

Latin Verbs: *Esse* (to Be)

Let us begin with being. Not only is the word *to be* an essential Latin word with high frequency, but it is also a necessary element for understanding some of the verb forms that we will be studying later.

Leaving aside for now all grammatical terminology, simply remember the equivalencies in the following table.

<i>To say:</i>	<i>Latin says:</i>	<i>To say:</i>	<i>Latin says:</i>	<i>To say:</i>	<i>Latin says:</i>
I am	sum	I was	eram	I will be	erô
you are	es	you were	erâs	you will be	eris
he / she / it is	est	he / she / it was	erat	he / she / it will be	erit
we are	sumus	we were	erâmus	we will be	erimus
you (pl.) are	estis	you (pl.) were	erâtis	you (pl.) will be	eritis
they are	sunt	they were	erant	they will be	erunt

A mnemonic: **WAS** carries the letter **A**:
eram, eras, erat, etc.

WILL usually carries the letter **I**:
eris, erit, etc.

A few other forms are good to remember: To say "to be" Latin uses the word *esse*. Things that are *about to be* are *futûra*. To say "he / she / it has been," Latin uses *fuit*. "They have been" is *fuêrunt*.

A Recommendation:

It can be very helpful to be able to produce such charts from memory, although doing so is not at the core of learning the language. What *is* at the core of language-learning is practicing the comprehension of particular expressions. Most people learn tables like the one above by reciting each column repeatedly, preferably while thinking of the meanings of the items, until they can do so automatically. In this approach, "*sum - es - est - sumus - estis - sunt*" becomes almost like a single word, all taken together.

Examples:

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. I am a citizen of the world. | cîvis mundî sum. / sum cîvis mundî. |
| 2. You are a citizen of the world. | cîvis mundî es. / es cîvis mundî. |
| 3. We are citizens of the world. | cîvês mundî sumus. / sumus cîvês mundî. |
| 3. They are citizens of the world. | cîvês mundî sunt. / sunt cîvês mundî. |

Note: By convention, let *you* designate **you (singular)**. **You (plural)** will be designated by *you (pl)*.

Exercise: Practice saying the following in Latin until you can do so *effortlessly and instantaneously*:

1. They will be citizens of the world.
2. I was a citizen of the world.
3. She was a citizen of the world.
4. You (pl) are citizens of the world.
5. You were a citizen of the world.
6. You are a citizen of the world.
7. You will be a citizen of the world.
8. They were citizens of the world.
9. They have been citizens of the world.
10. You were citizens of the world.