

Teaching notes on 1.05 Word order v. word ending

Slide 1

Learning objective: To understand how English creates meaning through use of word order, and how Latin is different. The majority of this lesson is spent understanding how English constructs meaning using the subject-verb-object ordering, which includes getting the pupils comfortable and familiar with the terms 'subject' and 'object' (and also reinforcing the concept of nouns and verbs).

Slide 2



The first time (of many) we'll encounter this game of 'Ecce Centurio!', which means, 'look at the centurion!' This is essentially a game to help embed Latin vocabulary in the pupils' memory. The first step is for the teacher to go round the board to see if the pupils can recall or infer (from the pictures) the meaning of the illustrated Latin words. As an extension, pupils can also be asked to think of derivative English words. For the main part of the game, a student is chosen to be the Centurion. He or she then calls out a Latin word from the board – classmates must then 'obey' this 'order' by miming the meaning of the word. In this instance, we have magnus (big), aqua (water), optimus (best) and victoria (victory), all of which have been seen before in previous lessons.

Slide 3



The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how important word order is in English, ahead of learning that Latin doesn't rely on word order but on word ending to convey meaning.

In English convention, the subject of a sentence comes before the verb, and the object comes after it, so swapping the position of two nouns in a sentence can fundamentally change its meaning.

Ask each of the students to write the following words large on a small whiteboard and then come up to the front of the classroom so everyone can read the sentence that they've made:



the boy



gobbles



the ice cream

Get a student in the class to read out the sentence, then get all the class to close their eyes for thirty seconds and imagine what they see when they think of that sentence. When they open their eyes, get some pupils to describe the mental picture that they have.

Next, get the two pupils holding the nouns to swap places, so you have:



the ice cream



gobbles



the boy

Again, get the students to close their eyes, and visualize the sentence. Ask for their mental images of this new sentence, showing how they are different from the first. The words themselves have not changed: ask the students what has [the word order]. Reinforce that word order is very important in expressing meaning in English. The noun that comes before the verb is the subject and does the action in the sentence. The word that comes after the verb is the object, which has the action done to it. If students need a bit more practice using the terms subject and object, you can repeat the above exercise with different noun/verb combinations and get the class to identify which word is the subject and which is the object.

Slide 4



This slide walks the class through their written exercise for this lesson. They will have a sheet of duplicate pairs of sentences. They choose a sentence and cut both of them out from the sheet. They then snip out the words and, on their worksheet, place them first in 'sensible' order, then in 'silly' order. To show that the sentences have different meanings, they will then illustrate each sentence with a picture. The worksheet reinforces the terms noun, verb, subject and object.

Slide 5

So that's what we know about English. But the Number One Golden Rule about Latin is that it doesn't use word order to convey meaning. What does it use instead? Word endings (in technical terms, Latin is an *inflected* language). We do this a little bit in English (e.g. we add '-ed' to the end of words to show past tense) but nowhere as extensively as the Romans.

Slide 7

This slide illustrates how Latin doesn't rely on word order. This is a first look at Latin in action, and so won't sink in with some pupils straight away, but it's important that they see the effects of word ending change early on.

The animations on this slide run like this:

1. The sentence, "The woman loves the cow" pops up.

2. The Latin words (and pictures) for woman (femina), cow (vaccca) and loves (amat) pop up. Pupils should be encouraged to guess what the Latin words mean, which shouldn't be too tricky with the clues.
3. The Latin translation of the English sentence pops up.
4. "The cow loves the woman" pops up, along with pictures.
5. The Latin translation of this English sentence pops up.

So you'll notice that the Latin words for 'cow', 'woman' and 'loves' are in exactly the same places in each Latin sentence, but the two sentences mean different things. Can the students spot what has changed? Many pupils should notice that when the noun is doing the loving, it ends in 'a', and when it is being loved, the noun ends in 'am'. Some pupils may feel comfortable describing this in terms of 'subject' and 'object' of a sentence.

N.B. the verb in Latin frequently comes at the end of a sentence or clause, acting as a natural form of punctuation (a bit like modern German).

Slide 7

The plenary which takes the form of a set of questions:

Question 1 Which Latin word meaning 'big' gives us the English word 'magnify'? [magnus]

Question 2 If a noun is doing the action in a sentence, is it the subject or the object?
[subject]

Question 3 Unlike English, Latin doesn't use word order to show meaning – what does it use instead? [changing the word ending]