

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR ROMAN, PART 1: THE IMPERATIVE

What is the Imperative?

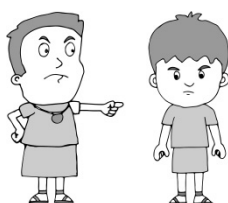
The imperative is the part of a verb used for giving commands. The word comes from the Latin verb *impero*, which means 'I order'.

Commands such as 'Sit down!', 'Pass me your book!', 'Look over there!' all include verbs in the imperative.



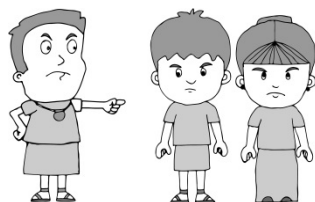
Making the Imperative

For most Latin verbs, the imperative is easy to make:



To tell *one person* what to do:

- Take the infinitive e.g. *audire* - to listen
- Take off the final *-re* ⇒ *audi!* 'Listen!'



To tell *several people* what to do:

- Take the infinitive e.g. *audire* - to listen
- Take off the final *-re* ⇒ *audi-*
- Add the letters *-te* ⇒ *audite!* 'Listen!'

Exercise 1:

If you were a Roman, which imperatives would you use for these situations? Give one-word answers, using the infinitive given in brackets [10 marks].

- a) Tell a soldier to be quiet (*tacere*) _____
- b) Tell a group of slaves to hurry (*festinare*) _____
- c) Tell a bird to sing (*cantare*) _____
- d) Tell a philosopher to teach (*docere*) _____
- e) Tell a neighbour and his wife to wait (*manere*) _____
- f) Tell a merchant to give something (*dare*) _____
- g) Tell a young couple to love (*amare*) _____
- h) Tell Livia to be happy (*gaudere*) _____
- i) Tell Marcus and Claudia to go away (*abire*) _____
- j) Tell Claudius to stay (*manere*) _____

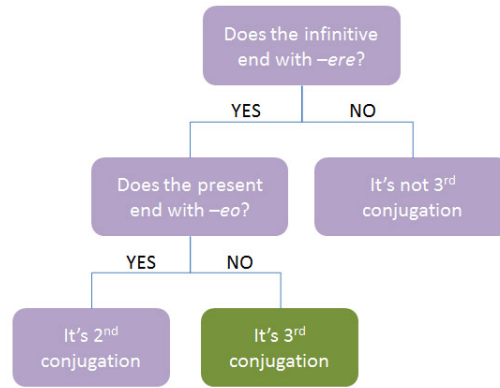
Read This! How to Tame the 3rd Declension

As you can see, most Latin verbs are very easy to turn into the imperative. Only the 3rd conjugation behaves a little differently.

Its imperative *singular* is completely normal, but when forming the imperative *plural*, 3rd conjugation verbs end with *-ite* instead of *-ete*.

Look at these 3rd conjugation verbs, and their imperatives:

<i>capio, capere, cepi, captum</i> - catch	⇒	<i>cape!</i> and <i>capite!</i> 'Catch!'
<i>lego, legere, lexi, lectum</i> - choose	⇒	<i>lege!</i> and <i>legite!</i> 'Choose!'
<i>mitto, mittere, misi, missum</i> - send	⇒	<i>mitte!</i> and <i>mittite!</i> 'Send!'



Exercise 2:

Give the imperative singular **and** plural for the following verbs. Use the principle parts and the flowchart above to help you decide whether the verb belongs to the 3rd conjugation. [20 marks]

- a) *rideo, ridere, risi, risum* – laugh _____
- b) *sto, stare, steti, statum* – stand _____
- c) *venio, venire, veni, ventum* – come _____
- d) *vivo, vivere, vixi, victum* – live _____
- e) *moveo, movere, movi, motum* - move _____
- f) *scribo, scribere, scripsi, scriptum* – write _____
- g) *aperio, aperire, aperui, apertus* - open _____
- h) *fero, ferre, tuli, latum* – carry _____
- i) *munio, munire, munivi, munitus* - defend _____
- j) *peto, petere, petivi, petitum* – seek _____

Take Care! Some final irregularities

As is always the case with Latin, there are a few verbs that don't abide by the usual rules. A few *singular* imperatives are irregular, but so common that they are worth learning. Be careful how you pronounce them!

<i>facio, facere, feci, factum</i> – do, make	⇒	<i>fac!</i> (pronounced 'fark'), 'Do!' or 'Make!'
<i>duco, ducere, duxi, ductum</i> – lead	⇒	<i>duc!</i> (pronounced 'dook'), 'Lead!'
<i>dico, dicere, dixi, dictum</i> – speak	⇒	<i>dic!</i> (pronounced 'deek'), 'Speak!'