

LESSON XXIII – National Heroes



Let’s expand! By the end of this lesson, your knowledge of the Latin verbal system will be virtually complete. There are a few irregular verbs, of course, but with only one other exception (present passive and future imperatives), you will soon have mastered all the forms of the Latin verb. To make this last clean sweep of the charts, however, it is necessary to introduce not one but two verbal nouns at this point.



You already know a great deal about the infinitive, which functions most of the time like a noun. There are two other “verbals” in Latin that function similarly—the gerund and the supine.

Because your textbook does not present the supine, you will probably see very little of it in classwork or on quizzes. It is nevertheless an easy form to recognize and translate, because it is simply a fourth declension noun based on the perfect passive participle. It exists in only two cases, the accusative and the ablative.

ACCUSATIVE	portātum	doctum	positum	captum	mūnitum
ABLATIVE	portātū	doctū	positū	captū	mūnitū

The accusative supine is used with verbs of motion to express purpose.

Exemplī Grātiā:

Militēs positum castra convēnērunt.

The soldiers assembled to pitch camp.

Notice in this example that the supine, like other verbals, can take an object.

The ablative supine is used like the ablative of respect. It occurs most often with adjectives such as *facilis* and *optimus*.

Exemplōrum Grātiā:

Illud tibi facile dictū.

That’s easy for you to say.

Quid optimum factū est?

What is the best thing to do?

Notā Bene: In the ablative case, the supine never takes an object.

For each of your model deponents, give both supines.

	arbitror	vereor	loquor	gradior	orior
ACCUSATIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABLATIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

The third kind of verbal noun that you need to know is much more common than the supine. It is called the gerund and it looks like the gerundive, or future passive participle, but is very different. Gerunds, like supines, have a limited number of forms. Unlike the supine, however, the gerund is based on the present stem. For all ten of your model verbs, write “complete” declensions of the gerund.

	portō	doceō	pōnō	capiō	mūniō
GEN.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
DAT.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ACC.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABL.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	arbitror	vereor	loquor	gradior	orior
GEN.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
DAT.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ACC.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ABL.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Notā Bene: The fact that the present infinitive replaces the gerund in the nominative case should reinforce for you the common function of these two verbals. For that matter, think about the way that the supine is translated. It too should remind you of the infinitive.



Let’s expand further! Although the Latin infinitive is not normally used to express purpose, the gerund and the supine often express this idea. The gerundive, for that matter, although it is a verbal adjective, can also be used to express purpose. Using the gerund and the gerundive in this way, however, requires you to learn a new meaning for a familiar preposition (*ad*) and a new use for two familiar nouns (*causā* and *grātiā*).



In the sentence “The soldiers came together to pitch camp,” there are four different ways to translate the purpose of the soldiers’ assembly.

Exempōrum Grātiā:

ut castra pōnerent
 ad castra pōnenda
 castrōrum pōnendōrum causā (or grātiā)
 castra positum

In the second example, note that a gerundive rather than a gerund is used. In an alternate phrase, such as *ad pugnandum*, the gerund could have been used because there would have been no noun to modify.

For each of the following sentences, supply three or four equivalent ways of translating just the statement of purpose. Remember that the accusative supine can only be used with verbs of motion.

1. These foreigners have come to seize the kingdom.

2. Sound your trumpet to summon the soldiers.

3. He made that speech to move the people.

4. We will mount an attack to recover the standards.

5. You (singular) must join forces with us to preserve your freedom.
