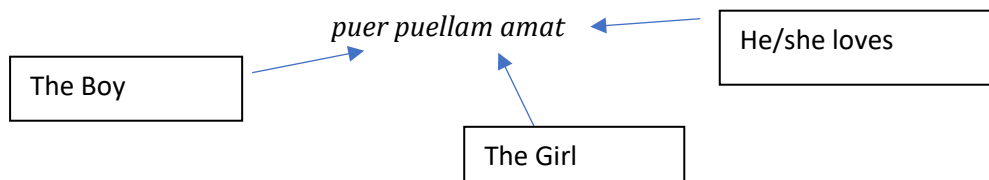


## The Most Important Thing About Latin...



Latin works like a puzzle: if one learns the rules, one can solve it – and the most important rule of all is this: **the order of the words has NO bearing upon the meaning.**

For example, let's look at this simple sentence:



This sentence could be written:

- a) *puer puellam amat,*
- b) *puer amat puellam,*
- c) *puellam puer amat* or
- d) *amat puellam puer* and they would all mean the same thing!

This is because Latin is an inflected language: the endings of the words denote their meanings, as opposed to the order of the words.

### How does this work?

Each verb has **six** possible endings for each tense and mood. These are called *conjugations*.

Each noun has **twelve** possible endings for each case. These are called *declensions*.

So let's start with verbs. Each verb has six possible **persons** (i.e. the one doing the action):

- First person = I
- Second person singular = You singular (equivalent to “tu” in French)
- Third person singular = He/she/it/one
- First person plural = We
- Second person plural = You plural (equivalent to “vous” in French)
- Third person plural = They

Here are the conjugations for a simple verb – *portare* (to carry):

	<b>Pluperfect = had carried</b>	<b>Perfect = carried</b>	<b>Imperfect = was carrying</b>	<b>Present = carry</b>	<b>Future = will carry</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular = I	<i>Portaveram</i>	<i>Portavi</i>	<i>Portabam</i>	<i>Porto</i>	<i>Portabo</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular = You singular	<i>Portaveras</i>	<i>Portavisti</i>	<i>Portabas</i>	<i>Portas</i>	<i>Portabis</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular = He/she/it/one	<i>Portaverat</i>	<i>Portavit</i>	<i>Portabat</i>	<i>Portat</i>	<i>Portabit</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural = We	<i>Portaveramus</i>	<i>Portavimus</i>	<i>Portabamus</i>	<i>Portamus</i>	<i>Portabimus</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural = You plural	<i>Portaveratis</i>	<i>Portavistis</i>	<i>Portabatis</i>	<i>Portatis</i>	<i>Portabitis</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural = They	<i>Portaverant</i>	<i>Portaverunt</i>	<i>Portabant</i>	<i>Portant</i>	<i>Portabunt</i>

Look at the endings of the verbs – can you notice any patterns? Regular verbs always follow the same patterns and the endings give you a clue about **who** is doing the action.

Verbs are broken down as follows:

The **stem** (i.e. the meaning)

The **tense** (i.e. when the action is taking place)

The **person** (i.e. who is doing the action)

**Porta** – **ba** – **m**

N.B.: always tackle them in **reverse** order: person – tense – meaning!

Here are some simple sentences using the vocabulary you have already seen. Are you able to translate them?

1. *Puer puellam portat*
2. *Porto puellam*
3. *Portamus puerum*
4. *Puellam portatis*
5. *Portant puerum*

Now let's make it a bit more challenging:

6. *Portabit puellam*
7. *Puellam portaveras*
8. *Puerum portabunt*
9. *Portaverat puellam*
10. *Puellam portaverant*