

## Wermuth's "Famous Quotes & Memory Joggers" for the Beginning Latin Student

1. *Always study vocabulary and grammatical structures first* before translating exercises.
2. **Make your own vocabulary cards.** Write the Latin word not only on the front of the card, but also on the back of the card just above the definition. This will instill in you a "conditioned" remembrance between the Latin word and its English meaning. You may also want to include the "conjugation" (if a verb) or the "declension" (if a noun) from which the word originates.
3. *Neuter Latin nouns* always repeat their Nominative endings in the Accusative (singular and plural, respectively).
4. The Latin declined ending "ī" shows up in two declensions (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) and in three different cases: **Genitive singular** (2<sup>nd</sup> declension masc. & neuter), **Nominative plural** (2<sup>nd</sup> declension masc.), and **Dative singular** (3<sup>rd</sup> declension all genders). Look at the declensions side by side and you'll readily notice this. (Of course, what declension the word originates in plus the sentence's context will help the reader determine which case is occurring.)
5. The **main characteristic** (irregularity) of a **3<sup>rd</sup> Declension Latin noun** is that its true stem does not appear within the vocabulary word (Nom. sing.) itself, but first reveals itself within the Genitive singular form. Example: *lex, legis . . .*
6. When translating Latin sentences, identify and translate in the following order whenever possible: (1) **Subject (Nominative case)**, then (2) **Verb**, and (3) **Direct Object (Accusative case)**.
7. "*Stick to your cases!*" (when translating Latin sentences)
8. **Q.** When you can't find a subject (Nominative) noun, pronoun or an adjective functioning as the subject (Nominative "substantive") of the sentence, where can you **always** still locate the subject of a Latin sentence?  
**A.** Hanging off the end of the verbal form (i.e., the personal ending) as the subject of the verb and also of the entire sentence!
9. Don't be intimidated by grammatical terminology. For example, "transitive" verbs (Lat. *trans* = *across, over*) are verbs that have "action" (i.e. they're "moving" toward an object). As a result, we have the "direct object," which receives the action of these verbs of motion. Or, as one of my students brilliantly (and simply) stated: "*The subject 'verbs' the object.*"

10. Remember, **transitive Latin verbs most often are positioned at the end of the sentence** (or individual clauses within the sentence).
11. *1<sup>st</sup> Conjugation* Latin verbs are also known as “**a**-stems.” In the *1<sup>st</sup> person singular*, the “a” of the stem is swallowed up by the personal ending “o” (kind of like Jonah inside the whale; he’s there . . . you just can’t see him!)
12. *2<sup>nd</sup> Conjugation* Latin verbs could very well be termed “e-stems.”
13. *3<sup>rd</sup> Conjugation* Latin verbs (e.g., *mitto, mittis, mittit*...) present a thematic “i” in their Present Indicative stems, except in the *1<sup>st</sup> person singular*.
14. The “tense sign” indicator for all conjugations of *Imperfect* tense Latin *Indicative* verbs is **-ba-**.
15. The “tense sign” indicator for *Future* tense Latin *1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Conjugation Indicative* verbs is **-bi-**.
16. The “tense sign” indicator for *Future* tense Latin *3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Conjugation Indicative* verbs is a thematic “e,” except for the *1<sup>st</sup> person singular*, where it is an “a.”
17. **Remember:** All Latin *Indicative* mode verb tenses except one (the *Perfect* tense) utilize the Latin verb endings: **-o** [or] **-m**, **-s**, **-t**, **-mus**, **-tis**, **-nt** in their formation. Meanwhile, the *Perfect Active Indicative* utilizes the following endings: **-i**, **-isti**, **-it**, **-imus**, **-istis**, **-erunt**.
18. There is a significance to the **Latin word order** within a sentence. Words at the beginning and end—*Subject* and *Verb*, respectively—obviously have prominence. For example, “**Genitive**” case words (showing possession or description), when moved in *front* of a word instead of their normal position following the word, signify greater emphasis. So: “*Deus, Pater hominum . . .*” (= “God, the Father of men . . .”) would be even stronger written “*Deus, hominum Pater . . .*”