

An Introduction to 'Endings' for Latin Nouns – Singular and Plural

One of the things that can make Latin a challenge for beginners is that it is a highly **inflected** language. This means that the forms or endings of words change depending on how they are used in a sentence. English has some inflections but not many – for example, adding 'ed' to make a verb past tense, or adding 's' to the end of a noun to make it plural.

Just like in English, Latin nouns change depending on whether they are **singular** or **plural** (whether there is one thing or more than one). However, different nouns change in different ways.

Technical note: There are five different groups of nouns (declensions) in Latin. Within those, nouns can also be masculine or feminine (like in French or Spanish) or neuter (like in German). The declension and the gender of the noun affect how it changes.

Can you spot how the nouns change from singular to plural in the examples below? Do they always change?

| Noun | Singular | Plural | Gender | Declension |
|-------|----------|---------|-----------|------------|
| girl | puella | puellae | feminine | first |
| boy | puer | pueri | masculine | second |
| stick | baculum | bacula | neuter | second |
| mouse | mus | mures | masculine | third |
| body | corpus | corpora | neuter | third |
| hand | manus | manus | feminine | fourth |
| thing | res | res | feminine | fifth |

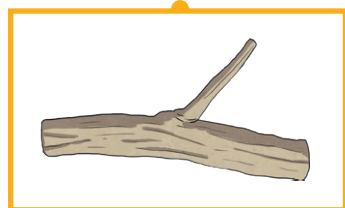
Have a Go: Use what you know about plural nouns from the table to match up the Latin sentences below to the correct pictures.

Baculum magnum est.

Bacula magna sunt.

Mus caseum cenat.

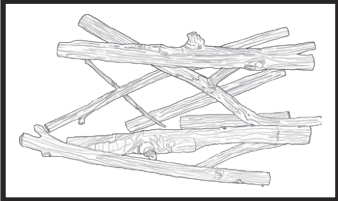
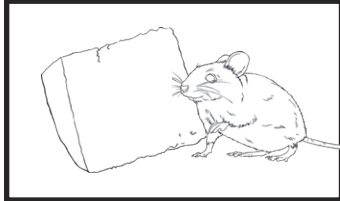
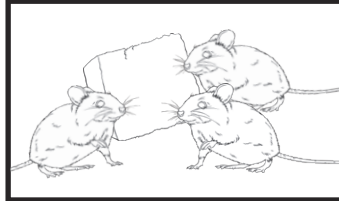
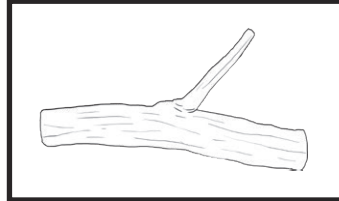
Mures caseum cenant.



Challenge: Can you work out what the sentences might mean?

An Introduction to 'Endings' for Latin Nouns – Singular and Plural **Answers**

Have a Go: Use what you know about plural nouns from the table to match up the Latin sentences below to the correct pictures.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Baculum magnum est. | Bacula magna sunt. | Mus caseum cenat. | Mures caseum cenant. |
|  |  |  |  |

Challenge: Can you work out what the sentences might mean?

| Latin Sentence | English Translation |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Baculum magnum est. | The stick is big. |
| Bacula magna sunt. | The sticks are big. |
| Mus caseum cenat. | The mouse eats the cheese. |
| Mures caseum cenant. | The mice eat the cheese. |