

Grammar: The fourth declension

Overview

The fourth declension is the fourth group of nouns, grouped according to their similar pattern of endings. For the other declensions, go to the appropriate page:

- 1st declension
- 2nd declension
- 3rd declension
- 5th declension

There are a very small number of nouns which fall into the fourth declension. These are characterised by *-u-* in their endings. They can be masculine, feminine or neuter.

Summary of basic case endings

| | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Nominative | subject | what does the verb |
| Accusative | (direct) object | what the verb is done to |
| Genitive | | 'of' |
| Dative: | (indirect object) | 'to, for' |
| Ablative: | | 'by, with, from' |

Masculine/feminine

manus, manūs - band of men

| Case | sing. | pl. |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Nom. | manus | manūs |
| Acc. | manum | manūs |
| Gen. | manūs | manuum |
| Dat. | manui | manibus |
| Abl. | manū | manibus |

Neuter

genu, genūs - knee

| Case | sing. | pl. |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Nom. | genu | genua |
| Acc. | genu | genua |
| Gen. | genūs | genuum |
| Dat. | genu | genibus |
| Abl. | genu | genibus |

Examples drawn from exercises

Locate the fourth declension noun and identify its number, gender and case.

1. immo vero etiam in senatum venit *Exercise 7*

Further examples drawn from Cicero

1. nam illa nimis antique praetereo, quod C. Servilius Ahala Sp. Maelium movis rebus studentem manu sua occidit.
In Catilinam 1.I.3
2. ego vix abs te iam diu manus ac tela contineo.
In Catilinam 1.VIII.21
3. at senatui, quae sint gerenda, praescribo et quo modo.
De Senectute VI.18
4. quamquam me quidem non fructus modo, sed etiam ipsius terrae vis ac natura delectate. *In Catilinam XV.51*
5. senatui placere C. Cassium pro consule provinciam Syriam optinere, ut qui optimo iure eam provinciam optinuerit.
Philippics XI.XII.30