and you know that a declension is a pattern of case endings. There are five declensions in Latin, and in each of them some case endings resemble those of the other declensions.

You know, the "-m" is almost always the ending of the accusative singular; "-s" is almost always the ending of the accusative plural; etc.

So what makes these declensions truly different from each other?

The truly distinctive characteristic of these declensions is the thematic vowel (that is, the vowel which regularly appears in the case endings):

- (1) The thematic vowel of the first declension is "-a-".
- (2) The thematic vowel of the second declension is "-o-"
(the "-u-" in the declension was really an "-o-" which has been changed).
- (3) The thematic vowel of the third declension is short "-e-" (which often changes to a short "-i-").

And now the fourth and fifth declensions:

- (4) The thematic vowel of the fourth declension is "-u-".
- (5) The thematic vowel of the fifth declension is "-e-". (We'll look at fifth declension nouns later.)

So, how can you tell to which declension a noun belongs?

The dictionary must give you that information.

But instead of listing a number next to the noun, the dictionary does something else. The dictionary actually starts to decline the noun for you.

The first entry in the dictionary is the nominative singular, followed by the genitive singular, which is then followed by the gender. You deduce the declension by looking at the genitive singular ending, which means you must know the forms of the genitive singulars for all the declensions:

- (1) An "-ae" genitive ending means the noun declines in the first declension, because "-ae" is the genitive singular ending of the first declension.
- (2) An "-i" genitive ending means the noun is second declension.
- (3) An "-is" genitive ending means the noun is third declension.

So now let's look at the fourth declension.

Like the third declension, the fourth declension can have nouns of all three genders belonging to it : the masculine and feminine nouns will follow one pattern of endings; the neuter nouns will follow another. (Now it happens that the vast majority of fourth declension nouns are masculine and that there are hardly any feminine nouns; but you should keep your guard up anyway.)

So here are the different case endings:

	MASCULINE AND FEMININE	NEUTER
Nom.	-us	-u
Gen.	-us	-us
Dat.	-ui	-u
Acc.	-um	-u
Abl.	-u	-u
Nom.	-us	-ua
Gen.	-uum	-uum
Dat.	-ibus	-ibus
Acc.	-us	-ua
Abl.	-ibus	-ibus

Let's take a closer look at these endings. First the masculine and feminine endings:

- (1) The nominative singular is short "-us", so this ending looks exactly like the "-us" type second declension ending for the nominative singular. So, looking at the dictionary entry for the nominative singular of a fourth declension masculine or feminine noun, you might be lured into thinking that it's of the second declension.
To see the difference you must go to the next entry - the genitive singular.
- (2) The genitive singular is long "-us", so the dictionary entry for a fourth declension noun will look like this : 'x'us, -us (m./f.), where 'x' is the stem of the noun.
- (3) The dative singular ending is the "-i" you've seen in the third declension and on the pronouns, which is attached to the thematic vowel "-u-".
- (4) The accusative singular ending is entirely predictable : it's just the thematic vowel with the ending "-m" attached.
This is the way all accusative singulars of masculine and feminine nouns are formed.
- (5) Equally predictable is the ablative singular: it's just the thematic vowel.
- (6) The nominative plural works on the analogy of the third declension : the long thematic vowel plus the ending "-s".
- (7) The genitive plural is odd-looking - "-uum" - but it's made up of the thematic vowel plus the genitive plural ending "-um" you're already familiar with from the third declension.
- (8) The dative and ablative plurals "-ibus" look like the third declension endings; notice also that the thematic vowel "-u-" has been replaced. It's "-ibus", not "-ubus". Strange.
- (9) The accusative plural is the same as the nominative plural.
You've seen this phenomenon before in the third declension.

Now let's look at the neuter side of the fourth declension. Wheelock tells you correctly that these are rare. And we're lucky they are, because they're somewhat odd.

- (1) The nominative singular ends in just a long "-u". Odd.
- (2) According to the laws of neuters, therefore, the accusative singular will also end in long "-u".
- (3) You would expect the dative singular to have a predictable ending, but look at it :
the ending is long "-u". Take a look at the endings in the singular, now.
Four of the cases in the singular have the same ending - long "-u" - which means you may have a devil of a time deciding which case a noun is in when it ends in long "-u".
Context has to help you.
- (4) Nothing irregular happens in the plural - if you remember that proposition two of the law of neuters tells you that all neuter nominative and accusative plurals end in short "-a".

One more thing about the fourth declension which might interest you is that there are no fourth declension adjectives. You recall that the first, second and third declensions are patterns of endings which nouns and adjectives can use. The fourth declension contains only nouns.

A list for a fourth declension noun in the dictionary will look like this :

metus, -us (m)
fructus, -us (m)
manus, -us (f)
cornu, -us (n)
versus, -us (m)

The first entry is the nominative singular, the second tells you the declension and indicates whether there are any stem changes from the nominative form.

But, there are no stem changes in fourth declension nouns. Isn't that nice?

So decline these nouns.
metus, -us (m)

Check you work against Wheelock page 93.
cornu, -us (n)

Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____
Nom.	_____	_____
Gen.	_____	_____
Dat.	_____	_____
Acc.	_____	_____
Abl.	_____	_____

ABLATIVE OF PLACE FROM WHICH AND SEPARATION

There's nothing really difficult about this bit of knowledge. You've seen for quite some time now that prepositions take certain cases and that the meaning of such expressions is set by the meaning of the preposition. The case the noun is in really has nothing to contribute to the meaning of the expression. For example, "ad" means "to" or "toward" and it takes its object in the accusative case. Therefore "ad urbem" means "to/toward the city".

The prepositions "ab, ex, de" mean something like "from" or "out of" or "away from" and they take the ablative case. So we can say, "*Veniunt ex urbe*". ("They are coming out of the city".)

Got that? Now here's a new twist.

If the verb being used explicitly contains the idea of physical separation, then the prepositions indicating separation ("ab, ex, de") are not used.

Instead, the thing from which the separation is being made is simply put into the ablative case.

We call this prepositionless use of the ablative case the "**Ablative of Separation**".

Like this. The verb "to free", "libero (1)", also carries with it the sense "to free from". Hence the idea of separation from something is explicit in the verb. So if we wish to say something like this - "The truth will free us from fear" - we write "*Veritas nos metu liberabit* (not "ab metu)". Look at the following examples:

"Fructibus bonis numquam carebamus". (We never used to lack good fruits.)

"Liberavistis nos sceleribus istius tyranni". (You have freed us from the crimes of that tyrant.)

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

fructus, -us (m) Don't forget the extended senses of the word "fruit": "fruits of our labor", for example.

communis, -e It doesn't mean "common" in the negative sense of "ordinary"; it means "common" in the sense that many share it. "General" is a better first translation.
"Communis opinio" means "general opinion"; "*communis salus*", "general safety".

careo (2), carui, -- Pay no attention to the fourth principal part for now, but do look at the construction which follows the verb.

"Careo" take the "Ablative of Separation", not the accusative case, as you might be led to expect by our use of the verb "to lack".