I. CONCEPT OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD (Definition)

You will recall from Wheelock Ch. 1 that “mood” (from Lat. modus) is the “manner” of expressing a verbal action or state of being. In Ch. 1 we encountered verbs in two of the three Latin moods, the indicative and the imperative. As you know, an imperative (from imperare, to command) emphatically commands someone to undertake an action that is not yet going on, while indicatives (from indicare, to point out) "indicate" real actions, i.e., actions that have in fact occurred (or have definitely not occurred) in the past, that are occurring (or are definitely not occurring) in the present, or that fairly definitely will (or will not) occur in the future.

In contrast to the indicative, the mood of actuality and factuality, the subjunctive is in general (though not always) the mood of potential, tentative, hypothetical, ideal, or even unreal action. An example in English is, “If the other student were here, he would be taking notes”; in this conditional sentence, which imagines actions that are contrary to the actual facts, English employs the auxiliaries “were” and “would” to indicate that the action described is only ideal. Among the other auxiliaries used in English to describe potential or hypothetical actions are “may,” “might,” “should,” “would,” “may have,” “would have,” etc.

Latin employs the subjunctive much more frequently than English, in a wide variety of clause types, and it uses special subjunctive verb forms rather than auxiliaries. There are two tasks involved in mastering the subjunctive: first, learning the new forms, which is a relatively simple matter; second, learning to recognize and translate the various subjunctive clause types, which is also quite easily done, if your approach is systematic.

II. SUBJUNCTIVE TENSES (Formation/Recognition)

There are only four tenses in the subjunctive mood. The present subjunctive is introduced in Ch. 28 and has rules for formation that vary slightly for each of the four conjugations; rules for forming the imperfect (Ch. 29), perfect, and pluperfect (Ch. 30) are the same for all four conjugations.

PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE: resembles present indicative, but with the vowel changes signalled in the mnemonic WE FEAR A LIAR and the personal endings -m, -s, -t, etc.; sometimes translated with the auxiliary “may.”
**IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE:** = 2nd principal part (present active infinitive), with the final -e lengthened, plus personal endings -m, -s, -t, etc.; sometimes translated with “might.”

**PERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE:** ACTIVE = the perfect active stem (from 3rd principal part) + -erim, -eris, etc. (resembles future perfect indicative except -erim not -erō and -i- long in -eris, -erimus, -eritis; sometimes translated with “may have.”) PASSIVE = perfect passive participle (4th principal part) + sim, sis, etc. (i.e., subjunctive equivalent of sum); sometimes translated with “may have been.”

**PLUPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE:** ACTIVE = perfect active infinitive (from 3rd principal part) + -m, -s, -t, etc.; sometimes translated with “might have.” PASSIVE = perfect passive participle (4th principal part) + essem, essēs, etc. (i.e., subjunctive equivalent of eram); sometimes translated with “might have been.”

**SYNOPSIS**

The following synopsis provides a useful overview of the entire Latin verb system, including all four subjunctive mood tenses:

### Indicative Mood

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act.</td>
<td>dācit</td>
<td>dācet</td>
<td>dācēbat</td>
<td>dāxit</td>
<td>dāxerit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass.</td>
<td>dācitur</td>
<td>dācētur</td>
<td>dācēbatur</td>
<td>ductus</td>
<td>ductus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Subjunctive Mood

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act.</td>
<td>dācat</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>dāceret</td>
<td>dāxerit</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass.</td>
<td>dācatur</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>dācerētur</td>
<td>ductus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
III. SUBJUNCTIVE CLAUSE TYPES

In Wheelock you are introduced to a series of subjunctive clause types: jussive and purpose clauses (Ch. 28), result clauses (29), indirect questions (30), cum clauses (31), proviso clauses (32), conditions (33, with three distinct subjunctive types), jussive noun clauses (36), relative clauses of characteristic (38), and fear clauses (40). You should systematically learn three details for each: (1) its definition, (2) how to recognize it in a Latin sentence, and (3) how to translate it into English. REMEMBER: definition, recognition, translation.

1. JUSSIVE SUBJUNCTIVES (Wheelock Ch. 28)

Definition: an independent (main) clause expressing a command or exhortation (the only use of the subjunctive in a main clause formally introduced in Wheelock). E.g., “Let us study this lesson carefully.”

Recognition: easily recognized, since the sentence’s main verb (and often its only verb) is subjunctive; negatives are introduced by nē.

Translation: let (sometimes may or should) is the English auxiliary used in translation, followed by the subject noun or pronoun (in the objective case, i.e., me, us, him, her, it, them). E.g.,

Cogitem nunc dē hāc rē, et tum nān errābō.
Let me now think about this matter, and then I will not make a mistake.

Discipulus discat aut discēdat.
Let the student either learn or leave.

Discāmus magnā cum delectātiōne linguam Latinam.
Let us learn the Latin language with great delight.

Nē id faciāmus.
Let us not do this.

2. PURPOSE CLAUSES (Wheelock Ch. 28)

Definition: a subordinate clause explaining the purpose of the action in the main clause, i.e., answering the question “why?” E.g., “we study Latin so that we may learn more about ancient Rome” or “we study Latin to improve our English.”

Recognition: introduced by ut if purpose is stated positively, by nē if negative, with a subjunctive verb at the end, and answering the question “why?”
Translation: there are often several options, including translating *ut* + the subjunctive together as an infinitive; other more formal options include using the auxiliary “may” for the present subjunctive and “might” for the imperfect. E.g.:

**Hic dicit ut eōs iuvet.**
*He says this to help them.*  
*in order to help them.*  
*that he may help them.*  
*so that he may help them.*  
*in order that he may help them.*

The first two translation options given above are more colloquial, the others more formal.

**Hic dixit ut eōs iuvāret.**
*He said this to help them.*  
*in order to help them.*  
*that he might help them.*  
*so that he might help them.*  
*in order that he might help them.*

3. **RESULT CLAUSES** *(Wheelock Ch. 29)*

**Definition:** a subordinate clause explaining the result of the action in the main clause, i.e., answering the question “what is (was) the outcome?” E.g., “It is raining so hard *that the streets are flooding*” and “Vicky studied Latin so diligently *that she knew it like a Roman.*”

**Recognition:** introduced by *ut* and concludes with a subjunctive verb; if negative, contains some negative word (*nōn, nēmō, numquam*, etc.); and answers the question “what is (was) the outcome?” Main clause usually contains a signal word indicating degree (*tam, tantus, ita, sic*). Easily distinguished from a purpose clause by sense and context, by the signal word in the main clause, and, if negative, by the presence of some negative word within the clause (vs. a negative purpose clause, which is introduced by *nē*).

**Translation:** translate *ut* as “that” and translate the subjunctive as an *indicative*, i.e., without an auxiliary (no “may” or “might”). E.g.:

**Tam multum studet ut Latinam bene discat.**
*He studies so much that he learns (is learning) Latin well.*

**Tam multum studēbat ut Latinam bene disceret.**
*He studied so much that he learned Latin well.*
4. INDIRECT QUESTIONS (Wheelock Ch. 30)

**Definition:** a subordinate clause which reports some question indirectly, i.e., not via a
direct quotation. E.g., “They asked what Gaius was doing” vs. “They asked, ‘What is Gaius
doing?’” (comparable in conception to an indirect statement, which reports indirectly, not a
question, but some affirmative statement and uses an infinitive with accusative subject, not a
subjunctive).

**Recognition:** introduced by an interrogative word *(quis, quid, quae, ubi, utrum...an [whether...or]*, -ne [attached to the clause’s first word, = *whether*]) and ends with a subjunctive;
the verb in the main clause is ordinarily a verb of speech, mental activity, or sense perception (the
same verbs that introduce indirect statements, listed in Ch. 25)

**Translation:** translate the subjunctive as an indicative (as with result clauses, no “may”
or “might”). Compare the following direct and indirect questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Question</th>
<th>Indirect Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Quid Gaius facit?</em></td>
<td><em>What is Gaius doing?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogant quid Gaius faciat.</em></td>
<td><em>They ask what Gaius is doing.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogaverunt quid Gaius faceret.</em></td>
<td><em>They asked what Gaius was doing.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quid Gaius fecit?</em></td>
<td><em>What did Gaius do?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogant quid Gaius fecerit.</em></td>
<td><em>They ask what Gaius did.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogaverunt quid Gaius feceret.</em></td>
<td><em>They asked what Gaius had done.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quid Gaius faciet?</em></td>
<td><em>What will Gaius do?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogant quid Gaius facturus sit.</em></td>
<td><em>They ask what Gaius will do (is about to do).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rogaverunt quid Gaius facturus esset.</em></td>
<td><em>They asked was Gaius would do (was about to do).</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FUTURE ACTIVE PERIPHRASTIC:** *Facturus sit/esset* in the last two examples is the
“future active periphrastic,” occasionally employed to indicate future time in certain types
of clauses, including indirect questions (Wheelock, p. 204).

**SEQUENCE OF TENSES:** The above examples clearly indicate the rule for sequence
of tenses, i.e., a primary tense main verb (present or future) is followed by a primary
tense subjunctive (present = time same or later than main verb, perfect = time before
main verb), a secondary (historical) tense main verb (any past tense) is followed by a
secondary tense subjunctive (imperfect = time same or later than main verb, pluperfect
= time before main verb); see Wheelock pp. 204–05.
5-7. *Cum* CLAUSES (Wheelock Ch. 31)

Definition: a subordinate clause introduced by *cum* meaning “when/since/although” and describing an action somehow associated with the action in the main clause. **FOUR TYPES:** TEMPORAL/*cum* = “when” = an action occurring at the same exact time as the action in the main clause; CIRCUMSTANTIAL/*cum* = “when” = some general circumstances under which action in main clause occurred; CAUSAL/*cum* = “since” = a cause/reason for action in main clause; ADVERSATIVE/*cum* = “although” = an action contrary to what might be expected, in view of the action in the main clause. E.g., When he saw her that day, he was happy (temporal); when he studies, he does well (circumstantial); since he studied hard, he did well (causal); although he studied hard, nevertheless he did not do well (adversative).

Recognition: introduced by *cum* (WITHOUT an ablative noun following—in which case *cum* would be functioning as a preposition = “with”), with a verb—either subjunctive or indicative—at the end, and usually set off from the main clause by comma(s); of the four types, the TEMPORAL is recognized by its INDICATIVE verb and the ADVERSATIVE is usually recognized by the presence of *tamen* (“nevertheless”) in the main clause; the other two types are recognized by context.

Translation: translate the verb in **ALL FOUR TYPES** as an INDICATIVE (i.e., with NO AUXILIARY such as “may” or “might”); translate *cum* as: “when,” if the verb is indicative; “although,” if *tamen* is in the main clause; otherwise as “when” or “since,” depending on context. E.g.:

**INDICATIVE TYPE:**

*Cum TEMPORAL*

*Cum in urbem ill*ē *diē vēnit, tē vīdit.* *WHEN he CAME into the city that day, he saw you.*

**SUBJUNCTIVE TYPES:**

5. *Cum CIRCUMSTANTIAL*

*Cum studeat, bene agit.* *WHEN (whenever) he STUDIES, he does well.*

6. *Cum CAUSAL*

*Cum hoc scīret, potuit ēōs iūvāre.* *SINCE he KNEW this, he was able to help them.*

7. *Cum ADVERSATIVE*

*Cum hoc scīret, tamen nōn potuit ēōs iūvāre.* *ALTHOUGH he KNEW this, he was nevertheless unable to help them.*
8. PROVISO CLAUSES (Wheelock Ch. 32)

Definition: a subordinate clause introduced by dummodo meaning “provided that/so long as” and describing an action on which the action in the main clause is contingent. E.g., “So long as he sees her tomorrow, he will be happy”; “Provided that you enjoy Latin, you won’t mind studying.”

Recognition: introduced by dummodo, with a subjunctive verb at the end, and usually set off from the main clause by comma(s).

Translation: translate dummodo as “provided that” or “so long as,” and translate the verb as an INDICATIVE (i.e., with NO AUXILIARY such as “may” or “might”). E.g.:

Bene agēs, dummodo studeās.
You will do well, provided that you study.

Semper eris fēlīx, dummodo Lātīnām amēs.
So long as you love Latin, you will always be happy.

9-11. CONDITIONAL CLAUSES (Wheelock Ch. 33)

Definition: a basic sentence type consisting of one clause stating a condition or premise, called the “protasis,” introduced by sī, “if,” or nisi, “if not/unless,” and a second clause called the “apodosis,” which states an outcome if the action in the protasis is realized. There are six basic types, three that take the indicative because they describe conditions that are likely to be realized, and three that take the subjunctive because they describe conditions that are less likely to be realized or even contrary to the actual facts of the situation. E.g., “If you study, you will learn.”

Recognition: two clauses, one introduced by sī or nisi and both USUALLY with verbs in same mood and tense.

Translation: depends on which of the six clause types, as follows:

INDICATIVE TYPES:
SIMPLE FACT PRESENT
Sī studeās, discis. If you are studying, you are learning.

SIMPLE FACT FUTURE/FUTURE MORE VIVID
Sī studebis, discēs. If you (will) study, you will learn.
SIMPLE FACT PAST
Si studuisti, didicisti. If you studied, you learned.
Si studēbas, discēbas. If you were studying, you were learning.

SUBJUNCTIVE TYPES:

9. FUTURE LESS VIVID/SHOULD-WOULD
Si studēas, discēas. If you should study, you would learn.

10. CONTRARY TO FACT PRESENT
Si studēres, discēres. If you were studying, you would be learning.

11. CONTRARY TO FACT PAST
Si studuissēs, didicissēs. If you had studied, you would have learned.

12. JUSSIVE NOUN CLAUSES (Wheelock Ch. 36)

Definition: a subordinate clause that reports indirectly, not in a direct quotation, what someone has ordered (hence the term “jussive”), commanded, urged, persuaded, begged, etc.—i.e., an expression of someone’s will or desire. Comparable to indirect statements/indirect questions in conception. E.g., “He orders/urges/persuades/begs/asks/advises you to do this.”

Recognition: identical to a purpose clause, introduced by ut/nē + subjunctive verb, but follows a verb of ordering etc. and answers the question “what” rather than “why?”

Translation: translate ut + subjunctive simply as an infinitive, add not with nē.

Tē hortor ut cum cārā studeās.
I urge you to study carefully.

13. RELATIVE CLAUSE OF CHARACTERISTIC (Wheelock Ch. 38)

Definition: a subordinate relative clause that describes—NOT a SPECIFIC characteristic—but some GENERAL quality of an antecedent that is itself either GENERAL, INDEFINITE, INTERROGATIVE, or NEGATIVE. E.g., “She was the SORT of person who would do this.” “Who is there who would do this?” “There is no one who would do this.”

Recognition: begins with a relative pronoun and ends with a subjunctive verb.

Translation: “would” sometimes used as auxiliary, sometimes no auxiliary; “the sort of/kind of” often supplied to make clear that antecedent is indefinite.
Cornelia est discipula quae Latinam amet.
Cornelia is a student who would love Latin/the sort of student who loves Latin.

Quis est qui Latinam non amet.
Who is there would does/would not love Latin?

14. FEAR CLAUSE (Wheelock Ch. 40)

Definition: a subordinate clause that describes an action that someone in the main clause fears. E.g., “I fear that they may not believe this.”

Recognition: main clause has a fear of fearing (e.g., timeō, metuō, vereor) and fear clause begins with nē if positive and ut if negative.

Translation: Translate nē as “that” and ut as “that...not,” and supply “may/will” for present subjunctive, “might/would” for imperfect, “has/(may) have” for perfect subjunctive, “had/might have” for pluperfect.

Timeō ut Latinam amēs.
I fear that you may/will not love Latin.

Timuērunt nē Hannibal Rōmam inīret.
They were afraid that Hannibal might/would enter Rome.

Metuit ut discipulī studuissent.
He feared that the students had not/might not have studied.