

# Grammar: the accusative case

## *Overview*

The accusative is mainly used to mark the direct object of a sentence. The direct object is *the thing to which* the verb is done.

There are some more technical uses of the accusative, as described in the pages that follow.

For the endings see the pages on individual declensions:

1st declension nouns

2nd declension nouns

3rd declension nouns

4th declension nouns

5th declension nouns

## *The accusative of extent of time and space*

The accusative is used to answer the question 'how long?' when it pertains to either time or space.

The Greeks fought the Trojan war for ten years

which in Latin would be:

**Graeci bellum Troianum decem annos pugnavit**

or

The army marched for a hundred stades

which in Latin would be:

**exercitus centum stadia**

## *The accusative of exclamation*

An exclamation would normally be made using 'o' + vocative case. You can, however, exclaim in Latin using the accusative, when expressing emotion or thought.

The famous exclamation in Cicero's *In Catilinam I o tempora! o mores!* could be in either the accusative or the vocative. It is, unfortunately, impossible to tell, as the 3rd declension plural vocatives and accusatives are identical.

The difference will, however, show up with 2nd declension masculine singular nouns. So, to exclaim, you can say:

o me miserum!	Woe is me!
me infelicem!	Unlucky me!
o manum Paridis levem!	Oh left hand of Paris! (Seneca <i>Troades</i> 956)
o curas hominum!	Oh cares of men! (Persius i.1 i.1)

### *The accusative with prepositions*

The accusative is used after a range of prepositions, which usually imply forward motion. For further information on this use of the accusative, see the page on *The accusative following certain prepositions*.

### *The accusative subject in indirect statement*

The topic of indirect speech is a complex one. Accordingly, the role of the accusative case in such constructions is described in detail in the pages on indirect speech constructions.

### *Examples drawn from the exercises*

Identify the type of accusative used in each sentence.

The number after each question indicates the exercise from which it has been drawn, so that you can look at the example in context.

1. immo vero etiam in senatum venit ... *Exercise 7*
2. videtis intestinam aliquam cotidie perniciem rei publicae molientem. *Exercise 7*

3. Panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie, ...  
*Exercise 2*
4. et rursus puerum quaerendo audita fatigat ...  
*Exercise 6*
5. dividimus muros et moenia pandimus urbis.  
*Exercise 1*

### *Examples drawn from Cicero*

1. ego feci qui litteras Graecas senex didici  
*De Senectute 26*
2. Sed redeo ad me.  
*De Senectute 32*
3. ad paternam enim magnitudinem animi doctrina uberior  
accesserat.  
*De Senectute 35*
4. Tenebat non modo auctoritatem, sed etiam imperium in  
suos  
*De Senectute 37*
5. Possum persequi permulta oblectamenta rerum rusticarum,  
sed haec ipsa, quae dixi, sentio fuisse longiora.  
*De Senectute 55*