# Taming Caesar



# Verbs and Their Children
**by Rose Williams**

Many of us in recent years have read Latin prose mostly in the form of Cicero. Cicero writes in the flowing Asiatic style, sometimes using long phrases (my students think they are VERY long) simply for their sonorous beauty. Caesar writes in the spare, almost terse Attic style. He is more like a good journalist, giving "just the facts, m'am" in a manner carefully chosen to sound objective.

## Verbals

*Words in a language refuse to stay in one category — nouns become verbs [impact] or adjectives [fun]; Verbs jump around all over the place, being especially athletic in becoming verbals, which are a very important part of any language.*

*When undertaking Caesar, or any major new literature, in a Latin class, I review verbals, as everyone uses these hybrids but few people really understand them. They come naturally in one's native language, but they can be a real pain in a new one. In the new Caesar Legamus Reader, which is a gentle introduction to Caesar's writing, I do verbals in the Second Lesson.*

*Here are my general charts of Latin verbal formation.*
*I begin with participles because*
*1) Latin ones are similar to English, and students already use them, although they probably don't realize it.*
*2) they serve as an excellent overview of Latin tense and voice structure.*
*3) they are used in the formation of the other verbals — infinitives, gerunds, and supines.*

## Participles
half verb and half adjective —
being verbs, they have tense and voice;
being adjectives, they have case, gender and number
—used to modify as adjectives are

|  | Active | Passive |
|---|---|---|
| Present tense (present stem + ns) | *portans*-carrying | _____ |
|  | *portantis*-of (one) carrying |  |
|  |  | (fourth principal part)* |
| Perfect tense | _____ | *portatus, a, um*-having been carried |
|  | (perfect passive particip + urus, ura, urum) | (pres stem + ndus, a, um) # |
| Future tense | *portaturus, a, um* -going to carry | *portandus, a, um*-going to be carried |

*used to make ablative absolute

#used to make passive periphrastic

*This chart includes only the nominative and genitive singular of the Present Active Participle, and only the nominative singular of the three participles which have 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ declension patterns. My students practice them in oral or written form using their noun charts.*

## Gerunds

*I can't say this is "half verb- half noun," because it does not have tense and voice.*
Verb form used as noun/adjective
in Latin, a metamorphic form of the future passive participle.
Neuter singular nouns in the second declension
in genitive, dative, accusative and ablative cases.
(If a Nominative verbal noun is needed in Latin, the infinitive is used.)

If they stand alone, they are formed thus:
Genitive                         *portandi*- of carrying
Dative                           *portando*- to, for carrying
Accusative                    *portandum* - carrying (direct object)
Ablative                        *portando* - by, with carrying

If they have objects, they become future passive participles
              *aquam portandam* literal translation: "water to be carried."

*English has no problem with a noun modifying a noun, such as homework or peacemaker or taxi driver. This probably arises from the Anglo Saxon kenning, a figure of speech such as skycandle for sun or treebreaker for wind. Latin makes no such concessions — in Latin one must say "maker of the peace" or "candle of the sky" Thus "carrying water" in Latin has a future passive participle with a modifier.*

## Supines
*One of those things that make us wonder how the Romans managed to conquer the world without outside help.*
*for a language with an extensive infinitive structure, this seems to be gilding the lily.*

Verb form used as fourth declension noun, usually corresponding in form to the fourth principal part of a verb.
It has only two cases and is translated with 'to.'

Accusative                    *dictum* — to say (used after motion verbs, indicating purpose) *venit dictum*
Ablative                        *dictu* — to say (used after adjectives) *mirabile dictu*

## Infinitives
half verb and half noun—used as nouns and as verbs of indirect statements
being verbs, they have tense and voice; the perfect passive and future active and passive
include participles which are declined

| Active | Passive |
|---|---|
| Present (2nd principal part) | (2nd prin part with"i") + |
| *portare*-to carry | *portari*-to be carried |
| | |
| (3rd prin part +isse) | (4th prin part + esse) |
| Perfect *portavisse*-to have carried | *portatus, a, um esse*-to have been carried |
| | |
| Future (future act partic + esse) | *Passive very rare* |
| *portaturus, a, um esse*-to be going to carry *portatum iri* | |

+For 3ʳᵈ conjugation verbs the last three letters shorten to "*i*"

# Participle Usage
The examples below come from Books I and II of *De Bello Gallico*

## Basic
These verb forms are most often used as adjectives. They occur in present tense active, perfect tense passive, (only deponents can occur in the perfect tense active), and future tense both active and passive.

*Hīs rēbus adductī et auctōritāte Orgetorīgis permotī cōnstituērunt…*
**Influenced by these things and moved by the authority of Orgetorix they decided…**

*vi coacturos ut per suos fīnes eos ire paterentur…*
**(Helvetians were) going to compel them by force that they …** *(quote finished in later example)*

## Gerundive
*Ad eās rēs cōnficiendās biennium sibi satis esse dūxērunt.*

**For completing these things (these things to be completed) they thought two years to be enough for themselves.**
(We have said that in Latin a gerund may stand alone, but if it has an object, it becomes a future passive participle and takes the ending of its object)

## Ablative Absolute
*In the example below, as we do in the Caesar Legamus reader, I have placed the ablative absolute in an enlarged font to make it more easily recognizable.*

This construction consists of a noun and a participle in the ablative case; they act together as an extra clause or sentence. It is also possible to make one with two nouns: (*Caesare duce*).

*ut domum reditionis spe sublata paratiores ad omnia pericula subeunda essent;*

**So that, the hope of a return home having been removed, they might be more prepared for all dangers to be undergone**

## Passive Periphrastic
The future passive participle is often combined with a form of sum to express obligation.

*Āciēs instruenda erat.*

**A battle line had to be set up.**

## Gerund Usage
As we have said these, which can be considered forms of the future passive participle used as nouns, occur only as neuter singulars in the second declension in genitive, dative, accusative and ablative cases.

Infinitives replace the Nominative singular.

*Belgae misericordiam Rōmānōrum dedendō recēpērunt.*

**The Belgians received the mercy of the Romans by surrendering.**

## Supine Usage
These if accusative end in *-tum* or *-sum* and are usually used after verbs of motion. If ablative, they end in *-tu* or *-su* and are usually used after adjectives.

*Perfacile factu esse illis probat.* DBG 1.3

**He showed to them (this) to be very easy to do**

## Infinitive Usage
## Nouns
The infinitive, the second principal part of the Latin verb, can be used as a noun.

*Differre inter sē est nātūra hominum.*

**To differ among themselves is the nature of men.**

## Verbs of Indirect Statement

Latin reserves the verbs in the Indicative Mood, which we would think of as "normal" verbs, for direct statements and questions. Indirect statements, such as what someone reports, thinks, or learns, are hearsay, and are therefore given an accusative subject and an infinitive for a verb. Here the infinitive maintains its character as a verb, taking a noun or pronoun in the accusative case for its subject. It may also have an accusative object.

**Caesar dīxit Gallōs differre inter sē.**

**Caesar said (that) Gauls differ among themselves.**

*This structure is found in English, though rarely.*
*Examples:*
*I believe this to be true. I think him to be handsome.*
*"We hold these truths to be self-evident…" U.S. Declaration of Independence*

## Distinctive Verbs

Next we will look at Caesar's use of verbs which present difficulties for the modern student because they are uncommon, unknown, or used differently in English.

### Impersonal Verbs

*Impersonal verbs in English tend to refer to the weather, perhaps because it cannot be controlled.*

*However as we saw in the case of the Passive Periphrastic, Latin tends to emphasize the deed rather than the doer.*

**Ita ancipiti proelio diu atque acriter pugnatum est**. *DBG 1.26*

**So it was fought long and fiercely on two fronts.**
*Perhaps Caesar uses such forms in an attempt to render his account less personal and therefore more credible, but their use is a common feature of Latin.*

### Impersonal Verb Practice

*[In this section participles are shown in green and infinitives in red.]*

*These will sound very strange in English, as we always like to assign responsibility for an action.*

*oportet, -ere, uit* - it is necessary, proper, becoming

In this example, which occurs very early in *DBG*, the participle *damnatum* may give more trouble than *oportet*. The older secondary texts paraphrase this sentence, but the new AP tests use an unadapted text.

In reference works we find people as objects and what happens to them as subjects of *sequor, sequi* in this sense; *poenam* is the subject, but *damnatum* the object is out in front as the emphatic participle, especially so as it is conditional "if condemned." *Oportet* stresses the strong command element: this is more than a recommendation.

**Damnatum poenam sequi oportebat ut igni cremaretur. DBG 1.4**

**It was necessary (that) the punishment, that he be cremated with fire, to follow (him) (if ) condemned.**

*We will look at the next two impersonal verbs in one Caesar sentence. Writers blend all the grammar parts into a whole, bless their pointed little heads, creating all sorts of grammatical hurdles.*

*licet, -ere, -uit, -itum est* - it is permitted, possible
This impersonal verb introduces a possibility, not a necessity.

*accidit* it happens (that)
This verb introduces a happening, for which no one is assigned responsibility.

*In this sentence participles are in* <span style="color:green">green</span>*, infinitives in* <span style="color:red">red</span>*, and the ablative absolute in an enlarged font*

**Multis in civitatibus harum rerum** <span style="color:green">exstructos</span> **tumulos locis** <span style="color:green">consecratis</span> <span style="color:red">conspicari</span> <u>licet</u>,// **neque saepe** <u>accidit</u> **ut** <span style="color:green">neglecta</span> **quispiam religione aut** <span style="color:green">capta</span> **apud se** <span style="color:red">occultare</span> **aut** <span style="color:green">posita</span> <span style="color:red">tollere</span> **auderet** DBG 6.17

**In many states it is possible to see heaped-up mounds of these things in consecrated places// nor does it often happen that, religion having been neglected, anyone dares either to hide captured (loot) in his own possession or to carry away the deposited (loot).**

## Deponent Verbs

***Deponent verbs*** *are a strange feature of Latin which may be a relic of an ancient middle voice. They tend to drive students to thoughts of suicide, homicide, or both. To make things worse, some verbs may be either deponent or regular —* ***mereo*** *and* ***mereor*** *provide an example.*

Since deponents generally have passive forms and active meanings, they may be emphasized along with passive voice, which plays a much larger role in Latin than in English. When students are attacking a new passage, they need to look at the vocabulary for the tell-tale "r" on the first form of a verb, which will tell them that the verb is deponent, and that its forms must be treated as active.

**Some of Caesar's favorite deponents**
*1ˢᵗ)conor, arbitror conspicor 2ⁿᵈ) vereor 3ʳᵈ) sequor proficiscor patior 4ᵗʰ) potior* (w abl) *orior*

## Deponent and Passive Verb Practice
Once again participles are shown in <span style="color:green">green</span> and infinitives in <span style="color:red">red</span>.

Identify the deponent and passive verbs and verb forms in these sentences:

*tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. DBG 1.1*

*Belgae ab extremis Galliae finibus oriuntur DBG 1.1*

*(Dixit) perfacile esse, cum virtute omnibus praestarent, totius Galliae imperio* <span style="color:red">potiri</span>*. DBG 1.2*

*fortitudinis angustos se fines* <span style="color:red">habere</span> *arbitrabantur DBG 1.2*

*Ad eas res* <span style="color:green">conficiendas</span> *Orgetorix deligitur DBG 1.3*

*Ea res est Helvetiis per indicium* <span style="color:green">enuntiata</span>*. DBG 1.4*

*nihilo minus Helvetii id quod constituerant* <span style="color:red">facere</span> *conantur, DBG 1.5*

*vi* <span style="color:green">coacturos</span> *ut per suos fines eos* <span style="color:red">ire</span> *paterentur. DBG 1.6*

*Caesari cum id* <span style="color:green">nuntiatum</span> *esset, eos per provinciam nostram iter*

<span style="color:red">facere conari</span>*, maturat ab urbe* <span style="color:red">proficisci</span> *DBG 1.7*

## Practice Passage
Let's take this one apart together, discussing verbs and verbals:
1) What are the major verbs?
2) What are the verbals and what kind are they?
Caesar, quod memoria <u>tenebat</u> L. Cassium consulem <span style="color:green">occisum</span> <span style="color:red">(esse)</span>

exercitumque eius ab Helvetiis <span style="color:green">pulsum</span> <span style="color:red">esse</span> et sub iugum <span style="color:green">missum</span> <span style="color:red">(esse)</span>,

<span style="color:green">concedendum</span> <span style="color:red">(esse)</span> non <u>putabat</u>; neque homines inimico animo, <span style="color:green">data</span>

facultate per Provinciam itineris <span style="color:green">faciendi</span>, <span style="color:green">temperaturos</span> <span style="color:red">(esse)</span> ab iniuria et

maleficio <u>existimabat</u>.

**Click here for Debra Nousek's "Pronouns in Caesar"**