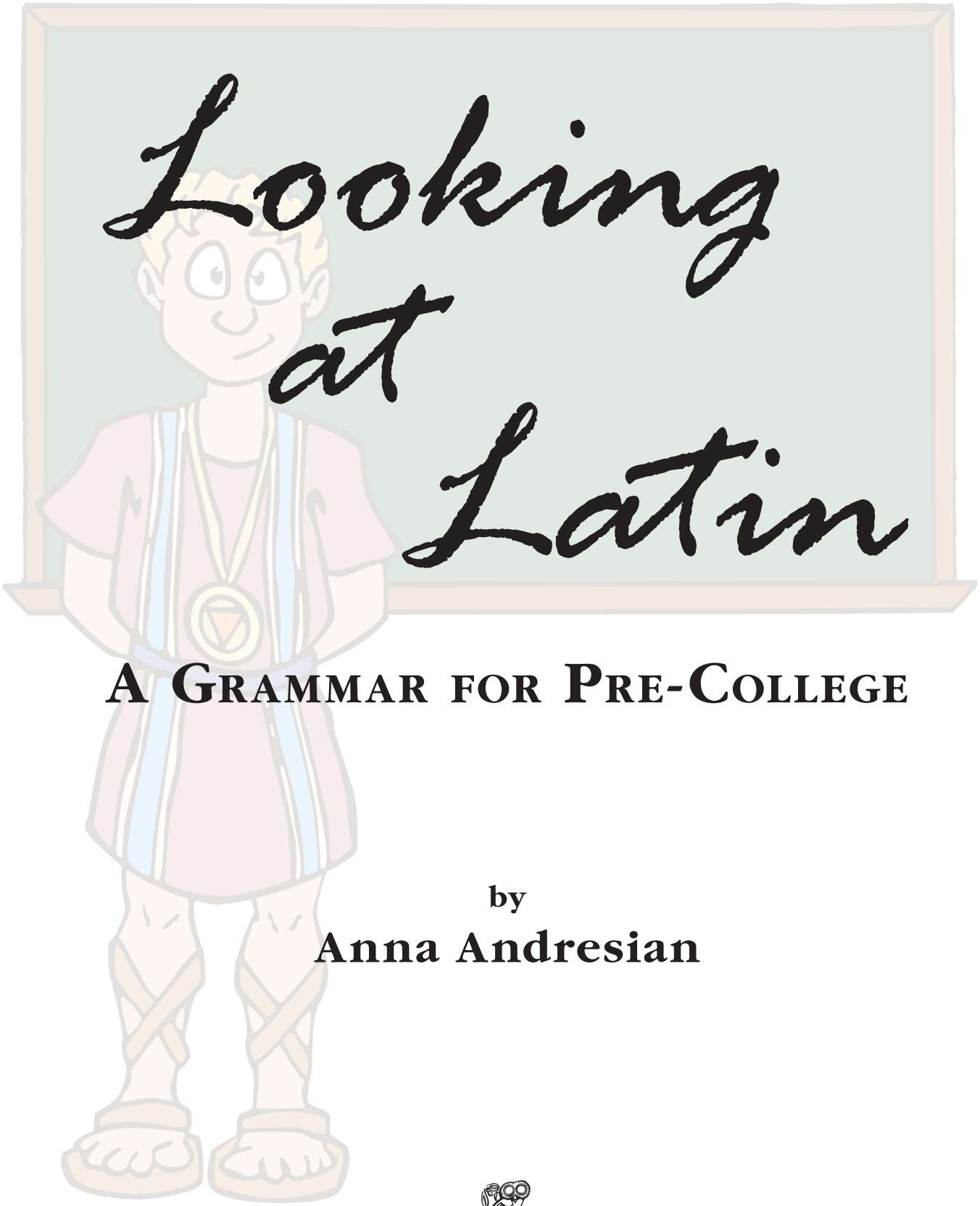

Looking at Latin

A Grammar for Pre-College

by

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Noun Terminology

CASE

ENGLISH

Word order tells you what is going on in a sentence.

↓

Flavia eats a bean. ⟷ Flāvia fabam devōrat.

A bean eats Flavia. ⟷ Flāviam faba devōrat.

Subject: comes before verb
Direct Object: comes after verb

(Subject → Verb → Direct Object)

LATIN

Word endings tell you what is going on in a sentence.

↓

Subject: ends in -a
Direct Object: ends in -am

(Flexible word order)

CASES

CASE

Different word forms (Flāvia vs. Flāviam) are called "cases." The case of a word reveals its grammatical role in the sentence.

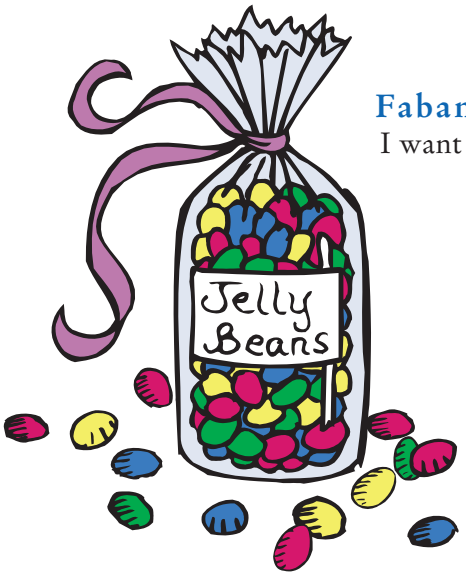
NOMINATIVE: SUBJECT
✧Andrew✧ likes ketchup.

GENITIVE: POSSESSION
✧Courtney's✧ hair is brown.

DATIVE: INDIRECT OBJECT
You gave a CD ✧to Ashley✧.

ACCUSATIVE: DIRECT OBJECT
You saw ✧Matthew✧ in the halls.

ABLATIVE: ---[Many different uses]---
André surprises Sue ✧with flowers✧.
Barney and Anne live ✧in New York✧.
Julian walks back ✧from the bus stop✧.



Fabam cupiō.
I want ✧a bean✧.

Noun Terminology

NUMBER

NUMBER

SINGULAR	PLURAL
One noun	More than one noun
↓	↓
(the feather)	(the feathers)

plūma
nominative singular

plūmae
nominative plural

The ending of a noun reveals its case and number.

Every noun has a set of singular case forms and a set of plural case forms.

Noun Terminology

GENDER

GENDER

Masculine Feminine Neuter

The gender of a noun is sometimes but not always related to the meaning of the noun.

RELATED MEANING & GENDER

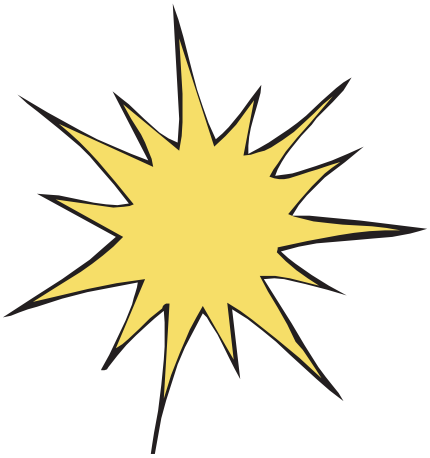
puella - girl → feminine
puer - boy → masculine

UNRELATED MEANING & GENDER

vīcus - village → masculine
urbs - city → feminine
oppidum - town → neuter

IDENTIFYING A NOUN'S GENDER

Some genders are obvious (*puer* - boy → masculine), but in many cases, you must look in the dictionary to find the gender of a noun.



Typical noun dictionary entries

stella, stellae, f. (star)

astrum, astrī, n. (star)

GENDER MATTERS!

Different genders use slightly different endings, so you may misunderstand a noun's form if you do not know its gender.

puer**um** (boy)
↓
masculine
↓
accusative singular

verb**um** (word)
↓
neuter
↓
nominative or accusative singular

Noun Terminology

DECLENSION

DECLENSION

"Declension" is simply a word that means "Noun Type."

There are 5 different types of nouns in the Latin language, each of which has its own set of case endings.

IDENTIFYING A NOUN'S DECLENSION

Every declension has a genitive singular form that is different from the genitive singular forms of other declensions.

Look at a noun's dictionary entry to find its genitive singular form.

stella, stellae, f. (star)

astrum, astrī, n. (star)

GENITIVE SINGULAR ENDINGS

-ae → 1st Declension

-ī → 2nd Declension

-is → 3rd Declension

-ūs → 4th Declension

-eī → 5th Declension

DECLENSION MATTERS!

It will be difficult to interpret noun endings correctly if you do not know the noun's declension.

SECOND DECLENSION

	SING.	PL.
Nom.	puer	puerī
Gen.	puerī	puerōrum
Dat.	puerō	puerīs
Acc.	**puerum**	puerōs
Abl.	puerō	puerīs

THIRD DECLENSION

	SING.	PL.
Nom.	pater	patrēs
Gen.	patris	**patrum**
Dat.	patrī	patribus
Acc.	patrem	patrēs
Abl.	patre	patribus

puer**um**: Second Declension → accusative singular

patr**um**: Third Declension → genitive plural

Noun Terminology

DICTIONARY ENTRY AND STEM

DICTIONARY ENTRY

puella, ↓ NOMINATIVE Singular — puellae, ↓ GENITIVE Singular — f. ↓ Gender — (girl) ↓ Meaning

Use genitive to identify the declension of the noun.

Use genitive to identify the stem of the noun.

PLURAL-ONLY NOUNS

Some nouns only use plural forms, so their dictionary entries give:

nom. pl., gen. pl., gender, meaning

dēliciae, dēliciārum, f. (sweetheart)

castra, castrōrum, n. (battle camp)

GENITIVE SINGULAR ENDINGS

-ae → 1st Declension

-ī → 2nd Declension

-is → 3rd Declension

-ūs → 4th Declension

-eī → 5th Declension

STEM

Basic foundation of a noun - case endings are added to it.

↓

Remove genitive singular ending to identify the stem of a noun.

DICTIONARY ENTRY		STEM
agricola, agricol**ae**, m. (farmer)	→	agricol-
ager, agr**ī**, m. (field)	→	agr-
līber**tās**, līber**tāt**is, f. (freedom)	→	lībertāt-
manus, man**ūs**, f. (hand)	→	man-
di**ēs**, di**ēī**, m. (day)	→	di-

puella, **puellae**, f.

↓

PUELL~~AE~~

↓

STEM: puell-

Noun Terminology

SUMMARY

CASE	Reveals grammatical function of noun.	Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Ablative
NUMBER	Indicates whether there is one or more than one.	Singular, Plural
GENDER	Plays a role in determining what case endings are used.	Masculine Feminine Neuter
DECLENSION	Type of noun: different declensions use different case endings.	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th
STEM	Basic foundation of noun: case endings are added to it.	Cut off ending of genitive singular form
DICTIONARY ENTRY	Reveals declension, stem, gender, and meaning of noun.	Nominative, Genitive, Gender, Meaning

First Declension

-AE

FEMININE (AND SOME MASCULINE) NOUNS

FIRST DECLENSION

Typical:
aqua, aquae, f. (water)

Genitive Singular: -AE

***LONG MARK**

↓

Nominative Sing.: -A
Ablative Sing.: -Ā

STEM

↓

Cut off -AE from Genitive Singular.

1ST DECLENSION ENDINGS		
	Singular	Plural
Nominative	-a	-ae
Genitive	-ae	-ārum
Dative	-ae	-īs
Accusative	-am	-ās
Ablative	-ā*	-īs

aqua, aquae, f. (water)

1ST DECLENSION aqua, aquae, f. (water)		
	Singular	Plural
Nominative	aqua	aquae
Genitive	aquae	aquārum
Dative	aquae	aquīs
Accusative	aquam	aquās
Ablative	aquā	aquīs

Most first declension nouns are feminine, but several are masculine:

agricola → farmer
nauta → sailor
poēta → poet