

Unit 9 - Noun and Verb Functions

Lesson 3 - Inflections and Word Order

Activity

Act out these basic Latin phrases illustrating the subject and direct object inflections - no English until it is discussed afterwards. Use only the verb *amat* in every sentence, because you want the emphasis to be on the changing endings of the nouns. Although they do not know any Latin verbs, they will quickly figure out that *amat* means loves when you kiss your classroom prop - my frog.

Use sentences like the following:

Magistra amat ranam.
Discipula amat ranam.
Discipulus amat ranam.

Motion for them to copy your action, kissing the frog.

Rana amat magistram.
Rana amat discipulam.
Rana amat discipulum

They will have expected this change, that the subject is now the frog, since you have changed the word order. Now make the frog kiss the students and yourself.

Now start playing with word order to see

Ranam amat magistra.
Ranam amat discipula.
Ranam amat discipulus.

If they pick up on the different endings. Lead them into figuring out that the ending on the noun, not the position, is dictating whether the word is doing the loving or not.

Conclude as always by writing the sentences on the board for them to see what you have been saying and to verbalize what they have figured out.

Rule #3	Word order
English	Word order matters
Latin	Word order does not matter. The endings on the words matter.

Discuss

- Subjects in Latin use the endings -a and -us / -r.
- When a noun changes its function in a sentence to direct object, it changes its ending.
- Take off the -a and replace it with -am for 1st declension words.

- Take off the -us and replace it with -um for 2nd declension words. (Leave on the -r.)

Activity

Write the words **rana amat magistram** on separate cards and put them on the floor. Ask the students to translate. Now switch the positions of **rana** and **magistram**. Ask them to translate. The translation should not change. Now move the cards to silly places around the room. Make the point that it does not matter where those two nouns go; as long as they have the same endings, the sentence means the same thing.

Discuss

- The different word endings are called inflections.
- Languages that use a lot of endings on the words to show their functions are called inflected languages.
- Many of the Romance languages are much more inflected than English but not as inflected as Latin.
- Word order has varying degrees of importance depending on the degree of inflection.

Homework

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Terms

inflection

inflected language