Chapter 17 Teaching Notes

Chapter overview

In Chapter 17 students learn to conjugate and translate first conjugation verbs in the imperfect tense. They use *was or were . . . –ing* as the basic translation of this tense, but are also introduced to two other translations of the imperfect, *kept* and *used to.*

Teaching tips

Vocabulary List

Some students may notice that **adornātum** appears twice on the vocabulary list, once as the neuter form in **adornātus, adornāta, adornātum,** and once as the fourth principal part of **adornō.** Why is this? The fourth principal part is the perfect passive participle of the verb. (They don't need to memorize this fact yet!) As for meaning, it means *having been decorated or adorned.* It's easy to see how one can shorten this to *decorated or adorned.* As for form, a participle has some of the characteristics of adjectives—including gender—and this participle happens to be neuter singular. In short, our adjective entry simply supplies all three genders of the participle whose neuter form is the fourth principal part of our verb.

The short **i** in **cūriōsus,** the second short **i** in **dīligentia,** and the short **i's** in **hodiē** and **pecūnia** sound more like long **ī's** because followed by another vowel.

Students may need to be reminded that the **c** in **excitō** is hard, as Latin **c** always is—the word should not be pronounced like our *excite.*

Grammar Lesson

About *past and ongoing:* actually, imperfect tense action can be *repeated* or *habitual,* instead—though of course, these are closely related to *ongoing.* The imperfect tense can even describe action *begun* or *attempted.* But *past and ongoing* covers most of the territory.

You'll want to make endings flash cards for the new imperfect tense endings. For example, **–bam** on one side (with the hyphen), *I was . . .* on the other (with the *dot dot dot*). It's not necessary to identify these endings as first conjugation since the imperfect tense endings are the same for all four conjugations.

I've pronounced the endings on the pronunciation CD.

Drill these cards together until the students know them cold in both directions. (Make them *say* the *dot dot dot . . .* they'll enjoy it, and it's important.) Also drill the personal endings cards. (Perhaps you haven't needed to use the personal endings cards in quite some time, but for the moment it would be a good idea to reintroduce them. Make sure your first person singular card says **–ō, –m** and not just **–ō.**) Keep the two sets separate at first, until the students do perfectly

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with each set separately, and then mix the two sets together and drill them together. It takes very little time to do this at the start of each class, and it does a lot of good.

Another occasional twist to introduce while drilling the imperfect cards: once they've given the Latin ending, e.g. **–bāmus,** before you flip the card over to show them whether they got it right, ask "long **ā** or short **a**?" (Of course, they should also be holding out their long **ā's** longer than their short **a's,** but since they may not, you might want to try this.)

One question I *don't* recommend you ask while drilling these endings is *what tense is this.* Though this would work fine for the imperfect tense endings, one doesn't really want to identify the other set of cards, the personal endings, too exclusively with the *present* tense—since after all, other tenses also end with the personal endings. But to identify *complete verbs* by tense is a very good thing!

Of course, students now need to notice, for every verb, whether it ends *just* with a personal ending, or whether it ends with one of their new imperfect tense endings, of which the personal endings are just a component. (*So ends the present tense . . . and other tenses too . . . ,* as the song says.)

By the way, how much emphasis you place on the *kept* and *used to* possibilities will be a matter of personal preference and class readiness. I'd suggest keeping the flash cards simple for now, with just the *was or were . . . –ing* translations. Students really need to master these first, before they go on to much experimenting with the others. Later on, during flash card drill time, you might add in an oral reminder that the *kept* and *used to* choices exist. But this is optional.

About the formation of the imperfect tense: I said in the text that the imperfect is actually even easier to form than the present. If students wish to be reminded why, turn them back to Chapter 5, Translation Worksheet 1. In the present tense, the stem vowel drops out in one form and is shortened in several others, whereas in the imperfect, the stem vowel stays in and stays long—and all we have to do is add endings.

Another point of comparison between the present and imperfect tenses: the long sign distribution in the imperfect tense endings should look familiar. That's because the same shortening rules that yield **–bam, –bat,** and **–bant** also gave us **amat** and **amant.** Leaving aside the first person singular, we have **–bās** and **amās,** **–bat** and **amat,** **–bāmus** and **amāmus,** **–bātis** and **amātis,** and finally **–bant** and **amant.** Yes, in the forms of **amō** the shortening is being applied to the stem vowel, and that is emphatically *not* what is happening in the imperfect tense forms. Still, the outcomes have a similarity to them which may help students learn the long signs of their new endings.

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If you choose to make a side-by-side comparison you will have a fine opportunity to dust off the person-and-number labels, too. (It *is* a good idea, for the next several chapters, from time to time to conjugate *present* tense verbs, too.)

By the way, the reason I say **–bā– / –ba–** and not **–ba– / –bā–** is that what we have going on here is a vowel normally long being shortened, rather than one normally short being lengthened. But if students don't follow my order in their answers, e.g. on the study sheet, it isn't *that* important.

Finally, I'll add here that we are learning, now, not just the imperfect tense, but more specifically, the imperfect active tense in the indicative mood! And similarly, the infinitive and the verb stem both have longer technical names. But students don't really need to memorize the additional terminology at this time. They can learn it once they start working with tenses which aren't active and indicative, and with different infinitives and verb stems—which won't be for a good while.

Study Sheet

A2: Actually, present tense verbs can also describe action that is habitual rather than presently occurring: *bears eat blueberries for breakfast.*

A4, 5: You may need to spell out this thought sequence in even more detail. If *perfect* means *complete* when we speak of verbs, then *imperfect* means *not complete* when we speak of verbs.

Derivative Worksheet

A5: In some uses of the word *entrance,* a more natural definition is *place where one enters.*

A7: Whether everything Dr. Livingstone *did* in Africa was good and wise is another question entirely.

Translation Worksheet 1

F1: Actually, **amīcīs** *could* refer either to male or female friends—but our students don't know that yet, so if one of them tells you it's *friends (f.),* consider this correct. (The reason it actually *could* be male or female friends is that the ablative plural ending is the same for the first and second declensions, and **amīcus** is a second declension noun.)

F3: Here **puella** is surrounded by two adjectives which both modify the same noun.

F7: Is **poētās** the subject? After all, it comes first in the sentence! Answer: of course not. It's in the accusative case. It's first just because there is no noun subject.

F9: See comment on F7.