

Latin Verbs: The Four Conjugations¹ and the Four Principal Parts

All Latin verbs belong to one of four possible conjugations (called first, second, third, and fourth). Knowing to which conjugation a verb belongs, as well as the form of its present infinitive, helps us to conjugate (tie together) the correct verb stem with the proper verb ending.

	1 st Conjugation	2 nd Conjugation	3 rd Conjugation	4 th Conjugation
Present Infinitive ends in...	-are	-ēre*	-ere	-ire
for example	coronare “to crown”	implēre “to fill”	incipere “to begin”	sentire “to feel”

* Most Latin texts *do not* include marks of pronunciation to distinguish between the present infinitives of 2nd and 3rd conjugation verbs.

To learn a Latin verb, memorize its four principal parts. These four parts provide the base upon which to conjugate the verb in all of its tenses and moods:

verb: “to crown”

corono	1st person singular, present active indicative (person) (number) (tense) (voice) (mood)	“I crown”
coronare	present active infinitive	“to crown”
coronavi	1st person singular, perfect active indicative (person) (number) (tense) (voice) (mood)	“I crowned”
coronatus	perfect passive participle	“crowned”

¹ From the Latin *conjungere* “to join together,” “to unite.”