

Latvian

An Essential Grammar

Dace Prauliņš



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Latvian

An Essential Grammar

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Dace Prauliņš has taught Latvian at the University of Glasgow, UK.

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Abbreviations

acc.	accusative case
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
dat.	dative case
dim.	diminutive
fam.	familiar
fem.	feminine gender
gen.	genitive case
intr.	intransitive
lit.	literally translated
loc.	locative case
masc.	masculine gender
nom.	nominative case
o.s.	oneself
pl.	plural
pol.	polite
prep.	preposition
sing.	singular
s.b.	somebody
s.t.	something
tr.	transitive
voc.	vocative case

Introduction – ievads

This grammar is intended for people learning the Latvian language, and I have tried to make it sufficiently clear for everybody, even people who have not had much exposure to grammatical terminology. However, it is not a book for complete beginners – rather, it is a second-stage book following an introductory course in the Latvian language which will have given the learner a basis in vocabulary and grammar which can be built on in this volume. It could also be used in parallel with an introductory course by those learners who wish to have a deeper insight into some of the points presented in their course book. This book is also not aimed at academic researchers who are looking for a more in-depth treatment of Latvian grammar, although I hope they will still find the overview useful.

I.1 Development of the Latvian language

Latvian, or Lettish as it is sometimes called, is an Indo-European language, i.e. it belongs to the large family of languages which includes most of the major languages in Europe, as well as some in Southern Asia, including Hindi and Farsi. Latvian and Lithuanian form the Baltic branch of this family and they are the only two surviving Baltic languages. Some linguists argue that the Baltic and Slavic languages together form one group, the Balto-Slavic languages, because of a number of similarities between them but there is a debate as to whether these similarities mean that they were originally similar or whether the similarities stem from prolonged contact between the languages.

The proto-Balts, the original Baltic tribes, arrived in the Baltic area in early 2000 BCE. The area of the Baltic languages extended across what today is

northern Poland in the west to the Ural mountains in the east, although they were not the only languages spoken in this area. The languages first split into Western Baltic, including Prussian and Curonian (today's Kurzeme in the west of Latvia), and Eastern Baltic, including Lithuanian and Lettgallian (today's Latgale in the east of Latvia) which is the basis of what was to become the Latvian language. The Western Baltic languages are now all extinct with Old Prussian being the last to survive, becoming extinct in the early eighteenth century. The split between the Latvian and Lithuanian languages happened around the sixth to seventh centuries CE and was caused by more contact with Finno-Ugric tribes in the north (today's Estonians and Livs who live around the western coasts of Latvia) to form Latvian dialects, and Slav tribes in the south and east to form Lithuanian dialects. In fact, Lithuanian stayed more archaic as the Slavic languages had less of an influence because of the greater similarities between the two groups of languages. One very big influence of Finno-Ugric languages on Latvian is the way that the stress in Latvian words is nearly always placed on the first syllable. During the tenth to twelfth centuries the various Latvian dialects began to form a common Latvian language.

The next big influence on Latvian was the German language from the thirteenth century when first traders, then missionaries and finally crusaders from Germany came to the area that is now Latvia and Estonia. They became the ruling elite, relegating the Latvian language to the status of a 'peasant language'. At that time Latvian was not a written language; it only became so with the Reformation in the sixteenth century when Martin Luther said that church services had to be held in the language of the people rather than in Latin. The Baltic German population had largely embraced Protestantism and so the German-speaking clergy set about translating prayers, catechisms and hymns into the Latvian language. As most of the clergy originated from the north of Germany, they used the Middle Low German phonetic system to write in Latvian. The first known printed book in Latvian was in 1525, and the early books preserved until today are a Catholic catechism and an Evangelical catechism from 1585. The first dictionary was published in 1638 by G. Menzelius, a Baltic German clergyman who also contributed greatly to standardizing the orthography of the language as until then it had been rather chaotic. The first grammar was published in 1644 by another clergyman, J.G. Rehehusen. The Bible was translated into Latvian in 1689 by J.E. Glück.

Until the nineteenth century books published in Latvian continued to be mainly religious works written by Baltic Germans. Then, along with other national movements around Europe, Latvia, now part of the Russian Empire but with the Baltic Germans still as the ruling elite, also experienced its own Awakening movement which saw the publication of newspapers in Latvian, e.g. the **Latweeschu Awizes** ‘Latvian Newspapers’ first published in January 1822. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the **Jaunlatvieši** ‘the New Latvians’ who demanded the same rights as other nationalities. Latvians themselves now became active in researching and standardizing the language, and the period also saw the publication of the first literary works written by Latvians themselves.

Among the most important luminaries of this period was Atis Kronvalds. He was instrumental in changing the script from the Gothic alphabet that had been used until then to the Latin one and this was first introduced in 1908. He was also one of the leaders in the orthography reform which was eventually introduced in the early 1920s and which is in use today. In addition, he introduced new words into the language based on Latvian grammatical rules in an attempt to purify the language of its German influence, e.g. **ķermenis** ‘body’, **dzeja** ‘poem, poetry’, **nākotne** ‘future’. The most important linguists of this period were Kārlis Milēnbahs and Jānis Endzelīns who researched the connections of Latvian with Sanskrit and European languages. They also wrote Latvian grammars which are still referred to today.

During the Soviet period (1945–1991) Russian became the language of government and many aspects of public life. There was also massive immigration from Russia and other parts of the Soviet Union as a workforce in the factories. The vast majority of these newcomers did not learn Latvian so the language was in danger of becoming a minority language. There was nothing that linguists could do to reverse this situation; however, they were able to continue research and to publish grammars and dictionaries in an effort to keep the Latvian language pure.

1.2 The Latvian language today

In 1988 Latvian once again became the official state language; Latvia’s full independence followed in 1991. Ethnic Latvians constituted only 52% of the population at that time (the proportion has since increased to 59%) so language and citizenship laws were introduced to protect the status of

Latvian as the official language. These call for Latvian to be taught as a second language in the many ethnic minority schools, and recently more subjects have to be taught in Latvian in these schools to ensure that students are not disadvantaged when applying for university places as higher education is available only in Latvian. In order to get Latvian citizenship, applicants have to pass a Latvian language test, as well as tests on history and the constitution. There are also language tests at three levels for people wanting to work in the public sector. Latvian has to be used as the official language in public life, and fines can be imposed if this is not done – for example, if menus in a restaurant are not displayed in Latvian. While some of these measures may seem harsh, Latvians feel that their language has always been under threat, first from German borrowings, then the influence of Russian, and now with globalization there is extensive borrowing from English. There are also moves within the Russian-speaking community for Russian to be declared as an official state language in addition to Latvian, which would diminish the monopoly that Latvian currently has.

Latvian is one of the official European Union languages with all legislation and a huge amount of information being translated into the language. Within Latvia itself there are about 1.5 million native speakers and a further 120 000 living abroad, mainly in the USA and Canada, Europe and Australia. These are the people who left Latvia in 1944 as the Soviet army invaded for the second time (and their descendants). These émigré communities continue to speak Latvian, send their children to Latvian weekend schools and uphold their cultural heritage. Their numbers in Europe have been swelled in recent years by new arrivals from Latvia who emigrate to look for work. Because of the language policy, a further 0.5 million people speak Latvian as a second language within Latvia.

1.3 Latvian dialects – latviešu valodas dialekti

Latvian is a very standardized language; however, three main dialects can still be distinguished. These are the *central dialect*, *vidus dialekts*, which forms the basis of standard Latvian; the *Livonian dialect*, *līviskais dialekts*; and *high Latvian*, *augšzemnieku dialekts*.

The central dialect can be subdivided into the *Vidzeme* variety, *Vidzemes izloksnes*; the *Curonian* variety, *kursiskās izloksnes*; and the *Semigallian*

variety, *zemgaliskās izloksnes*. The Curonian variety is more archaic than the other two, which are more similar. Examples of differences seen in the Curonian variety include: vowels are lengthened before an *r*, e.g. *cirst* ‘to chop’ becomes *cierst*, *kurpe* ‘shoe’ becomes *kuorpe*; the infixed *i* in the future tense for first conjugation verbs whose stem ends in *d*, *s*, *t* and *z* is missing, e.g. *neššu* instead of *nesīšu* ‘I will carry’; an extra syllable is added in reflexive verbs between the prefix and the stem, e.g. *nosabeidzas* instead of *nobeidzas* ‘it finishes’; the more archaic forms *-ub-* and *-uv-* have been retained, e.g. *dubens* instead of *dibens* ‘bottom’, *zuve* instead of *zivs* ‘fish’. Both the Curonian and some accents in Semigallian have retained the soft *r*, *ŗ*. In some areas within Semigallia an extra short *a* is added after an *r*, e.g. *vārti* ‘gate’ becomes *var^ati*. The central dialect has tended to retain the three types of tone more than the other dialects, see Section 2.6.

The Livonian dialect is spoken in the north-west of Courland and the north-west of Vidzeme. The origin is the indigenous Liv people who have their own, now almost extinct, Finno-Ugric language. The Livonian dialect is the result of the Livs speaking Latvian and introducing some of their own grammar and vocabulary. Examples include: different words such as *liblana* ‘butterfly’ which is *tauriņš* in standard Latvian; final vowels are dropped, e.g. *māsa* ‘sister’ becomes *mās*; there is no distinction between the two genders so feminine nouns become masculine, e.g. *grāmatiņč* instead of *grāmatiņa* ‘little book’; verb forms are not differentiated for person and number with the third-person form used for all, e.g. *es bi*, *viņi bi* instead of *es biju* ‘I was’ and *viņi bija* ‘they were’; the dative is used for possession rather than the genitive, e.g. *Valdam mās* instead of *Valdas māsa* ‘Valda’s sister’. The Livonian dialect has two tone, the even (merged with the falling) and the broken tone, see Section 2.6.

High Latvian can be divided into the Selonian and Latgalian varieties. Historically, Latgalian gave rise to Latvian with additions from Curonian, Semigallian and Livonian. Today, however, Latgalian has remained more archaic and closer to Lithuanian than the other dialects because Latgale was separated from the rest of the Latvian territory when it was incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. There is a debate as to whether Latgalian is a dialect of Latvian or a language in its own right, and it was treated as such in the 1920s to early 1930s when it was the official language in Latgale. The most notable difference from standard Latvian is the use of vowels with most pronounced differently:

<i>Vowel/consonant change</i>	<i>Latgalian</i>	<i>Standard Latvian</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
a > o	vosora	vasara	summer
ā > ō, uo	mōsa, muosa	māsa	sister
ē > broad ē [æ], ie	krējums, kriejums	krējums	cream
broad e [æ] > a	vacs	vecs	old
broad ē [æ] > ā	sāta	sēta	yard
i > y	syta	sita	hit
ī > ei	veirs	vīrs	husband
ie > ī	zīma	ziema	winter
o [uo] > ū	ūla	ola	egg
ū > eu, iu, ou, yu	leupa, loupa, lyupa	lūpa	lip
ġ > dž	zuodžs	zāģis	saw
ķ > č	kačs	kaķis	cat

Latgalian has some words of its own, e.g. **būds** instead of **vaigs** ‘cheek’, and some which have a Slavic influence, e.g. **klevers** instead of **āboliņš** ‘clover’.

The tone pattern is falling (merged with the even) and broken, see Section 2.6.

Pronunciation and orthography – pareizruna un pareizrakstība

2.1 Vowels – patskaņi

Latvian has 12 vowel sounds: a, ā, e (*narrow* – šaurais e), ē (*narrow*), ē (*broad* – platais e), ē (*broad*), ī, ī, o (*short*), o (*long*), u, ū. The bar over the vowel is called a *macron* (*garumzīme*) and it indicates that the vowel is long.

Vowel	Pronunciation guide	Latvian examples	Meaning
a	Like 'ah' in 'Sarah'	ap, kaķis, suņa	around, cat, dog's
ā	Like 'a' in 'art'	ātri, māte, dārzā	quickly, mother, in the garden
e (narrow)	Like 'e' in 'bet'	es, bet, roze	I, but, rose
ē (narrow)	Like 'ai' in 'fair'	ēst, sēt, universitātē	to eat, to sow, in the university
e (æ, broad)	Like 'a' in 'cat'	esmu, sega	am, blanket
ē (ā, broad)	Like 'a' in 'last'	ēdam, dēls	(we) eat, son
ī	Like 'i' in 'pit'	ir, pils, parki	is/are, castle, parks
ī	Like 'ea' in 'eat'	Īrija, zīds, teātrī	Ireland, silk, in the theatre
o (short)	Like 'o' in 'bog'	oktobris, politika	October, politics
o (long)	Like 'oa' in 'oar'	opera, Eiropa, foto	opera, Europe, photo
u	Like 'u' in 'pull'	uguns, zupa, dzīvoju	fire, soup, (I) live/d
ū	Like 'oo' in 'pool'	ūdens, krūze, tirgū	water, cup, in the market

2.1.1 Quantity – kvantitāte

Quantity refers to the length of a vowel or a consonant (see Section 2.3). The macron shows us that a vowel is long and it is used above all the vowels apart from o. In a stressed syllable a long vowel is about double the length of a short one, slightly less in an unstressed syllable. It is important to use the difference in length in speaking and the macron in writing as it can change the lexical or grammatical meaning of a word:

- Different words:

bars	crowd	bārs	bar
kapu	of graves	kāpu	of dunes
kazas	goats	kāzas	wedding
lapa	leaf	lāpa	torch
pili	castle (acc. sing.) drop (acc. sing.)	pīli	duck (acc. sing.)
pļava	meadow	pļāva	(he/she/they) mowed
saku	(I) say	sāku	(I) begin/began
sals	frost	sāls	salt
ja	if	jā	yes

- Different cases:

mēri	measurements	mērī	in the measurement
opera	opera	operā	in the opera
sēde	meeting	sēdē	in the meeting

- Different tenses:

braucam	(we) travel	braucām	(we) travelled
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- Difference between indefinite and definite adjectives:

liela pilsēta	a big town	lielā pilsēta	the big town
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2.1.2 Narrow and broad e and ē – šaurais un platais e un ē

The learner will need to refer back to this section many times during the learning process as there is too much information to take in after a couple of readings.

The narrow e/ē is used:

- if the following syllable contains:
 - the vowels i, ī, narrow e or ē, e.g. **mētēlis** ‘coat’ – this example illustrates the principle of working back from last syllable so the i causes the e to be narrow which in turn causes the ē to be narrow
 - the diphthongs ie, ei, e.g. **ēdiet!** ‘eat’, **zemei** ‘to the land’
 - the palatalized consonants j, č, dž, š, ž, ģ, ķ, ļ, ņ, e.g. **dzeja** ‘poetry’, **strebjam** ‘(we) slurp’, **lemju** ‘I decide’, **slēpju** ‘I hide’, **senču** ‘of ancestors’, **sešas** ‘six (fem.)’, **ežu** ‘of hedgehogs’, **reņģu** ‘of herrings’, **zeķu** ‘of socks’, **dēliņš** ‘sonny’ – note that these consonants overrule the need to have a broad e/ē before vowels a and u
- in the last syllable of nouns, e.g. **māte** ‘mother’, **saulē** ‘in the sun’, **zemenes** ‘strawberries’, **eglēš** ‘in fir trees’
- in second-declension nouns ending in -s, e.g. **ūdeņū** ‘of waters’, **zibens** ‘lightning’
- in second- and fifth-declension nouns whose root ends in r, e.g. **Pētera** ‘Peter’s’, **atsperu** ‘of springs’
- in sixth-declension nouns, e.g. **dzelzs** ‘iron’, **klēts** ‘barn’
- in the first part of a compound noun the pronunciation of the original word is kept, e.g. **ūdensroze** ‘waterlily’, **dzelzsbetons** ‘reinforced concrete’
- in the infinitive form of first-conjugation and third-conjugation -ēt verbs, e.g. **nest** ‘to carry’, **nesties** ‘to rush’, **redzēt** ‘to see’, **peldēties** ‘to swim’
- in the present tense of first-conjugation verbs ending in -rt, e.g. **dzeru** ‘(I) drink’, **beram** ‘(we) strew’
- in the present second-person singular form of first-conjugation and third-conjugation -ēt verbs, e.g. **tu nes**, ‘you carry’, **tu redz** ‘you see’ – the other persons have a broad e/ē
- in the imperative form of first-conjugation and third-conjugation -ēt verbs, e.g. **nes!** **nesiet!** ‘carry (sing./pl.)’, **redz!** **redziet!** ‘see (sing./pl.)’
- in the past tense of first-conjugation verbs, e.g. **es nesu** ‘I carried’, **viņš ēda** ‘he ate’ – note that the past tense overrules the need to have a broad e/ē before vowels a and u
- in the last syllable of the third-person future tense, e.g. **redzēs** ‘(he/she/they) will see’
- in one-syllable words, e.g. **es** ‘I’, **mēs** ‘we’, **nē** ‘no’, **te** ‘here’
- in prefixes such as **bez-**, **jeb-**, **ne-**, **pēc-**, e.g. **nedrīkstēt** ‘to not be allowed’, **bezdarbs** ‘unemployment’ – the fact that there is a prefix overrules the need to have a broad e/ē before vowels such as a and u; the only exception is **neesmu** ‘I am not’, which is pronounced as a broad ē

- in the majority of loan words and proper nouns, regardless of the consonant or vowel in the following syllable, e.g. **problēma** ‘problem’, **teātris** ‘theatre’, **Aleksandrs, Zelma**.

The broad **e/ē** [æ/ǣ] is used:

- if the following syllable contains:
 - the vowels **a, ā**, broad **e** or **ē**, **u, ū**, e.g. **cena** ‘price’, **setā** ‘in the yard’, **ezers** ‘lake’, **cepumi** ‘cookies’, **medū** ‘in honey’; an exception is the verb **pretoties** ‘to oppose’ which keeps its narrow **e** pronunciation from the word **pretī** ‘opposite’ from which it is derived
 - the diphthongs **ai, au, o**, e.g. **senais** ‘ancient (def. adj.)’, **elpot** ‘to breathe’
- in first-declension nouns, e.g. **dēls** ‘son’, **zēns** ‘boy’ – this also applies to the different cases, e.g. **zēni** ‘boys’, overruling the need to have a narrow **e/ē** before vowels such as **i**
- in the genitive plural of sixth-declension nouns, e.g. **klēšu** ‘of barns’; however, a narrow **e/ē** is very often used if there is no alternation, e.g. **Cēsu** ‘of Cesis’
- in the first part of a compound noun the pronunciation of the original word is kept, e.g. **Vecrīga** ‘Old Riga’, **Ventspils** – exceptions to this rule are the words **sestdiena** ‘Saturday’, **svētdiena** ‘Sunday’, **vectētiņš** ‘granddad’, **žēlsirdīgs** ‘compassionate’
- in all forms of adjectives and participles, e.g. **dzeltens** ‘yellow (masc. sing.)’, **redzētas** ‘seen (fem. pl.)’
- in the present tense of first-conjugation verbs, apart from those ending in **-rt**, and third-conjugation **-ēt** verbs apart from the second-person singular, e.g. **es nesu** ‘I carry’, **viņš redz** ‘he sees’
- in adverbs derived from adjectives, e.g. **reti** ‘rarely’, **lēni** ‘slowly’
- in loan words and proper nouns where there is an **r** in the same syllable, e.g. **koncerts** ‘concert’, **nervs** ‘nerve’, **Ernests, Herta**; exceptions to this are the words **termometrs** ‘thermometer’ and **termoss** ‘thermos flask’
- in German proper nouns the diphthong **ei** is frequently pronounced with a broad **ē**, e.g. **Heine, Leipziga** ‘Leipzig’.

2.1.3 Short and long o – īsa un garais o

There are actually three pronunciations of the letter **o**: two of them are monothongs and are dealt with in this section while the third one is a diphthong so will be dealt with in the next section. As a monothong **o** appears in loan words as well as some proper nouns.

A short o is used:

- mostly at the beginning of loan words, e.g. **Olimpiskās spēles** ‘Olympic Games’, **orhideja** ‘orchid’, **ortogrāfija** ‘orthography’, **protokols** ‘protocol’
- in some place names, e.g. **Kolka**, **Zolitūde**
- in some surnames, e.g. **Poruks**.

A long o is used:

- in some short loan words, e.g. **jods** ‘iodine’, **kols** ‘colon’, **oda** ‘ode’, **oms** ‘ohm’, **opera**, **opijs** ‘opium’, **pols** ‘pole’
- mostly at the end of loan words in the endings **-ode**, e.g. **metode** ‘method’, **-ons**, e.g. **elektrons** ‘electron’, **-ors**, e.g. **lektors** ‘lecturer’, **-ozs**, e.g. **virtuozs** ‘virtuoso’; other examples include **radio**, **kino** ‘cinema’.

2.2 Diphthongs – divskaņi

A diphthong is where there are two vowel sounds together in the same syllable and they are pronounced as one sound, e.g. ‘low’ in English. Latvian has ten diphthongs.

<i>Diphthong</i>	<i>Pronunciation guide</i>	<i>Latvian examples</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ai	Like ‘uy’ in ‘buy’	aiz, skaists, Andai	behind, beautiful, to/for Anda
au	Like ‘ou’ in ‘ground’	auksts, lauks, jau	cold, field, already
ei	Like ‘ay’ in ‘pay’	Eiropa, teikt, mātei	Europe, to say, to/for mother
eu	Like ‘a’ in ‘cat’ and ‘u’ in ‘pull’ said quickly together	Seula	Seoul
ie	Like ‘ea’ in ‘ear’	iet, siena, mazie	to go, wall, the little ones
iu	Like the abbreviation ‘EU’ but said quickly	pliukšķēt	to crack (a whip)
o [uo]	Like ‘wa’ in ‘wasp’ but without the initial airy sound	ola, ozols, šo	egg, oak, this
oi	Like ‘oy’ in ‘boy’	Radio Oira, boikots	folk radio station, boycott
ou	Like ‘ew’ in ‘sew’	džouls	joule
ui	Like the French ‘oui’	puika, fui	boy, yuk

The diphthongs **eu**, **oi** and **ou** are not very common and are mainly used in loan words. The diphthong **eu** is particularly rare as in words of Greek origin containing this letter combination it is usually changed to **ei**, e.g. **eiforija** ‘euphoria’.

There are occasions when the same letters as in a diphthong appear together but are in separate syllables; they are then not pronounced as a diphthong but as separate letters, e.g. **neilgs** [ne-ilgs] ‘brief’, **triumfs** [tri-umfs] ‘triumph’.

The letter **o** is pronounced as a diphthong in words of Latvian origin as well as in loan words which have been in the language for a long time, e.g. **doma** ‘thought’, **skola** ‘school’. It is also used in most place names, e.g. **Ogre**, **Majori**, and in surnames, e.g. **Barons**. There are a few words in which the **o** can be pronounced either as a long monothong or as a diphthong, e.g. **citrons** ‘lemon’, **balkons** ‘balcony’. Compare the Latvian word **robots** [ruobuots] ‘notched’ with the loan word **robots** [robots] ‘robot’.

2.3 Consonants – līdzskaņi

There are twenty-six consonants in Latvian. The digraphs **dz** and **dž** are counted as single consonant sounds.

Consonant	Pronunciation guide	Latvian examples	Meaning
b	Like ‘b’ in ‘bed’	bet, ābols, grib	but, apple, wants
c	Like ‘ts’ in ‘cats’	cālis, sacept, nāc!	chicken, to fry, come
č	Like ‘ch’ in ‘chase’	čūska, lāči	snake, bears
d	Like ‘d’ in ‘day’	diena, labdien, dod!	day, good day, give
dz	Like ‘ds’ in ‘beds’	dzintars, daudz, zodz!	amber, many, steal
dž	Like ‘j’ in ‘John’	džungļi, dadži	jungle, thistles
f	Like ‘f’ in ‘fast’	filma, Āfrika, fotogrāf!	film, Africa, photographer
g	Like ‘g’ in ‘get’	gaiss, iegūt, deg	air, to gain, burn/s
ģ	Like ‘dj’ sound in ‘due’ or the French ‘adieu’	ģimene, aģents	family, agent
h	Like ‘h’ in ‘hair’	hokejs, Bahs	hockey, Bach
j	Like ‘y’ in ‘yellow’	jāt, māja, lej!	to ride, house, pour
k	Like ‘k’ in ‘rake’ but softer	kāja, aka, nāk	leg, well (water source), come/s

Consonant	Pronunciation guide	Latvian examples	Meaning
ķ	Like 'ty' sound in 'Tuesday'	ķer, šķinķis	catch, ham
l	Like 'l' in 'like'	lauva, ala, cel!	lion, cave, lift
ļ	Like 'lly' sound in 'million'	ļaudis, apaļš, ceļ	people, round, lifts
m	Like 'm' in 'mother'	māte, zeme, kam	mother, land, to whom
n	Like 'n' in 'now'	no, zināt, sen	from, to know, long ago
ņ	Like 'ny' sound in 'new'	ņemt, sēņot, bērniņ!	to take, to pick mushrooms, little child
p	Like 'p' in 'pot' but softer	punkts, sāpes, ap	point, pain, around
r	Rolled like 'r' in Scots 'very'	rasa, karote, kur	dew, spoon, where
s	Like 's' in 'sit'	sols, aste, brālis	bench, tail, brother
š	Like 'sh' in 'shop'	šis, laša, kurš	this, salmon's, who/which
t	Like 't' in 'top' but softer	tēvs, atbilde, pat	father, answer, even
v	Like 'v' in 'vet'	vanags, tava	hawk, your (fem.)
z	Like 'z' in 'zoo'	ziņas, roze, griez!	news, rose, cut
ž	Like 's' in 'pleasure'	žurnāls, brieži, griež	magazine, stags, cut/s

The letters **f** and **h** are only used in loan words. In words of Greek and German origin with the **ch** combination Latvian uses the letter **h**, e.g. **haoss** 'chaos'. Similarly, the letter **f** is used for the **ph** combination of Greek origin, e.g. **fonētika** 'phonetics'.

The voiceless consonants **k**, **p**, **t** are not aspirated in Latvian; this means that there is not the little puff of air that accompanies these sounds in English making the Latvian equivalent a softer sound.

If there is a double consonant, this has a longer sound than just a single one, e.g. **mana** 'my (fem.)', **manna** 'semolina', **apelē** '(he/she/they) appeal/s', **appelē** '(it) becomes mouldy'. In **man-na** and **ap-pelē** there is a distinct pause between the two **n** and **p** sounds. The possibilities for double consonants are **ll**, e.g. **balle** 'ball (dance)', **ļļ**, e.g. **eļļa** 'oil', **mm**, e.g. **mamma** 'mum', **nn**, e.g. **tonna** 'tonne', **ņņ**, e.g. **hunņi** 'the Huns', **rr**, e.g. **ķerra** 'wheelbarrow'. Double consonants are also used in proper nouns, e.g. **Emma**, **Šillers** 'Schiller', **Tallina** 'Tallinn'. In addition, we see double consonants in words which have a prefix ending in the same letter as the start

of the basic word, e.g. *pārrunāt* ‘to discuss’, and in compound words, e.g. *lappuse* ‘page’.

2.4 Sound changes – skaņu pārmaiņas

2.4.1 Positional sound changes – pozicionālās skaņu pārmaiņas

There are a number of positional changes which affect the pronunciation, but not the spelling, of words. These changes depend on the position of the consonant within a word. Before we look at them in detail, we need to look at what voiced and unvoiced consonants are.

Voiced consonants: These use the voice which you can feel if you touch your throat. In Latvian they are the consonants **b, d, dz, dž, g, ģ, j, m, n, ņ, l, ļ, r, v, z, ž**.

Unvoiced consonants: These do not use the voice: **c, č, f, h, k, ķ, p, s, š, t**.

The most common changes in pronunciation are the following. The consonants **l, m, n** and **r** do not affect the pronunciation and they themselves do not change.

- A voiced consonant before an unvoiced one becomes unvoiced:

b > p	labs	[laps]	good
d > t	gads	[gats]	year
g > k	draugs	[drauks]	friend
z > s	uzkāpt	[uskāpt]	to climb up

- An unvoiced consonant before a voiced one becomes voiced:

c > dz	piecdesmit	[piedzdesmit]	fifty
k > g	sākdams	[sāgdams]	beginning
p > b	apdomāt	[abdomāt]	to consider
s > z	pusdienas	[puzdienas]	lunch
š > ž	trešdiena	[treždiena]	Wednesday
t > d	atbilde	[adbilde]	answer

- Particularly at the ends of words, the following consonant combinations become one sound:

ds > c	sirds	[sirc]	heart
ts > c	pats	[pac]	oneself
šs > š	svešs	[sveš]	strange
žs > š	mežs	[meš]	wood, forest

- Similarly, we get the following changes:

sč > šč	pusčetri	[puščetri]	half past three
zš > šš	uzšūt	[uščūt]	to sew on
žž > žž	izzūt	[ižžūt]	to dry up

- The following consonant combinations produce a nasal ņ sound as in the English ‘-ing’:

ng > ņg	bungas	[buŋgas]	drum
nk > ņk	banka	[baŋka]	bank

- Where the consonants **j** and **v** follow the short vowels **a**, **e**, **i**, **u** in the same syllable and are at the end of a word or followed by a consonant, they lose their properties as consonants with the result that a diphthong is formed:

aj > ai	klaiš	[klaiš]	open
	klajums	[klajums]	open space
ej > ei	zvejniēks	[zveiniēks]	fisherman
	zveja	[zveja]	fishing
uj > ui	šuj	[šui]	(he/she) sews
	šuju	[šuju]	(I) sew
av > au	tavs	[taus]	your (masc.)
	tava	[tava]	your (fem.)
ev > eu	tev	[teu]	you (dat.)
	tevi	[tevi]	you (acc.)
iv > iu	zivs	[zius]	fish (sing.)
	zivis	[zivis]	fish (pl.)

- An unvoiced consonant between two short vowels is lengthened and sounds as though it is doubled:

k > kk	aka	[ak-ka]	well
p > pp	lapa	[lap-pa]	leaf
t > tt	bute	[but-te]	plaiice

2.4.2 Historic sound changes – vēsturiskās skaņu mijas

These are changes that occur in a language as it develops. They are present both in writing and in speaking. The biggest group of changes is palatalization in second-, fifth- and sixth-declension nouns. These are dealt with thoroughly in the relevant sections so will not be discussed here – see Sections 3.2.2, 3.2.5 and 3.2.6.

- Consonant interchange happens with the letters **g** and **k** when new words are formed and in conjugation when these letters are followed by the vowels and diphthongs **e, ē, ei, i, ī, ie**. The letter **g** changes to either a **ģ** or **dz**:

zirgs	horse	→	zirģelis	little horse
draugs	(male) friend	→	draudzene	(female) friend

The letter **k** changes to **ķ** or **c**:

mūks	monk	→	mūķene	nun
pūka	fluff	→	pūciņa	little (bit of) fluff

- In first-conjugation infinitives the consonant **t** influences **t** and **d** which become **s** before a **t**:

kodu	(I) bit	→	kost	to bite
situ	(I) hit	→	sist	to hit

- In participles the consonant **d** influences **t** and **d** which become **z** before a **d**:

vedu	(I) led, took	→	vezdams	leading, taking
metu	(I) threw	→	mezdams	throwing

- Vowels often change when forming new words or in conjugation:

likt	to put	→	lieku	(I) put
snigt	to snow	→	sniegs	snow

- Before **-šana** the consonants **d, t, s** and **z** are deleted:

vešana (from vedšana)	leading, taking
mešana (from metšana)	throwing
plīšana (from plīšana)	tearing
lūšana (from lūšana)	breaking

2.5 Word stress – vārda uzsvars

In this section the ' symbol is used only to mark stress, it is not used in writing. In general, Latvian has the stress on the first syllable of the word, e.g. 'mēle 'tongue', 'pavasaris 'spring'. This is an influence from its Finno-Ugric neighbours Liv and Estonian. Stress is not connected with length so a short syllable can be stressed while a long one is unstressed, e.g. 'upē 'in the river'. There are exceptions to this rule as follows.

- In pronouns and adverbs with the prefix **ne-**, e.g. **ne'kas** 'nothing', **ne'kad** 'never', **ne'kur** 'nowhere'; verbs, nouns and adjectives, as well as adverbs derived from adjectives, beginning with **ne-** have the stress on the first syllable as normal, e.g. **'nedot** 'not to give', **'nepatika** 'dislike', **'nepatīkami** 'unpleasantly'.
- In the superlative form of adjectives and adverbs, e.g. **vis'karstākais** 'the hottest', **vis'skaistāk** 'most beautifully'.
- In compound numerals with **pus-**, e.g. **pus'otra** 'one and a half', **pus'četri** 'half past three'; in nouns with **pus-** the stress is on the first syllable, e.g. **'puslaiks** 'half time', **'pusdienas** 'lunch'.
- In compounds with the prefixes:
 - **ik-**, e.g. **ik'viens** 'everyone' – nouns and adjectives beginning with **ik-** keep the stress on the first syllable, e.g. **'ikdiēna** 'normal day', **'ikdienišķīgs** 'everyday'
 - **jeb-**, e.g. **jeb'kad** 'whenever', **jeb'kurš** 'whoever' – this is true for all words beginning with **jeb-**
 - **pa-**, e.g. **pa'retam** 'now and then' (but **'pareti** 'rarely'), **pa'tiesi** or **pa'tiešām** 'really' (but **'patiesība** 'truth', **'patiesīgs** 'truthful'), **pa'visam** 'entirely' – be careful though because the majority of the words with the prefix **pa-** do have the stress on the first syllable
 - **vis-**, e.g. **vis'maz** 'at least' – this does not hold for all words beginning with **vis-**.
- In some compounds and individual words, e.g. **ar'vien** 'ever', **gan'drīz** 'almost', **jo'projām** 'still', **lab'dien** 'good day', **lab'rīt** 'good morning', **lab'vakar** 'good evening', **nu'pat** 'just now', **pal'dies** 'thank you', **pat'laban** 'now', **tā'pat** 'in the same way', **tik'pat** 'as much/many as', **tur'klāt** 'in addition', **tur'pat** 'in the same place', **tur'pretim** 'on the other hand', **var'būt** 'maybe', **vien'alga** 'all the same, it doesn't matter'.
- In some diminutives, e.g. **drus'cītiņ** 'a little bit'.
- There are also a few words which have the stress on the third syllable, e.g. **nepar'ko** 'not for anything in the world', **nepa'visam** 'no way', **pama'zītiņām** 'little by little'.
- Words of French origin with the stress on the final syllable, e.g. **foa'jē** 'foyer', **komuni'kē** 'communiqué'.
- In foreign names which are not declined the stress is kept on the same syllable as in the original language, e.g. **I'go** 'Hugo', **Did'ro** 'Diderot'; similarly, in proper nouns which are declined and are three syllables or longer, the stress is kept on the original syllable, e.g. **Dosto'jevskis** 'Dostoyevsky'.

- In foreign names which have the stress on the last syllable in the original language, Latvian puts the stress on the first syllable, e.g. 'Ivans.

As we have seen, this is a difficult topic with rules and exceptions; however, it is important to remember that the majority of words have the stress on the first syllable. If there is any uncertainty, then the only way to find out for sure where the stress goes in a word is to consult a pronunciation guide such as Strautiņa, V. and Dz. Šulce (2009) *Latviešu valodas pareizrūna un pareizrakstība*. Rīga, RaKa.

2.6 Tone – intonācija

Latvian is a tonal language which means that the voice alters in pitch from high to low and also in volume in long syllables, i.e. those which have a long vowel or a diphthong, or in which a consonant in the same syllable increases the length of the syllable. These consonants are **l, ļ, m, n, ņ, r**, e.g. **pants** ‘verse’ is slightly longer than **pasts** ‘post’. Traditionally three tonal patterns are recognized in Latvian, namely the *even tone*, **stieptā intonācija**; the *falling tone*, **krietošā intonācija**; and the *broken tone*, **lauztā intonācija**. However, in today’s standard Latvian only two tones are recognized, the even tone and the *non-even tone*, **nestieptā intonācija**, which can be either the falling or the broken tone.

The even tone is represented by the symbol ~ . The syllable is pronounced evenly from the beginning to the end, e.g. **lauks** ‘field’, **māte** [māte] ‘mother’, **paņts** ‘verse’.

The falling tone is represented by the symbol ` . Here the pitch and volume rise initially and then fall away gradually to almost a whisper over the length of the syllable, e.g. **gaiss** ‘air’, **āita** ‘sheep’, **būt** [būt] ‘to be’.

The broken tone is represented by the symbol ^ . Here the pitch and volume rise initially, followed by an interruption, and then fall away suddenly, e.g. **maize** ‘bread’, **dēls** [dēls] ‘son’, **lauzt** ‘to break’.

There are very few words in Latvian which are distinguished by tone alone:

lōks [luōks] ‘spring onion’, **lōks** [luòks] ‘arch, bow’, **lōgs** [luòks] ‘window’
zāle [zāle] ‘hall’, **zāle** [zāle] ‘grass’
stāvs [stāvs] ‘storey, floor’, **stāvs** [stāvs] ‘steep’
griezts [griēzt] ‘to cut’, **griezts** [griēzt] ‘to rotate, turn’

The use of tone varies from dialect to dialect with only some areas within the central dialect tending to keep all three tones, namely the area around Cesis, Valka and Valmiera in Vidzeme. In the Livonian dialect the even tone has merged with the falling tone while retaining the broken tone. In high Latvian the even tone has merged with the falling tone while also retaining the broken tone. As an example the words **trauks** ‘dish’, **draugs** ‘(male) friend’ and **raugs** ‘yeast’ are pronounced [traũks], [draũgs], [raũgs] in the central dialect; [traũks], [draũgs], [raũgs] in the Livonian dialect; and [tràuks], [dràuks], [ràuks] in high Latvian.

As with stress, a pronunciation dictionary should be consulted for individual words, see Section 2.5; however, the average student of Latvian need not be too concerned with this area of the language as they can be perfectly well understood without using these pitch patterns.

2.7 Phrase and sentence stress – frāzes un teikuma uzsvars

Apart from the word stress and tone we have just looked at, Latvian also has sentence stress. In general, the first word of a sentence is lightly stressed and the final word has a stronger stress:

Vakar biju **IEPIRKTIES**. I went shopping yesterday.

In compound sentences this stress pattern applies to each clause, not including conjunctions:

Vakar biju **IEPIRKTIES** bet **maz** ko **NOPIRKU**.
I went shopping yesterday but didn't buy anything much.

2.8 The alphabet – alfabēts

The Latvian alphabet has thirty-three letters:

**Aa Āā Bb Cc Čč Dd Ee Ēē Ff Gg Ģģ Hh Ii Īī Jj Kk Ķķ Ll Ļļ Mm
Nn Ņņ Oo Pp Rr Ss Šš Tt Uu Ūū Vv Zz Žž**

The pronunciation of each individual letter for spelling purposes is as follows:

A = a	Ā = garais ā	B = bē
C = cē	Č = čē	D = dē
E = e	Ē = garais ē	F = ef

G = gā	Ģ = ģē	H = hā
I = i	Ī = garais ī	J = jē
K = kā	Ķ = ķē	L = el
Ļ = eļ	M = em	N = en
Ņ = eņ	O = o	P = pē
R = er	S = es	Š = eš
T = tē	U = u	Ū = garais ū
V = vē	Z = zē	Ž = žē

The long vowels are indicated as such by saying **garais** which just means 'long'. As we have already seen before, the bar above the vowels is called a *macron*, this and the other marks above and below letters are called *diacritical marks* and they are used to indicate changes in pronunciation. The comma-like mark under **ķ**, etc., as well as the same mark above the lower-case **ģ** (written above as there is no space below) indicates palatalization. This means that the letter is pronounced by the tongue approaching the palate or roof of the mouth. The inverted circumflex above **ž**, etc., indicates a softening of the consonant.

Latvian does not have the letters q, w, x, y. However, **www** is of course used in website addresses and this is pronounced **vē-vē-vē**. The @ symbol in e-mail addresses is pronounced **et**.

Latvian spelling has changed on the Internet when Latvian fonts are not available. There are three possibilities. The first is simply to omit all the diacritical marks, e.g. **ši brīnišķīgā mūzika** 'this wonderful music' becomes **si briniskiga muzika**. The second, but not so common, way is to indicate the presence of a diacritical mark by using an apostrophe before or after the letter so we get 's'i br'ini's'k'ig'a m'uzika or s'i' bri'nis'k'i'ga' mu'zika. The third, and probably the most common, possibility is to double long consonants, e.g. **ā** > **aa**, add **h** to represent **č**, e.g. **ž** > **zh**, and add **j** to represent the palatalized sounds, e.g. **ņ** > **nj**. This results in **shii briinishkjiigaa muuzika**.

In a Latvian dictionary the long and short vowels are not distinguished separately; however, the consonants are, so words beginning with **k** will all come before words beginning with **ķ**, for example.

2.9 Word division – vārdu dalīšana

Latvian has very strict rules about how to divide a word at the end of a line. Basically words are divided by syllables but the following points must be noted.

- One-syllable words are not divided, e.g. **gads** ‘year’.
- A single vowel cannot be left on its own, e.g. **ola** ‘egg’, but diphthongs can be left on their own, e.g. **ie-la**.
- Prefixes are left at the end of the line while the rest of the word is taken to the next line:

ie-iet ‘to enter’, **pa-celt** ‘to lift up’.

- The following suffixes are taken to the next line:

-damies/-damās	klausī-damies	listening
-dams/-dama	nes-dams	carrying
-gans/-gana	zaļ-gans	greenish
-nieks/-niece	ārzem-nieks	foreigner
-nīca	vies-nīca	hotel
-šana	lasīšana	reading
-šanās	iepirkšanās	shopping
-tala	birz-tala	copse
-tava	mazgā-tava	laundry
-tuve	ska-tuve	stage
-tājs/-tāja	skolo-tāja	(female) teacher

- Compound words are divided according to their constituent parts, e.g. **putekļ-sūcējs** ‘vacuum cleaner’, **grāmat-veikals** ‘bookshop’, **div-pa-dsmit** ‘twelve’.
- Other words are divided by taking account of the number of consonants:

0 + 1	la-pa	leaf
	ze-me-nes	strawberries
1 + 1	maz-gāt	to wash
1 + 2	rak-stīt	to write
2 + 1	spilg-ti	brightly (this combination is used if the 1 + 2 split leaves an awkward consonant combination on the next line)
2 + 2	zvirg-zdi	gravel

- The digraphs **dz** and **dž** are not divided, e.g. **da-dzis** ‘thistle’, **mene-džers** ‘manager’.

2.10 Capitalization – lielo sākumburtu lietošana

In general, capitalization is the same as in English, the points below will deal with some of the differences.

The initial letter is capitalized in:

- single proper nouns, e.g. **Pēteris, Daugava**
- the words **tu** ‘you (sing.)’ and **jūs** ‘you (pl. and polite)’, as well other associated pronouns, in letters and other correspondence, e.g.:

Mīļā Inita!

Es ļoti priecājos par Tavu vēstuli un steidzos Tev tūlīt atbildēt.

**Ļoti gaidu Jūs ar Marko ciemos un ceru, ka laiks būs labs,
kamēr Jūs būsiet Valmierā.**

Tava Ieva

‘Dear Inita

I’m very happy to get your letter and I’m hurrying to reply to you immediately. I’m really looking forward to you and Marko visiting and I hope that the weather will be good while you’re in Valmiera.

Yours (lit. your)

Ieva’

All initial letters are capitalized in:

- names of countries, e.g. **Latvijas Republika** ‘Republic of Latvia’, **Apvienotā Karaliste** ‘United Kingdom’
- names of parliaments and some other institutions, e.g. **Latvijas Republikas Saeima** ‘Parliament of the Republic of Latvia’
- names of international organizations, e.g. **Apvienoto Nāciju Organizācija** ‘United Nations Organization’
- names of geographic places if each word is a proper noun, e.g. **Lielais Barjerriifs** ‘Great Barrier Reef’
- names of constellations, e.g. **Lielais Lācis** ‘the Great Bear’
- names of newspapers and magazines, e.g. **Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze** ‘Independent Morning Newspaper’.

Only the initial letter of the first word is capitalized in:

- names of organizations, institutions and companies, e.g. **Valmieras mēbeles** ‘Valmiera Furniture’
- names of honours, e.g. **Trīszvaigžņu ordenis** ‘Order of the Three Stars’
- names of books and works of art, e.g. **„Karš un miers”** ‘War and Peace’
- names of geographic places if they include a word which is not a proper noun, e.g. **Burtnieku ezers** ‘Lake Burtnieki’
- names of festivals and remembrance days, e.g. **Vecgada vakars** ‘New Year’s Eve’.

The initial letters of the first two or three words are capitalized in:

- names of institutions, etc. in which the country or organization is the first word or words and this is then followed by the name of the institution, e.g. **Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija** ‘Latvian Art Academy’, **Eiropas Kopienes Tiesa** ‘The Court of Justice of the European Communities’, **Eiropas Savienības Civildienesta tiesa** ‘European Union Civil Service Tribunal’.

2.11 Foreign names – citvalodu īpašvārdi

Latvian has its own names for some countries, e.g. **Vācija** ‘Germany’, **Krievija** ‘Russia’, while others are similar to their English equivalents, e.g. **Spānija** ‘Spain’. Town names tend to have a Latvian equivalent which is generally feminine, e.g. **Londona**, **Berlīne**. The same is true for many other geographic names, e.g. **Temsa** ‘the Thames’. Personal names are always changed into the Latvian phonetic equivalent with masculine or feminine endings added and these can then be declined:

George Clooney	→	Džordž Klūnijs (Džordž is actually one name which does not take an extra ending)	
		Džordžam Klūnijam	to/for George Clooney
John Kennedy	→	Džons Kenedijs	
		Džona Kenedija	John Kennedy's
Elizabeth Taylor	→	Elizabete Teilore	
		Elizabetei Teilorei	to/for Elizabeth Taylor
Jennifer Aniston	→	Dženifera Anistone	
		Dženiferas Anistones	Jennifer Aniston's

Nouns – lietvārdi

Nouns are the words we use to describe things, e.g. **galds** ‘table’; people, e.g. **meitene** ‘girl’; animals e.g. **kaķis** ‘cat’; places, e.g. **pilsēta** ‘town’; and abstract ideas, e.g. **prieks** ‘happiness’. The examples just given are all *common nouns*, **sugasvārdi**. *Proper nouns*, **īpašvārdi**, are used to name people, places and organizations, etc., e.g. **Jānis**, **Valda**, **Rīga**, **Latvijas Republikas Saeima** (the Latvian parliament).

3.1 Grammatical categories – gramatiskās kategorijas

3.1.1 Gender – dzimte

Like German, French and other European languages, Latvian divides nouns into grammatical genders. Latvian nouns can be either *masculine*, **vīriešu dzimte**, or *feminine*, **sieviešu dzimte**. It is important to know the gender as this will affect many other elements in the sentence such as adjectives, pronouns and participles. In general it is easy to recognize the gender from the ending of the noun.

- Masculine nouns end in -s, -š, -is and -us, e.g. **koks** ‘tree’, **ceļš** ‘path, way’, **nazis** ‘knife’, **tirgus** ‘market’.
- Feminine nouns end in -a or -e, e.g. **meita** ‘daughter’, **roze** ‘rose’.

However, there is a small group of masculine nouns which end in -a, e.g. **lauva** ‘lion’, and another small group of feminine nouns ending in -s, e.g. **pils** ‘castle’. These need to be learnt specifically.

Nouns describing people generally follow the sex of the person:

Latvian has gender-specific words for occupations and also for nationalities:

skolotājs	male teacher	skolotāja	female teacher
latvietis	a male Latvian	latviete	a female Latvian

The names of many animals also follow the sex of the animal:

bullis	bull	govs (fem.)	cow
---------------	------	--------------------	-----

The names of young animals tend to be masculine, e.g. **kucēns** ‘puppy’.

Surnames also normally follow the gender of the person:

Ozoliņš (masc.)	Ozoliņa (fem.)
Hartmanis (masc.)	Hartmane (fem.)

However, some Latvian women who were born outside Latvia use the masculine form of the name for a couple of reasons: first, the differentiation was not as widespread in the 1930–1940s when their parents or grandparents left Latvia; second, it is the masculine form of the name which is entered in their passports from their country of residence. In such a case the surname tends not to be declined, e.g. **Prauliņš kundze** ‘Ms/Mrs Praulins’.

Some masculine surnames end in -a or -e and these will be looked at in Sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5.

Country names tend to be feminine following the gender of **valsts** (fem.) ‘state’, e.g. **Latvija**, **Austrālija**, as do town and city names – **pilsēta** ‘town’ – whether they are in Latvia or elsewhere, e.g. **Rīga**, **Londona**. River names are also feminine – the word for ‘river’ **upe** is itself feminine, e.g. **Daugava**, **Amazona**. However, the names of mountains are masculine – **kalns** ‘hill, mountain’, e.g. **Gaiziņš**, **Everests**. Names of lakes are also masculine – **ezers** ‘lake’, e.g. **Burtnieks**, **Balatons**.

3.1.2 Number – skaitlis

Nouns can be *singular*, *vienskaitlis*, or *plural*, *daudzskaitlis*, e.g. **krēsls** ‘chair’, **krēsli** ‘chairs’. See Sections 3.2.9–3.2.11 for nouns used only in the singular or the plural, or for nouns whose meaning is different in the singular and plural. When talking about the members of a family who all have the same surname, then the plural form is used, e.g. **Šmiti** ‘the Smiths’.

- The *vocative*, **vokatīvs**, is used for addressing or calling people or animals:

Mikin! **Mikiņš** is a common cat's name

If we look at a sentence such as this traditional Latvian tongue twister and put the cases with each of the nouns, we can work out the meaning:

Kārlis Klārai krelles deva – Klāra Kārlim klarneti.

nom. dat. acc. nom. dat. acc.

Karlis gave Klara a necklace, Klara (gave) Karlis a clarinet.

We can even add more cases to the sentence:

Kārlis Klārai kafejnīcā krelles deva – Klāra Kārlim koka klarneti.

nom. dat. loc. acc. nom. dat. gen. acc.

Karlis gave Klara a necklace in the café, Klara (gave) Karlis a clarinet
(made of) wood.

3.2 Declension – deklinēšana

Latvian grammars divide nouns into six declension groups, **deklinācijas**.

3.2.1 First declension – pirmā deklinācija

The first group contains nouns ending in -s and -š, e.g. **dēls** 'son', **ceļš** 'road, way'. These are all masculine. The declension is exactly the same for both -s and -š nouns – the only difference is in the nominative singular.

	Singular		Plural	
	-s	-š	-s	-š
Nominative	dēls	ceļš	dēli	ceļi
Genitive	dēla	ceļa	dēlu	ceļu
Dative	dēlam	ceļam	dēliem	ceļiem
Accusative	dēlu	ceļu	dēlus	ceļus
Locative	dēlā	ceļā	dēlos	ceļos

The vocative in the singular is exactly the same as the nominative for most one-syllable nouns, e.g. **dēls!** 'son!', **tēvs!** 'father!'. Longer nouns drop the final -s or -š, e.g. **Andrejs** → **Andrej!**, **Mārtiņš** → **Mārtiņ!** In the plural the vocative is the same as the nominative, e.g. **draugi!** 'friends!'.

3.2.2 Second declension – otrā deklinācija

The second group contains masculine nouns ending in **-is**, e.g. **kaķis** ‘cat’, as well as a small group of masculine nouns ending in **-s**, e.g. **akmens** ‘stone’.

	Singular		Plural	
	-is	-s	-is	-s
Nominative	kaķis	akmens	kaķi	akmeņi
Genitive	kaķa	akmens	kaķu	akmeņu
Dative	kaķim	akmenim	kaķiem	akmeņiem
Accusative	kaķi	akmeni	kaķus	akmeņus
Locative	kaķī	akmenī	kaķos	akmeņos

Apart from **akmens**, the only other nouns ending in **-s** which belong to this group are:

asmens	blade	sāls	salt
mēness	moon	ūdens	water
rudens	autumn, fall	zibens	lightning

Note that the genitive singular ends in **-s** for these nouns. **Suns** ‘dog’ is another noun which belongs to this group but this follows the standard **-is** declension so the genitive singular is **suņa**. **Sāls** is still rather controversial as it is listed as a second-declension noun in dictionaries and grammars; however, cooking salt, as opposed to chemical salts, was always considered to be a sixth-declension noun and many people would still consider **vāramā sāls** (fem.) ‘cooking salt’ to be correct.

In the vocative singular the nouns ending in **-s** generally keep this ending; however, the use of the vocative is rather limited since these objects are not usually addressed but an example might be **mēness!** ‘moon!’. The nouns ending in **-is** drop the final **-s**, e.g. **Jānis** → **Jāni!** The noun **suns** ‘dog’ also follows this pattern → **sunī!** In the plural the vocative is the same as the nominative, e.g. **brāļi!** ‘brothers!’.

What is characteristic for this declension group is the consonant change, or *alternation*, **lidzskanu mija**, in the genitive singular and in all the cases in the plural. This characteristic is also called *palatalization* as the consonant changes to a palatalized sound, i.e. the tongue touches the palate in pronouncing these sounds. We can see the consonant change in the

plural declension of **akmeņi** where the **n** has changed to **ņ**. We do not see it in the genitive singular in **akmens** as this remains the same as the nominative, but we do see it in **suņa**. We would also have seen it if we had taken **brālīš** ‘brother’ as the example as this changes to **brāļa** in the genitive singular and **brāļi**, etc. in the plural. The rules for these consonant changes are as follows (and there is a reverse retrieval table in Appendix 2); where there are two consonants together which are capable of softening, then they both do so, e.g. **ln > ļņ**:

Consonant change	Nominative singular	Genitive singular	Nominative plural	Meaning
b > bj	gul b is	gul b ja	gul b ji	swan
c > č	lāc i s	lāč a	lāč i	bear
d > ž	bried i s	briež a	briež i	stag
dz > dž	dadz i s	dadž a	dadž i	thistle
l > ļ	cel i s	ceļ a	ceļ i	knee
ln > ļņ	aln i s	aļņ a	aļņ i	elk
m > mj	kur m is	kur m ja	kur m ji	mole
n > ņ	torn i s	tor ņ a	tor ņ i	tower
p > pj	skap i s	skap j a	skap j i	cupboard
s > š	ķirs i s	ķirš a	ķirš i	cherry
sl > šļ	kāpsl i s	kāpšļ a	kāpšļ i	stirrup, step
sn > šņ	atkusn i s	atkuš ņ a	atkuš ņ i	thaw
t > š	latviet i s	latvieš a	latvieš i	(male) Latvian
v > vj	šķīv i s	šķīv j a	šķīv j i	plate
z > ž	naz i s	naž a	naž i	knife
zl > žļ	zizl i s	zižļ a	zižļ i	baton
zn > žņ	uzgriezn i s	uzgriež ņ a	uzgriež ņ i	(metal) nut

There are exceptions to these rules in a few groups of nouns:

- the nouns **tētis** ‘dad’ – gen. sing. **tēta** and **viesis** ‘guest’ – gen. sing. **viesa**
- nouns which end in:
 - astis:** **strupastis** ‘bobtail’ – gen. sing. **strupasta**
 - ģis:** **kuģis** ‘ship’ – gen. sing. **kuģa**
 - jis:** **simtkājis** ‘centipede’ – gen. sing. **simtkāja**
 - ķis:** **kaķis** ‘cat’ – gen. sing. **kaķa**
 - matis:** **tumšmatis** ‘dark-haired (male) person’ – gen. sing. **tumšmata**

-ris: **stūris** 'corner' – gen. sing. **stūra**

-skatis: **tālskatis** 'binoculars' – gen. sing. **tālskata**

- two-syllable proper nouns, i.e. male names, ending in **-dis** and **-tis**, e.g. **Valdis** – gen. sing. **Valda** (although **Valža** is occasionally heard); **Gatis** – gen. sing. **Gata**; if the name is longer than two syllables, there may be a change, e.g. **Visvaldis** – gen. sing. **Visvalža**
- surnames ending in **-ckis** and **-skis**, e.g. **Trockis** – gen. sing. **Trocka**; **Čaikovskis** – gen. sing. **Čaikovska**.

3.2.3 Third declension – trešā deklinācija

The third group comprises masculine words ending in **-us**, e.g. **tirgus** 'market'.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nominative	tirgus	tirgi
Genitive	tirgus	tirgu
Dative	tirgum	tirgiem
Accusative	tirgu	tirgus
Locative	tirgū	tirgos

In the vocative singular the final **-s** is dropped, e.g. **Mikus** → **Miku!** In the plural the vocative is the same as the nominative but it would not normally be used for the objects included in this group.

If a feminine surname ends in **-us**, it is generally not declined, e.g. **Daces Markus grāmata** 'Dace Markus' book', or the ending is treated as though it was an **-uss** ending and declined accordingly, e.g. **vizīte pie dakteres Markusas** 'a visit to Dr. Markus'. If the same ending is masculine, it is generally treated as **-uss**, e.g. **Ivara Markusa grāmata** 'Ivars Markus' book'.

3.2.4 Fourth declension – ceturtā deklinācija

The fourth group contains nouns ending in **-a**. These are primarily feminine, e.g. **māsa** 'sister', but there is also a small group of masculine nouns which end in **-a**, e.g. **puika** 'boy'. These have slightly different endings as the table below shows.

	Singular		Plural	
	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine
Nominative	māsa	puika	māsas	puikas
Genitive	māsas	puikas	māsu	puiku
Dative	māsai	puikam	māsām	puikām
Accusative	māsu	puiku	māsas	puikas
Locative	māsā	puikā	māsās	puikās

It is the dative singular which is different depending on whether the noun is feminine or masculine. This also applies to masculine names ending in -a such as **Janka** – dat. sing. **Jankam**. There are a few nouns in Latvian which can be the same in the masculine and the feminine, e.g. **plāpa** ‘gossip, i.e. a person who gossips’. Here it will depend on whether the gossip is male or female:

Neviens netic plāpam. Nobody believes the (male) gossip.

Neviens netic plāpai. Nobody believes the (female) gossip.

This also happens with surnames where the masculine and feminine are the same as they are based on a fourth-declension noun, e.g. **Liepa**:

Es vēstuli aizsūtīju Jānim Liepam.

I sent the letter to Janis Liepa.

Es vēstuli aizsūtīju Ievai Liepai.

I sent the letter to Ieva Liepa.

The vocative singular is generally the same as the nominative for most two-syllable nouns, e.g. **Rūta!** Longer nouns drop the final -a, e.g. **Rūtiņ!** In the plural the vocative is the same as the nominative, e.g. **māsas!** ‘sisters!’. Names of foreign origin are usually used in their full form, e.g. **Marija!**

3.2.5 Fifth declension – piektā deklinācija

The fifth declension contains mostly feminine nouns ending in -e, e.g. **māte**, but there is also a small group of masculine proper nouns, i.e. surnames, which belong here, e.g. **Egle**, as well as one noun which can be either feminine or masculine – **bende** ‘executioner’.

	Singular		Plural	
	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine
Nominative	māte	bende	mātes	bendes
Genitive	mātes	bendes	māšu	benžu
Dative	mātei	bendem	mātēm	bendēm
Accusative	māti	bendi	mātes	bendes
Locative	mātē	bendē	mātēs	bendēs

The masculine dative singular has the ending **-em**; in the case of a female executioner, the dative singular would be **bendei**. This is also true of surnames ending in **-e**, which can be masculine or feminine:

Es vēstuli aizsūtīju Jānim Eglem. I sent the letter to Janis Egle.

Es vēstuli aizsūtīju Ievai Eglei. I sent the letter to Ieva Egle.

The vocative singular is generally the same as the nominative for most two-syllable nouns, e.g. **Ilze!** Longer nouns drop the final **-e**, e.g. **Ilzīt!** In the plural the vocative is the same as the nominative, e.g. **mātes!** ‘mothers!’.

The fifth declension has alternation as in the second declension but only in the genitive plural (there is a reverse retrieval table in Appendix 2):

Consonant change	Nominative singular	Genitive plural	Meaning
b > bj	zīlbe	zīlbju	syllable
c > č	svece	sveču	candle
d > ž	sekunde	sekunžu	second (time)
dz > dž	kaudze	kaudžu	heap
kst > kš	sacīkstes (pl.)	sacīkšu	competition
l > ļ	pīle	pīļu	duck
m > mj	zeme	zemju	land
n > ņ	sakne	sakņu	root
p > pj	upe	upju	river
s > š	adrese	adrešu	address
sn > šņ	aploksne	aplokšņu	envelope
t > š	biļete	biļešu	ticket
v > vj	virtuve	virtuvju	kitchen
z > ž	vāze	vāžu	vase
zn > žņ	zvaigzne	zvaigžņu	star

There are exceptions to these rules in a few groups of nouns.

- Nouns which end in:

-**aste**: **strupaste** ‘(female) bobtail’ – gen. pl. **strupastu**
 -**fe**: **žirafe** ‘giraffe’ – gen. pl. **žirafu**
 -**ģe**: **skauģe** ‘envious woman’ – gen. pl. **skauģu**
 -**ķe**: **zeķe** ‘sock’ – gen. pl. **zeķu**
 -**mate**: **tumšmate** ‘dark-haired (female) person’ – gen. pl. **tumšmatu**
 -**pēde**: **ortopēde** ‘(female) orthopedist’ – gen. pl. **ortopēdu**
 -**re**: **biedre** ‘(female) member’ – gen. pl. **biedru**
 -**ste**: **ārste** ‘(female) doctor’ – gen. pl. **ārstu** – this only applies if there is no **k** before the **s**

- Other common nouns which do not have alternation include:

bāze ‘basis’ – gen. pl. **bāzu**
bote ‘boot’ – gen. pl. **botu**
flote ‘fleet’ – gen. pl. **flotu**
fronte ‘front’ – gen. pl. **frontu**
gāze ‘gas’ – gen. pl. **gāzu**
gide ‘(female) guide’ – gen. pl. **gidu**
kase ‘cash desk’ – gen. pl. **kasu**
mute ‘mouth’ – gen. pl. **mutu**
pase ‘passport’ – gen. pl. **pasu**
šprote ‘sprat’ – gen. pl. **šprotu**

- Some nouns have parallel forms, e.g.:

finances (pl.) ‘finance’ – gen. pl. **finanšu** or **finansu**
torte ‘gateau’ – gen. pl. **toršu** or **tortu**

3.2.6 Sixth declension – sestā deklinācija

The sixth declension contains a small group of feminine nouns ending in -s, e.g. **pils** ‘castle’. There is also a very small group of feminine nouns used only in the plural, i.e. **brokastis** ‘breakfast’, the town **Cēsis**, **durvis** ‘door’. And finally there is also the masculine plural word **ļaudis** ‘people’ which is included in this group.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nominative	pils	pilis
Genitive	pils	piļu
Dative	pilij	pilīm
Accusative	pili	pilis
Locative	pilī	pilīs

The vocative is the same as the nominative in both the singular and plural.

The sixth declension has alternation as in the second declension but only in the genitive plural (there is a reverse retrieval table in Appendix 2):

<i>Consonant change</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
d > ž	sirds	siržu	heart
l > ļ	pils	piļu	castle
n > ņ	asinis (pl.)	asiņu	blood
s > š	nāss	nāšu	nostril
sn > šņ	krāsns	krāšņu	stove, oven
st > š	pāksts	pākšu	pod (e.g. pea)
t > š	nakts	nakšu	night
v > vj	zivs	zivju	fish
z > ž	birzs	biržu	grove

Unfortunately, there is no way of telling the difference between a masculine and a feminine noun ending in -s. Of course the majority will be masculine and thus follow the first declension. The most common feminine nouns following the sixth-declension endings are the following – the genitive plural is shown if the noun does not follow the rules of alternation:

acs	eye – gen. pl. acu
auss	ear – gen. pl. ausu
asinis (pl.)	blood
balss	voice – gen. pl. balsu
brokastis (pl.)	breakfast – gen. pl. brokastu
Cēsis (pl.)	town in Latvia – gen. pl. Cēsu
cilts	tribe
debess	sky, heaven (often used in the plural) – gen. pl. debesu
dzelzs	iron (metal) – gen. pl. dzelzu

govs	cow
klēts	barn
klints	cliff
krāšns	oven
krūts	breast, in the plural krūtis means 'breasts' or 'chest'
kūts	byre – gen. pl. kūtu
kvīts	receipt
nakts	night
nāss	nostril
pāksts	pod (e.g. pea)
pirts	sauna – gen. pl. pirtu
plīts	cooker
sirds	heart
smilts	sand (mainly used in the plural)
takts	time (in music, e.g. 'to keep time') – gen. pl. taktu
telts	tent
uguns	fire
uts	louse – gen. pl. utu
valsts	country, state – gen. pl. valstu
vēsts	news – gen. pl. vēstu
zivs	fish
zoss	goose – gen. pl. zosu

If a surname is based on a sixth-declension noun, e.g. **Klints**, **Dzelzs**, then the feminine surname retains the -s ending, e.g. **Ieva Dzelzs**.

3.2.7 Reflexive nouns – atgriezeniskie lietvārdi

Nouns formed from reflexive verbs, i.e. those ending in -šānās, e.g. **tikšanās** 'meeting', do not belong to any of the six declensions – they form a group of their own in which some of the cases are missing.

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nominative	tikšanās	tikšanās
Genitive	tikšanās	tikšanos
Dative	–	–
Accusative	tikšanos	tikšanās
Locative	–	–
Vocative	–	–

Piedalīšanās šovā bija viņas ideja. (nom. sing.)

Taking part in the show was her idea.

Smiešanās terapija. (gen. sing.)

Laughter therapy.

Uz redzēšanos! (acc. sing.)

Good bye. (lit. Until (we) see each other again.)

Par pateicību es izpildīšu trīs tavas vēlēšanās! (acc. pl.)

To thank you I will grant you three wishes.

The fact that some of the cases are missing can create problems if we want to say, for example, ‘in the meeting’ as there is no locative case. We can do one of two things, as follows.

- Use the reflexive noun in the genitive and add another suitable noun which can be declined, for example, we could say tikšanās laikā ‘at the time of the meeting’:

Tikšanās laikā puses pārrunāja jautājumus par savstarpējo ekonomisko sadarbību.

In the meeting the parties discussed questions regarding mutual economic cooperation. (lit. In the meeting time ...)

- Use a synonym, for example, sapulce ‘meeting’:

Sapulcē puses pārrunāja jautājumus par savstarpējo ekonomisko sadarbību.

In the meeting the parties discussed questions regarding mutual economic cooperation.

3.2.8 *Indeclinable nouns – nelokāmie lietvārdi*

There is a group of foreign loan words and proper nouns which are not declined; they do not even have a plural form. The reason for this is that they have endings in the original language which are difficult to change to a declinable Latvian ending without compromising the integrity of the word. They end in vowels as follows and are mainly masculine although proper nouns follow the Latvian pattern, e.g. town names are generally feminine (see Section 3.1.1; only a few examples are given, there are others in these groups):

- -ā: bakarā ‘baccarat’, Petipā ‘Petipa’.

Bakarā ir dārgs prieks. (nom.)

Baccarat is an expensive pleasure.

Vai tu spēlē bakarā? (acc.)

Do you play baccarat?

- -e or -ē: **kanoe** (fem.) ‘canoe’, **foajē** ‘foyer’, **Bizē** ‘Bizet’.

Es redzēju kanoe. (acc.)

I saw a canoe.

Tajā kanoe ir mana jaka. (loc.)

My jacket is in that canoe.

- -i or ī: **Kapri** ‘Capri’, **Debiši** ‘Debussy’. However, **Helsinki** is classed as a masculine plural noun and follows the example of the Latvian town **Talsi** so ‘in Helsinki’ is **Helsinkos**.

Debiši ir Francijas komponists. (nom.)

Debussy is a French composer.

Debiši kompozīcijas ir ļoti skaistas. (gen.)

Debussy’s compositions are very beautiful.

- -o: **radio** ‘radio’, **Toronto**. Most place names ending in -o follow this rule, but there are exceptions which have been changed to Latvian versions, e.g. **Kaira** ‘Cairo’, **Tokija** ‘Tokyo’ and these follow normal declension patterns.

Kādas radio programmas tu klausies? (gen.)

What radio programmes do you listen to?

Vai tu klausies radio? (acc.)

Do you listen to the radio?

- -u or -ū: **ragū** ‘ragout’, **Peru**:

Tas ir garšīgs ragū. (nom.)

That is a delicious ragout.

Vai tev ir ragū recepte? (gen.)

Do you have a ragout recipe?

3.2.9 Singular-only nouns – vienskaitlinieki

Many of these are the same as their English equivalents, e.g.:

- many materials, e.g. **cukurs** ‘sugar’, **sudrabs** ‘silver’, **eļļa** ‘oil’
- weather words, e.g. **sniegs** ‘snow’, **lietus** ‘rain’, **krusa** ‘hail’
- some collective nouns, e.g. **cilvēce** ‘humanity’, **jaunatne** ‘young people’, **inteliģence** ‘intelligentsia’

- many abstract nouns, e.g. **mūžība** ‘eternity’, **skaistums** ‘beauty’, **mīlestība** ‘love’
- many plant names, e.g. **āboliņš** ‘clover’, **kukurūza** ‘corn’, **lucerna** ‘alfalfa’
- many geographical names, e.g. **Latvija**, **Rīga**, **Daugava**.

3.2.10 **Plural-only nouns – daudzskaitlinieki**

Some of these nouns are the same as their English equivalents, whereas others are singular in English:

- many mass nouns – **milti** ‘flour’, **putekļi** ‘dust’, **ziepes** ‘soap’
- objects comprising two or more parts – **bikses** ‘trousers’, **durvis** ‘door’, **grieznes** or **šķēres** ‘scissors’
- many abstract nouns – **dusmas** ‘anger’, **meli** ‘lies’, **sāpes** ‘pain’
- many cereals – **kvieši** ‘wheat’, **rīsi** ‘rice’, **rudzi** ‘rye’
- many herbs and spices – **dilles** ‘dill’, **pētersīļi** ‘parsley’, **pipari** ‘pepper’
- some parts of the body and organs – **mati** ‘hair’ (but it is possible to use **mats** for one individual hair), **smadzenes** ‘brain’, **smaganas** ‘gums’
- many geographic and house names – **Cēsis**, **Alpi** ‘Alps’, **Jauntulki**
- points of the compass – **austrumi** ‘east’, **dienvidi** ‘south’, **rietumi** ‘west’, **ziemeļi** ‘north’
- many names of festivals and celebrations – **Lieldienas** ‘Easter’, **Ziemassvētki** ‘Christmas’, **kāzas** ‘wedding’
- many illnesses – **iesnas** ‘cold’, **izsitumi** ‘rash’, **masalas** ‘measles’
- some collective nouns: **ļaudis** ‘people’, **mēbeles** ‘furniture’
- meals – **brokastis** ‘breakfast’, **pusdienas** ‘lunch’, **vakariņas** ‘dinner, evening meal’.

3.2.11 **Nouns with different meanings in the singular and plural**

Sometimes a noun can have different meanings in the singular and plural:

biezums	thickness	biezumi	dregs, grounds (coffee)
saldums	sweetness	saldumi	sweets, candies
šokolāde	chocolate	šokolādes	chocolates

3.3 **Diminutives – deminutīvi, pamazināmie lietvārdi**

Diminutives in English are words such as *mummy*, *doggy* and *teddy* in which the -y ending gives the meaning of, for example, ‘a little dog’ or

they are used as terms of endearment. In Latvian they are very common both in the sense of ‘little’ and as terms of endearment, but also occasionally to show scorn. They are frequently used in folk songs. The basic rules to form them are as follows.

First declension:

- The -s or -š ending is taken off and replaced by the suffix -iņš: **bērns** ‘child’ → **bērnīšs** ‘little child’.
- With nouns ending in -ns the diminutive ending is -tiņš: **gredzens** ‘ring’ → **gredzentiņš** ‘little ring’.
- If the stem of the noun ends in **g** or **k**, then these are changed to **dz** and **c**, respectively: **draugs** ‘friend’ → **draudziņš** ‘little friend’, **koks** ‘tree’ → **kociņš** ‘little tree’.

Second declension:

- The -is ending is taken off and the suffix -ītis is added: **brālis** ‘brother’ → **brālītis** ‘little brother’.
- An exception is **brīdis** ‘moment’ which becomes **brītiņš** ‘a little moment’.
- **Suns** ‘dog’ follows the basic rule so the diminutive becomes **sunītis** ‘doggy’.
- However, the other nouns ending in -s in this group drop the -s and replace it with -tiņš which makes them first-declension nouns: **mēness** ‘moon’ → **mēnestiņš** ‘little moon’.

Third declension:

- In general the -us ending is replaced by the suffix -tiņš which then makes the diminutive a first-declension noun: **alus** ‘beer’ → **alutiņš** ‘little beer’.
- Exceptions include **tirgus** ‘market’ which changes to **tirdziņš**; **vidus** ‘middle’ changes to **vidutiņš** ‘little middle’; the name **Mikus** changes to **Mikiņš**.

Fourth declension:

- The feminine nouns in this group drop the -a ending and replace it with the suffix -iņa: **sakta** ‘(traditional) brooch’ → **saktiņa** ‘little (traditional) brooch’.
- The masculine nouns in this group tend to drop the -a ending and add the suffix -iņš which makes the diminutive a first-declension noun: **puika** ‘boy’ → **puikiņš** ‘little boy’.
- If the stem of the noun ends in **g** or **k**, then these are changed to **dz** and **c**, respectively: **sega** ‘blanket’ → **sedziņa** ‘little blanket’, **pūka** ‘fluff’ → **pūciņa** ‘little (bit of) fluff’.

Fifth declension:

- The feminine nouns in this group drop the -e ending and add the suffix -īte: **puķe** ‘flower’ → **puķīte** ‘little flower’.
- Should one ever wish to refer to ‘an executioner’, **bende**, with a term of endearment, it would depend on whether this person was male or female (see Section 3.2.5), i.e. **bendītis** ‘male executioner’ or **bendīte** ‘female executioner’.
- This also applies to surnames which are derived from a noun ending in -e: **Eglītis** (masculine) and **Eglīte** (feminine).

Sixth declension:

- Nouns in this group tend to drop the -s ending and add the suffix -tiņa which makes the diminutives fourth-declension nouns: **auss** ‘ear’ → **austiņa** ‘little ear’.
- For nouns ending in -ts only -iņa is added: **pirts** ‘sauna’ → **pirtiņa** ‘little sauna’.
- **Sirds** ‘heart’ becomes **sirsniņa** ‘little heart’; **govs** ‘cow’ becomes **gotiņa** ‘little cow’.
- An exception is **pils** ‘castle’ which becomes **pilīte** ‘little castle’ although this is rarely used. **Pilīte** is also the diminutive of **pile** ‘drop, e.g. of water’.

These are the basic forms of the diminutive, but other variations exist together with the standard form. These are much more informal.

- The suffixes -elis (masculine) and -ele (feminine) are sometimes used: **suns** ‘dog’ → **šunelis** ‘doggy’ (note that the first letter has changed from s to š), **māsa** ‘sister’ → **māšele** ‘little sister’.
- The suffix -uks is another one which is sometimes used and makes the diminutive a first-declension noun: **brālis** ‘brother’ → **brāļuks** ‘little brother’. This suffix can also be used with feminine nouns in which case the diminutive is also a first-declension noun, e.g. **māsa** ‘sister’ → **māšuks** ‘little sister’.
- Another diminutive suffix is -ēns (masculine) or -ene (feminine) but nouns with this suffix have taken on a more specialized meaning. The masculine form is used to name young animals: **kuce** ‘bitch’ → **kucēns** ‘puppy’, **pīle** ‘duck’ → **pīlēns** ‘duckling’. These can have further diminutive forms: **kucēniņš** ‘little puppy’.
- The -ēns or -ene suffix is also used for people, e.g. **dēls** ‘son’ → **dēlēns** ‘sonny’, **brālis** ‘brother’ → **brālēns** this means ‘(male) cousin’. **Meita** now means ‘daughter’ but its old meaning was ‘maiden’. The diminutive

meitene was therefore ‘young maiden’ or now ‘girl’. This now has a further diminutive form, i.e. **meitenīte** ‘lassie’. The masculine ending is also seen, i.e. **meitēns** ‘lassie’.

The words **tēvs** ‘father’ and **māte** ‘mother’ are exceptions to the above rules. The basic forms, i.e. **tēviņš** and **mātīte**, are only used to designate the male and female of an animal species.

Strazdu tēviņš ir melns, bet mātīte ir brūna.

The male blackbird is black, but the female is brown.

The word **tēviņš** can be used to describe a man but it is rather derogatory, e.g. **rupjš tēviņš** ‘a rough guy’. To say ‘daddy’ the form **tētiņš** is used – this is the diminutive form of **tētis** ‘dad’. For ‘mummy’ the words **māmiņa** or **māmuliņa** are used.

However, very often children use the more international words **paps** or **papus** and **mamma**, and these can also have various diminutives such as:

paps, papus → **papiņš, papucis, papucītis**

mamma → **mammiņa, mammucis, mammucītis**

The same applies to names which are frequently used in the diminutive or other terms of endearment:

Dace → **Dacīte, Dača, Dačele, Dačuks, Dačulis**

Jānis → **Jancis, Jančuks, Jānītis, Janka, Jāņuks**

3.4 Noun formation – lietvārdu darināšana

3.4.1 Nouns formed with prefixes – lietvārdu darināšana ar priedēkļiem

Latvian uses quite a few prefixes to form new nouns; some of these are based on prepositions so the meaning can often be deduced from the meaning of the preposition. When a new noun is formed there can be a change in the ending, e.g. **kakls** ‘neck’ → **apkakle** ‘collar’.

aiz-	behind	aizdurve	place behind the door
ap-	around	apkakle	collar, lit. s.t. around the neck
apakš-	1. under, lower 2. subordinate	apakšlūpa apakšīrnieks	lower lip subtenant
ār-	outside	ārzemnieks	foreigner, lit. a person from an outside country

at-	1. return 2. repeat	atceļš atbalss	the way back echo
bez-	without	bezdarbība	unemployment
caur-	through	caurvējš	draught, lit. through wind
ie-	in	ierocis	weapon, lit. s.t. in the hand
iekš-	inside	iekškabata	inside pocket
līdz-	together, co-	līdzdarbība	cooperation
ne-	1. lack, un-, mis- 2. undesirable	nelaime negadījums	misfortune accident, lit. un(desirable) event
no-	1. area downwards 2. outlying 3. delineated 4. time shortly before	nokalne nomale nodaļa novakars	lower slopes of hill outlying area department eventide
pa-	1. under, below	palodze	window sill, lit. s.t. below the window
	2. similar to, sub-	pamāte	step-mother
pakaļ-	1. back 2. copy, forge	pakaļdurvis pakaļdarinājums	back door forgery
pār-	over, super-	pārgalvība	overconfidence
pēc-	after	pēcvārds	epilogue, afterword
pie-	1. next to, close to 2. time shortly before 3. add to	pierobeža pievakare pieskaņa	borderland late afternoon undertone
pirms-	before, pre-	pirmskara (gen.) ¹	pre-war
pret-	1. opposite 2. against, counter- 3. in return	pretmala pretuzbrukums pretkalpojums	opposite side counterattack service in return
pretim-	1. opposite	pretimsēdētājs	person sitting opposite
	2. contra-	pretimrunāšana	contradiction
priekš-	1. in front 2. before	priekšdurvis priekšsacīkstes	front door preliminary rounds (in sport)
	3. pre-	priekšnoteikums	precondition

starp-	between	starpbrīdis	interval, break
uz-	above	uzacis	eyebrows, lit. s.t. above the eyes
vir-	over; above	virsraksts	title, lit. above writing
zem-	under	zemūdene	submarine

- 1 The word **pirmskara** ‘pre-war’ is a word formed using a preposition as a prefix to a noun. The resulting noun is always in the genitive case and has an adjectival function, *ģenitīvenis*, e.g. **pirmskara ēka** ‘a pre-war building’, **pirmskara ēkā** ‘in the pre-war building’. Other examples include:

ārrindas	non-combatant: ārrindas dienests ‘non-combatant service’
bezmaksas	free (of charge): bezmaksas ieeja ‘free entrance’
pēcoperācijas	post-operative: pēcoperācijas atveseļošanās ‘post-operative convalescence’
piemājas	attached to the house: piemājas zemes gabals ‘plot of land attached to the house’
pretkara	anti-war: pretkara mītiņš ‘anti-war rally’
priekšsvētku	before a festival: priekšsvētku noskaņa ‘the atmosphere before a festival’ (such as Christmas)
starpplanētu	inter-planetary: starpplanētu misija ‘inter-planetary mission’
virszemes	terrestrial: virszemes TV ‘terrestrial TV’

3.4.2 Nouns formed with suffixes – *lietvārdu darināšana ar izskaņām*

Latvian has a rich range of suffixes which are used to form nouns from other parts of speech. Reflexive nouns and diminutives form a part of this process, but we have already looked at them in Sections 3.2.7 and 3.3, respectively.

People

-ājs, -āja From the past-tense root of first-conjugation verbs:

ēdu ‘(I) ate’ → **ēdājs, ēdāja** ‘(male/female) eater’

See note at the end of **-ējs, -ēja**.

-ējs, -ēja From the past-tense root of first-conjugation verbs, as well as *iet* ‘to go’ and *dot* ‘to be’:

braucu ‘(I) drove’ → **braucējs, braucēja** ‘(male/female) driver’

pārdevu ‘(I) sold’ → **pārdevējs, pārdevēja** ‘(male/female) seller, shop assistant’

gāju ‘(I) went’ → **gājējs, gājēja** ‘(male/female) walker, pedestrian’

pirku ‘(I) bought’ → **pircējs, pircēja** ‘(male/female) buyer’ – there is **k/c** interchange here caused by the **ē**

Note: sometimes the same verb can give rise to two different nouns with either the -ājs/-āja ending or the -ējs/-ēja ending:

dzēru '(I) drank' → **dzērājs, dzērāja** '(male/female) drinker'
dzēru '(I) drank' → **dzērējs, dzērēja** '(male/female) drinker'

In such a case, the -ājs/-āja ending signifies somebody who does the action intensively so here the 'drinker' is a 'drunkard', while the -ējs/-ēja ending signifies somebody who does the action from time to time so here it means 'somebody who is drinking'.

- eklis** Formed mainly from verbs:
mācīt 'to teach' → **māceklis** 'apprentice'
- ēknis** Formed from verbs which have -ē as the present-tense third-person ending:
audzē 'he/she raises' → **audzēknis** 'pupil'
- ene** Feminine noun formed from the masculine:
draugs '(male) friend' → **draudzene** '(female) friend' – note the **g/dz** interchange
- iene** Feminine noun formed from the masculine:
kaimiņš '(male) neighbour' → **kaimiņiene** '(female) neighbour'
- ietis, -iete** Formed from nouns:
vīrs 'husband' → **vīrietis** 'man'
sieva 'wife' → **sieviete** 'woman'
Latvija 'Latvia' → **latvietis** 'Latvian man', **latviete** 'Latvian woman'

This is a very common way of forming the words for nationalities as well as being used for inhabitants of towns and cities worldwide and for towns predominantly in the east of Latvia:

Londona → **londonietis** (masc.), **londoniete** (fem.) 'Londoner'
Valmiera → **valmierietis** 'a man from Valmiera',
valmieriete 'a woman from Valmiera'

However, in many cases the feminine form of a word for nationality ends in **-iete** while the masculine counterpart ends in **-s** or **-is**:

Krievija 'Russia' → **krievs, krieviete** 'Russian man/
woman'

Amerika → **amerikānis, amerikāniete** 'American
man/woman'

-(i)nieks, -(i)niece

Formed mainly from the root of nouns, adjectives, numerals, adverbs, verbs; this is a common way of forming nouns for occupations and for inhabitants of towns predominantly in the west of Latvia:

dārzs 'garden' → **dārznieks, dārzniece** '(male/
female) gardener'

Liepāja → **liepānieks, liepāniece** 'man/woman
from Liepāja'

bagāts 'rich' → **bagātnieks, bagātniece** 'rich man/
woman'

pieci 'five' → **piecnieks** 'a five' (top score in
academic marks)

rakstīt 'to write' → **rakstnieks, rakstniece** '(male/
female) writer'

The examples seen so far have the suffix **-nieks/-niece**. The **i** is inserted if the addition of the suffix creates a group of consonants which is difficult to pronounce:

māksla 'art' → **mākslinieks, māksliniece** '(male/
female) artist'

Rīga → **rīdzinieks, rīdziniece** 'man/woman from
Rīga' – note the **g/dz** interchange

gudrs → **gudrinieks, gudriniece** 'a clever man/woman'

pretī 'opposite' → **pretinieks, pretiniece** '(male/
female) opponent'

-onis, -one

Formed mainly from verbs:

varēt 'to be able' → **varonis, varone** '(male/
female) hero'

-tājs, -tāja

Formed from the infinitives of second- and third-
conjugation verbs:

domāt 'to think' → **domātājs, domātāja** '(male/
female) thinker'

peldēt 'to swim' → **peldētājs, peldētāja** '(male/
female) swimmer'

-ulis, -ule

lasīt 'to read' → **lasītājs, lasītāja** '(male/female) reader'
dejojot 'to dance' → **dejojotājs, dejojotāja** '(male/female) dancer'

Formed from adjectives and from the root of the verbs:

mazs 'small' → **mazulis, mazule** '(male/female) baby',
 also used for the young of animals, e.g. **lāča mazulis** 'bear cub'

brēkt 'to scream, cry' → **brēkulis, brēkule** '(male/female) cry baby'

Plants

-ājs

Formed from nouns:

avenē 'raspberry' → **avenājs** 'raspberry cane'

-ene

Formed from nouns and adjectives:

dzērve 'crane' → **dzērvene** 'cranberry' – interesting
 that English has the same derivation

skābs 'sour' → **skābene** 'sorrel'

Objects

-amais, -āmais

Formed by adding the definite adjective ending to the present-tense first-person plural of verbs:

uzkožam '(we) snack' → **uzkožamais** 'snack'

rakstām '(we) write' → **rakstāmais** 's.t. to write with'

-ējs

Formed from verbs:

sūkt 'to suck' → **putekļsūcējs** 'vacuum cleaner, lit. dust sucker' – note the **k/c** interchange

-eklis

Formed from verbs:

grābt 'to grab, rake' → **grābeklis** 'rake'

-ēklis

Formed from verbs which have **-ē** as the present-tense third-person ending:

perē 'she hatches' → **perēklis** 'nest'

-īklis, -klis

Formed from verbs:

adīt 'to knit' → **adīklis** '(a piece of) knitting'

art 'to plough' → **arklis** 'plough'

- (i)nieks** Formed from nouns:
bagāža 'luggage' → **bagāžnieks** 'boot, trunk (of car)'
bura 'sail' → **burinieks** 'sailing ship'
- tājs** Formed from the infinitive of verbs:
skaitīt 'to count' → **skaitītājs** 'meter'
- ulis, -ule** Formed from the root of verbs:
zīmēt 'to draw' → **zīmulis** 'pencil'
klausīties 'to listen' → **klausule** '(telephone) receiver'

Places

- ija** Country names formed from nouns:
skots 'Scot' → **Skotija** 'Scotland'
anglis 'English man' → **Anglija** 'England'
- nīca** Formed from nouns, adjectives and occasionally verbs:
viesis 'guest' → **viesnīca** 'hotel'
slims 'ill' → **slimnīca** 'hospital'
ēdu '(I) ate' → **ēdnīca** 'canteen'
- tava** Formed from the infinitive (or from the infinitive less **-ies** in the case of reflexive verbs) of mainly second- and third-conjugation verbs, as well as occasionally first-conjugation verbs:
mazgāt 'to wash' → **mazgātava** 'laundry'
frizēt 'to do s.b.'s hair' → **frizētava** 'hairdresser's'
klausīties 'to listen' → **klausītava** 'lecture theatre'
slidot 'to skate' → **slidotava** 'ice rink'
nolikt 'to put down' → **noliktava** 'warehouse'
- tuve** Formed from the infinitive of first-conjugation verbs:
cept 'to bake, roast, fry' → **ceptuve** 'bakery'

Actions

- iens** Formed mainly from the past-tense stem:
saucā '(he/she/they) called' → **sauciens** 'call'

-šana

Formed from the infinitive of verbs, this is the equivalent of the gerund or '-ing' form in English:

lasīt 'to read' → **lasīšana** 'reading'

rakstīt 'to write' → **rakstīšana** 'writing'

-ums

Formed from the root or past-tense stem of verbs:

jautāt 'to ask' → **jautājums** 'question'

lūgt 'ask, beg' → **lūgums** 'request'

Abstracts

-atne

Formed mainly from adjectives:

jauns 'young' → **jaunatne** 'youth'

-enis

Formed from verbs:

likt 'to put, order' → **liktenis** 'destiny'

-ība

Formed from nouns, adjectives and verbs, particularly participles:

tauta 'nation, people' → **tautība** 'nationality'

slims 'ill' → **slimība** 'illness'

palīdzēt 'to help' → **palīdzība** 'help'

dalāms 'divisible' → **dalāmība** 'divisibility'

-eklis, -ēklis, -oklis

Formed from verbs, -ēklis is formed from verbs which have -ē as the present-tense third-person ending:

jukt 'to become confused' → **juceklis** 'confusion'

kavēt 'to hinder' → **kavēklis** 'hindrance'

stāvēt 'to stand' → **stāvoklis** 'condition'

-tne

Formed from verbs whose infinitive or past stem ends in ā, there are only five words with this ending:

atklāt 'to disclose' → **atklātne** 'picture postcard, opening move in chess'

izkārt 'to hang out' → **izkārtne** 'signboard'

pagāja 'passed' → **pagātne** 'past'

piestāt 'to stand, stop' → **piestātne** 'stop (for transport)'

zināt 'to know' → **zinātne** 'knowledge'

-ums

Formed from adjectives, the past-tense stem or occasionally from the present-tense stem of verbs:

karsts 'hot' → **karstums** 'heat'

atradu '(I) found' → **atradums** 'find'

notikt 'to happen' → **notikums** 'event'

Noun
formation

Loan words

There are many loan words which have been Latvianized by adapting the original ending to enable the noun to be declined according to one of the Latvian declension patterns. Here are some of the most common suffixes used with loan words:

-ācija	deklarācija 'declaration'
-āde	fasāde 'façade'
-aks	konjaks 'cognac'
-ānis, -āne	republikānis, republikāne '(male/female) Republican'
-ānis, -āniete	amerikānis, amerikāniete 'American man/woman'
-ārijs	akvārijs 'aquarium'
-ārs, -āre	sekretārs, sekretāre '(male/female) secretary'
-āts	plakāts 'poster'
-ators, -atore	aviators, aviatore '(male/female) aviator'
-āts, -āte	advokāts, advokāte '(male/female) lawyer'
-āze	ekstāze 'ecstasy'
-āža	masāža 'massage'
-ēma	teorēma 'theorem'
-eris, -ere	šoferis, šofere '(male/female) driver'
-ers, -ere	kurjers, kurjere '(male/female) courier'
-ieris, -iere	kontrolieris, kontroliere '(male/female) inspector, ticket collector'
-ija	partija '(political) party'
-ijs	embrijs 'embryo'
-ika	gramatika 'grammar'
-ilis	reptilis 'reptile'
-ils	krokodils 'crocodile'
-ings	mārketings 'marketing'
-īns	apelsīns 'orange'
-isms	materiālisms 'materialism'
-ists, -iste	pianists, pianiste '(male/female) pianist'
-īts	granīts 'granite'
-īvs	pasīvs 'passive'
-ons	betons 'concrete'

-orija	auditorija ‘auditorium’
-ors, -ore	režisors, režisore ‘(male/female) director (film, etc.)’
-oze	prognose ‘prognosis’
-ūcija	revolūcija ‘revolution’
-ūra	kultūra ‘culture’

3.4.3 Compound nouns – saliktie lietvārdi, salikteņi

The first element of a compound noun can be as follows.

- A noun, e.g. **dziesmusvētki** ‘song festival’, **galvaspilsēta** ‘capital city’ – the first noun is always in the genitive which is clear in both of these examples. However, in many compounds the genitive ending has disappeared, e.g. **viesistaba** ‘living room, lit. guest room’. In these cases, if there is alternation in the genitive, then this is kept in the compound, e.g. **mēnesis**, gen. **mēneša** ‘month’ + **alga** ‘salary’ → **mēnešalga** ‘monthly salary’. In some cases, a compound noun is not formed and the two elements are written as separate words, e.g. **rokas soma** ‘handbag’.
- An adjective, e.g. **labdarība** ‘charity’, **mazbērns** ‘grandchild’ – adjectives drop their endings in a compound noun.
- A numeral, e.g. **pirmatskaņojums** ‘first performance’, **trešdaļa** ‘a third’ – numerals drop their endings in a compound noun.
- A pronoun, e.g. **pašcieņa** ‘self-esteem’, **mūslaiku** (gen.)¹ ‘contemporary, up-to-date’ – pronouns drop their endings in a compound noun.
- A participle, e.g. **ēdamistaba** ‘dining room’, **rakstāmpapīrs** ‘writing paper’.
- A verb, e.g. **stāvlampa** ‘standard lamp (lit. standing lamp)’, **dzīvotgriba** ‘will to live’.
- An adverb, e.g. **atpakaļceļš** ‘way back’, **līdzautors** ‘co-author’.

1 The word **mūslaiku** is a compound noun which is only used in the genitive with an adjectival function, see note 1 in Section 3.4.1. Other examples include:

daudzbērnu	with many children, e.g. daudzbērnu ģimene ‘a family with many children’
četrstabu	four-room, e.g. četrstabu māja ‘a four-room house’

Chapter 4

Pronouns – vietniekvārdi

Pronouns are either words which substitute for nouns, e.g. ‘he’, ‘you’, or they have an adjectival function, e.g. ‘my book’, ‘that tree’. In English grammar the latter are often classed as adjectives, e.g. words like ‘my’ are often called *possessive adjectives*, or else they are classed as *determiners* in more recent English grammars. Latvian grammars class these words as pronouns so this grammar is following in the same tradition.

4.1 Personal pronouns – personu vietniekvārdi

Personal pronouns are the words ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘we’, ‘they’. In Latvian they are:

Singular:	es	I	Plural:	mēs	we
	tu	you		jūs	you
	viņš	he		viņi	they (masc.)
	viņa	she		viņas	they (fem.)

In grammar **es** ‘I’ and **mēs** ‘we’ are referred to as *first-person pronouns*; **tu** ‘you’ and **jūs** ‘you’ are *second-person pronouns*; and **viņš** ‘he’, **viņa** ‘she’, **viņi**, **viņas** ‘they’ are *third-person pronouns*. The forms listed above are the basic forms which are the subject of the sentence and as such are in the nominative case. They change according to case and the complete declension is given in Section 4.1.6.

4.1.1 You – tu and jūs

As in many European languages, Latvian has two forms for the pronoun ‘you’. **Tu** is the singular, familiar form. This is used to address children, family members, friends and people you know well. **Jūs** is the plural form

for addressing people who would be addressed both as **tu** and **jūs** individually. It is also the polite form used to address people you do not know so well. Today Latvians are less formal than they used to be and people start using the **tu** form more readily. This is especially true of young people and you will also find that **tu** is often used in the media. If you are not sure which form to use, start with **jūs** and then follow the lead of the person you are speaking to.

In letter writing **Tu** and **Jūs** are always written with a capital letter as a mark of respect to the reader. This also applies to these pronouns in the different cases which we are going to look at below, as well as to the possessive pronouns (see Section 4.2):

Nosūtu Jums failu. (I)'m sending you a file.

4.1.2 *It – tas/tā*

Latvian does not have a separate pronoun for 'it' when referring to inanimate objects; the word **tas/tā** 'that' is used as the equivalent (see Section 4.4).

„Vilciens atiet 19:29.” „Cikos tas pienāk Carnikavā?” „20:09.”

The train leaves at 19.29. What time does it arrive in Carnikava? 20.09.

It must be said that colloquially many Latvians use **viņš/viņa** 'he/she' instead of **tas/tā** in this context, even if strictly speaking it is not grammatically correct.

4.1.3 *Use and omission of subject pronouns*

Personal pronouns are often used only if they need to be stressed as it is quite normal to leave them out since the person is understood from the verb ending:

„Vai iesi uz kino?”

Are you going to go to the cinema?

„Nē, neiešu, jo nav laika.”

No, I'm not going to go as I don't have time. (lit. Going to the cinema?)

No, not going as isn't time.)

4.1.4 *Empty subject words 'it' and 'there'*

English uses what might be called *empty subject words* as they do not refer to anything but are needed since a verb needs a subject in English,

for example, when talking about the weather we say ‘it is snowing’. Latvian does not have an equivalent of the word ‘it’ in this case so in Latvian we just say **snieg**. Many of the expressions to do with weather use this format. Here are some more examples:

Ir ziema. (It) is winter.
Ir karsts. (It) is hot.
Līst. (It) is raining.

English also uses the subject ‘it’ when it is followed by an infinitive, e.g. ‘It is not easy to learn Chinese’. Here again the word ‘it’ has no equivalent in Latvian so we get: **Nav viegli iemācīties ķīniešu valodu.**

Similarly, Latvian has no equivalent of the word ‘there’ in a sentence such as: ‘There are four books on the table.’ In Latvian this is: **Uz galda ir četras grāmatas.**

To say something like ‘there are four books there’, we use the word **tur** ‘there’ which refers to the second ‘there’ in the English sentence even though it is put at the beginning of the sentence: **Tur ir četras grāmatas.**

4.1.5 *Inclusive plural pronouns*

Latvian has an unusual way of saying, for example, ‘my husband and I’ which translates as **mēs ar vīru** lit. ‘we with (my) husband’. The **mēs** is called an *inclusive plural pronoun* because it includes the husband. Here are some more examples:

Mēs ar Anitu apmeklēsim dzintaru izstādi.

Anita and I are going to visit the amber exhibition. (lit. We with/including Anita are going to ...)

Ko Jūs ar Pēteri sestdien darīsi?

What are you and Peteris going to do on Saturday? (lit. What are you with/including Peteris going to ...)

4.1.6 *Declension of personal pronouns – vietniekvārdu locīšana*

For the function of the cases see the brief summary in Section 3.1.3. There is no vocative form.

<i>Singular</i>				
Nominative	es	tu	viņš	viņa
Genitive	manis	tevis	viņa	viņas
Dative	man	tev	viņam	viņai
Accusative	mani	tevi	viņu	viņu
Locative	manī	tevī	viņā	viņā

<i>Plural</i>				
Nominative	mēs	jūs	viņi	viņas
Genitive	mūsu	jūsu	viņu	viņu
Dative	mums	jums	viņiem	viņām
Accusative	mūs	jūs	viņus	viņas
Locative	mūsos	jūsos	viņos	viņās

Here are a few examples:

Sakiet, ka manis nav mājās.

Say that I'm not at home.

Nedod viņiem tik daudz saldumu.

Don't give them so many sweets.

Kas tevi interesē?

What are you interested in? (lit.

What interests you?)

4.2 Possessive pronouns – piederības vietniekvārdi

Possessive pronouns are words like 'my', 'his', etc. In English they are known as possessive adjectives or determiners. In Latvian they are:

Singular:	mans/mana	my	Plural:	mūsu	our
	tavs/tavs	your		jūsu	your
	viņa	his		viņu	their (masc., fem.)
	viņas	her			

Savs/sava also belongs to this group. It has a reflexive function with the meaning 'one's own':

Es braucu ar savu mašīnu.

I travelled in my (own) car.

Viņi brauca ar savu mašīnu.

They travelled in their (own) car.

It is used when referring back to the subject of the sentence so it cannot be used with the subject at the beginning of the sentence, e.g. **Sava mašīna**

ir garāžā is not possible. However, it is possible to use **savs/sava** as a subject in a sentence where it is not in the first position, for example:

Katram ir sava mašīna. Everybody has their own car.

Mans/mana, tavs/tava and **savs/sava** have masculine and feminine, as well as singular and plural forms to agree with the noun which follows them. The other possessive pronouns do not change; they are, in fact, the genitive form of the personal pronouns. **Mans/mana, tavs/tava** and **savs/sava** take the same endings as indefinite adjectives but they are given in full below for clarity – all three take the same endings so they are only given for **mans/mana**.

	Singular		Plural	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Nominative	mans	mana	mani	manas
Genitive	mana	manas	manu	manu
Dative	manam	manai	maniem	manām
Accusative	manu	manu	manus	manas
Locative	manā	manā	manos	manās

Here are a couple of examples to show the changes in endings.

Mans suns ir lielāks par tavu suni. My dog is bigger than your dog.
Manam sunim ir lielas ausis. My dog has big ears.

And now compare these with the other possessive pronouns which do not change:

Mūsu suns ir lielāks par jūsu suni. Our dog is bigger than your dog.
Viņas sunim ir lielas ausis. Her dog has big ears.

These possessive pronouns can be converted into independent stand alone pronouns indicating ‘mine, yours’, etc. They agree with the noun that they are referring to for gender, number and case by taking indefinite adjective endings as for **mans** or definite adjective endings (see Section 5.2):

Singular:	manējs/manēja, manējais/manējā	mine
	tavējs/tavēja, tavējais/tavējā	yours
	viņējs/viņēja, viņējais/viņējā	his, hers
Plural:	mūsējs/mūsēja, mūsējais/mūsējā	ours
	jūsējs/jūsēja, jūsējais/jūsējā	yours
	viņējs/viņēja, viņējais/viņējā	theirs
	savējs/savēja, savējais/savējā	one’s own (sing. and pl.)

Although both the indefinite and definite forms are given in grammar books and dictionaries, it is the definite form which is used far more often:

Vai drīkstu lietot tavu datoru, manējais nedarbojas?

May I use your computer, mine isn't working?

Dizains var būt jūšējais, var būt manējais, var būt pirkts profesionālais.

The design can be yours, can be mine, (or) can be a bought professional one.

This form is also used to refer to family, as well as one's husband or wife:

Mūsējie vēl nav atbraukuši.

Our family haven't arrived yet. (lit. Ours haven't ...)

Manējā tikko atbrauca no ekskursijas.

My wife (has) just returned from a trip. (lit. Mine just returned ...)

4.3 Reflexive personal pronoun – atgriezeniskais vietniekvārds

This is the equivalent of the English '-self', e.g. 'myself', 'himself', etc. – 'I bought myself a new book'. In Latvian the genitive pronoun **sevis** and its variants are used. It does not have a nominative or a vocative form but here are the other forms:

Genitive	sevis
Dative	sev
Accusative	sevi
Locative	sevī

This pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence as in the example above. It can also refer back to a verb in the command form as the last two examples below show.

Es sev nopirku jaunu grāmatu.

I bought myself a new book.

Putekļsūcējs sevī iesūc putekļus un citus netīrumus.

A vacuum cleaner sucks dust and other dirt into itself.

Aiztaisi aiz sevis durvis!
Close the door after you. (lit. . . after yourself.)

Pārbaudi sevi!
Test yourself!

4.4 **Demonstrative pronouns – norādāmie vietniekvārdi**

Demonstrative pronouns are word such as ‘this’ and ‘that’ in English, e.g. ‘this book’. In Latvian ‘this’ is *šis* and ‘that’ is *tas*.

	Singular		Plural	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Nominative	šis	šī	šie	šīs
Genitive	šī, šā	šīs, šās	šo	šo
Dative	šim	šai	šiem	šām
Accusative	šo	šo	šos	šās
Locative	šai, šajā, šinī	šai, šajā, šinī	šais, šajos, šinīs	šais, šajās, šinīs

	Singular		Plural	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Nominative	tas	tā	tie	tās
Genitive	tā	tās	to	to
Dative	tam	tai	tiem	tām
Accusative	to	to	tos	tās
Locative	tai, tajā, tanī	tai, tajā, tanī	tais, tajos, tanīs	tais, tajās, tanīs

As you can see, more than one form is possible for the locative and all of these are considered to be correct. Here are some examples to show the different cases:

Nemšu šīs kurpes.
I'll take these shoes.

Labs strādnieks nepazudīs arī šajos grūtajos laikos.
A good worker won't be ruined (lit. won't disappear) even in these hard times.

Apsveicam tos puīšus, kas trenējās mūsu klubā.

We congratulate those guys who trained in our club.

Tām, kas plāno grūtniecību.

For those (women) who are planning a pregnancy.

In colloquial Latvian you will also come across *šitas/šitā* for ‘this’; this version follows the endings for *tas*:

Šitas tak ir jāizmēģina! Of course, this has to be tried out.

Also included in the group of demonstrative pronouns are *šāds* ‘such (as this)’ and *tāds* ‘such (as that)’. These follow the endings for indefinite adjectives (see *mans* ‘my’ in Section 4.2).

Šāds pasākums Rīgā tiek organizēts pirmo reizi.

Such an event is being organized for the first time in Riga.

Nevarēju iedomāties, ka tāds mazs dzīvnieciņš var izdot tādu troksni.

I couldn’t imagine that such a small animal could let out such a noise.

Šāds tāds together means ‘so-so’:

– **Kāds šodien ir laiks?** – What’s the weather like today?

– **Šāds tāds.** – So-so.

In the plural *šādi tādi* means ‘all kinds of, various’:

Pavasara tīrīšanas laikā atradās šādi tādi nevajadzīgi nieki.

During the spring clean all kinds of unnecessary clutter was found.

(lit. In the spring cleaning time ...)

Mums ir padomā šādi tādi pārsteigumi.

We have various surprises in mind.

In colloquial Latvian *šitāds* is sometimes used instead of *šāds*.

Šitāds vējš. Such a wind.

4.5 Interrogative pronouns – jautājamie vietniekvārdi

Interrogative pronouns are those which are found at the beginning of a question, i.e. ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘which’, ‘what kind of’. In Latvian they are:

kas	who, what
kurš/kura	who, which
kāds/kāda	what (kind of)

Kas follows the masculine declension of the demonstrative pronoun **tas** ‘that’ in Section 4.4; however, it has only one form which is used for the masculine and feminine, as well as the singular and plural. In addition, it has no locative form – **kur** ‘where’ is used instead:

Nominative	kas
Genitive	kā
Dative	kam
Accusative	ko
Locative	kur

Kurš/kura and **kāds/kāds** follow **mans/mana** ‘my’ in Section 4.2.

Kas is used in general to ask about somebody or something who or which is unknown:

Kas tas ir?	Who is that? What is that?
No kā viņš to dabūja?	Who did he get that from?
Kam tu dosi tās rozes?	Who are you going to give those roses to?
Ko tu nopirki?	What did you buy?
Kur tu biji?	Where were you?

Kas used together with the preposition **par** means ‘what kind of’ or ‘what’:

Kas tā par grāmatu?	What’s that book? What kind of book is that?
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Kurš/kura is used to indicate which or who of a known group; it is sometimes used together with the preposition **no** with the meaning ‘of’:

Kura kleita tev patīk?	Which dress do you like?
Kurš no jums zina atbildi?	Which one of you knows the answer?

Kāds/kāda is the equivalent of ‘what kind of’ or to ask what somebody or something is like, i.e. asking about the characteristics:

Kāda šogad būs ziema?	What will winter be like this year?
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Care has to be taken with questions such as the following where English uses ‘what’ as the question word. If we remember that **kas** refers to an unknown, then it becomes more logical that it cannot be used as we are asking about a specified item:

Kāda ir tava epasta adrese?	What is your email address?
Kāda ir cilvēku dzīves jēga?	What is the meaning of human life? (lit. What is people’s life meaning?)

4.6 Relative pronouns – attieksmes vietniekvārdi

Relative pronouns are the words ‘who’, ‘which’, ‘that’, ‘whose’ which are used to introduce relative clauses. In Latvian **kas** ‘who, which, that’ and **kurš/kura** ‘who, which, that’ are used. The declension of these has already been discussed in Section 4.5. In general, **kas** is the word which should be used:

Tas vīrietis, kas sēž pie galda, ir mans brālis.

That man who is sitting at the table is my brother.

Neceri uz to, kas nav vēl rokā.

Don't hope for that which is not yet in (your) hand (Latvian proverb).

(Never spend your money before you have it.)

Grāmata, ko vakar nopirku, izrādījās ļoti laba.

The book that I bought yesterday turned out to be very good.

There are specific rules for the use of **kurš/kura**; it is used:

- together with a preposition:

Neesmu redzējusi mašīnu, par kuru tu runā.

I haven't seen the car that you are talking about.

- if it is necessary to use the genitive or the locative case for the relative pronoun:

Pētījumi liecina, ka vīrieši, kuru rokas ceturtais pirksts ir garāks par rādītājpirkstu, sievietēm liekas pievilcīgāki.

Research shows that men whose ring finger is longer than the index finger seem more attractive to women. (lit. Researches show that men whose fourth finger of the hand is longer ...)

Tā ir māja, kurā atrodas pirts.

That is a house in which there is a sauna.

There are a couple of differences from the way English uses relative pronouns in sentences. The first is the use of commas. If you compare the sentences above, you will notice that the Latvian sentences have commas between all the clauses whereas the English ones do not. English does use commas where there is extra information which is not needed to understand the main clause, e.g. ‘My aunt, who lives in Australia, is 60 years old today’. However, in Latvian all the clauses have to be separated in this way as can be seen in the examples above.

Another difference is that the relative pronoun can never be omitted as it can in English so, taking one of the above examples, we can give a different translation in English:

Neesmu redzējusi mašīnu, par kuru tu runā.

I haven't seen the car you are talking about.

4.7 Indefinite pronouns – nenoteiktie vietniekvārdi

Indefinite pronouns are used to refer to an unspecified person, thing or place, e.g. 'somebody'. The most common ones in Latvian are given below together with examples of their use. These pronouns can either be used on their own or combined with a noun, participle or an adjective as some of the examples will show. In general, combinations with **kāds/kāda** refer to people, whereas **kas** refers to animals, things, events or abstract ideas. Many of these pronouns are compounds and can be made up of **kaut**, an untranslatable particle, **diezin** or **diez** 'God knows', **nezin** or **nez** 'don't know' as the first element and **kas**, **kāds/kāda**, **kurš/kura** as the second element.

The declension for **kas** is given above, the other words follow the declension of **mans/mana** 'my' in Section 4.2; however, **diezin**, **nez** and **kaut** are not declined:

cits/cita	anybody, somebody else	Ja cits to var labāk izdarīt, lai dara. If anybody else can do it better, let them do it.
daži/dažas	some	Daži savu vidi nevērtē kā stabilu un drošu. Some don't consider their environment (to be) stable and safe. (lit. ... as stable and safe.)
dažs labs/daža laba	some	Dažs labs guļ līdz pusdienai. Some sleep until midday.
diezin kas	God knows what	Diezin kas nu Andrejam noticis. God knows what's happened to Andrejs.

jebkāds/ jebkāda	any	Fen šui sistēmā jebkāds gaismas avots (svēces, lampas, kamīns) arī pārstāv uguns stihiju. In the feng shui system any source of light (candles, lamps, stove) also represents the fire element.
jebkas	anything	Jebkas var notikt ar jebkuru. Anything can happen to anybody. (lit. ... with anybody.)
jebkurš/jebkura kāds/kāda	anybody somebody, anybody, some, any	see previous example Kāds ir zvanījis. Somebody has phoned.
kas	something, anything	Vai ir kas jauns? Is there anything new?
kaut kāds/ kaut kāda	somebody, some (this has rather a negative meaning)	Bija kaut kāds džeks, bet nu nekādi nespēju atcerēties, kā viņu sauca. There was some guy but now I really can't remember what he was called.
kurš katrs/ kura katra	somebody, anybody, some, any	Uzdevumus var izpildīt kurš katrs ierēdnis. Any clerk can carry out the tasks.
nez kurš	don't know who	Nez kurš man ir atstājis puķes. Don't know who has left flowers for me.
viens otrs/ viena otra	a couple, some	Viens otrs tomāts ir sarkans. A couple of tomatoes are red.

4.8 Definite pronouns – noteiktie vietniekvārdi

These pronouns refer to somebody or something that is known. They can be used on their own as replacements for nouns or can be combined with nouns as the examples will show. They all follow the declension of *mans/mana* 'my' in Section 4.2.

abi/abas	both	Uzbrukumā abas komandas izskatījās lieliski. In attack both teams looked great.
ikkatrs/ikkatra	everyone	Ikkatrs tiks gaidīts ar lielu prieku! We look forward to welcoming everyone. (lit. Everybody will be expected with great joy.)
ikviens/ikviena	everyone, each, every	Ikviens var piedalīties! Everyone can take part!
katrs/katra	everyone, each, every	Katrs sākums grūts. Every beginning (is) difficult (Latvian proverb). (All things are difficult before they are easy.)
viss/visa	all	Parādīt visas vakances. Show all vacancies.

4.9 Negative pronouns – noliedzamie, noliegtie vietniekvārdi

Negative pronouns are words such as ‘nothing’ in English. In Latvian there are three: **nekāds/nekāda** ‘no, none, not any’, **nekas** ‘nothing’, **neviens/neviena** ‘nobody, not any’. Normally **nekas** refers to inanimate objects while **neviens** refers to animate beings. The stress is always on the second syllable so the words are pronounced **ne'kāds**, **ne'kāda**, **ne'kas**, **ne'viens**, **ne'viena**.

Nekas is used without an accompanying noun, while **nekāds** is only used with an accompanying noun and therefore has an adjectival function. **Neviens** can be used either independently or together with a noun. The examples below will illustrate this.

The declension of **kas** is shown in Section 4.5, the other words follow **mans/mana** ‘my’ in Section 4.2.

Although these pronouns are obviously negative in themselves, they must also be used together with a negative verb. This is called *double negation* and it does not result in a positive sentence as it can in English. The ‘not’ is included in brackets in the following examples to show the literal translation but of course in English this is wrong:

Istabā neviena nav.There is nobody in the room.
(lit. ... nobody isn't ...)**Mums nekā nav.**

We have nothing. (lit. To us nothing isn't.)

Es to nekādā ziņā nedarīšu.There's no way I'm going to do that.
(lit. I that no way will not do.)

It is even possible to end up with four negatives in the sentence:

Neviens nekādā ziņā negribēja neko darīt.

There was no way anybody wanted to do anything. (lit. Nobody no way didn't want anything to do.)

If these pronouns are used together with the preposition *ar* 'with', they are split with the preposition coming in the middle:

Viņš nespēj sadzīvot ne ar vienu.

He can't get on with anybody.

Ja ūdensvads aizsalst, tad nav ne ar ko rokas nomazgāt.If the water pipe freezes, then there's nothing to wash (your) hands with.
(lit. ... then isn't nothing with which hands to wash.)**Šādi apgalvojumi nav pamatoti ne ar kādiem faktiskiem pētījumiem.**

Such claims are not based on any factual research. (lit. ... with any factual research.)

4.10 Emphatic pronoun – *noteicamais vietniekvārds*

The emphatic pronoun is the equivalent of using 'myself', etc. in English when it is used for emphasis. It is also the equivalent of 'one's own' when used together with a noun. In Latvian the pronoun is *pats* which is declined as follows.

	Singular		Plural	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Nominative	pats	pati	paši	pašas
Genitive	paša	pašas	pašu	pašu
Dative	pašam	pašai	pašiem	pašām
Accusative	pašu	pašu	pašus	pašas
Locative	pašā	pašā	pašos	pašās

Es pats to varu izdarīt.

I can do that myself.

Paša prāts – salds un gards.

One's own mind – sweet and delicious (Latvian proverb). (Advice when most needed is least heeded.)

Tas pats means 'the same':

Man ir apnikuši tie paši meli.

I'm fed up with the same lies.

4.11 Reciprocal pronouns – vietniekvārdi, kuri norāda uz savstarpējām attieksmēm

Reciprocal pronouns in English are 'each other', 'one another'. In Latvian **viens otrs/viena otra** are used when referring to the relationship between two objects, while **cits/cita** is used when referring to more than two objects. The first element always stays in the nominative singular although it must agree with the gender. The second element is also singular but is declined according to the grammatical requirements:

Pēteris un Anda mīl viens otru.

Peteris and Anda love each other.

Palīdzēsim cits citam!

Let's help one another.

Chapter 5

Adjectives – Īpašības vārdi

An adjective is a word which describes a noun, e.g. ‘a beautiful day’. In this phrase ‘beautiful’ is an adjective. There are two sets of endings for adjectives in Latvian: the indefinite and the definite. This is the equivalent of using the articles ‘a’ and ‘the’ in English and will be explained more in the relevant sections.

Apart from being definite or indefinite, adjectives also have to agree with the gender, the number and the case of the noun they are describing whether they come before or after the noun as will be seen below. However, there are a couple of adjectives which are loan words and which do not change at all, these are **rozā** ‘pink’ and **lillā** ‘purple’ so we get:

Tā rozā kleita ir visskaistākā. (nom. def.)

That pink dress is the most beautiful.

Es nopirku rozā kleitu. (acc. indef. or def.)

I bought a pink dress. / I bought the pink dress.

5.1 Indefinite endings – nenoteiktās galotnes

In English we say ‘a beautiful house’, but Latvian does not have articles so this concept is expressed using the indefinite adjective endings – **skaista māja**. Masculine nominative endings are either **-s**, e.g. **skaists**, or **-š**, e.g. **dziļš** ‘deep’ and this is the form which is given in dictionaries; the feminine nominative ending is **-a**. Here are all the endings; there is no vocative ending for indefinite adjectives:

	Masculine		Feminine	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skaists	skaisti	skaista	skaistas
Genitive	skaista	skaistu	skaistas	skaistu
Dative	skaistam	skaistiem	skaistai	skaistām
Accusative	skaistu	skaistus	skaistu	skaistas
Locative	skaistā	skaistos	skaistā	skaistās

The indefinite endings are used as follows.

- When an object is mentioned for the first time:

Man blakus dzīvo liels suns.
Next door to me lives a big dog.

- To describe nouns in a general sense:

Labam vārdam laba vieta.
There is a good place for a good word (Latvian proverb). (Good words cost nothing and are worth much.)

- After the following words and their declensions:

dažādi	various	dažādas interesantas grāmatas various interesting books
dažs	some	dažas pavisam vienkāršas lietas some really simple things
kāds	some	kāds jauns izgudrojums some new invention
kaut kāds	some, any	kaut kādas sarkanās puķes some kind of red flowers
nekāds	no	Nav nekādu jaunu ziņu. There is no new news.
šāds	such, so	šāda liela māja such a big house (as this)
tāds	such, so	tāds liels brīnums such a big miracle (as that)
visādi	all kinds of	visādas ne pārāk patīkamas sekas all kinds of not particularly pleasant consequences

- After the following words and their declensions which precede adjectives used as nouns:

kas	something	Es redzēju daudz ko jaunu. I saw many new (things).
kaut kas	something	Man ir kaut kas interesants, ko tev pastāstīt. I've got something interesting to tell you.
nekas	nothing	Nebija nekā jauna. (There) was nothing new.
šis tas	something or other	Cerams ka šeit varēs atrast šo to interesantu. Hopefully, something or other interesting will be found here.

- If the adjective has a predicative function, i.e. it follows the verb in the second part of the sentence:

Viņš ir ļoti draudzīgs.
He is very friendly.

- In similes:

Vesels kā rutks.
As healthy as a black radish (i.e. very healthy).

- In the comparative form (see Section 5.3.2):

Londona ir lielāka nekā Rīga.
London is bigger than Riga.

Adjectives always have to agree with the noun or pronoun they are associated with so, for example, in the debitive mood, where the logical subject is in the dative, the adjective is also in the dative:

Tev jābūt pacietīgai.
You (fem.) have to be patient.

5.2 Definite endings – noteiktās galotnes

Definite adjective endings are used as an equivalent to the English article 'the', e.g. *skaistā māja* 'the beautiful house'.

	Masculine		Feminine	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skaistais	skaistie	skaistā	skaistās
Genitive	skaistā	skaisto	skaistās	skaisto
Dative	skaistajam	skaistajiem	skaistai	skaistajām
Accusative	skaisto	skaistos	skaisto	skaistās
Locative	skaistajā	skaistajos	skaistajā	skaistajās

There is a vocative form for definite adjectives. This is either the same as the nominative form, e.g. **dārgie kolēģi!** ‘dear colleagues’ or, where the noun drops the ending to form the vocative, the accusative ending **-o** is used, e.g. **mīlo Juri!** ‘dear Juris’, **mīlo māsiņ!** ‘dear sister’.

The definite endings are used as follows.

- When talking about something already mentioned or known:

slavenais rakstnieks Hemingvejs

the famous writer Hemingway

Man blakus dzīvo liels un mazs suns.

Next door to me live a big and a small dog.

Lielo suni sauc Reks – mazo Rio.

The big dog is called Reks, the small one Rio.

- Following the possessive pronouns **mans/mana** ‘my’, **tavs/tava** ‘your (sing.)’, etc., as well as **savs/sava** ‘own’:

mans lielais rakstāmgalds

my big desk

mūsu jaunie kursi

our new courses

Viņš lielās ar savu lielo mašīnu.

He’s showing off with his big car.

However, **mans/mana** and **tavs/tava** may be used with the indefinite ending in an exclamation:

Tavu lielu prieku!

(Your) great joy! (This exclamation refers to ‘great joy’ in general, rather than being specifically ‘your great joy’.)

- With a possessor in the genitive:

mātes jaunais darbs

mother’s new job

- Following these pronouns and their declensions:

nekāds	no (when used in a predicative function)	Tas nav nekāds lielais pārsteigums. That's no big surprise.
šis	this	Šīs skaistās rozes these beautiful roses
tas	that	tās lielās grāmatas those large books
pats	... self	pats slavenais rakstnieks the famous writer himself
tas pats	the same	tie paši vecie meli the same old lies
viss	all	visi mīļie draugi all dear friends

- In the superlative form (see Section 5.3.3):

mans vecākais brālis my eldest brother

- In constructions with **no** meaning 'of the', including **daži no** 'some of', **kāds no** 'one of', **viens no** 'one of':

Dubajā atrodas dažas no pasaules visaugstākajām ēkām.

Some of the world's tallest buildings are in Dubai.

Rīga ir viena no pasaules visskaistākajām pilsētām.

Riga is one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

- Together with nouns in the genitive when both the genitive noun and the adjective are associated with the same noun. Both the genitive noun and the adjective come before the noun referred to but the word order is not important:

skolas labie pasniedzēji / labie skolas pasniedzēji

the school's good teachers

- With proper nouns:

gudrā Lija	clever Lija
Sarkanā jūra	the Red Sea
Jānis Briesmīgais	Ivan the Terrible

- When addressing people (see also the note regarding the vocative above):

Cienītais Prezidenta kungs! Esteemed Mr President.

- As an intensifier in exclamations which can also be used with an ironic meaning:

Lielais paldies! A very big thank you!

- In terms such as:

magnētiskais lauks	the magnetic field
baltais lācis	polar bear (lit. the white bear)
melnais tirgus	the black market

- In individual types of a particular generic item:

zaļā tēja	green tea
klasiskā mūzika	classical music
saldaiss ēdiens	dessert (lit. sweet food)

- When using an adjective as a noun:

aklais	the blind (man)
jaunie	the young ones

- Some adjectives are only used with definite endings: **labais** 'right', **kreisais** 'left', **apakšējais** 'bottom', **augšējais** 'top', **iekšējais** 'inner', **kādreizējais** 'former', **malējais** 'outer', **pašreizējais** 'current', **pēdējais** 'last', **šodienējais** 'today's', **tagadējais** 'present-day', **toreizējais** 'of that time', **vakarējais** 'yesterday's', **vidējais** 'middle, average'.
- Some surnames are in the definite adjective form and follow the definite adjective endings:

Edis Stiprais (masc.)	Edīte Stiprā (fem.)
Edim Stiprajam (dat.)	Edītei Stiprajai (dat.)

5.3 Degrees of comparison – salīdzināmās pakāpes

The majority of adjectives have comparative forms as outlined below. There are, however, some which do not have comparative or superlative forms:

- Adjectives whose properties cannot be diminished or intensified, e.g. **akls** 'blind', **mūžīgs** 'eternal'
- Some adjectives with the suffixes:

-āls	lokāls	local
-ējs	vidējs	middle, average
-īgs	iekšķīgs	internal
-isks	vēsturisks	historic

5.3.1 Equative degree – vienlīdzīgā pakāpē

To say ‘as...as’ in Latvian the construction **tik** or **tikpat...kā** is used:

Valdis ir tik garš kā Jānis. / Valdis ir tikpat garš kā Jānis.

Valdis is as tall as Janis.

In the negative ‘not as...as’ the construction **ne tik...kā** is used although the **ne** is amalgamated into a negative verb:

Vilks nav tik liels kā vilka kauciens.

A wolf is not as big as a wolf's howl (Latvian proverb). (His bark is worse than his bite.)

In similes the equivalent of ‘as’ is **kā**:

mīksts kā pūpēdis

as soft as a puffball

5.3.2 Comparative degree – pārākā pakāpē

The comparative degree in English uses ‘-er’ or ‘more’, e.g. ‘smaller’, ‘more interesting’. In Latvian the comparative form of adjectives covers both of these English constructions so it is not possible to translate the ‘more’ in ‘more interesting’. To form the comparative, the final -s or -š ending is removed, the suffix **-āk** is added, and then the indefinite adjective endings:

mazāks suns a smaller dog

skaistāka māja a more beautiful house

To compare two things, i.e. ‘...than’, Latvian uses either **...nekā** in positive sentences or **...kā** in negative sentences. It is also possible to use **...par** plus the accusative in the singular and plus the dative in the plural in either positive or negative sentences:

Daugava ir garāka nekā Gauja. / Daugava ir garāka par Gauju.

The (River) Daugava is longer than the (River) Gauja.

Gauja nav garāka kā Daugava. / Gauja nav garāka par Daugavu.

The Gauja is not longer than the Daugava.

5.3.3 Superlative degree – vispārākā pakāpe

The superlative degree in English is formed with ‘-est’ or ‘most’. In Latvian it is formed in the same way as the comparative but the definite adjective endings are added. For emphasis the prefix *vis-* is usually added but it can also be left off – the definite adjective endings already show that it is superlative:

vismazākais suns / mazākais suns the smallest dog
vis skaistākā māja / skaistākā māja the most beautiful house

visneiedomājamākais šaursliežu dzelzceļš
the most unimaginable narrow-gauge railway (Latvian tongue twister)

The emphatic pronoun *pats/pati* ‘myself, etc.’ (see Section 4.1) can also be added for emphasis instead of *vis-*:

pats mazākais suns the very smallest dog
pati skaistākā māja the most beautiful house

When using the prefix *vis-* the stress is not placed on this but on the first syllable of the basic adjective, e.g. *vis'mazākais*.

5.4 Formation of adjectives – ipašības vārdu darināšana

Adjectives in Latvian can be formed by adding prefixes or suffixes to various parts of speech.

5.4.1 Adjectives formed with prefixes – ipašības vārdu darināšana ar priedēkļiem

The following Latvian prefixes are used to form adjectives:

- at-** A diminished intensity: **attāls** ‘distant’
- bez-** A lack: **bezalkoholisks** ‘alcohol-free’
- caur-** Direction through something: **caurbraucams** ‘passable, i.e. able to drive through’
- ie-** A diminished intensity: **iezaļgans** ‘greenish’
- līdz-** Common, simultaneous: **līdzatbildīgs** ‘sharing the responsibility’
- ne-** 1. Negative; partial or complete lack: **neveikls** ‘awkward, clumsy, maladroit’
2. Comparatively small value: **nedzīlš** ‘not so deep’

pa-	A diminished intensity: padārgs 'quite expensive'
pār-	An increased intensity, 'over': pārgalvīgs 'audacious'
pret-	'Anti-': pretdabisks 'unnatural, i.e. anti-nature'
starp-	'Inter-': starptautisks 'international'

In addition to these, there are also several prefixes derived from loan words which can be joined with loan words or with Latvian words; some of the most common are:

a-	asimetrisks 'asymmetrical'
anti-	antibiotisks 'antibiotic'
inter-	internacionāls 'international'
kontr(a)-	kontrindicēts 'contra-indicated'
super-	superizturīgs 'super-tough'; there is also the adjective superīgs 'super', which has been Latvianized from the English and is very much an 'in' word at the time of writing
ultra-	ultramoderns 'ultra-modern'

5.4.2 Adjectives formed with suffixes – *īpašības vārdu darināšana ar izskaņām*

Suffixes can be added to most of the other parts of speech to form adjectives:

-āds, -āda	Formed from numerals and pronouns: viens 'one' → vienāds 'identical' savs 'one's own' → savāds 'strange'
-ains, -aina	Formed from nouns: lietus 'rain' → lietains 'rainy'
-ējs, -ēja	Formed from adverbs and nouns: tagad 'now' → tagadējs 'present-day' vidus 'middle' → vidējs 'middle, average'
-ens, -ena	Formed from adjectives, fourth-declension nouns and verbs; when formed from adjectives, the meaning of the original adjective is modified: salds 'sweet' → saldens 'sweetish' vara 'power' → varens 'mighty, powerful' drūpt 'to crumble' → drūpens 'crumbly'

-gans, -gana	Formed from adjectives to modify the meaning: zils 'blue' → zilgans 'blueish'
-īgs, -īga	Formed from nouns, adverbs, adjectives, past-tense stem of verbs: prieks 'happiness' → priecīgs 'happy'; note the k/c interchange before the ī pretī 'opposite' → pretīgs 'offensive' vesels 'well, healthy' → veselīgs 'healthy'; vesels is used as the opposite of 'sick', whereas veselīgs is used to mean 'healthy' in general, e.g.: Viņš ilgi noslimoja bet tagad ir atkal vesels. He was ill for a long time but is now well again. Viņš ir ļoti veselīgs. He is very healthy. deva '(he/she/they) gave' → devīgs 'generous'
-iņš, -iņa	Formed from adjectives to give a diminutive meaning: mazs 'small' → maziņš 'wee, small', e.g. maziņš eža puskažociņš 'a hedgehog's wee, small half-coat' (Latvian tongue twister)
-isks, -iska	Formed from nouns and adjectives; very often used in loan words: zinātne 'science' → zinātnisks 'scientific' politika 'politics' → politisks 'political' liels 'big' → lielisks 'excellent'
-ots, -ota	Formed from nouns: sudrabs 'silver' → sudrabots 'silvery'

There are also suffixes derived from loan words, the most common of which are:

-āls, -āla	ideāls 'ideal'
-ārs, -āra	lēgendārs 'legendary'
-ils, -ila	stabils 'stable'
-īvs, -īva	pozitīvs 'positive'
-īzs, -īza	precīzs 'precise'
-ozs, -oza	nervozs 'nervous'

5.4.3 *Compound adjectives – saliktie īpašības vārdi*

Adjectives can be formed by joining other parts of speech to an adjective to form a new one. The second part of the compound is always an adjective; the first part can be:

- An adjective: **zilgans** ‘blueish’ + **zaļš** ‘green’ → **zilganzaļš** ‘bluey-green’
- An adverb: **gaiši** ‘light’ + **brūns** ‘brown’ → **gaišbrūns** ‘light brown’
- A noun: **dzintars** ‘amber’ + **dzeltens** ‘yellow’ → **dzintardzeltens** ‘amber-coloured’
- A numeral: **divi** ‘two’ + **gadīgs** ‘. . . - year-old’ → **divgadīgs** ‘two-year-old’
- A pronoun: **pats** ‘self’ + **mīlīgs** ‘loving’ → **patmīlīgs** ‘selfish’

Adverbs – apstākļa vārdi

The group of words we call adverbs comprises different types of words with diverse functions. These can broadly be categorized into the following groups:

- adverbs of cause and purpose, e.g. **tādēļ** ‘because’
- adverbs of degree, e.g. **daudz** ‘much, many’
- indefinite and negative adverbs, e.g. **kaut kad** ‘sometime’
- interrogative adverbs, e.g. **kur** ‘where’
- adverbs of manner, e.g. **ātri** ‘quickly’
- adverbs of place, e.g. **tur** ‘there’
- adverbs of time, e.g. **vakar** ‘yesterday’.

What they all have in common is that:

- they describe or modify another word such as a verb, an adjective or another adverb, or a clause
- they have no gender, case or number, i.e. they do not change their endings as nouns and adjectives do; the only exception is in the comparative and superlative.

6.1 Cause and purpose – cēloņa un nolūka apstākļa vārdi

The cause is the reason for doing something while the purpose is the aim of doing something. The adverbs are in pairs with a question word (beginning with **k**) and an answer word (beginning with **t**). The most common pair used for cause is **kāpēc** ‘why’ and **tāpēc** ‘because’:

– **Kāpēc tu dārzu neaplēji?**

– Why didn’t you water the garden?

– **Tāpēc, ka drīz līs.**

– Because it’s going to rain soon.

And the most common pair used for purpose is **kādēļ** ‘why’ and **tādēļ** ‘because’:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| – Kādēļ tu ej dārzā? | – Why are you going into the garden? |
| – Tādēļ, ka gribu dārzu apļiet. | – Because (I) want to water the garden. |

However, these pairs are often regarded as being interchangeable. Other ‘why’/‘because’ pairs include **kālab/tālab**, **kamdēļ/tamdēļ**.

The ‘because’ word is also used with the meaning ‘therefore’:

Drīz būs draugu kāzas. Man tādēļ jāpērk jauna kleita.
It’s my friends’ wedding soon. I therefore have to buy a new dress.

6.2 Degree – mēra apstākļa vārdi

Adverbs of degree indicate the degree of quality, quantity or intensity. They can qualify verbs:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Viņš <u>daudz</u> runā. | He talks <u>a lot</u> . |
| Man <u>ļoti</u> salst. | I am <u>very</u> cold. (lit. It is very cold to me.) |
| Viņa <u>maz</u> iet uz teātri. | She <u>seldom</u> (lit. little) goes to the theatre. |

They can also qualify adjectives:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Viņš ir <u>pavisam</u> laimīgs. | He is <u>totally</u> happy. |
| Šodien ir <u>puslīdz</u> labs laiks. | The weather is <u>fairly</u> good today. |

And they can qualify other adverbs:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mums ir <u>diezgan</u> daudz ko darīt. | We have <u>rather</u> a lot to do. |
| Vai varu <u>mazliet</u> vairāk dabūt? | Can I have <u>a bit</u> more? |

Many of the words are regarded as adverbs if they qualify verbs, adjectives or adverbs. In addition, they can also be used with nouns, in which case they are regarded as indefinite quantifiers (see Section 7.6.3):

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| cik | how much, how many,
as far as | Cik atceros, . . .
As far as I remember, . . . |
| cik necik | a little, more or less | Policijai izdevās faktus cik necik
precīzi noteikt.
The police succeeded in establishing
the facts more or less precisely. |

daudz	much, many	Tas ir par daudz. That's too much.
maz	little, few	Viņš maz atcerās. He remembers little.
mazāk	less, fewer	Lūdzu, dodiet man mazāk! Please give me less.
necik	not a bit, not much	Tomēr reformas necik tālu netika. However, the reforms didn't get very far.
nedaudz	a little	Mājsaimniecību labklājība ir nedaudz uzlabojusies. Household prosperity has improved a little.
nemaz	not at all	To es nemaz nezināju. I didn't know that at all.
tik	so much, that much	Ir tik daudz ko iegūt. There is so much to gain.
vairāk	more	Es vairāk nevaru. I can't (do) any more.

The adverbs of degree seen so far have all been words in their own right which have not been derived from adjectives by changing the adjective ending into an adverb one. But this group does also include such adverbs:

šausmīgs 'terrible' → **šausmīgi** 'terribly'

Viņš ir šausmīgi noguris. He is terribly tired.

6.3 Indefinite and negative adverbs – nenoteiktie un negatīvie apstākļa vārdi

Indefinite adverbs refer to an unspecified place or time, etc., while negative adverbs refer to no place or time, etc.:

kaut kā	somehow	Bet kaut kā neizdevās. But somehow it didn't succeed.
kaut kad	sometime	kaut kad pirms padsmiņ gadiem sometime (11–19) years ago
kaut kur	somewhere	kaut kur pāri varavīksnei somewhere over the rainbow

nekad	never	Nekad neviens to nezinās. Nobody will ever know that. (Note the triple negative construction here: lit. never nobody that will not know.)
nekur	nowhere	Nekur nav tik labi kā mājās. Nowhere is as good as at home (Latvian proverb). (There's no place like home.) (Note the double negative construction: lit. nowhere is not as good...)

6.4 Interrogative adverbs – jautājuma apstākļa vārdi

Interrogative adverbs are the question words at the beginning of a sentence:

cik	how much, how many	Cik tas maksā? How much does it cost?
kā	how	Kā tu to zini? How do you know that?
kāpēc	why	Kāpēc debesis ir zilas? Why is the sky (lit. are the skies) blue?
kad	when	Kad viņa būs atpakaļ? When will she be back?
kur	where	Kur tu teci, kur tu teci, gailīti manu? Where are you going, where are you going, my little cockerel? (Latvian folk song)

6.5 Manner – veida apstākļa vārdi

Adverbs of manner answer the question 'how?':

– Kā viņš gāja?	How did he go?
– Ātri.	<u>Quickly.</u>
– Kā viņa runāja?	How did she speak?
– Klusām.	<u>Quietly.</u>

In English these adverbs are often formed with 'ly' added to the adjective, e.g. 'quick → quickly'. In Latvian the equivalent is to change the adjective ending to -i, e.g. ātrs → ātri. But there are also other types of adverbs in this group:

Viņi atnāca <u>kājām</u>.	They came <u>on foot</u> .
Man bija jāēd <u>stāvus</u>.	I had to eat <u>standing up</u> .

6.6 Place – vietas apstākļa vārdi

There are a number of adverbs which indicate where an action takes place or the direction of the action:

Lūdzu, parakstieties apakšā!

Please sign below!

Liec virsū vāku!

Put the lid (on top)!

Viņas brauca mājup no darba.

They were driving home(ward) from work.

Failu var lejup lādēt.

The file can be downloaded.

6.7 Time – laika apstākļa vārdi

6.7.1 Specifying a point in time

Pērn pus gadu mācījies valodu skolā.

Last year I studied at a language school for half a year.

Vakar bija skaists laiks.

It was beautiful weather yesterday.

6.7.2 Denoting relative time

Ja darbs beidzas vēlu, tad, pārnākot mājās, vairs nav spēka.

If work finishes late then, coming home, (one) no longer has any energy.

Agri gulēt un agri celties.

Early to bed and early to rise.

6.7.3 Distributive

ikreiz each/every time

Mana sirds saviļņojas

Ikreiz, kad redzu tevi.

My heart is thrilled each time I see you. (From a poem by Dina Lukovska.)

jebkad ever

Labākais, kas jebkad Latvijā ir noticis!

The best thing that has ever happened in Latvia!

6.8 Comparison of adverbs – apstākļa vārdu salīdzināmās pakāpes

Adverbs which are formed from adjectives with the **-ī**, **-u** and **-ām** endings (see Section 6.12.1) have comparative and superlative forms. The comparative is formed by changing the **-ī**, **-u** or **-ām** ending in the positive degree to **-āk**:

ātri → ātrāk	quickly → more quickly
klusām → klusāk	quietly → more quietly
vēlu → vēlāk	late → later

This construction is also used with some adverbs which have no ending:

drīz → drīzāk	soon → sooner
maz → mazāk	little, few → less, fewer

The superlative is formed by simply adding **vis-** as a prefix to the comparative form: **visātrāk** ‘most quickly’, **visklusāk** ‘most quietly’, **visvēlāk** ‘latest’.

Daudz ‘much’ does not follow this rule and has irregular comparative and superlative forms, i.e. comparative: **vairāk** ‘more’; superlative: **visvairāk** ‘most’.

To form a comparative sentence **nekā** is used with a positive verb and **kā** with a negative one as the equivalent of ‘than’:

Skotijā līst vairāk nekā Francijā.

It rains more in Scotland than in France.

Francijā nelīst vairāk kā Skotijā.

It doesn't rain more in France than in Scotland.

Laiks skrien ātrāk nekā parasti.

Time is flying faster than usually. (lit. Time is running faster than usually.)

An alternative construction is with the use of **par** in which case the noun or pronoun following **par** is in the accusative in the singular and in the dative in the plural:

Es runāju vāciski labāk par tevi.

I speak German better than you (sing.).

Es runāju vāciski labāk par jums.

I speak German better than you (pl.).

Adverbs in the positive degree can be emphasized by using **ļoti** ‘very’, but in the comparative **daudz** must be used:

Tas bija ļoti labi. That was very good. (lit. ...very well.)

Tas bija daudz labāk. That was much better.

6.9 Use compared with English

In the previous section we saw an example of where Latvian uses an adverb where English would use an adjective when referring to a situation or clause, i.e. in Latvian we say **tas bija labi** ‘that was good (lit. well)’ when **tas** refers to a situation. If **tas** refers to a masculine noun, then it is followed by an adjective:

Es iesāku jaunu kursu. Tas ir ļoti interesants. (adjective because **tas** refers to **jaunu kursu**)

I started a new course. It is very interesting.

Es sarunājos ar profesoru. Tas bija ļoti interesanti. (adverb because **tas** refers to situation)

I was talking to the professor. It was very interesting. (lit. ...interestingly.)

Latvian always uses an adverb to describe a verb where English might use an adjective with verbs such as ‘look’:

O, tu lieliski izskaties!

Oh, you look wonderful. (lit. ...wonderfully.)

Another difference is in describing colours where Latvian uses the adverbs **gaiši** ‘light(ly)’ and **tumši** ‘dark(ly)’:

gaiši zils light blue **tumši zils** dark blue

6.10 Impersonal constructions

There are a number of expressions which follow the construction of **man ir ...** lit. ‘to me is ...’, meaning ‘I am’ in English. These are listed with the pronoun **man** ‘to me’ by way of example but the dative case of nouns and the other personal pronouns is used, e.g. **Sanitai ir auksti** ‘Sanita is cold’, **viņai ir auksti** ‘she is cold’.

Man ir auksti.	I am cold. (lit. To me is coldly.)
Man ir bail.	I am afraid. (lit. To me is afraid.)
Man ir bēdīgi.	I am sad. (lit. To me is sadly.)
Man ir karsti.	I am hot. (lit. To me is hotly.)
Man ir labi.	I am well. (lit. To me is well.)
Man ir patīkami.	I enjoy. (lit. To me is pleasant.)
Man ir slikti.	I feel unwell. (lit. To me is badly.)
Man ir vienlga.	It's all the same to me.
Man ir žēl.	I am sorry. (lit. To me is sorry/pity.)

6.1.1 Writing and pronouncing adverbs – apstākļa vārdu pareizrakstība un pareizrūna

There are a few rules to note when writing and pronouncing adverbs.

6.1.1.1 Adverbs written as one word

The prefixes **ik-**, **jeb-** and **ne-** are not separated from the stem and the stress goes on the second syllable as indicated by the apostrophe in the examples below:

Man jāsmaida ik'reiz, kad atceros, kā . . .

I have to smile each time I remember . . .

Jeb'kur viņi spēlēja, viņus saņēma ar sajūsmu.

Wherever they played, they were received with enthusiasm.

Pēteris vasarā ne'kur nebrauca.

Peteris didn't go anywhere in summer.

The situation with **pa** is a bit more complicated. As a prefix **pa-** is not separated from the stem and in general the stress goes on the first syllable:

'pareizi	correctly
'patiesi	in truth
'paklusi	rather quietly
'parīt	the day after tomorrow

However, there are a few exceptions to this stress rule – the following compound adverbs are stressed on the second syllable:

pa'galam	ruined
pa'laikam	now and again
pa'pilnam	abundantly
pa'retam	now and then
pa'tiešām	indeed
pa'visam	all told, quite

There are also adverbial phrases in which **pa** is written as a separate word:

pa jaunam	in a new way
pa kreisi (nogriezties)	(to turn) left
pa labi (nogriezties)	(to turn) right
pa reizei	at times
pa vecam	in the old way, as is

The suffix **-pat** is written as one word with the stem, as is **pat-** as a prefix; the stress goes on the second syllable:

Nu'pat saņēmu labas ziņas.

I've just received some good news.

Pat'laban viss ir kārtībā.

Everything is OK at the moment.

(lit. ... is in order.)

Papriekš 'first of all' is not to be confused with **pa priekšu** 'in front'. With reference to time, it is written as one word:

Papriekš izlasīšu avīzi, tad iešu iepirkties.

I'll read the newspaper first, then I'll go shopping.

Man pa priekšu brauca divi policijas motocikli.

Two police motorcycles were travelling in front of me.

Another frequent mistake is made with **neparko** 'by no means, not for the world' and **ne par ko** 'nothing at all':

Bērns neparko negrib iet gultā.

The child doesn't want to go to bed at all.

Es ne par ko nedomāju.

I'm not thinking about anything at all.

6.11.2 Adverbs written as two words

Any compound adverbs which include the following words as the first word are written separately: **kaut**, e.g. **kaut kad** 'sometime'; **diez** or **diezin**, e.g. **diez kā** 'god knows how'; **nez** or **nezin**, e.g. **nezin kad** 'nobody knows when'. However, **diezgan** 'enough' or 'fairly' is written together – the **diez-** prefix here doesn't have the meaning of 'who knows' (although historically the word derived from **Dievs zin gan** 'God does know'). Here are some examples:

Diezin kā viņš šajā sniegā varēs atnākt.

Who knows how he will be able to come in this snow.

Nezin kā mums izdosies to paslēpt.

Nobody knows how we'll manage to hide it.

6.12 Formation of adverbs – apstākļa vārdu darināšana

6.12.1 Adverbs derived from adjectives

Adverbs can be formed from just about any adjective. The most common way of forming adverbs is by changing the adjective ending to **-i**, e.g. **lēts**

‘cheap’ → **lēti** ‘cheaply’. However, **-u** and **-ām** endings are also used, e.g. **klusī, klusu, klusām** ‘quietly’. These have exactly the same meaning and are generally interchangeable.

As already stated, the **-i** ending is the most common today, but there is one function where the **-u** ending is used and that is in the phrase meaning ‘too’, e.g. **par ātru** ‘too fast’, **par vēlu** ‘too late’:

Viņš brauc par ātru. He drives too fast.

Viņš atnāca par vēlu. He came too late.

It is worth noting that **vēlu** ‘late’ is the only form used for this adverb, the **-i** and **-ām** endings are not used.

This construction is also used in phrases such as ‘too big’ and ‘too small’ where English would use an adjective:

Šis kreklis man ir par dārgu.

This shirt is too expensive for me. (lit. ...expensively ...)

Adverbs ending in **-i** are also formed from participles:

saprotams ‘comprehensible’ → **saprotami** ‘comprehensibly’

pievelkošs ‘attracting, attractive’ → **pievelkoši** ‘attractively’

atklāts ‘open’ → **atklāti** ‘openly’

6.12.2 Adverbs derived from other parts of speech

Many adverbs are derived from nouns, verbs, numerals, pronouns and adjectives. Compound adverbs can be formed from a combination of these parts of speech. However, there is no overall rule that can be followed in forming them. Some examples are:

vakars ‘evening’ – noun	→	vakar ‘yesterday’
nākāmo nedēļu ‘the next week’ – participle + noun	→	nākamnedēļ ‘next week’
pirmo dienu ‘the first day’ – numeral + noun	→	pirmdien ‘Monday’
stāvēt ‘to stand’ – verb	→	stāvus ‘standing, upright’
trīs ‘three’ – numeral	→	trījatā ‘in threes’
labu prātu ‘of a good mind’ – adjective + noun	→	labprāt ‘willingly’
šo gadu ‘this year’ – pronoun + noun	→	šogad ‘this year’

Chapter 7

Numerals and quantifiers, time – skaitļa vārdi, laiks

7.1 Cardinal numbers – pamata skaitļa vārdi

Cardinal numbers are when we use ‘one’, ‘two’, ‘three’, etc. in English. In Latvian they are as follows:

nulle	zero
viens	one
divi	two
trīs	three
četri	four
pieci	five
seši	six
septiņi	seven
astoņi	eight
deviņi	nine
desmit (desmits – noun)	ten
vienpadsmit	eleven
divpadsmit	twelve
trīspadsmit	thirteen
četrpadsmit	fourteen
piecpadsmit	fifteen
sešpadsmit	sixteen
septiņpadsmit	seventeen
astoņpadsmit	eighteen
deviņpadsmit	nineteen
divdesmit	twenty
divdesmit viens	twenty-one
divdesmit divi	twenty-two
trīsdesmit	thirty

četrdesmit	forty
piecdesmit	fifty
sešdesmit	sixty
septiņdesmit	seventy
astoņdesmit	eighty
deviņdesmit	ninety
simt (simts – noun)	hundred
simt viens	a hundred and one
simt divdesmit viens	a hundred and twenty-one
divsimt, divi simti	two hundred
divsimt viens	two hundred and one
tūkstoš (tūkstotis – noun)	thousand
divtūkstoš, divi tūkstoši	two thousand
desmittūkstoš, desmit tūkstoši	ten thousand
simttūkstoš, simt tūkstoši	hundred thousand
miljons	million
desmit miljoni	ten million
miljards	billion
triljons	trillion

Compound numbers above 100 are expressed as follows:

simt piecpadsmit	one hundred and fifteen
divsimt divpadsmit	two hundred and twelve
četrsimt četrdesmit četri	four hundred and forty-four
divtūkstoš četrsimt piecdesmit divi	two thousand four hundred and fifty-two

Occasionally compound numbers may be seen or heard in the following format where the hundreds and thousands are expressed as nouns with the accompanying number separate (see Section 7.2.1 for the declension):

divi tūkstoši četri simti piecdesmit divi
two thousand four hundred and fifty-two (lit. two thousands four hundreds and fifty-two)

For numbers above 1 000 000 the word for million/s must be used as a noun and so it is written separately from its accompanying number:

divi miljoni trīssimttūkstoš četrsimt
two million three hundred thousand four hundred (lit. two millions ...)

The numbers given in this section are used for counting. See Section 7.2 for how to use these numbers in a sentence.

7.2 Declension of numbers and their grammatical use

7.2.1 Declension of numbers – skaitļa vārdu deklinācija

The numbers one to nine, apart from three (see below), must agree with the noun in gender, number and case. They are declined like indefinite adjectives (see Section 5.1). Compound numbers which end in one of these numbers must also agree but only the last element is declined:

Astrīdai ir divi kaķi.	Astrida has two cats.
Artim ir divas mašīnas.	Artis has two cars.
Es nopirku sešus dārza krēslus.	I bought six garden chairs.
Grāmata maksāja vairāk par divdesmit pieciem latiem.	
The book cost more than twenty-five lats.	

Compound numbers ending in the number one are followed by a singular:

Saņēmu divdesmit vienu rozi.
I received twenty-one roses. (lit. ...rose.)

The number three is either not declined at all or it follows the following irregular declension in which there are only two differences between masculine and feminine:

Nominative	trīs
Genitive	trīs, triju
Dative	trīs, trim, trijiem (masc.), trijām (fem.)
Accusative	trīs
Locative	trīs, trijos (masc.), trijās (fem.)

Manam kaimiņam ir trīs suņi.

My neighbour has three dogs.

Triju Zvaigžņu ordenis ir Latvijas Republikas apbalvojums.

The Three Star Order is a distinction of the Republic of Latvia. (The **Triju Zvaigžņu ordenis** is also called the **Trīs Zvaigžņu ordenis**.)

Laika ziņas Latvijā trijām dienām.

The weather forecast for Latvia for three days. (It would also be possible to say **trim dienām** or **trīs dienām**.)

Čempionvienība Ventspils uzvarējusi visās trijās pirmajās spēlēs.

The champion team Ventspils (has) won in all three (of its) first matches. (It would also be possible to say **trīs pirmajās spēlēs**.)

When used as nouns, the words for ten, a hundred, a million, a billion and their plural equivalents follow the declension of a first-declension noun (see Section 3.2.1).

Vairāki simti Beļģijā dzīvojušo latviešu pagaišnedēļ svinēja Jāņus.

Several hundred Latvians living in Belgium celebrated Jani (the midsummer festival). (lit. Several hundreds of ...) (See Section 7.2.3 for the use of the genitive following numbers.)

As a noun the word for a thousand, **tūkstošis**, follows second-declension nouns (see Section 3.2.2):

Rīgā ir pulcējušies vairāki tūkstoši cilvēku.

Several thousand people have gathered in Riga. (lit. Several thousands of ...)

Ķīpsalā uzcelš mājokļus vairāk nekā 50 tūkstošiem cilvēkiem.

Housing will be built in Kipsala for more than fifty thousand people.

(Note that the thousands are very often written as a number followed by the word 'thousands'.)

7.2.2 Use of numeral or noun construction

As already mentioned above, a compound number above 100 is normally used in the short form rather than using the hundreds and thousands as nouns with separate numbers:

astoņsimt astoņdesmit astoņi eight hundred and eighty-eight

However, the words for a million, a billion, etc. must be used as nouns:

divi miljoni trīssimttūkstoš 2 300 000

In compound numbers the short form is the one normally used. However, if using a round number such as 'two hundred', 'three thousand', etc., then it is possible to use either the short form or the noun construction:

Šajā ielā ir divsimt divas mājas.

There are two hundred and two houses in this street.

Šajā ielā ir divsimt māju.

There are two hundred houses in this street. (lit. ...two hundred of ...)

(See Section 7.2.3 for the use of the genitive following numbers.)

Šajā ielā ir divi simti māju.

There are two hundred houses in this street. (lit. ...two hundreds of ...)

Koncertu apmeklēja divtūkstoš piecsimt cilvēku.

The concert was attended by two thousand five hundred people.

Koncertu apmeklēja divtūkstoš cilvēku.

The concert was attended by two thousand people. (lit....two thousand of ...)

Koncertu apmeklēja divi tūkstoši cilvēku.

The concert was attended by two thousand people. (lit....two thousands of ...)

The noun construction is always used for indefinite numbers:

Viņam ir vairāki simti grāmatu.

He has several hundred books. (lit....hundreds of ...)

7.2.3 Use of the genitive following numbers

When used as nouns, the number ten and its multiples, as well as a hundred, a thousand, etc., are followed by a noun in the genitive if the noun is either a subject (and thus normally nominative) or an object (and thus normally accusative). The equivalent in English can be seen in the examples in the previous section where the literal translation is given as ‘hundreds of’, ‘thousands of’. In English this only happens with an indefinite number but in Latvian the genitive is also used with definite numbers:

Simts cilvēku stāvēja rindā.

A hundred people (subject) were standing in a queue. (lit. A hundred of ...)

Es redzēju divus simtus cilvēku.

I saw two hundred people (object). (lit....two hundreds of ...)

When used in the short form, these round numbers are followed by either a genitive, or the nominative or accusative as required:

Simt cilvēku (gen.) stāvēja rindā. Simt cilvēki (nom.) stāvēja rindā.

Es redzēju simt cilvēku (gen.). Es redzēju simt cilvēkus (acc.).

divdesmit grādu (gen.)/grādi (acc.) Celsius
twenty degrees Celsius

If a preposition is used before the number, then the noun follows the rules for prepositions (see Chapter 9):

no divdesmit līdz divdesmit pieciem grādiem Celsius

from twenty to twenty-five degrees Celsius

The *-padsmit* ‘-teen’ numbers are also usually followed by the genitive but can be seen followed by the nominative or accusative as appropriate:

Klasē bija četrpadsmit zēnu (gen.).

There were fourteen boys in the class. (lit. ...fourteen of ...)

Klasē bija četrpadsmit zēni (nom.).

There were fourteen boys in the class.

Es redzēju četrpadsmit zēnus (acc.).

I saw fourteen boys.

However, if the number is preceded by a declinable word, then the genitive is not used:

Klasē šodien bija visi četrpadsmit zēni (nom.).

All fourteen boys were in the class today.

In time phrases, which are in the accusative (see Section 11.4.2), the accusative is not changed to a genitive following a number:

Pavadīju desmit dienas Francijā. I spent ten days in France.

Datives and locatives are never changed to a genitive after a number:

Es konfektes iedevu desmit bērniem. I gave the sweets to ten children.

Viņi ir dzīvojuši desmit mājās. They have lived in ten houses.

7.2.4 Age and years

To say how old you are, you use the dative construction **man ir ...** 'to me is ... , I have ...' (see Section 11.1.4):

Man ir pieci gadi. I am five years old. (lit. To me are five years.)

We have to remember that several numbers take the genitive (see Section 7.2.3). We also have to remember that numbers ending in 'one' such as **divdesmit viens** 'twenty-one' are followed by the word 'year' in the singular. Here are some examples:

Viņam ir trīsdesmit gadu.

He is thirty years old. (lit. To him are thirty years.)

Viņai ir četrpadsmit gadu.

She is fourteen years old. (lit. To her are fourteen years.)

Man ir četrdesmit viens gads.

I am forty-one years old. (lit. To me is forty-one year.)

To ask how old somebody is, we use the question:

Cik gadu tev ir? How old are you? (lit. How many years to you are?)

7.2.5 Indefinite round numbers

To say ‘tens’, ‘hundreds’, etc., Latvian uses the dative plural:

Rīgā ir pulcējušies tūkstošiem cilvēku.

Thousands of people have gathered in Riga. (See Section 7.2.3 for the use of the genitive following numbers.)

To say ‘tens of thousands’, etc., the first element is in the dative plural while the second one follows the grammatical requirements of the sentence:

Rīgā ir pulcējušies desmitiem tūkstoši cilvēku.

Tens of thousands of people have gathered in Riga.

Nebija vietas desmitiem tūkstošiem cilvēkiem.

There wasn’t any space for tens of thousands of people.

7.3 Ordinal numbers – kārtas skaitļa vārdi

Ordinal numbers are when we use ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, etc. in English. In Latvian they are as follows; they all have to agree with the noun in gender, number and case and are declined like definite adjectives (see Section 5.2):

pirmais	first
otrais	second
trešais	third
ceturtais	fourth
piektais	fifth
sestais	sixth
septītais	seventh
astotais	eighth
devītais	ninth
desmitais	tenth
vienpadsmitais	eleventh
divdesmitais	twentieth
divdesmit pirmais	twenty-first
divdesmit otrais	twenty-second
simtais	hundredth
divsimtais	two hundredth
tūkstošais	thousandth
divtūkstošais	two thousandth
miljonais	millionth

desmit miljonais	ten millionth
miljardais	billionth
triljonais	trillionth

Although mathematically it is not possible to have 'zeroth', Latvian does use the word **nultais**, e.g. **nultais izmērs** 'size 0', **nultais gads** 'the year 0', **nultais stāvs** 'zeroth storey'.

In compound numbers only the final element is changed into the ordinal number form:

simt piecpadsmitais	one hundred and fifteenth
divsimt divpadsmitais	two hundred and twelfth
četršimt četrdesmit certutais	four hundred and forty-fourth
divtūkstoš četršimt piecdesmit otrais	two thousand four hundred and fifty-second

Here are a few examples showing ordinal numbers in different cases:

Viņi dzīvo otrajā stāvā.

They live on the second floor. (In British English this would be the first floor as in Latvian floors are numbered 'first', 'second', etc., rather than 'ground', 'first', etc.)

Biju trešo reizi Parīzē.

I was in Paris for the third time.

Viņa raksta otro grāmatu.

She's writing (her) second book.

7.4 Fractions and decimals – daļskaitļi un decimāldaļskaitļi

7.4.1 Fractions

Fractions are expressed using the word **daļa** 'part' preceded by an ordinal number in the feminine form to agree with the feminine word **daļa**. The only exception to this is the word for 'half' – **puse**. Here are some basic examples:

viena puse	one half
viena trešā daļa	one third
viena ceturtdā daļa	one quarter
viena piektā daļa	one fifth
viena desmitā daļa	one tenth
viena simtā daļa	one hundredth

When expressing more than one of a fraction, it is normal to use compound nouns although they can also be written as separate words:

divas trešdaļas	two thirds
divas trešās daļas	
trīs ceturtdaļas	three quarters
trīs ceturtais daļas	
četras piektdaļas	four fifths
četras piektās daļas	
septiņas desmitdaļas	seven tenths
septiņas desmitās daļas	
septiņdesmit simtdaļas	seventy hundredths
septiņdesmit simtās daļas	

‘One and a half’ is **pusotra** which is in the genitive singular. The word is declined like **otrs** ‘second’, i.e. with definite adjective endings (see Section 5.2), but the genitive is used instead of the nominative and the accusative.

Uz galda ir pusotra litra piena.

There are one and a half litres of milk on the table.

Nopērc pusotra litra piena!

Buy one and a half litres of milk.

Pavadīju pusotras nedēļas Rīgā.

I spent one and a half weeks in Riga.

‘Two and a half’, etc. is expressed with the suffix **-arpus** ‘with a half’ which is not declined. The resulting compound is followed by a genitive:

divarpus litru piena	two and a half litres of milk
trīspadsmītarpus kilometru	thirteen and half kilometres

7.4.2 Decimals

Decimals are written and said differently from English. In English we use a point followed by each number said individually. Latvian uses a comma followed by a compound number:

0,1	nulle, komats, viens	0.1	zero point one
4,65	četri, komats, sešdesmit pieci	4.65	four point six five
10,05	desmit, komats, nulle pieci	10.05	ten point zero five

7.5 Punctuation with numbers

As we have just seen in the previous section, decimal points are not used in Latvian, a comma is used instead. For thousands, etc., a space is left between groups of three digits so we get 10 000, 1 000 000.

Arabic numerals, i.e. '1, 2, 3', etc., are used for cardinal and ordinal numbers. An ordinal number is written with a point after it:

5 stāvi	5 storeys
5. stāvs	the 5th storey

Roman numerals, i.e. 'I, II, III', etc., are sometimes used for ordinal numbers, but these are not followed by a point:

X nodaļa	the 10th chapter
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However, if a Roman numeral is used to denote a chapter number in a book, then it is followed by a point:

VII. Skaitļa vārdi	7. Numerals
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7.6 Definite and indefinite quantifiers

7.6.1 Definite quantifiers

Words like 'dozen' are definite quantifiers; in Latvian they are followed by the noun in the genitive:

bars	crowd	Ārā stāvēja liels bars cilvēku. A large crowd of people stood outside.
daļa	part	Šodien lielākā daļa cilvēku uzskata, ka vide ir jāsaudzē. Today the majority of people are of the opinion that the environment has to be conserved. (lit. ... the biggest part of people ...)
ducis	dozen	ducis olu a dozen eggs

The same is true for words denoting containers of all kinds, i.e. they are also followed by the noun in the genitive:

ēdamkarote	tablespoon	ēdamkarote etiķa	a tablespoon of vinegar
paciņa	packet	paciņa cukura	a packet of sugar
pudele	bottle	pudele piena	a bottle of milk
sauja	handful	sauja rīsu (pl.)	a handful of rice

7.6.2 Weights and measures

Definite and
indefinite
quantifiers

Weights and measures are followed by the noun in the genitive:

100 gramu sviesta	100 grams of butter (see Section 7.2.3 for the use of the genitive with numbers)
kilograms kartupeļu	a kilogram of potatoes
divi litri piena	two litres of milk
divi metri zīda	two metres of silk

However, if the weights and measures are used together with adjectives such as *vecs*, *dziļš*, etc., then they go into the accusative:

divus gadus vecs bērns	a two-year-old child
divus metrus dziļš ezers	a two-metre-deep lake

7.6.3 Indefinite quantifiers

Indefinite quantifiers are words like ‘much’ and ‘many’. In Latvian many of these words can also qualify verbs, adjectives and adverbs in which case they are known as adverbs of degree (see Section 6.2). Indefinite quantifiers are followed by the noun in the genitive:

Darzā ir <u>daudz</u> puķu.	There are <u>many</u> flowers in the garden.
Paliek <u>nedaudz</u> laika.	There's <u>little</u> time.
Man nav <u>vairāk</u> naudas.	I have no <u>more</u> money.
Tuksnesī ir <u>maz</u> cilvēku.	There are <u>few</u> people in the desert.
Man tagad ir <u>mazāk</u> laika.	I now have <u>less</u> time.
Pielēj <u>mazliet</u> piena!	Add <u>a bit</u> of milk.

Colloquially there are a few more words which can be used with the same meaning as *mazliet*, ‘a bit’:

Vai varat man iedot <u>drusciņ</u> cukura?	Can (you) give me <u>a bit</u> of sugar?
Man vajag <u>drusku</u> piena pie kafijas.	I need <u>a bit</u> of milk in my coffee.
Iedod viņam <u>bišķiņ/biškīt</u> šokolādes!	Give him <u>a bit</u> of chocolate.

As mentioned above, these words are normally followed by a noun in the genitive case. However, they can sometimes be seen or heard with the noun in the nominative or accusative, but this is considered to be colloquial rather than correct usage:

Darzā ir daudz puķes.

There are many flowers in the garden.

Vai varat man iedot drusciņ cukuru?

Can you give me a bit of sugar?

If the quantifier is preceded by a preposition, then the noun follows the rules for prepositions, it is not put into the genitive:

Dārzenus savāra mērcē un krāmē kārtās ar daudz sieru.

The vegetables are cooked in the sauce and then put into layers with a lot of cheese.

Nosvinēju dzimšanas dienu ar daudz draugiem.

I celebrated my birthday with a lot of friends.

The words **daudz** and **vairāk** can be used in the plural with an adjectival function by adding indefinite adjective endings (see Section 5.1). In this case the noun which follows is not put into the genitive, it follows the grammatical requirements of the sentence:

Dārzā ir daudzas puķes.

There are many flowers in the garden.

Nosvinēju dzimšanas dienu ar vairākiem draugiem.

I celebrated my birthday with several friends.

7.7 Telling the time – pulksteņa laiks**7.7.1 What time is it? – Cik (ir) pulkstenis?**

To say the hour, the cardinal numbers are used (see Section 7.1):

Pulkstenis ir viens.

It is one o'clock. (lit. The clock is one.)

Pulkstenis ir trīspadsmit.

It is thirteen hundred hours. (lit. The clock is thirteen.)

Pulkstenis ir divi.

It is two o'clock. (lit. The clock is two.)

For minutes 'past' the hour **un** 'and' or, more colloquially, **pāri** 'after', or occasionally **pēc** 'after', is used. If **un** is used, the numbers stay in the nominative:

trīspadsmit un piecas minūtes

thirteen oh five (lit. thirteen and five minutes)

If **pāri** or **pēc** is used, then the hour is put into the dative plural, and even the word for 'one' is put into the dative plural, to agree with the preposition,

the minutes stay in the nominative (see Section 7.2.1 for declension of numbers):

piecas minūtes pāri vieniem	five minutes past one
desmit minūtes pāri diviem	ten minutes past two
divdesmit minūtes pēc trijiem	twenty minutes past three

To say ‘quarter past’ the equivalent **certuksnis pāri** is sometimes used but it is more usual to say ‘15 minutes past’:

piecpadsmīt minūtes pāri diviem	fifteen minutes past two
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To say ‘to’, the minutes are continued around the clock using **un**, particularly with the 24-hour clock:

piecpadsmīt un piecdesmit minūtes	fifteen fifty
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More colloquially, a phrase with **bez** ‘without, less’ is used in which case the minutes go into the dative to agree with the preposition, the hour stays in the nominative:

bez desmit minūtēm četri	ten to four (lit. four less ten minutes)
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It is also possible to use **pirms** ‘before’ as an equivalent of ‘to’ in which case the minutes are in the nominative and the hour is in the dative plural to agree with the preposition:

desmit minūtes pirms četriem	ten to four
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In the colloquial expressions the word **minūtes** can be omitted as in ‘five past’, ‘ten past’, etc. but it is generally used for ‘five to’, ‘ten to’, etc., as well as for minutes in between:

piecas pāri sešiem	five past six
bez desmit minūtēm vienpadsmit	ten minutes to eleven
četras minūtes pāri pieciem	four minutes past five

To say ‘half past’, the equivalent of ‘...30’ is used or colloquially the expression is the equivalent of half to the next hour:

piecpadsmīt un trīsdesmit minūtes	fifteen thirty
pus četri	half past three (lit. half four)

It is very important not to confuse the English meaning of ‘half four’, i.e. 4.30, with the Latvian one – many a friendship can be strained as a result!

7.7.2 *At what time? When? – Cikos? Kad?*

The locative is used to answer the question ‘at what time?’ together with **pulksten** ‘o’clock’, this is shortened to **plkst.** as an abbreviation; it can be left out colloquially. The word **un** is often left out when giving times from a timetable; similarly **minūtēs** can also be left out. When telling the time, numbers which are usually not declined, e.g. **vienpadsmit** ‘eleven’, do take the required locative endings for the hour:

plkst. vienos

at one (o’clock)

plkst. trīspadsmitos

at thirteen (hundred hours)

plkst. trīspadsmitos un piecpadsmit minūtēs

at thirteen fifteen

plkst. trīspadsmitos piecpadsmit

at thirteen fifteen

If **pāri** ‘after’ is used colloquially, then the hour, including ‘one’, goes into the dative plural to agree with the preposition:

divdesmit minūtēs pāri sešiem

at twenty minutes past six

desmit minūtēs pāri vieniem

at ten minutes past one

If **bez** ‘without, less’ is used, then the minutes go into the dative plural to agree with the preposition:

bez desmit minūtēm četros

at ten minutes to four

7.7.3 *From what time ... until what time? Around what time? – No cikiem ... līdz cikiem? Ap cikiem?*

The dative plural, including for ‘one’, is used here to agree with the prepositions:

no (plkst.) vieniem

from one (o’clock)

līdz (plkst.) trīspadsmitiem

until thirteen (hundred hours)

no vieniem un piecpadsmit minūtēm

from one fifteen

no vieniem piecpadsmit

līdz sešiem un četrdesmit minūtēm

until six forty

līdz sešiem četrdesmit

ap četriem	around four
ap četriem un divdesmit minūtēm	around four twenty
ap četriem divdesmit	
ap sešiem divdesmit piecām	around six twenty-five

Days of the week, months, dates

7.8 Days of the week, months, dates

7.8.1 Days of the week – dienas

Days of the week are literally ‘first day’, ‘second day’, etc. and ‘holy day’ for ‘Sunday’. They are written with lower-case letters:

pirmdiena	Monday
otrdiena	Tuesday
trešdiena	Wednesday
ceturtdiena	Thursday
piektdiena	Friday
sestdiena	Saturday
svētdiena	Sunday

To say ‘on Monday’, the noun is changed into an adverb which in effect just means taking the -a off the end:

Pirmdien es braukšu uz Turciju. On Monday I'm travelling to Turkey.

To say ‘on Mondays’ we use the plural of the word in the locative case:

Pirmdienās es spēlēju futbolu. On Mondays I play football.

If we want to use a part of the day together with the day, the word for the day goes into the genitive:

pirmdienas vakars Monday evening

To say ‘on Monday afternoon’, for example, the word for the part of the day goes into the locative:

pirmdienas pēcpusdienā on Monday afternoon

7.8.2 Months – mēneši

The months are all written with an initial lower-case letter:

janvāris	January
februāris	February

marts	March
aprīlis	April
maijs	May
jūnijs	June
jūlijs	July
augusts	August
septembris	September
oktobris	October
novembris	November
decembris	December

The locative is used to say 'in':

februārī	in February
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To say 'at the beginning, end' etc., these words are in the locative while the month is in the genitive:

marta sākumā	at the beginning of March
septembra vidū	in the middle of September
decembra beigās	at the end of December

7.8.3 Dates – datumi

To say just the day and month we use the nominative, ordinal numbers are used for the day (see Section 7.3):

(Šodien ir) divdesmitais maijs	(Today is) the twentieth May
(Šodien ir) trīsdesmit pirmais jūlijs	(Today) is the thirty-first July

When we add the year, it goes into the genitive and is placed before the day and month:

(Šodien ir) divtūkstoš vienpadsmitā gada divdesmitais maijs
(Today is) the twentieth May, 2011 (lit. of the year 2011 the 20th May)

The word for 'thousand' in a date is always written in the short form although the 'hundreds' can be written in either the short form or in the noun construction:

tūkstoš deviņsimt deviņdesmit devītais gads / tūkstoš deviņi simti deviņdesmit devītais gads
(the) year nineteen ninety-nine (lit. (one) thousand nine hundred/s ninety-ninth year)

To say 'on the' the day and month go into the locative:

desmitajā novembrī on the tenth November

If we add the year, then this goes into the genitive again and is placed at the beginning:

divtūkstoš vienpadsmitā gada desmitajā novembrī

on the tenth November, 2011 (lit. of the year 2011 the 10th November)

To abbreviate this in a letter, the following form is used:

2011.g. 10. novembrī

Sometimes a Roman numeral is used for the month:

2011.g. 10. XI

To say just the year, we put it into the locative:

Viņš ir dzimis tūkststoš deviņsimt sešdesmit pirmajā gadā.

He was born in the year 1961. (lit. He is born ...)

Days of the
week, months,
dates

Chapter 8

Verbs – darbības vārdi

Verbs are the parts of speech which represent an action, e.g. ‘walk’, ‘eat’, ‘see’; or a state, e.g. ‘be’, ‘have’, ‘exist’.

8.1 Verb forms and categories

8.1.1 Grammatical categories

Apart from the form of the verb that can be found in a dictionary, i.e. the infinitive such as ‘to be’, ‘to go’, verbs are divided into various categories which will be explained in more detail in the relevant sections.

1. *Number*, i.e. singular and plural.
2. *Person*, i.e. first, second and third. These correspond to pronouns in the following way:

First-person singular	es ‘I’
Second-person singular	tu ‘you’
Third-person singular	viņš ‘he’, viņa ‘she’, tas ‘it’
First-person plural	mēs ‘we’
Second-person plural	jūs ‘you’; this is also used as the polite form to address one person just as ‘vous’ is used for this purpose in French or ‘Sie’ in German
Third-person plural	viņi ‘they’ (masc.), viņas ‘they’ (fem.), tie ‘they’ (inanimate)

However, it is important to remember that Latvian very often does not use the pronouns as the verb ending indicates the person, e.g. **eju** ‘(I) go’, **domājam** ‘(we) think’.

3. *Gender*, i.e. masculine and feminine. In Latvian only some participles have masculine and feminine forms, e.g. *es esmu lasījis* 'I have read (masc. sing.)', *es esmu lasījusi* 'I have read (fem. sing.)', *mēs esam lasījuši* 'we have read (masc. pl.)', *mēs esam lasījušas* 'we have read (fem. pl.)'.
4. *Tense*: Latvian has:
 - three simple tenses, i.e. present, e.g. *es rakstu* 'I write'; past, e.g. *es rakstīju* 'I wrote'; and future, e.g. *es rakstīšu* 'I will write'
 - three compound tenses, i.e. present perfect, e.g. *es esmu rakstījis* 'I have written'; past perfect (pluperfect), e.g. *es biju rakstījis* 'I had written'; and future perfect, e.g. *es būšu rakstījis* 'I will have written'.
5. *Voice*, i.e. active, e.g. *viņš apkopj dārzu* 'he looks after the garden'; and passive, e.g. *dārzs tiek apkopts* 'the garden is looked after'.
6. *Mood*: there are five moods in Latvian, i.e.:
 - Indicative – this is the most commonly used mood and covers the majority of verb functions, e.g. 'they run', 'we eat'
 - Imperative – this is the command form, e.g. 'Stand up!'
 - Conditional – in English the conditional is expressed with 'would' or 'could', e.g. 'I would like a new car', 'I could do that job'
 - Debitive – this is the equivalent in Latvian of the English constructions with 'must' or 'have to', e.g. 'I must go', 'I have to go'
 - Relative – this is the equivalent of reported speech in English, e.g. 'She said she had to go'.

8.1.2 Reflexive verbs – atgriezeniskie darbības vārdi

Latvian has two types of verbs: non-reflexive and reflexive. Reflexive verbs are common in languages such as French and German in which they refer back to the 'doer' of the action, e.g. 'se laver' in French and 'sich waschen' in German mean 'to wash oneself'. In Latvian reflexive verbs do also have this function, e.g. *mazgāt* means 'to wash s.t.' such as *mazgāt veļu* 'to wash clothes'; *mazgāties*, the reflexive form, means 'to wash oneself'. However, in Latvian reflexive verbs do not necessarily have just this function as they frequently change their meaning in the reflexive form and this does not obviously refer back to the 'doer', e.g. *klausīt* means 'to obey' and *klausīties*, the reflexive form, means 'to listen'.

8.1.3 Infinitive – nenoteiksmē

The infinitive is the base form of the verb which is the one given in a dictionary and in English is expressed by using the word ‘to’ in front of the verb, e.g. ‘to walk’. Latvian infinitives always end in **-t** for non-reflexive verbs and **-ties** for reflexive verbs. They are then further divided into monosyllabic verbs which end in just **-t** while their reflexive equivalents end in **-ties**, and infinitives which end in **-āt/-āties**, **-ēt/-ēties**, **-īt/-īties**, **-ot/-oties**, as well as very occasionally **-ūt**. These infinitive endings are taken off in order to conjugate the verb, i.e. to put endings on it to form the tenses.

**8.1.4 Transitive and intransitive verbs – pārējošie
un nepārējošie darbības vārdi**

A transitive verb has an object, e.g. ‘I hit my hand’. An intransitive verb does not have an object – it stands alone, e.g. ‘I walk’. Some verbs can be either depending on the context, e.g. ‘I cook dinner’ is transitive; ‘I cook every day’ is intransitive.

**8.2 Conjugation of simple tenses – vienkāršo laiku
konjugācija**

Conjugation means putting the appropriate endings onto a verb to make it agree with the number and person. Traditionally, Latvian verbs are divided into three conjugations and a number of subgroups. There are only three verbs which are completely irregular. We will look at only present- and past-tense conjugation in this section. The future conjugation will be dealt with in Section 8.3.3 together with the uses of the future as it is fairly straightforward.

8.2.1 Irregular verbs – nekārtnie darbības vārdi

The three irregular verbs are **būt** ‘to be’, **dot** ‘to give’ and its reflexive counterpart **doties** ‘to make one’s way’, and **iet** ‘to go’ and **ieieties** ‘to become the custom’.

būt 'to be'	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
es	esmu	biju
tu	esi	biji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	ir	bija
mēs	esam	bijām
jūs	esat	bijāt

dot 'to give' doties 'to make one's way'	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Non-reflexive		
es	dodu	devu
tu	dod	devi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dod	deva
mēs	dodam	devām
jūs	dodat	devāt
Reflexive		
es	dodos	devos
tu	dodies	devies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dodas	devās
mēs	dodamies	devāmies
jūs	dodaties	devāties

iet 'to go' ieieties 'to become the custom'	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Non-reflexive		
es	eju	gāju
tu	ej	gāji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	iet	gāja
mēs	ejam	gājām
jūs	ejat	gājāt
Reflexive		
es	ieejos	iegājos
tu	ieejies	iegājies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	ieejas	iegājās
mēs	ieejamies	iegājāmies
jūs	ieejaties	iegājāties

8.2.2 First conjugation – pirmā konjugācija

The verbs in this group all end in -t in the infinitive and the infinitive is monosyllabic, i.e. it has a root of only one syllable, e.g. **braukt** ‘to travel, drive’. A prefix may be added to the verb to modify its meaning; however, this does not change the conjugation, it remains a first-conjugation verb, e.g. **iebraukt** ‘to drive in’.

What makes this group of verbs difficult for students of Latvian is the fact that very often there are root changes across the tenses. These can be vowel, consonant or pronunciation changes. They will be illustrated in the tables that follow which include some of the most common first-conjugation verbs. However, if the verb is not known, it can sometimes be very difficult to find its meaning in a dictionary, e.g. **tu pērc** ‘you buy’ is the second-person singular form of the verb **pirkt** ‘to buy’ where there is a vowel change as well as a consonant change. For this reason, there is a reverse retrieval list of the most common first-conjugation verbs with root changes in Appendix 2.

Here are the basic present and past simple tense endings before we look at the different subgroups of conjugation 1 verbs. The third-person singular and plural forms are the same so there are only five different endings. The present **tu** form has either no ending, or it has the ending -i depending on the subgroup (see below).

<i>Non-reflexive verbs</i>		
<i>Person</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
es	-u	-u
tu	-(i)	-i
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	—	-a
mēs	-am	-ām
jūs	-at	-āt

<i>Reflexive verbs</i>		
<i>Person</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
es	-os	-os
tu	-ies	-ies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	-as	-ās
mēs	-amies	-āmies
jūs	-aties	-āties

First-conjugation verbs can be divided into five basic groups depending on how they behave. These groups are then further divided into subgroups with similar characteristics. The subgroups are established according to how the verb behaves across the infinitive, the first-person singular in the present tense and the first-person singular in the past tense. However, it does not mean that the root stays the same throughout the conjugation as the examples given will show. The lists of verbs are not exhaustive but they will give an idea how other verbs will behave. Reflexive verbs are in the same groups as their non-reflexive counterparts so examples are only given in the table at the end of each subgroup.

Group 1 verbs: These include the verbs in which consonants usually change but vowels basically stay the same across the three parts of the verb although in the case of *e* and *ē* there can be pronunciation differences.

- Subgroup 1 – the root does not change across the three parts:

art – aru – aru to plough – (I) plough – (I) ploughed

Example	Present	Past
art ‘to plough’		
es	aru	aru
tu	ar	ari
viṇṣ, viṇa, viṇi, viṇas	ar	ara
mēs	aram	arām
jūs	arat	arāt

- Subgroup 2 – the root does not change apart from the present second-person singular in which there is *g/dz* or *k/c* interchange:

augt – augu – augu to grow – (I) grow – (I) grew
sākt – sāku – sāku to begin – (I) begin – (I) began

The present second-person singular is **audz** ‘(you) grow’, **sāc** ‘(you) begin’. The other persons follow the first-person singular root.

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
sākt 'to begin' (tr.)		
sākties 'to begin' (intr.)		
Non-reflexive		
es	sāku	sāku
tu	sāc	sāki
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sāk	sāka
mēs	sākam	sākām
jūs	sākat	sākāt
Reflexive		
es	sākos	sākos
tu	sācies	sākies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sākas	sākās
mēs	sākamies	sākāmies
jūs	sākaties	sākāties

- Subgroup 3 – the root has **s** in the infinitive and **t** in the present and past tenses:

sist – situ – situ 'to hit – (I) hit – (I) hit'

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
sist 'to hit'		
sisties 'to knock against s.t.'		
Non-reflexive		
es	situ	situ
tu	sit	siti
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sit	sita
mēs	sitam	sitām
jūs	sitat	sitāt
Reflexive		
es	sitos	sitos
tu	sities	sities
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sitas	sitās
mēs	sitamies	sitāmies
jūs	sitaties	sitāties

- Subgroup 4 – the infinitive and present roots are the same but there is a consonant change of **k** to **c** in the past:

nākt – nāku – nācu to come – (I) come – (I) came

The present second-person singular changes due to **k/c** interchange, i.e. **nāc** ‘(you) come’. The other persons follow the first-person singular root.

Examples	Present	Past
nākt ‘to come’		
nākties ‘to be obliged’		
Non-reflexive		
es	nāku	nācu
tu	nāc	nāci
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	nāk	nāca
mēs	nākam	nācām
jūs	nākat	nācāt
Reflexive		
Third person	nākas	nācās

- Subgroup 5 – there is a pronunciation change in the **e** or **ē** from narrow to broad in the present:

cept – cepu [æ] – cepu	to fry, roast, bake – (I) fry, etc. – (I) fried, etc.
degt – degu [æ] – degu ¹	to burn – (I) burn – (I) burned
mest – metu [æ] – metu ²	to throw – (I) throw – (I) threw
nest – nesu [æ] – nesu	to carry – (I) carry – (I) carried
ņemt – ņemu [æ] – ņēmu ³	to take – (I) take – (I) took
vest – vedu [æ] – vedu ²	to lead – (I) lead – (I) led
bēgt – bēgu [ā] – bēgu ¹	to flee – (I) flee – (I) fled
ēst – ēdu [ā] – ēdu ²	to eat – (I) eat – (I) ate

The change to the broad **e** or **ē** affects all the persons in the present tense except the second-person singular which is always a narrow **e** or **ē**.

- There may be additional changes as in the case of **degt** and **bēgt** in which there is **g/dz** interchange in the present second-person singular, i.e. **dedz** ‘(you) burn’, **bēdz** ‘(you) flee’.
- Note that infinitive roots ending in **s** behave in different ways, i.e. there is no change (**nest**), or the past- and present-tense roots change to **d** (**vest**, **ēst**) or **t** (**mest**).
- Also note that **ņemt** changes to **ņēmu**, i.e. with a long **ē**, in the past.

<i>Examples</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
cept 'to fry, roast, bake' (tr.)		
cepties 'to fry, roast, bake' (intr.)		
degt 'to burn'		
aizdegties 'to catch fire'		
<hr/>		
Non-reflexive		
es	cepu [æ] degu [æ]	cepu degu
tu	cep dedz	cepi degi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	cep [æ] deg [æ]	cepa dega
mēs	cepam [æ] degam [æ]	cepām degām
jūs	cepat [æ] degat [æ]	cepāt degāt
<hr/>		
Reflexive		
es	cepos [æ] aizdegos [æ]	cepos aizdegos
tu	cepies aizdedzies	cepies aizdegies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	cepas [æ] aizdegas [æ]	cepās aizdegās
mēs	cepamies [æ] aizdegamies [æ]	cepāmies aizdegāmies
jūs	cepaties [æ] aizdegaties [æ]	cepāties aizdegāties

- Subgroup 6 – the infinitive has *ī* in the root while the present and past have *in*:

mīt – minu – minu	to tread – (I) tread – (I) trod
pīt – pinu – pinu	to plait – (I) plait – (I) plaited
tīt – tinu – tinu	to wind, wrap – (I) wind, etc. – (I) wound, etc.
trīt – trinu – trinu	to sharpen – (I) sharpen – (I) sharpened

Examples	Present	Past
pīt 'to plait'		
pīties 'to get entangled'		
Non-reflexive		
es	pinu	pinu
tu	pin	pinī
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	pin	pina
mēs	pinam	pinām
jūs	pinat	pināt
Reflexive		
es	pinos	pinos
tu	pinies	pinies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	pinas	pinās
mēs	pinamies	pināmies
jūs	pinaties	pināties

Group 2 verbs: These include the verbs in which consonants basically stay the same, apart from alternation and s roots in the infinitive, but vowels change from i or ī to e, ē or ie across the three parts of the verb.

- Subgroup 1 – the infinitive and past tense have i in the root while the present tense has a broad e or ē:

vilkt – velku [æ] – vilku ¹	to pull – (I) pull – (I) pulled
cirpt – cērpū [æ] – cirpu	to shear (a sheep) – (I) shear – (I) sheared
cirst – cērtu [æ] – cirtu ²	to chop, fell – (I) chop – (I) chopped
pirkt – pērku [æ] – pirku ¹	to buy – (I) buy – (I) bought

The present second-person singular always has a narrow e/ē while the other persons follow the first person.

- There may be additional changes as in the case of **vilkt** and **pirkt** in which there is k/c interchange in the present second-person singular, i.e. **velc** '(you) pull', **pērc** '(you) buy'.
- Note that the s root in the infinitive changes to t in the present and past tenses.

Examples	Present	Past
vilkt 'to pull'		
vilkties 'to drag o.s. along'		
cirpt 'to clip'		
Non-reflexive		
es	velku [æ] cēpu [æ]	vilku cirpu
tu	velc cērp	vilki cirpi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	velk [æ] cērp [æ]	vilka cirpa
mēs	velkam [æ] cērpam [æ]	vilkām cirpām
jūs	velkat [æ] cērpāt [æ]	vilkāt cirpāt
Reflexive		
es	velkos [æ]	vilkos
tu	velcies	vilkies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	velkas [æ]	vilkās
mēs	velkamies [æ]	vilkāmies
jūs	velkaties [æ]	vilkāties

- Subgroup 2 – the infinitive and past tense have *i* in the root while the present tense has *ie*:

likt – lieku – liku	to put – (I) put – (I) put
snigt – snieg – sniga	to snow – (it) snows – (it) snowed
tikt – tieku – tiku	to reach – (I) reach – (I) reached

There may be additional changes as in the cases in which there is *k/c* in the present second-person singular, i.e. **liec** '(you) put', **tiec** '(you) reach'. The same would apply to *g/dz* interchange in **snigt** if the present second-person singular were used.

Examples	Present	Past
likt 'to put'		
likties 'to seem'		
Non-reflexive		
es	lieku	liku
tu	liec	liki
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	liek	lika
mēs	liekam	likām
jūs	liekat	likāt
Reflexive		
es	liekos	likos
tu	liecies	likies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	liekas	likās
mēs	liekamies	likāmies
jūs	liekaties	likāties

- Subgroup 3 – the verb **dzīt**, i.e.:

dzīt – dzenu [æ] – dzinu to drive, chase – (I) drive – (I) drove

The present second-person singular has a narrow e while the other persons follow the first person.

Examples	Present	Past
dzīt 'to drive, chase'		
dzīties 'to strive'		
Non-reflexive		
es	dzenu [æ]	dzinu
tu	dzen	dzini
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dzen [æ]	dzina
mēs	dzenam [æ]	dzinām
jūs	dzenat [æ]	dzināt
Reflexive		
es	dzenos [æ]	dzinos
tu	dzenies	dzinies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dzenas [æ]	dzinās
mēs	dzenamies [æ]	dzināmies
jūs	dzenaties [æ]	dzināties

Group 3 verbs: These include the verbs in which consonants usually stay the same but vowels change in a number of different ways across the three parts of the verb.

- Subgroup 1 – the infinitive and past tense have **a** in the root while the present tense has **o**:

prast – protu – pratu ^{1,2}	to know (how to do s.t) – (I) know – (I) knew
rakt – roku – raku ³	to dig – (I) dig – (I) dug
rast – rodu – radu ^{1,2}	to find – (I) find – (I) found
tapt – topu – tapu ¹	to become – (I) become – (I) became
zagt – zogu – zagu ³	to steal – (I) steal – (I) stole

- If the root of these verbs ends in **d**, **p** or **t** in the present tense, then they take the additional **-i** ending in the present second-person singular, e.g. **atrodi** ‘(you) find’, **proti** ‘(you) know (how to do s.t.)’, **topi** ‘(you) become’.
- If the root of the infinitive has **s**, this changes to either **d** or **t** in the present and past tenses.
- There may be additional changes as in **rakt** and **zagt** in which there is **k/c** and **g/dz** interchange in the present second-person singular, i.e. **roc** ‘(you) dig’, **zodz** ‘(you) steal’.

Examples	Present	Past
rast ‘to find’		
rasties ‘to arise’		
zagt ‘to steal’ (tr.)		
zagties ‘to steal’ (intr.)		
Non-reflexive		
es	rodu zogu	radu zagu
tu	rodi zodz	radi zagi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	rod zog	rada zaga
mēs	rodam zogam	radām zagām
jūs	rodat zogat	radāt zagāt

Examples	Present	Past
Reflexive		
es	rodos zogos	rados zagos
tu	rodies zodzieš	radies zagies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	rodas zogas	radās zagās
mēs	rodamies zogamies	radāmies zagāmies
jūs	rodaties zogaties	radāties zagāties

- Subgroup 2 – the infinitive and past tense have a short **i** or **u** in the root while the present tense has a long **ī** or **ū**, respectively:

apnīkt – apnīku – apniku¹	to become boring – (I) become boring – (I) became boring
krist – krītu – kritu^{2,3}	to fall – (I) fall – (I) fell
lipt – līpu – lipu³	to stick – (I) stick – (I) stuck
patīkt – patīku – patīku¹	to like
jukt – jūku – juku¹	to become confused – (I) become confused – (I) became confused
just – jūtu – jutu^{2,3}	to feel – (I) feel – (I) felt
klūpt – klūpu – klupu³	to stumble – (I) stumble – (I) stumbled
mukt – mūku – muku¹	to run away – (I) run away – (I) ran away
pazust – pazūdu – pazudu^{2,3}	to disappear – (I) disappear – (I) disappeared
rukt – rūku – ruku¹	to shrink – (I) shrink – (I) shrank
sprukt (vaļā) – sprūku – spruku¹	to break loose – (I) break loose – (I) broke loose
šļukt – šļuku – šļuku¹	to slip, slide – (I) slip – (I) slipped

- There may be additional changes with **k/c** interchange in the present second-person singular, e.g. **mūc** ‘(you) run away’.
- If the root of the infinitive has **s**, this changes to either **d** or **t** in the present and past tenses.
- If the root of these verbs ends in **d**, **p** or **t** in the present tense, then they take the additional **-i** ending in the second person singular, e.g. **krīti** ‘(you) fall’, **līpi** ‘(you) stick’, **jūti** ‘(you) feel’, **klūpi** ‘(you) stumble’, **pazūdi** ‘(you) disappear’.

Examples	Present	Past
<i>krist</i> 'to fall'		
<i>kristies</i> 'to drop' (intr.)		
<i>just</i> 'to feel' (tr.)		
<i>justies</i> 'to feel' (intr.)		
Non-reflexive		
es	krītu jūtu	kritu jutu
tu	krīti jūti	kriti juti
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	krīt jūt	krita juta
mēs	krītam jūtam	kritām jutām
jūs	krītat jūtat	kritāt jutāt
Reflexive		
es	krītos jūtos	kritos jutos
tu	krīties jūties	krities juties
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	krītas jūtas	kritās jutās
mēs	krītamies jūtamies	kritāties jutāties
jūs	krītaties jūtaties	kritāties jutāties

- Subgroup 3 – the root has an *r*,¹ (see note on p. 120) and the infinitive and present tense have a short vowel while the past tense has a long vowel; the *e/ē* remains narrow in the group of verbs with *e/ē* in the root:

skart – skaru – skāru to touch – (I) touch – (I) touched

dzert – dzeru – dzēru to drink – (I) drink – (I) drank

ķert – ķeru – ķēru to catch – (I) catch – (I) caught

spert – speru – spēru to kick – (I) kick – (I) kicked

tvert – tveru – tvēru to snatch – (I) snatch – (I) snatched

šķirt – šķiru – šķīru to divide – (I) divide – (I) divided

burt – buru – būru to cast a spell – (I) cast a spell – (I) cast a spell

durt – duru – dūru to stab – (I) stab – (I) stabbed

kurt – kuru – kūru to make a fire – (I) make a fire – (I) made a fire

Examples	Present	Past
skart 'to touch' (tr.) pieskarties 'to touch' (intr.)		
Non-reflexive		
es	skaru	skāru
tu	skar	skāri
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	skar	skāra
mēs	skaram	skārām
jūs	skarat	skārāt
Reflexive		
es	pieskaros	pieskāros
tu	pieskaries	pieskāries
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	pieskaras	pieskāras
mēs	pieskaramies	pieskāramies
jūs	pieskaraties	pieskāraties

- Subgroup 4 – the root has an *r*,¹ (see note on p. 120) and the infinitive and past tense have a long vowel while the present has a short vowel; the *e/ē* remains narrow in the group of verbs with *e/ē* in the root:

bārt – baru – bāru	to scold – (I) scold – (I) scolded
kārt – karu – kāru	to hang – (I) hang – (I) hung/hanged
bērt – beru – bēru	to strew – (I) strew – (I) strewed
pērt – peru – pēru	to flog – (I) flog – (I) flogged
svērt – sveru – svēru	to weigh – (I) weigh – (I) weighed
vērt (vaļā/ciet) – veru – vēru	to open/close – (I) open/close – (I) opened/closed

Examples	Present	Past
bārt 'to scold' bārties 'to quarrel'		
Non-reflexive		
es	baru	bāru
tu	bar	bāri
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	bar	bāra
mēs	baram	bārām
jūs	barat	bārāt

Examples	Present	Past
bārt 'to scold' bārties 'to quarrel'		
Reflexive		
es	baros	bāros
tu	baries	bāries
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	baras	bārās
mēs	baramies	bārāties
jūs	baraties	bārāties

- 1 Traditionally these verbs are placed in Group 4 with the palatalized verbs because the present-tense root can have a soft, or palatalized, *ŗ*. However, this letter was abolished in the 1950s (except in some émigré publications) and today there is mostly no difference between the *ŗ* and the *r* pronunciation. It therefore seems more logical to include these verbs in Group 3 together with the verbs in which there are vowel changes. The verb *art* 'to plough' is exceptional and has been put into Group 1 as it has no vowel changes.
- Subgroup 5 – there is an additional *n* in the present tense:

aut (kājas) – aunu – āvu	to put (one's shoes on) – (I) put – (I) put
brist – brienu – bridu	to wade – (I) wade – (I) waded
līst – lienu – līdu	to creep – (I) creep – (I) crept
siet – sienu – sēju	to tie – (I) tie – (I) tied
skriet – skrienu – skrēju	to run – (I) run – (I) ran

Examples	Present	Past
siet 'to tie' piesieties 'to find fault'		
Non-reflexive		
es	sienu	sēju
tu	sien	sēji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sien	sēja
mēs	sienam	sējām
jūs	sienat	sējāt
Reflexive		
es	piesienos	piesējos
tu	piesienies	piesējies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	piesienas	piesējās
mēs	piesienamies	piesējāmies
jūs	piesienaties	piesējāties

Group 4 verbs: These include the verbs in which there is palatalization or alternation in the present tense.

- Subgroup 1 – the infinitive has a **g** or **k** while the present and past tenses have **dz** or **c**, respectively:

beigt – beidzu – beidzu	to finish – (I) finish – (I) finished
kliegt – klieđu – klieđu	to shout – (I) shout – (I) shouted
lūgt – lūdzu – lūdzu	to ask, beg, pray – (I) ask, etc. – (I) asked, etc.
segt – sedzu [æ] – sedzu¹	to cover – (I) cover – (I) covered
slēgt – slēdzu [æ] – slēdzu¹	to lock – (I) lock – (I) locked
sniegt – sniedzu – sniedzu	to hand – (I) hand – (I) handed
zviegt – zviedzu – zviedzu	to neigh – (I) neigh – (I) neighed
žņaugt – žņaudzu – žņaudzu	to strangle – (I) strangle – (I) strangled
braukt – braucu – braucu	to travel, drive – (I) travel – (I) travelled
brēkt – brēcu [æ] – brēcu¹	to yell – (I) yell – (I) yelled
dūkt – dūcu – dūcu	to buzz – (I) buzz – (I) buzzed
jaukt – jaucu – jaucu	to mix – (I) mix – (I) mixed
kaukt – kaucu – kaucu	to howl – (I) howl – (I) howled
krākt – krācu – krācu	to snore – (I) snore – (I) snored
kviēkt – kviecu – kviecu	to squeal – (I) squeal – (I) squealed
lēkt – lecu [æ] – lēcu¹	to jump – (I) jump – (I) jumped
liekt – liecu – liecu	to bend – (I) bend – (I) bent
maukt – maucu – maucu	to put on – (I) put on – (I) put on
plūkt – plūcu – plūcu	to pick (e.g. flowers) – (I) pick – (I) picked
rūkt – rūcu – rūcu	to roar, growl, thunder – (I) roar, etc. – (I) roared, etc.
saukt – saucu – saucu	to call – (I) call – (I) called
sūkt – sūcu – sūcu	to suck – (I) suck – (I) sucked
šalkt – šalcu – šalcu	to rustle – (I) rustle – (I) rustled
šlākt – šlācu – šlācu	to spurt (liquid) – (I) spurt – (I) spurted

šņaukt (degunu) – šņaucu – šņaucu	to blow (one's nose) – (I) blow – (I) blew
teikt – teicu – teicu	to say – (I) say – (I) said
vākt – vācu – vācu	to collect – (I) collect – (I) collected

- 1 Where there is an *e* or *ē*, these follow the rules for broad and narrow *e/ē* as in Group 2 verbs, i.e. the infinitive and the past tense have narrow *e/ē*, the present tense has broad *e/ē* apart from the second-person singular which is narrow.

Examples	Present	Past
beigt 'to finish' (tr.)		
beigties 'to finish' (intr.)		
braukt 'to travel, drive'		
izbraukties 'to go for a drive'		
Non-reflexive		
es	beidzu braucu	beidzu braucu
tu	beidz brauc	beidzi brauci
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	beidz brauc	beidza brauca
mēs	beidzam braucam	beidzām braucām
jūs	beidzat braucat	beidzāt braucāt
Reflexive		
es	beidzos izbraucos	beidzos izbraucos
tu	beidzies izbraucies	beidzies izbraucies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	beidzas izbraucas	beidzās izbraucās
mēs	beidzamies izbraucamies	beidzāmies izbraucāmies
jūs	beidzaties izbraucaties	beidzāties izbraucāties

- Subgroup 2 – the infinitive and past tenses have **l, s** or **z** while the present tense has a palatalized **ļ, š** or **ž**, respectively; the **e/ē** remains narrow in the group of verbs with **e/ē** in the root:

kalt – kaļu – kalu	to forge (metal) – (I) forge – (I) forged
malt – maļu – malu	to grind, mince – (I) grind, etc. (I) ground, etc.
celt – ceļu – cēlu	to lift – (I) lift – (I) lifted
dzelt – dzeļu – dzēlu	to sting – (I) sting – (I) stung
smelt – smeļu – smēlu	to scoop, ladle – (I) scoop, etc. – (I) scooped, etc.
šķelt – šķeļu – šķēlu	to split – (I) split – (I) split
velt – veļu – vēlu	to roll – (I) roll – (I) rolled
kāst – kāšu – kāsu	to strain, filter – (I) strain, etc. – (I) strained, etc.
elst – elšu – elsu	to pant – (I) pant – (I) panted
dzēst – dzēšu – dzēsu	to erase – (I) erase – (I) erased
plēst – plēšu – plēsu	to tear – (I) tear – (I) tore
jaust – jaušu – jautu	to sense – (I) sense – (I) sensed
ciest – ciešu – cietu	to suffer – (I) suffer – (I) suffered
post – pošu – posu	to tidy – (I) tidy – (I) tidied
pūst – pūšu – pūtu	to blow – (I) blow – (I) blew
bāzt – bāžu – bāzu	to shove – (I) shove – (I) shoved
gāzt – gāžu – gāzu	to overturn – (I) overturn – (I) overturned
berzt – beržu – berzu	to rub – (I) rub – (I) rubbed
grauzt – graužu – grauzu	to gnaw – (I) gnaw – (I) gnawed
lauzt – laužu – lauzu	to break – (I) break – (I) broke
griezt – griežu – griezu	to cut – (I) cut – (I) cut

The second-person singular form does not follow the palatalization of the first-person form given, it keeps the unpalatalized form of the infinitive. However, if the infinitive stem has an **s**, then the second-person singular follows the change in the past tense, e.g. **griežu** ‘(I) cut’, **griez** ‘(you) cut’, **pūšu** ‘(I) blow’, **pūt** ‘(you) blow’.

<i>Examples</i> celt 'to lift' celties 'to rise' plēst 'to tear' plēsties 'to fight' bāzt 'to shove' bāzties 'to intrude'	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Non-reflexive		
es	ceļu plēšu bāžu	cēlu plēsu bāzu
tu	cel plēs bāz	cēli plēsi bāzi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	ceļ plēš bāž	cēla plēsa bāza
mēs	ceļam plēšam bāžam	cēlām plēsām bāzām
jūs	ceļat plēšat bāžat	cēlāt plēsāt bāzāt
Reflexive		
es	ceļos plēšos bāžos	cēlos plēšos bāzos
tu	celies plēsies bāzies	cēlies plēsies bāzies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	ceļas plēšas bāžas	cēlās plēsās bāzās
mēs	ceļamies plēšamies bāžamies	cēlāmies plēsāmies bāzāmies
jūs	ceļaties plēšaties bāžaties	cēlāties plēsāties bāzāties

- Subgroup 3 – the infinitive has *s* in the root while the present has *ž* and the past has *d*:

aust – aužu – audu	to weave – (I) weave – (I) wove
grūst – grūžu – grūdu	to shove – (I) shove – (I) shoved
kost – kožu – kodu	to bite – (I) bite – (I) bit
laist – laižu – laidu	to let, allow – (I) let – (I) let
ost – ožu – odu	to smell – (I) smell – (I) smelt
skaust – skaužu – skaudu	to envy – (I) envy – (I) envied
snaust – snaužu – snaudu	to doze – (I) doze – (I) dozed
spiest – spiežu – spiedu	to press – (I) press – (I) pressed
spraust – spraužu – spraudu	to pin – (I) pin – (I) pinned
spriest – spriežu – spriedu	to judge – (I) judge – (I) judged
sviest – sviežu – sviedu	to throw – (I) throw – (I) threw

The present second-person singular in these verbs ends in *d* so we get, for example, *kod* ‘(you) bite’, *laid* ‘(you) let’, *spied* ‘(you) press’.

Examples	Present	Past
<i>grūst</i> ‘to shove’		
<i>grūsties</i> ‘to press’		
Non-reflexive		
es	grūžu	grūdu
tu	grūd	grūdi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	grūž	grūda
mēs	grūžam	grūdām
jūs	grūžat	grūdāt
Reflexive		
es	grūžos	grūdos
tu	grūdies	grūdies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	grūžas	grūdās
mēs	grūžamies	grūdāmies
jūs	grūžaties	grūdāties

- Subgroup 4 – the present and past tenses have an extra *j*; the *e/ē* remains narrow in the group of verbs with *e/ē* in the root:

jāt – jāju – jāju
klāt – klāju – klāju
krāt – krāju – krāju
rāt – rāju – rāju
dēt – dēju – dēju
sēt – sēju – sēju
spēt – spēju – spēju

to ride – (I) ride – (I) rode
 to lay (e.g. the table) – (I) lay – (I) laid
 to save, collect – (I) save, etc. – (I) saved
 to scold – (I) scold – (I) scolded
 to lay (eggs) – (I) lay – (I) laid
 to sow – (I) sow – (I) sowed
 to be able – (I) am able – (I) was able

Examples	Present	Past
<i>klāt</i> 'to lay'		
<i>klāties</i> 'to spread over'		
Non-reflexive		
es	klāju	klāju
tu	klāj	klāji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	klāj	klāja
mēs	klājam	klājām
jūs	klājat	klājāt
Reflexive		
es	klājos	klājos
tu	klājies	klājies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	klājas	klājās
mēs	klājamies	klājāmies
jūs	klājaties	klājāties

- Subgroup 5 – the present tense has an extra j while the past-tense stem changes from au to āv:

bļaut – bļauju – bļāvu
graut – grauju – grāvu
kaut – kauju – kāvu

to shout – (I) shout – (I) shouted
 to destroy – (I) destroy – (I) destroyed
 to slaughter – (I) slaughter –
 (I) slaughtered

kraut – krauju – krāvu
ļaut – ļauju – ļāvu
plaut – plauju – plāvu
raut – rauju – rāvu

to load – (I) load – (I) loaded
 to allow – (I) allow – (I) allowed
 to mow, cut – (I) mow – (I) mowed
 to pull, tear – (I) pull, etc. –
 (I) pulled, etc.

spļaut – spļauju – spļāvu
šaut – šauju – šāvu
žaut – žauju – žāvu

to spit – (I) spit – (I) spat
 to shoot – (I) shoot – (I) shot
 to hang out (e.g. washing) –
 (I) hang out – (I) hung out

Examples	Present	Past
kaut 'to slaughter'		
kauties 'to fight'		
Non-reflexive		
es	kauju	kāvu
tu	kauj	kāvi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	kauj	kāva
mēs	kaujam	kāvām
jūs	kaujat	kāvāt
Reflexive		
es	kaujos	kāvos
tu	kaujies	kāvies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	kaujas	kāvās
mēs	kaujamies	kāvāmies
jūs	kaujaties	kāvāties

- Subgroup 6 – the present tense has an extra *j* which changes to *v* in the past tense:

skūt – skuju – skuvu to shave – (I) shave – (I) shaved
šūt – šuju – šuvu to sew – (I) sew – (I) sewed

Examples	Present	Past
skūt 'to shave' (tr.)		
skūties 'to shave' (intr.)		
Non-reflexive		
es	skuju	skuvu
tu	skuj	skuvi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	skuj	skuva
mēs	skujam	skuvām
jūs	skujat	skuvāt
Reflexive		
es	skujos	skuvos
tu	skujies	skuvies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	skujas	skuvās
mēs	skujamies	skuvāmies
jūs	skujaties	skuvāties

- Subgroup 7 – the infinitive has *ī* in the root while the present and past have *ij*:

rīt – riju – riju to swallow, gulp down – (I) swallow – (I) swallowed
vīt – viju – viju to twist – (I) twist – (I) twisted

Examples	Present	Past
rīt 'to swallow'		
aizrīties 'to choke'		
Non-reflexive		
es	riju	riju
tu	rij	riji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	rij	rija
mēs	rijam	rijām
jūs	rijat	rijāt
Reflexive		
es	aizrijos	aizrijos
tu	aizrijies	aizrijies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	aizrijas	aizrijās
mēs	aizrijamies	aizrijāmies
jūs	aizrijaties	aizrijāties

- Subgroup 8 – the infinitive has *ie* in the root while the present has *ej* and the past has *ēj*; the *e/ē* remains narrow:

liet – leju – lēju to pour – (I) pour – (I) poured
riet – reju – rēju to bark – (I) bark – (I) barked

Example	Present	Past
liet 'to pour'		
es	leju	lēju
tu	lej	lēji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	lej	lēja
mēs	lejam	lējām
jūs	lejat	lējāt

- Subgroup 9 – the present-tense root, apart from the second-person singular, adds a *j* after the consonants **b**, **m** and **p**, i.e. the labials, so called because they are pronounced using the lips; the *e/ē* remains narrow in the group of verbs with *e/ē* in the root:

glābt – glābju – glābu	to save (from danger) – (I) save – (I) saved
grābt – grābju – grābu	to grab, rake – (I) grab – (I) grabbed
ģērbt – ģērbju – ģērbu	to dress (s.b.) – (I) dress – (I) dressed
knābt – knābju – knābu	to peck – (I) peck – (I) pecked
kniebt – kniebju – kniebu	to pinch – (I) pinch – (I) pinched
strēbt – strebju¹ – strēbu	to slurp – (I) slurp – (I) slurped
lemt – lemju – lēmu	to decide – (I) decide – (I) decided
stumt – stumju – stūmu	to push – (I) push – (I) pushed
vemt – vemju – vēmu	to vomit – (I) vomit – (I) vomited
kāpt – kāpju – kāpu	to climb – (I) climb – (I) climbed
kopt – kopju – kopu	to look after – (I) look after – (I) looked after
krāpt – krāpju – krāpu	to cheat – (I) cheat – (I) cheated
slēpt – slēpju – slēpu	to hide – (I) hide – (I) hid
stiept – stiepu – stiepu	to stretch, drag – (I) stretch, etc. – (I) stretched, etc.
triept – triepju – triepu	to smear, spread – (I) smear, etc. – (I) smeared, etc.

1 Note that **strēbt** has a short e in the present.

Examples	Present	Past
glābt 'to save s.b.'		
glābties 'to save o.s.'		
Non-reflexive		
es	glābju	glābu
tu	glāb	glābi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	glābj	glāba
mēs	glābjam	glābām
jūs	glābjat	glābāt
Reflexive		
es	glābjos	glābos
tu	glābies	glābies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	glābjas	glābās
mēs	glābjamies	glābāmies
jūs	glābjaties	glābāties

Group 5 verbs: These include the verbs in which the present tense stem adds **st** and the second-person singular adds the **i** ending. The majority of

these verbs are intransitive, i.e. they do not take an object, and most do not have a reflexive form.

- Subgroup 1 – the stem remains unchanged apart from the addition of the *st* in the present tense:

alkt – alkstu – alku

to long for – (I) long for – (I) longed for

birt – birstu – biru

to fall (e.g. leaves) – (I) fall – (I) fell

dīgt – dīgstu – dīgu

to sprout – (I) sprout – (I) sprouted

dilt – dilstu – dilu

to wear out – (I) wear out – (I) wore out

dzimt – dzimstu – dzimu

to be born – (I) am born –

(I) was born

grimt – grimstu – grimu

to sink – (I) sink – (I) sank

gurt – gurstu – guru

to tire – (I) tire – (I) tired

ģībt – ģībstu – ģību

to faint – (I) faint – (I) fainted

ilgt – ilgstu – ilgu

to last – (I) last – (I) lasted

mirt – mirstu – miru

to die – (I) die – (I) died

pampt – pampstu – pampu

to swell – (I) swell – (I) swelled

plaukt – plaukstu – plauku

to bloom – (I) bloom – (I) bloomed

reibt – reibstu – reibu

to get dizzy – (I) get dizzy – (I) got dizzy

rimt – rimstu – rimu

to calm down – (I) calm down –

(I) calmed down

rūgt – rūgstu – rūgu

to ferment – (I) ferment – (I) fermented

salt – salstu – salu

to get cold – (I) get cold – (I) got cold

silt – silstu – silu

to get warm – (I) get warm –

(I) got warm

skumt – skumstu – skumu

to grieve – (I) grieve – (I) grieved

saslimt – saslimstu –

to become ill – (I) become ill –

saslimu

(I) became ill

sapīkt – sapīkstu – sapīku

to get annoyed – (I) get annoyed –

(I) got annoyed

slāpt – slāpstu – splāpu

to thirst – (I) thirst – (I) thirsted

sprāgt – sprāgstu – sprāgu

to burst – (I) burst – (I) burst

stingt – stingstu – stingu

to become rigid – (I) become rigid –

(I) became rigid

svilt – svilstu – svilu

to singe – (I) singe – (I) singed

tirpt – tirpstu – tirpu

to go numb – (I) go numb –

(I) went numb

trūkt – trūkstu – trūku

to be lacking – (I) am lacking – (I) was

lacking

vārgt – vārgstu – vāgu

to waste away – (I) waste away –

(I) wasted away

Example <i>alkt</i> 'to long for'	Present	Past
es	alkstu	alku
tu	alksti	alki
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	alkst	alka
mēs	alkstam	alkām
jūs	alkstat	alkāt

- Subgroup 2 – the stem has *s* across the principle parts and adds *t* in the present tense:

aizmirst – aizmirstu – aizmirsu	to forget – (I) forget – (I) forgot
apklust – apklustu – apklusu	to grow silent – (I) grow silent – (I) grew silent
aust – aust – ausa	to dawn – (it) dawns – (it) dawned
dzist – dziest¹ – dzisa	to go out (e.g. fire) – (it) goes out – (it) went out
karst – karstu – karsu	to get hot – (I) get hot – (I) got hot
kust – kūstu¹ – kusu	to melt – (I) melt – (I) melted
plīst – plīstu – plīsu	to break – (I) break – (I) broke

1 Note the vowel changes in the present tense of *dzist* and *kust*.

Examples	Present	Past
<i>aizmirst</i> 'to forget'		
<i>aizmirsties</i> 'to forget o.s.'		
Non-reflexive		
es	aizmirstu	aizmirsu
tu	aizmirsti	aizmirsi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	aizmirst	aizmirsā
mēs	aizmirstam	aizmirsām
jūs	aizmirstat	aizmirsāt
Reflexive		
es	aizmirstos	aizmirsos
tu	aizmirsties	aizmirsies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	aizmirstas	aizmirsās
mēs	aizmirstamies	aizmirsāmies
jūs	aizmirstaties	aizmirsāties

- Subgroup 3 – the infinitive and present tense have **st** in the stem while the past tense has **d** or **t**:

briest – briestu – briedu	to ripen – (I) ripen – (I) ripened
klīst – klīstu – klīdu	to wander – (I) wander – (I) wandered
plūst – plūstu – plūdu	to flow – (I) flow – (I) flowed
svīst – svīstu – svīdu	to sweat – (I) sweat – (I) sweated
šķīst – šķīstu – šķīdu	to dissolve – (I) dissolve – (I) dissolved
kalst – kalstu – kaldu	to dry up – (I) dry up – (I) dried up
vīst – vīstu – vītu	to wither – (I) wither – (I) withered

Examples briest 'to ripen' kalst 'to dry up'	Present	Past
es	briestu kalstu	briedu kaltu
tu	briesti kalsti	briedi kalti
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	briest kalst	brieda kalta
mēs	briestam kalstam	briedām kaltām
jūs	briestat kalstat	briedāt kaltāt

- Subgroup 4 – the infinitive and past tense have **z** in the stem while the present tense has **st**:

birzt – birstu – birzu	to crumble – (I) crumble – (I) crumbled
lūzt – lūstu – lūzu	to break – (I) break – (I) broke

Example lūzt 'to break' (intr.)	Present	Past
es	lūstu	lūzu
tu	lūsti	lūzi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	lūst	lūza
mēs	lūstam	lūzām
jūs	lūstat	lūzāt

- Subgroup 5 – the past tense has **j** in the stem:

līt – līst – lija	to rain – (it) rains – (it) rained
dzīt – dzīstu – dziju	to heal – (I) heal – (I) healed

Example dzīt 'to heal' (intr.)	Present	Past
es	dzīstu	dziju
tu	dzīsti	dziji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dzīst	dzija
mēs	dzīstam	dzijām
jūs	dzīstat	dzijāt

- Subgroup 6 – the past tense has **n** in the stem:

pazīt – pazīstu – pazinu to know (s.b.) – (I) know – (I) knew

Examples pazīt 'to know s.b.' pazīties 'to keep up acquaintance'	Present	Past
Non-reflexive		
es	pazīstu	pazinu
tu	pazīsti	pazini
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	pazīst	pazina
mēs	pazīstam	pazinām
jūs	pazīstat	pazināt
Reflexive		
es	pazīstos	pazinos
tu	pazīties	pazinies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	pazīstas	pazinās
mēs	pazīstamies	pazināmies
jūs	pazīstaties	pazināties

- Subgroup 7 – the past tense has **v** in the stem together with a short vowel:

grūt – grūstu – gruvu to collapse – (I) collapse – (I) collapsed
gūt – gūstu – guvu to obtain – (I) obtain – (I) obtained
kļūt – kļūstu – kļuva to become – (I) become – (I) became
pūt – pūstu – puvu to rot – (I) rot – (I) rotted
žūt – žūstu – žuvu to dry – (I) dry – (I) dried

<i>Example</i> grūt 'to collapse'	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
es	grūstu	gruvu
tu	grūsti	gruvi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	grūst	gruva
mēs	grūstam	gruvām
jūs	grūstat	gruvāt

8.2.3 Second conjugation – otrā konjugācija

The infinitives of verbs in this group end in **-āt**, e.g. **strādāt** 'to work'; **-ēt**, e.g. **spēlēt** 'to play (tr.)'; **-ot**, e.g. **dzīvot** 'to live'; and **-ūt**, there is in fact only one verb in this group with this ending, i.e. **dabūt** 'to get'. The reflexive infinitives end in **-āties**, e.g. **mazgāties** 'to wash (oneself)', **-ēties**, e.g. **spēlēties** 'to play (intr.)', **-oties**, e.g. **lepoties** 'to be proud'.

Verbs ending in **-āt/-āties** and **-ēt/-ēties** can be found in both the second and third conjugation groups. The vast majority of verbs ending in **-āt/-āties** belong to the second conjugation. Verbs ending in **-ēt** are more problematic and only consulting an orthographical dictionary or online conjugation resource will give a definitive answer as to which group a verb belongs to. Appendix 1 has a list of the most common **-ēt/-ēties** verbs. A hint that an **-ēt/-ēties** verb is a second conjugation one is in the case of loan words, either ones whose equivalents can be found in English and other languages, e.g. **studēt** 'to study' or which derive from German, e.g. **spēlēt** 'to play' from the German 'spielen'.

What distinguishes this group is the addition of an extra syllable in the present tense and this makes the first-person singular form the same in the present and the past. Because of the extra syllable, this group is sometimes known as 'the long conjugation'. The **j** is added to avoid having two vowels together. The verbs are conjugated by removing the final **-t** and then adding endings as follows.

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Non-reflexive		
es	-ju	-ju
tu	–	-ji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	–	-ja
mēs	-jam	-jām
jūs	-jat	-jāt

	Present	Past
Reflexive		
es	-jos	-jos
tu	-jies	-jies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	-jas	-jās
mēs	-jamies	-jāties
jūs	-jaties	-jāties

Examples	Present	Past
strādāt 'to work'		
spēlēt 'to play' (tr.)		
dzīvot 'to work'		
dabūt 'to get'		
mazgāties 'to wash' (o.s.)		
spēlēties 'to play' (intr.)		
lepoties 'to be proud'		

Non-reflexive

es	strādāju spēlēju dzīvoju dabūju	strādāju spēlēju dzīvoju dabūju
tu	strādā spēlē dzīvo dabū	strādāji spēlēji dzīvoji dabūji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	strādā spēlē dzīvo dabū	strādāja spēlēja dzīvoja dabūja
mēs	strādājam spēlējam dzīvojam dabūjam	strādājām spēlējām dzīvojām dabūjām
jūs	strādājat spēlējat dzīvojat dabūjat	strādājāt spēlējāt dzīvojāt dabūjāt

Examples	Present	Past
strādāt 'to work'		
spēlēt 'to play' (tr.)		
dzīvot 'to work'		
dabūt 'to get'		
mazgāties 'to wash' (o.s.)		
spēlēties 'to play' (intr.)		
lepoties 'to be proud'		
Reflexive		
es	mazgājos spēlējos lepojos	mazgājos spēlējos lepojos
tu	mazgājies spēlējies lepojies	mazgājies spēlējies lepojies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	mazgājas spēlējas lepojas	mazgājās spēlējās lepojās
mēs	mazgājamies spēlējamies lepojamies	mazgājāmies spēlējāmies lepojāmies
jūs	mazgājaties spēlējaties lepojaties	mazgājāties spēlējāties lepojāties

8.2.4 Third conjugation – trešā konjugācija

This group contains verbs ending in **-āt**, e.g. **dziedāt** 'to sing'; **-ēt**, e.g. **gribēt** 'to want'; **-īt**, e.g. **rakstīt** 'to write'; **-ināt**, e.g. **aicināt** 'to invite'. The reflexive endings are **-āties**, e.g. **iedziedāties** 'to start singing'; **-ēties**, e.g. **peldēties** 'to swim'; **-īties**, e.g. **sarakstīties** 'to correspond'; **-ināties**, e.g. **sazināties** 'to communicate'.

As we have already seen, the vast majority of verbs ending in **-āt/-āties** belong to the second conjugation. In fact, there are only two non-reflexive/reflexive pairs which belong to the third conjugation, i.e. **dziedāt** 'to sing'/'**iedziedāties** 'to start singing' and **raudāt** 'to cry'/'**apraudāties** 'to shed tears'. Appendix 1 has a list of the most common verbs ending in **-ēt/-ēties**.

The third conjugation is divided into two subgroups:

- Verbs ending in **-āt/-āties** and **-ēt/-ēties** take the following endings after the infinitive ending is taken off; for the present tense the **-āt/-āties** and **-ēt/-ēties** are taken off before adding the endings; for the past tense **-t/-ties** is taken off leaving the vowel.

	Present	Past
Non-reflexive		
es	-u	-ju
tu	-i	-ji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	—	-ja
mēs	-am	-jām
jūs	-at	-jāt
Reflexive		
es	-os	-jos
tu	-ies	-jies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	-as	-jās
mēs	-amies	-jāties
jūs	-aties	-jāties

Examples	Present	Past
<i>dziedāt</i> 'to sing'		
<i>gribēt</i> 'to want'		
<i>iedziedāties</i> 'to start singing'		
<i>peldēties</i> 'to swim'		

Non-reflexive		
es	dziedu gribu	dziedāju gribēju
tu	dziedi gribi	dziedāji gribēji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	dzied grib	dziedāja gribēja
mēs	dziedam gribam	dziedājām gribējām
jūs	dziedat gribat	dziedājāt gribējāt
Reflexive		
es	iedziedos peldos	iedziedājos peldējos
tu	iedziedies peldies	iedziedājies peldējies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	iedziedas peldas	iedziedājās peldējās
mēs	iedziedamies peldamies	iedziedājāmies peldējāmies
jūs	iedziedaties peldaties	iedziedājāties peldējāties

- The second subgroup comprises verbs ending in **-īt/-īties** and **-ināt/-ināties**. The endings in the third-person singular and in the second- and third-person plural are slightly different; for the present tense the **-īt/-īties** and **-āt/-āties** are taken off before adding the endings; for the past tense **-t/-ties** is taken off leaving the vowel.

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
Non-reflexive		
es	-u	-ju
tu	-i	-ji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	-a	-ja
mēs	-ām	-jām
jūs	-āt	-jāt
Reflexive		
es	-os	-jos
tu	-ies	-jies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	-ās	-jās
mēs	-āties	-jāties
jūs	-āties	-jāties
<hr/>		
<i>Examples</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>
rakstīt 'to write'		
aicināt 'to invite'		
sarakstīties 'to correspond'		
sazināties 'to communicate'		
Non-reflexive		
es	rakstu	rakstīju
	aicinu	aicināju
tu	raksti	rakstīji
	aicini	aicināji
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	raksta	rakstīja
	aicina	aicināja
mēs	rakstām	rakstījām
	aicinām	aicinājām
jūs	rakstāt	rakstījāt
	aicināt	aicinājāt

Examples	Present	Past
rakstīt 'to write'		
aicināt 'to invite'		
sarakstīties 'to correspond'		
sazināties 'to communicate'		
<hr/>		
Reflexive		
es	sarakstos sazinos	sarakstījos sazinājos
tu	saraksties sazinies	sarakstījies sazinājies
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	sarakstās sazinās	sarakstījās sazinājās
mēs	sarakstāmies sazināmies	sarakstījāmies sazinājāmies
jūs	sarakstāties sazināties	sarakstījāties sazinājāties

8.3 Tenses – laiki

8.3.1 Simple present – vienkāršā tagadne

Latvian has only one present tense so it is the equivalent of both present tenses in English, e.g. *es rakstu* means 'I write' and 'I am writing'. In general, it is used just as both of these tenses in English.

Katru dienu rakstu daudz epastu.

Every day I write lots of emails.

Pašreiz rakstu draugam epastu.

At the moment I'm writing an email to my friend.

Just as in English, the present tense is used to relate the content of a film, book, etc.:

Devušies leģendārās Jaunības Strūklakas meklējumos, Džeks Sperovs nonāk kapteiņa Melnā Bārda gūstā, kurš kopā ar savu meitu arī vēlas atrast šo brīnumaino strūklaku.

Having set out to find the legendary Fountain of Youth, Jack Sparrow becomes a prisoner of Captain Blackbeard who, together with his daughter, also wants to find this wondrous fountain.

The present tense can be used to talk about an action which is going to happen at a predetermined time in the near future and so is the equivalent of using the present tense in English with a future meaning:

Vilciens atiet šovakar plkst. 18:00. The train leaves this evening at 1800 hours.
Rīt ēju pie vecmāmiņas. (I)'m going to my grandmother's tomorrow.

One use of the present tense which is different from English is when an action was started in the past and continues into the present in which case English uses the present perfect tense. Latvian uses the present tense and often adds the word *jau* 'already':

Dzīvoju jau vairākus gadus Rīgā. (I) have lived in Riga for several years. (lit. (I) live ...)

8.3.2 *Simple past – vienkāršā pagātne*

As for the present tense, Latvian has only one simple past tense which is the equivalent of both past tenses in English, e.g. *es rakstīju* means 'I wrote' and 'I was writing'. The use is generally the same as in English:

Vakar braucu mājās no Francijas.
I travelled home from France yesterday.
Vakar braucu mājās no Francijas, kad satiku vecu paziņu.
I was travelling home from France yesterday when I met an old acquaintance.

8.3.3 *Simple future – vienkāršā nākotne*

The future tense refers to actions or states which will happen in the future and as such the Latvian simple future tense is the equivalent of the English 'will', 'be going to' and 'will be -ing' constructions, e.g. *es lasīšu* means 'I will read', 'I am going to read' and 'I will be reading'.

The formation and conjugation of the future tense is relatively simple and regular. For most verbs the *-t* or *-ties* ending is taken off the infinitive and the following endings are added:

	es	tu	viņš, viņa viņi, viņas	mēs	jūs
Non-reflexive	-šu	-si	-s	-sim	-siet, -sit
Reflexive	-šos	-sies	-sies	-simies	-sieties, -sities

The three irregular verbs follow this pattern as well. The second-person plural has two possible endings both of which are correct but the **-siet** and **-sieties** endings are more common. Here are a couple of examples of the future conjugation:

	es	tu	viņš, viņa viņi, viņas	mēs	jūs
lasīt 'to read'					
klausīties 'to listen'					
Non-reflexive	lasīšu	lasīsi	lasīs	lasīsim	lasīsiet lasīsīt
Reflexive	klausīšos	klausīsies	klausīsies	klausīsimies	klausīsieties klausīsities

There are a couple of exceptions to the general rule of removing the **-t** or **-ties** ending from the infinitive and then adding the future endings. In first-conjugation verbs, if the infinitive stem ends in **s** after the **t** is removed, e.g. **ēst** 'to eat', **sis-t** 'to hit', **nes-t** 'to carry', then we need to look at how the past tense is formed and use the letter used to form the past-tense stem in the future tense instead of the **s** – this will be a **d** or a **t**, or will in fact stay as an **s** – and an infixed **ī** is added for pronunciation purposes:

- **ēst** becomes **ēdu** in the past so the future is **ēdīšu** in the first-person singular
- **sist** becomes **situ** in the past so the future is **sitīšu**
- **nest** becomes **nesu** in the past so the future is **nesīšu**.

The other endings follow the ones given above. The same principle applies to reflexive verbs:

- **ierasties** 'to arrive' changes to **ierados** in the past so the future is **ieradišos**
- **saprasties** 'to get on' changes to **sapratos** in the past so the future is **sapratīšos**
- **nesties** 'to rush' becomes **nesos** in the past so the future is **nesīšos**.

	es	tu	viņš, viņa viņi, viņas	mēs	jūs
Non-reflexive					
ēst 'to eat'	ēdīšu	ēdīsi	ēdīs	ēdīsim	ēdīsiet, ēdīsīt
sist 'to hit'	sitīšu	sitīsi	sitīs	sitīsim	sitīsiet, sitīsīt
nest 'to carry'	nesīšu	nesīsi	nesīs	nesīsim	nesīsiet, nesīsīt
Reflexive					
ierasties 'to arrive'	ieradīšos	ieradīsies	ieradīsies	ieradīsimies	ieradīsieties ieradīsities
saprasties 'to get on'	sapratīšos	sapratīsies	sapratīsies	sapratīsimies	sapratīsieties sapatīsities
nesties 'to rush'	nesīšos	nesīsies	nesīsies	nesīsimies	nesīsieties nesīsities

Another exception to the general rule is when the stem ends in a *z* after the infinitive ending is taken off. Here again we add an infixed *ī* for pronunciation purposes so we get, for example, **lauzt** 'to break' which becomes **lauzīšu** in the future.

The future is used very much as the future tenses in English. However, it also tends to replace the English present continuous tense when it is used with a future meaning. The present tense can be used with a future meaning in Latvian when there is a pre-determined time for the action to take place:

Es nākamnedēļ braucu uz Franciju. I'm travelling to France next week.

In other cases the simple future is used:

Es šogad nebraukšu atvaļinājumā. I'm not going to go on holiday this year.

The simple future is also used in a general sense:

Ko sēsi, to plausi. As you sow, so shall you reap. (lit. As you shall sow,...)

8.3.4 Perfect tenses – saliktie laiki

The compound or perfect tenses are the equivalent of 'to have' plus the past participle in English, e.g. 'I have written'. In Latvian they are formed using the verbs **būt** 'to be' and **nebūt** 'not to be' plus the active past participle. For non-reflexive verbs the past participle is formed from the past tense by taking the past-tense endings off and adding the following gender- and number-specific endings:

masculine singular	-is	masculine plural	-uši
feminine singular	-usi	feminine plural	-ušās

Taking **rakstīt** 'to write' as an example, the third-person past tense is **rakstīja**, take off the -a and we are left with **rakstīj-**. So we can now put the complete present perfect together:

es esmu rakstījis	I (masc.) have written
tu esi rakstījusi	you (fem. sing.) have written
viņi nav rakstījuši	they (masc. pl.) have not written
mēs neesam rakstījušas	we (fem.) have not written

For a reflexive verb the past participle is formed in the same way by using the past tense and then the following endings are added:

masculine singular	-ies	masculine plural	-ušies
feminine singular	-usies	feminine plural	-ušās

Taking **klausīties** 'to listen' as an example, the third-person past tense is **klausījās**, take off the -ās and we are left with **klaistīj-**:

viņš nav klausījies	he has not listened
viņa ir klausījusies	she has listened
jūs neesat klausījušies	you (masc. pl.) have not listened
viņas ir klausījušās	they (fem.) have listened

To form the *past perfect*, or pluperfect, we simply use the past tense of **būt** or **nebūt**:

jūs bijāt rakstījis	you (pol. sing.) had written
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And for the *future perfect* we use the future of **būt** or **nebūt**:

viņas nebūs rakstījušas	they (fem.) will not have written
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------

In forming the past participle, it is important to be aware of the **k/c** and **g/dz** interchange. The masculine singular will have **c** or **dz** in the stem of the past participle, regardless of what the past-tense stem is, as it is followed by **i** or **ies**, whereas the other forms will have **k** and **g**, respectively, as they are followed by **u**:

braukt 'to drive, travel' → past tense brauca	
viņš ir braucis	he has driven
viņi nav braukuši	they (masc.) have not driven
viņa ir braukusi	she has driven
viņas nav braukušas	they (fem.) have not driven

vilkt 'to pull' → past tense vilka	
viņš ir vilcis	he has pulled
viņi nav vilkuši	they (masc.) have not pulled
viņa ir vilkusi	she has pulled
viņas nav vilkušas	they (fem.) have not pulled

aizmigt 'to fall asleep' → past tense aizmiga	
viņš ir aizmiedzis	he has fallen asleep
viņi nav aizmiguši	they (masc.) have not fallen asleep
viņa ir aizmigusi	she has fallen asleep
viņas nav aizmigušas	they (fem.) have not fallen asleep

Use of the perfect tenses is very similar to the perfect in English but there are some exceptions as described below.

Present perfect – saliktā tagadne

- Used when one action precedes another in the present tense:

Jānis ir paēdis un tagad lasa avīzi.

Janis has eaten and is now reading the newspaper.

- Used when the consequences of an action are in the present:

Esmu pazaudējis atslēgas – netieku iekšā dzīvoklī.

I've lost my keys – I can't get into the flat.

- Used when an action is finished but no time is given as to when it happened:

Esmu bijusi Parīzē. I (fem.) have been to Paris.

But when a time is given, the simple past tense must be used:

Pagaišgad biju Parīzē. I was in Paris last year.

However, it is possible to use the present perfect together with a definite time if the action still has current relevance:

Grāmata, kura klajā nākusi jau pagaišgad, ir svarīga mūsdienu vecākiem.

The book, which was published last year, is important for today's parents. (lit... which (has been) published ...)

The implication here is that, although the book was published last year, it is still available now.

- As in English, the auxiliary verb can be omitted in a relative clause as we saw in the last point:

Grāmata, kura klajā nākusi jau pagaišgad, ...

The book, published last year, ... (lit. (The) book, which published ...)

- Used where English uses the verb ‘to be’ with an adjective which is in effect a past participle and denotes an action in the past with consequences in the present:

Viņi ir noguruši.

They are tired.

Viņa ir precējusies.

She is married.

Viņš ir šķīries.

He is divorced.

Es esmu dzimis 1980. gadā.

I was born in 1980. (Note the use of the present perfect here in Latvian.)

This use is far more common in Latvian which has more of these past participles than English does:

Viņa ir noskumusi.

She is sad.

- One difference from English is when describing an action which begins in the past and continues into the present where English uses the present perfect. In Latvian the present tense is used, often with the addition of *jau* ‘already’:

Es jau divdesmit gadu dzīvoju Rīgā.

I’ve lived/been living in Riga for twenty years. (lit. I live ...)

Although this is the normal construction, it is also possible to use the present perfect if there is an element of surprise at the length of time:

Viņš nerunā franciski, lai gan viņš Francijā nodzīvojis jau divdesmit gadu.

He doesn’t speak French even though he (has) lived in France for twenty years.

- The auxiliary verb *būt* can often be omitted as we saw in the last point:

...viņš Francijā nodzīvojis ...

It is also often omitted in impersonal constructions:

Kas noticis? What (has) happened?

Past perfect – saliktā pagātne

- Denotes an action which happens before another action in the past:

Kad viņa atnāca, mēs jau bijām paēduši.

When she arrived, we had already eaten.

- Used where English uses the verb ‘to be’ with an adjective which is in effect a past participle and denotes an action which happened before the time in the past with consequences in the past:

Viņi bija noguruši. They were tired.

- A similar adjectival use of the past participle is found in a sentence such as:

Vakar biju aizbraukusi uz Valmieru.

Yesterday (I) travelled to Valmiera. (lit. ... (I) had travelled ...).

Future perfect – saliktā nākotne

- Denotes an action that will have happened before another action in the simple future:

Kad būsim paēduši, mēs iesim uz kino.

When (we) have eaten, we'll go to the cinema. (lit. When (we) will have eaten...)

This is different from English which uses the present perfect in this case.

- Can be used to soften a criticism:

Tu nu gan būsi maldījusies.

I'm afraid you might be mistaken. (lit. You will have been mistaken.)

- Used in the adjectival function:

Mēs būsim noguruši pēc garās pastaigas.

We will be tired after the long walk.

- Used where there is uncertainty about an event in the present:

Viņa laikam būs jau aizbraukusi atvaļinājumā.

She'll have probably already gone on holiday.

8.4 Imperfective and perfective aspect – nepabeigtie un pabeigtie darbības veidi

Imperfective has the meaning of ‘unfinished’ and *perfective* means ‘finished’ when referring to the action of a verb. This is expressed by the use of verb prefixes and adverbs. As an example compare *pirkt* ‘to buy’ which

describes the process of buying and **nopirk** ‘to buy’ which means that the buying action is completed:

Viņš pirka puķes.

He was buying some flowers.

Viņš nopirka puķes.

He bought some flowers.

The addition of the prefix **no-** changes the meaning of this verb from imperfective to perfective. The prefix here has no other function and in fact cannot be translated into English apart from using the continuous and simple forms of the verb as indicated in the examples. However, we cannot say that the imperfective and perfective are the equivalents of these two tenses in English as the simple tense can also be used to translate the imperfective:

Katru nedēļu viņš pērk puķes savai mātei.

He buys flowers for his mother every week.

In general, verbs without prefixes are imperfective, but not all prefixes necessarily make a verb perfective. Many prefixes change the meaning of a verb rather than making it perfective. In the example of **rakstīt** ‘to write’, **norakstīt** means ‘to copy’, **parakstīt** means ‘to sign’, **pārrakstīt** means ‘to re-write’, **aprakstīt** means ‘to describe’, but **uzrakstīt** means ‘to write’ and finish writing.

Es visu vakaru rakstīju vēstules. Uzrakstīju arī vienu draugiem Kanādā.

I was writing letters all evening. I also wrote one to friends in Canada.

Another prefix which is sometimes used in a purely perfective function is **pa-**:

Ko tu dari?

What are you doing?

Savu labo darbu esmu padarījis.

I’ve done my good deed.

The prefix **no-** is the one used with loan words to show the perfective aspect, e.g. **nofotogrāfēt** ‘to photograph’.

Adverbs are used together with unprefixed verbs of motion to distinguish the imperfective and perfective aspect. For example, **slēgt vaļā** ‘to unlock’ describes the action of unlocking while **atslēgt** ‘to unlock’ infers the completed action:

Slēdz vaļā seifu!

Unlock the safe!

Viņš atslēdza seifu.

He unlocked the safe.

An adverb can be used together with its corresponding prefix in which case the verb has a perfective meaning. Prepositions can also be added and these will often be the same as the prefix. Here are some of the most common adverbs together with their corresponding prefixes, as well as some prepositions as examples:

apkārt	around	ap-	Bēni skraidīja apkārt. Children were running around. Grāmata nav nevienā bibliotēkā! Visas apskrēju. The book isn't in any library. (I) ran round them all.
ārā	outside	iz-	Viņa izgāja ārā no istabas. She went out of the room. (lit. went outside of ...) Viņa gāja ārā no istabas. She was going out of the room.
iekšā	inside	ie-	Nāciet iekšā! Come inside! Viņš ienāca istabā un aizvēra durvis. He came into the room and shut the door.
klāt	near	pie-	Viņš nāca man klāt. He came close to me. Viņš pienāca pie manis. He came up to me.
nost	off	no-	Kāp nost! Get down! Viņš nokāpa no mūra. He climbed down from the wall.
pāri (adv./prep.)	over	pār-	Mēs lidojām pāri jūrai. We were flying over the sea. Mēs pārlidojām jūru. We flew over the sea.
prom/projām	away	aiz-	Viņi iet prom. They are going away. Viņi ir aizgājuši. They have gone away.
šurp	here	at-	Nāc šurp! Come here! Viņš atnāca sešos. He came at six.

The active voice is when the subject of the sentence is the ‘doer’ of the action, e.g. ‘The ancient Egyptians built pyramids’. The passive voice is when the subject of the sentence has an action done to it, e.g. ‘Pyramids were built in ancient Egypt’. All the tenses described above are in the active so the rest of this section will concentrate on the passive.

Latvian uses a choice of two auxiliary verbs plus the passive past participle to form the passive. The passive past participle is simply the infinitive with indefinite or definite adjective endings (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2), e.g. *celt* ‘to build’ → *celts* ‘built’. The participle has to agree with the noun or pronoun in gender, number and case so the complete range of adjective endings is used.

The two auxiliary verbs, as well as their negative forms with the prefix *ne-*, are:

- **tikt** has many different meanings as a verb in its own right but they are not relevant here – it is the most common passive auxiliary
- **būt** ‘to be’.

The passive is used in all six tenses as outlined in Section 8.3 by using the auxiliary verb in the relevant tense. The simple tenses use the auxiliary **tikt** (see below for conjugation), whereas the perfect tenses, in general, use **būt** (see Section 8.2.1 for conjugation) although using **tikt** in the perfect tense is also possible.

tikt	<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Future</i>
es	tieku	tiku	tikšu
tu	tiec	tiki	tiksi
viņš, viņa, viņi, viņas	tiek	tika	tiks
mēs	tiekam	tikām	tiksim
jūs	tiekat	tikāt	tiksiet, tiksit

Muiža tiek restaurēta ar arzemju finansiālu atbalstu.

The manor house is being restored with overseas financial aid.

Pie piramīdu būves tika nodarbināti simtiem tūkstošu strādnieku.

Hundreds of thousands of workers were employed in the building of the pyramids.

Koncerta datums tiks noskaidrots nākamā gada sākumā.

The date of the concert will be clarified at the beginning of next year.

The perfect tenses convey a more perfective aspect (see Section 8.4) implying that the action is finished rather than ongoing as in the examples above:

Pasaulē pirmā Skype telefona būdiņa ir uzbūvēta Tallinas lidostā.

The world's first Skype telephone booth has been built at Tallinn Airport.
(lit. In the world first ...)

Tik daudz sniega nebija gaidīts, tāpēc sniega arkli nebija sagatavoti.

So much snow hadn't been expected so the snow ploughs hadn't been prepared.

Šeit tu būsi vienmēr gaidīts.

You will always be welcome here. (lit. ... expected ...)

The passive is used in the imperative with the auxiliary **būt** in the imperative form (see Section 8.8.2):

Esiet laipni gaidīti!

We look forward to welcoming you (pl./pol.). (lit. Be politely expected.)

There is one conditional form of the passive using the auxiliary **tiktu**, i.e. the conditional form (see Section 8.8.3):

Kas nepieciešams, lai tiktu pieņemts vēlamajā amatā?

What is necessary (in order) to be employed in (one's) desired post?

The relative mood has four tenses – the simple present and future using **tikt** as the auxiliary, and two perfect tenses – the present perfect and the future perfect using **būt** as the auxiliary (see Section 8.8.5):

Patlaban tiekot apkopota informācija, un daļēji ir izveidota datu bāze.

At the moment information is apparently being aggregated and a database has (apparently) been partially developed.

Līgums ar hokejistu tikšot pagarināts uz vienu gadu.

The contract with the ice-hockey player is apparently going to be extended for another year.

In Latvian a passive is used in constructions where there is no agent:

Avīzes tiek pārdotas kioskā.

Newspapers are sold in the kiosk.

We cannot add 'by the sales assistant' to this sentence as in Latvian this construction is not possible. Nor can we say 'newspapers are sold by the sales assistant'. If it is important to add the agent, i.e. 'the sales assistant' in our example, then we have to change the sentence into an active one.

The way Latvian conveys a passive meaning in an active sentence is by putting the object at the beginning of the sentence:

Avīzes pārdod pārdevēja.

Newspapers are sold by the sales assistant. (lit. Newspapers sells the sales assistant.)

Another use for this active with a passive meaning is in the following example – a passive sentence would be:

Viņš tika pieņemts jaunā amatā. He was employed in a new post.

However, the passive meaning can also be expressed by using an active verb in the third person but without a subject, corresponding to the formal use of ‘one’ in English; again the object comes at the beginning of the sentence:

Viņu pieņēma jaunā amatā.

He was employed in a new post. (lit. Him (one) employed in a new job.)

A similar use happens in constructions such as in the equivalent to the English ‘it was confirmed that . . .’:

Apstiprināja, ka . . . It was confirmed that . . . (lit. (One) confirmed that . . .)

8.6 Infinitives – nenoteiksmē

The infinitive is the basic form of the verb which is found in the dictionary. Infinitives in Latvian always end in -t for non-reflexive verbs and -ties for reflexive verbs.

In general their use is very similar to English. For example, in constructions with two verbs, the second verb is in the infinitive:

Bērns grib dzert. The child wants to drink.

Man patīk slēpot. I like skiing. (lit. To me like to ski.)

Man nav kur dzīvot. I have nowhere to live. (lit. To me is not where to live.)

The infinitive is also used after certain adverbs (where English uses an adjective) such as **grūti** ‘difficult’, **viegli** ‘easy’, **žēl** ‘sad, sorry’. In these phrases the verb **būt** ‘to be’ can be omitted as it is understood:

Man grūti panest kritiku.

(It’s) difficult for me to take criticism.

Vai viegli būt jaunam? (1986 film by Juris Podnieks)

(Is it) easy to be young?

Žēl to dzirdēt.

Sorry to hear that.

A difference from English is that Latvian has infinitive sentences such as:

Ko man darīt?

What should I do? (lit. What to me to do?)

8.7 Participles – divdabji

In English, words such as ‘going’ and ‘gone’ are participles. Latvian has rather more types than English.

8.7.1 Active present participle -ošs – daramās kārtas tagadnes divdabji -ošs

This is the equivalent of the present participle ending in ‘-ing’ in English when this is used in an adjectival function to describe something that is happening concurrently, e.g. ‘a motivating job’. It is formed by adding -ošs to the stem of a verb, i.e. after removing the final -u ending from the first-person singular, and this is then declined exactly the same as definite and indefinite adjectives (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2):

motivēju ‘(I) motivate’ → **motivējošs** ‘motivating’

motivējošs darbs a motivating job

motivējošā filma the motivating film

If the present-tense stem of the verb ends in š or ž, then it is more common to use the past-tense stem as an alternative form:

ciešu ‘(I) suffer’, **cietu** ‘(I) suffered’ → **cietošs** ‘suffering’

graužu ‘(I) gnaw’, **grauzu** ‘(I) gnawed’ → **grauzošs** ‘gnawing’

The active present participle for reflexive verbs is rare and it does not have a full declension. It is formed by removing the -os ending from the first-person singular and then adding the following endings:

	Masculine		Feminine	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	—	kustošies	—	kustošās
Genitive	—	kustošos	kustošās	kustošos
Dative	—	—	—	—
Accusative	kustošos	kustošos	kustošos	kustošās
Locative	—	—	—	—

Ātri kustošies elektroni nespēj apstāties.

Fast moving electrons are unable to stop.

Ir svarīgi ieelļot kustošos mehānismus.

It's important to oil the moving mechanisms.

Since many of the declensions are missing, a sentence would need to be reformulated if it were to contain a missing case. For example, it is not possible to form a nominative singular from the verb **darboties** 'to work, operate'; therefore a construction such as **šis ārzemēs darbojošais uzņēmums** 'this company operating abroad' is not possible. This sentence needs to be reformulated to:

Šis uzņēmums, kurš darbojas ārzemēs, ir pārcietis ekonomisko krīzi.

This company, which operates abroad, has survived the economic crisis.

8.7.2 Active present participle -ot/-oties – daramās kārtas tagadnes divdabis -ot/-oties

The -ot present participle is the equivalent of the English '-ing' present participle when it is used as a non-finite verb, e.g. 'going into the room, he saw ...'. For non-reflexive verbs it is formed from the present-tense stem by taking the -u ending off the present-tense first-person singular and then adding -ot: **eju** 'I go' → **ejot** 'going'. For reflexive verbs the -os ending is taken off the present-tense first-person singular and -oties is added: **klausos** 'I listen' → **klausoties** 'listening'. This participle is not conjugated. It is used to indicate an action happening at the same time as the main action in the sentence:

Studiju laikā daudz laika pavadīju serfojot internetā un klausoties mūziku.

During my studies I spent a lot of time surfing the internet and listening to music. (lit. ...in the internet ...)

Ir pierādīts, ka klausoties mūziku putekļu sūkšanas laikā, pieaug tīrīšanas efektivitāte.

It has been proven that listening to music while vacuuming increases the effectiveness of cleaning. (lit. ...listening to music during the time of vacuuming, the effectiveness of cleaning increases.)

The dative is used to indicate who is doing the action in a clause containing an -ot/-oties participle if the subjects of the two clauses are different:

Govīm klausoties Mocarta mūziku, piena raža ir 3,5 reizes lielāka nekā parasti.

If cows listen to music by Mozart, the milk yield is 3.5 times bigger than usual. (lit. For cows listening to ...)

If 'the cows' is the subject of both clauses, we could say:

Klausoties Mocarta mūziku, govīs pienu dod 3,5 reizes vairāk nekā parasti.

Listening to music by Mozart, cows give 3.5 times more milk than normal.

8.7.3 Active present participle **-dams/-damies – daramās kārtas tagadnes divdabis -dams/-damies**

This participle has the same meaning as the **-ot/-oties** participle in the previous section and is used more in writing and in formal speech. For non-reflexive verbs it is formed by taking the **-t** off the infinitive and then adding the participle ending:

masculine singular: -dams	masculine plural: -dami
feminine singular: -dama	feminine plural: -damas

For reflexive verbs the **-ties** ending is taken off and then the participle ending is added. This time there are only two endings – masculine and feminine:

masculine singular and plural: -damies
feminine singular and plural: -damās

Care has to be taken if the infinitive stem ends in **s** or **z** as the past-tense stem is then taken into consideration:

nest 'to carry' → **nesu** '(I) carried' → **nesdams** 'carrying'
lauzt 'to break' → **lauzu** '(I) broke' → **lauzdams** 'breaking'

These two examples do not pose any problems, but now look at the next two: the **d** and **t** endings in the past stem are changed to **z** in the participle:

vest 'to take, transport' → **vedu** '(I) took, transported' → **vezdams** 'taking, transporting'
mest 'to throw' → **metu** '(I) threw' → **mezdams** 'throwing'

This participle can simply be used with an adjectival function as it is in this sentence to reinforce the verb:

Žurka šņukst šņukstēdama.

A rat, sobbing, is sobbing (Latvian tongue twister).

When using this participle in a separate clause, the subject in both the clause with the participle and the main clause has to be the same, as well as the time of the actions being concurrent:

Mazais suņuks skrēja pie visiem garāmgājējiem, luncinādams asti un mēģinādams viņus aplaizīt.

The wee doggy ran up to all the passers-by, wagging his tail and trying to lick them.

Viņa gulēja zālē, skatīdamās mākoņos un klausīdamās, kā apkārt sienāži sisināja.

She lay in the grass, looking at the clouds and listening as the grasshoppers chirped. (lit. ...looking into clouds ...)

In addition, the subject of the main clause must be in the nominative case. If we change the last sentence to make the main clause *viņai uznāca miegs* ... 'she became sleepy ...', we are no longer able to use the same participle as the subject of the main clause is no longer in the nominative so we have to say:

Skatoties mākoņos un klausoties, kā apkārt sienāži sisināja, viņai uznāca miegs.

Looking at the clouds and listening as the grasshoppers chirped, she became sleepy. (lit. Looking into clouds ...)

8.7.4 Active present participle -am/-ām, -amies/-āmies – daramās kārtas tagadnes divdabis -am/-ām, -amies/-āmies

This is another equivalent of the English '-ing' participle but this time it is associated with the 'doer' of the action in the accusative, i.e. it is the object of a concurrent action in the main clause:

Es klausījos meiteni dziedam. I listened to the girl singing.

The participle is formed from the present-tense stem of non-reflexive verbs by taking the first-person ending off and adding **-am**; in effect it is the same as the present first-person plural form. It is not declinable:

dziedu '(I) sing' → **dziedam** 'singing'

In third-conjugation verbs which have a long *ā* in the first-person plural form (see Section 8.2.4), this is also used in the participle:

rakstām '(we) write' → **rakstām** 'writing'

For reflexive verbs, the -os ending is taken off and then -amies is added:

gatavojos 'I get ready' → **gatavojamies** 'getting ready'

And again, if third-conjugation verbs have a long ā in the first-person plural form, this is kept:

mācāmies 'we learn' → **mācāmies** 'learning'

The use of this participle is restricted to being associated with verbs such as **dzirdēt** 'to hear', **redzēt** 'to see', etc.:

Redzēju melnus mākoņus nākam. I saw black clouds coming.

Es dzirdēju viņu krācam. I heard him/her snoring.

8.7.5 Active past participle – daramās kārtas pagātnes divdabīs

We have already dealt with the active past participle in Section 8.3.4 as it is used in the perfect tenses. In addition to this use, the active past participle can also be used in an adjectival function:

novītušās puķes

the wilted flowers

noguruši strādnieki

tired workers (masc.)

Some active past participles can be used as nouns:

kritušais

the fallen (man)

pieaugušie

adults, grown-ups

The past participle can be used to introduce a clause as the equivalent of the English 'having ...':

legājis istabā, viņš sajuta svaigu dārzeņu un ceptas vistas aromātu.

Having gone into the room, he smelt fresh vegetables and fried chicken.

(lit...he felt the smell of fresh vegetables...)

8.7.6 Passive present participle – ciešamās kārtas tagadnes divdabīs

We could say that this participle is rather like the English adjectives ending in '-able' or '-ible', e.g. 'drinkable', 'legible'. It is formed in exactly the same way as the -am/-ām participle for non-reflexive verbs only (see Section 8.7.4) but it is declinable so agrees with the noun in gender, number and case using indefinite and definite adjective endings (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2):

dzeramais ūdens

drinking water

ēdamās sēnes

edible mushrooms

The use of this participle includes the following.

- A passive function:

Vai jums ir pārdodams īpašums?

Do you have a property for sale? (lit. ...sellable property, i.e. property to be sold.)

- To indicate possibility:

Vai šis ūdens ir dzerams vai ne?

Is this water drinkable or not?

- To indicate necessity or permissibility:

Privātīpašums ir neaizskarams.

Private property is sacrosanct. (lit. ... is not to be touched.)

- As a noun:

rakstāmais a writing implement, something to write with

The meaning of this participle can sometimes also be conveyed using the -ošs participle so there can be two possibilities. The -ams participle is considered to be more correct:

nākamā nedēļa – nākošā nedēļa the coming/next week

In this example of the two possibilities, **nākams** is used for time, whereas **nākošs** is correctly used for something moving under its own power, e.g. **nākošais tramvajs** 'the coming tram' although colloquially it is used for time as well.

8.7.7 *Passive past participle – ciešamās kārtas pagātnes divdabis*

We have dealt with the passive past participle in Section 8.5 when describing the passive. In addition, the passive past participle can be used in an adjectival function:

Daudz cilāts akmens nesūno.

A much lifted stone does not gather moss (Latvian proverb). (A rolling stone gathers no moss.)

Some of these adjectival participles can be used as nouns:

Pusmācīts sliktāks par nemācītu.

A half-taught (person) is worse than an untaught (person) (Latvian proverb). (Better untaught than ill-taught.)

8.8 Mood – izteiksmes**8.8.1 Indicative – īstenības izteiksmes**

The indicative is what we might consider to be the ‘normal’ verb – all the verbs we considered under Tenses (Section 8.3) are indicative. The remaining moods in this section are not. The Latvian name for this mood is the ‘reality mood’.

8.8.2 Imperative – pavēles izteiksmes

The imperative is the command form, e.g. ‘sit down!’.

Second person: The second-person singular and plural imperative is what we usually think of as the command form.

The second-person singular imperative uses the second-person singular present-tense form for both non-reflexive and reflexive verbs, e.g. *lasī!* ‘read!’, *runā!* ‘speak!’, *nāc!* ‘come!’, *klausies!* ‘listen!’.

In non-reflexive verbs the second-person plural imperative is formed from the second-person singular by basically adding *-iet*. If the second-person singular ends in a consonant, then the *-iet* ending is added without any further modification:

nāc → *nāciet!* come!

If the second-person singular ends in *-i*, then this is removed before adding the *-iet*:

lasī → *lasiet!* read!

If the second-person singular ends in a vowel, then a *j* is added to separate the vowels:

runā → *runājiet!* speak!

It is important to use the second-person singular to form the plural imperative. Although the plural imperative looks very similar to the second-person plural present tense, it keeps any idiosyncrasies that the second-person singular has, e.g. *nākt* ‘to come’ → *nāc* ‘(you) come (sing.)’, *nākat* ‘(you) come (pl.)’ – the singular imperative is *nāc!* and the plural is *nāciet!* which keeps the *c* from the singular rather than using the *k* from the second-person plural present tense. Similarly, the pronunciation of the plural form follows that

of the singular form. The second person singular uses the narrow *e*, e.g. *ēst* ‘to eat’ → *ēd* ‘(you) eat (sing.)’, *ēdat* [æ] ‘(you) eat (pl.)’ – the singular imperative is *ēd!* and the plural is *ēdiet!*, both with a narrow *e*.

Reflexive verbs use *-ieties* to form the plural imperative form, e.g. *klausieties!* ‘listen! (pl./pol.)’. The notes for non-reflexive verbs hold true for reflexives as well:

mazgājieties! ‘wash yourself (pol.) / yourselves (pl.)!’ where the extra *j* has been added to separate vowels

negrūdieties! ‘don’t push! (pl./pol.)’ where the *d* has been kept from the second-person singular imperative rather than using the *ž* from the second-person plural present form

celieties! ‘get up! (pl./pol.)’ where the *e* is narrow

Occasionally, the infinitive is used as an imperative, but this has a much stronger tone and would be used, for example, in the army, e.g. *sēsties!* ‘sit down!’. However, the infinitive is used in non-personal instructions, e.g. on the Internet:

Meklēt.	Search.
Parādīt rezultātus.	Show results.

First-person plural: This is the equivalent of the English ‘let’s . . .’, e.g. ‘Let’s go!’. In Latvian the first-person plural future or present form is used, e.g. *iesim!* or *ejam!* ‘let’s go!’. In general, the future form is the most usual.

Third person: This is the equivalent of the English ‘let him/her/them . . .’, e.g. ‘Let them come!’. In Latvian the particle *lai* is used with the third-person present verb form, e.g. *lai nāk!* ‘let (him/her/them) come!’.

8.8.3 Conditional/subjunctive – *vēlējuma izteiksme*

In English the conditional is expressed with ‘would’, e.g. ‘I would like’, ‘I would have liked’, while instances of the subjunctive are seen in sentences such as ‘If I were a rich man, . . .’. In Latvian there are only two forms, the simple to express the present and the compound to express the past.

To form the simple conditional in non-reflexive verbs a *u* is added to the infinitive and this is the same for every person, singular or plural:

es būtu	I would be
viņi redzētu	they would see

For reflexive verbs the -ies ending is changed to -os:

es skatītos	I would look
viņi klausītos	they would listen

The compound conditional uses the conditional of the verb **būt** 'to be' or **nebūt** 'not to be' together with the past participle (see Section 8.3.4):

es būtu bijusi	I (fem.) would have been
viņi būtu klausījušies	they (masc. pl.) would have listened

The conditional is used as follows.

- In hypothetical conditional sentences – the conditional must be used in both parts of the sentence unlike English where 'would' is not used in the 'if' clause:

Ja man būtu laiks, es brauktu atvaļinājumā.

If I had time, I would go on holiday. (lit. If I would have time,...)

Ja viņš būtu gribējis ko pateikt, tad to arī būtu skaidri pateicis.

If he had wanted to say something, then (he) would have said it clearly.
(lit. If he would have wanted,...)

The simple and compound conditionals can be used together to express a past condition with a present result:

Ja viņi nebūtu iegādājušies suni, viņi neietu tik daudz pastaigāties.

If they (masc.) hadn't got (themselves) a dog, they wouldn't go for a walk so much.

- In the concept of 'I wish' which uses **kaut**:

Kaut rīt saule spīdētu! I wish the sun would shine tomorrow.

- In wishes using **vēlēties** 'to wish' or **gribēt** 'to want' plus **lai**:

Es tiešām gribu, lai varētu tekoši runāt valodā.

I really want to be able to speak the language fluently. (lit. ... in the language ...)

Es tikai vēlos, lai tas neaizņemtu tik daudz vietas.

I just wish it didn't take up so much space.

- To express importance or necessity together with the conjunction **lai**:

Vai jums ir svarīgi, lai sabiedriskā transporta līdzekļi būtu jauni?

Is it important for you that public transport facilities be new?

Vajag, lai viņu atlaistu. It is necessary that he be dismissed.

- In polite requests:

Vai jūs varētu man, lūdzu, palīdzēt?

Could you help me, please?

- To express purpose, i.e. the equivalent of ‘so that’ or ‘in order to’, using the conjunction *lai*:

Paej mazliet uz priekšu, lai tu labāk redzētu!

Go forward a bit so that you can see better.

Streb stipri karstu pupu putru, lai tu būtu stiprs.

Eat a very hot bean porridge so that you may be strong

(Latvian tongue twister).

- In hypothetical concessive subordinate clauses with the conjunction *lai*:

Latvietis ir latvietis vienmēr, lai kur arī dzīvotu, lai arī par ko strādātu, lai arī kādas domas domātu savā ikdienas dzīvē.

(From a speech given by ex-President Valdis Zatlers in 2009)

A Latvian is always a Latvian, no matter where he may live, what he may do for a living, what thoughts he may have in his daily life.

- In hypothetical constructions with the conjunction *it kā* ‘as if, as though’:

Viņa uzvedās, it kā nekas nebūtu bijis.

She behaved as though nothing had happened. (lit. ...nothing had been.)

8.8.4 Debitive – vajadzības izteiksme

The debitive mood is the equivalent of the English ‘must’ or ‘have to’, e.g. ‘I must go’. In Latvian it is formed by adding the prefix *jā-* to the third-person present-tense form, e.g. *jāiet*. This is then used with the *logical subject* in the *dative case*:

Man jāiet. I must go/I have to go.

In the present, this construction is the most common, but it can also be used with the present tense of the verb *būt* ‘to be’ as an auxiliary: *man ir jāiet* ‘I must go’, ‘I have to go’.

The negative *man nav jāiet* expresses the English ‘I don’t have to go’. The concept of the English ‘must not’ is expressed by using the verb *nedrīkstēt* ‘not be allowed to’:

Neko nedrīkstam darīt, jo dzīvoklis vēl nepieder mums.

(We are) not allowed to do anything as the flat does not belong to us yet.

In the future and past tenses, the auxiliary verb **būt** must be used in the third person in the relevant tense:

Man būs jāiet. I will have to go.

Man bija jāiet. I had to go.

The debitive can also be formed using the perfect tenses of the verb **būt** but these are not so common:

Man jau sen bijis jārunā ar viņu. I('ve) needed to talk to him for a long time.

Man būs bijis jāraksta vēstule. I will have had to write a letter.

Man nebija bijis jādomā par to. I hadn't had to think about that.

When the verb in the debitive is followed by a *logical object*, this goes in the *nominative case* rather than the accusative:

Man jāmazgā veļa. I have to do the washing. (lit. ...wash the washing.)

However, if the verb in the debitive is followed by an infinitive plus an object, this object is in the accusative as normal:

Man jāsāk mazgāt veļu. I have to start to do the washing.
(lit. ...wash the washing.)

This applies only to logical objects in the accusative case. If the verb in the debitive is normally followed by a case other than the accusative, then this case is kept with the debitive:

Man jāiet mājās (loc.). I have to go home.

Tev jātic man (dat.). You have to believe me.

In the last example, the dative **tev** is part of the debitive construction while the dative **man** follows the verb **ticēt**.

If the logical object is a first- or second-person pronoun or **sevi** 'oneself', this stays in the accusative rather than changing to a nominative:

Man tevi jāredz. I have to see you (sing.).

Man jūs jāredz. I have to see you (pl./pol.).

Man ir jāredz sevi tādu, kādu mani redz citi. I have to see myself as others see me.

In a sentence where an adjective is used with a predicative function, e.g. 'a teacher has to be patient', the adjective has to be in the dative case to agree with the dative used for the logical subject so we get **skolotājai jābūt pacietīgai** (female teacher).

Alternative constructions: There are other ways that the meaning of the debitive can be conveyed:

- Using the impersonal verb **vajadzēt** ‘to need’:

Jums vajag iziet saulē. You need to go out into the sun.

Vajadzēt has the third-person present form **vajag**, the third-person past form is **vajadzēja** and the third-person future form is **vajadzēs**.

- Using the impersonal verb **nākties** ‘to be obliged’:

Viņam nācās precēt bagātu atraitni, lai segtu savus parādus.

He had to marry a rich widow in order to cover his debts.

- Using the passive present participle (see Section 8.7.6):

Viņi nopirka remontējamu dzīvokli.

They bought a flat which has to be renovated.

- Using the infinitive:

Bērns niķojas, ko darīt?

(Your) child is being naughty, what (should you) do?

The difference between the debitive, **vajadzēt** and **nākties** is that the debitive expresses an objective necessity whereas **vajadzēt** expresses an obligation or a moral necessity where English would use ‘should’:

Tev jādzer zaļā tēja, jo man citas nav.

You have to drink green tea because I don’t have any other.

Tev vajag dzert zaļo tēju, jo tā ir veselīga.

You should drink green tea because it’s healthy.

The construction with **nākties** often expresses inevitability as in the example above.

8.8.5 *Relative – atstāstījuma izteiksme*

This is the equivalent of reported speech in English, e.g. ‘She said she was going to the zoo’, although, as we will see, it is more widely used in Latvian. It is used to indicate that the person reporting what somebody else has said is not taking responsibility for the truth of this. It is also used in contexts where English might use phrases such as ‘it is said that . . .’ or ‘apparently . . .’.

To form the present relative of non-reflexive verbs, the third-person present form is used, the -a ending is removed if there is one and then the ending -ot is added. This is the same for all persons:

ēd '(he) eats' → **ēdot**

raksta '(he) writes' → **rakstot**

The relative of the verb **būt** 'to be' is irregular – **esot**, as is **iet** 'to go' – **ejot**.

For reflexive verbs, the third-person present -as/-ās ending is removed and then -oties is added:

sākas '(it) begins' → **sākoties**

klausās '(he) listens' → **klausoties**

For the future relative of non-reflexive verbs the future first-person singular form is used, the -u ending is removed and replaced with -ot:

būšu '(I) will be' → **būšot**

For reflexive verbs the -os ending is taken off the future first-person singular and replaced with -oties:

došos '(I) will set out for' → **došoties**

For the past relative, the present perfect (see Section 8.3.4) is used and the auxiliary is changed to **esot**:

Viņš esot bijis Īrijā.

He was apparently in Ireland/He has apparently been to Ireland.

There is also a future perfect form using the auxiliary **būšot** but it is quite rare:

Viņš būšot apceļojis visu pasauli.

Apparently he will have travelled all over the world.

The relative is used as outlined below.

- For reported speech:

„Es braukšu uz Franciju.” → Viņa teica, ka braukšot uz Franciju.

“I will travel to France.” → She said she would travel to France.

Unlike English, in Latvian the same tense is used as in direct speech so in the above sentence the original future is simply changed to a relative future. Here are examples using other tenses:

„Es eju uz veikalu.” → Viņa teica, ka ejot uz veikalu.

“I’m going to the shop.” → She said (she) was going to the shop.

„Es nopirku jaunas kurpes.” → Viņa teica, ka esot nopirkusi jaunas kurpes.

“I bought (some) new shoes.” → She said (she had) bought (some) new shoes.

It is also possible to use indirect speech without changing the verb into the relative mood:

„Es nopirku jaunas kurpes.” → Viņa teica, ka nopirka jaunas kurpes.

- To report what has been said – used very often in the media so that the journalist does not have to take responsibility for the truth of what is being reported:

Ziema būšot siltāka nekā parasti.

(Somebody has said that/The meteorologists have said that) winter will be milder than usual. (lit... usually.)

- To indicate doubts or uncertainty about what is being reported:

Viņš esot aizbraucis uz Poliju. (They say) he has gone to Poland.

- To report rumours and gossip:

Viņi esot šķīrušies.

They have apparently divorced.

- In narratives, particularly in folk tales – the present perfect form is used but the auxiliary verb *esot* is often omitted leaving just the past participle:

Viņos laikos kādam tēvam bijuši četri bērni.

Once upon a time (it is said) a father had four children.

Kādā karstā vasaras dienā, pašā dienasvidū, trīs meitas

gājušas uz jūru mazgāties. Mazgājoties viena teikusi:

«Nu, redzēs gan, kura no mums pirmā aprecēsies!»

One hot summer's day, right in the middle of the day, (it is said) three

girls went to the sea to wash. While washing one of them said:

“Well, let's see which one of us gets married first”.

In a negative the prefix *ne-* is used on the participle if the auxiliary is omitted:

Reiz dzīvojuši vīrs ar sievu, kam nebijijs neviena bērna.

Once upon a time (it is said) there lived a man and his wife who didn't have any children. (lit... a man with his wife ...)

- In reported commands with the conjunction lai:

„Piezvani man!” → Viņš teica, lai es viņam piezvanot.

“Phone me!” → He told me to phone him.

It is also possible to use reported commands without putting the verb into the relative mood:

„Piezvani man!” → Viņš teica, lai es viņam piezvanu.

8.8.6 Mixed moods – debitive plus conditional or relative

Combining the debitive with the conditional makes it possible to express a wish for something necessary to become a reality. It has two forms – the simple present for the present/future and the present perfect for the past:

Kuram te būtu jāiet gulēt?

Who here ought to be going to bed? (The word **te** ‘here’ refers to an internet forum?)

Man būtu bijis jānogūlas.

I should have lain down.

Combining the debitive with the relative expresses a reported necessity. It has two forms – the present and the future:

Man esot jābrauc komandējumā.

(I’ve been told) I have to go on a business trip.

Sacensību treniņā būšot jābrauc ar riteni un jāskrien.

During the training for the competition it will (apparently) be necessary to ride a bike and to run.

8.9 Verb formation – darbības vārdu darināšana

8.9.1 Verbs formed with prefixes – darbības vārdu darināšana ar priedekļiem

Some prefixes are based on prepositions so they can give a clue to the meaning of the word; however, as the following examples show, this is not always the case. The ideal would be to give a verb with all its derivations and their meanings but, unfortunately, this is not possible in this volume.

- aiz-
1. away: aiziet ‘to go away’
 2. obstruction: aizaugt ‘to become overgrown’
 3. close: aizvērt ‘to close’
 4. start of an action: aizdedzināt ‘to set alight’

- ap-** around: **apiet** ‘to go around’
- at-**
1. away: **atiet** ‘to depart (transport)’
 2. back: **atdot** ‘to give back, return’
 3. towards: **atnākt** ‘to come, arrive’
 4. repetition: **atkārtot** ‘to repeat’
 5. return to former state: **atveseļoties** ‘to recover (from an illness)’
 6. open: **atvērt** ‘to open’
- ie-**
1. in: **ienākt** ‘to come in, enter’
 2. beginning of an action: **iemīlēt** ‘to fall in love with s.b.’
 3. a sudden action (with reflexive verbs): **iesmieties** ‘to burst out laughing’
 4. a finished action: **iedot** ‘to give’ (perfective aspect)
- iz-**
1. out: **iziet** ‘to go out’
 2. to do s.t. completely: **izlasīt grāmatu** ‘to read a book completely’ (perfective aspect)
 3. to do s.t. intensively: **izskraidīties** ‘to have a good run around (e.g. children playing)’
- ne-** negative: **būt, vai nebūt** ‘to be or not to be’
- no-**
1. down: **noņemt** ‘to take down’
 2. off: **nolauzt** ‘to break off’
 3. to do s.t. completely: **novalkāt** ‘to wear out (clothes)’
- pa-**
1. a small action: **pagaidīt** ‘to wait for a while’
 2. perfective meaning: **padarīt** ‘to do (and finish doing)’
 3. to do s.t. for pleasure: **pastaigāties** ‘to go for a walk’
- pār-**
1. over: **pārņemt** ‘to take over’
 2. to cross s.t.: **pāriet** ‘to go across’
 3. over-, too much: **pārēsties** ‘to eat too much’
 4. to do s.t. again in a different way, re-: **pārrakstīt** ‘to re-write’
 5. to transform: **pārtulkot** ‘to translate’
 6. through: **pārziemot** ‘to hibernate’
 7. movement homewards: **pārbraukt** ‘to drive home’
 8. mis-: **pārprast** ‘to misunderstand’
 9. to do s.t. completely, perfective meaning: **pārlauzt** ‘to break completely’
- pie-**
1. to approach: **pienākt** ‘to approach’
 2. to add s.t.: **pielikt algu** ‘to raise (lit. add) the salary’
 3. to do s.t. completely: **piepildīt** ‘to fill (lit. fill full)’

- sa- 1. together: **sanākt** 'to come together, gather, work out'
2. into pieces: **sagriezt** 'to cut into pieces'
3. to do s.t. completely: **sacept** 'to fry (until ready)'
- uz- 1. up: **uziet** 'to go up'
2. on: **uzlikt** 'to put on'

8.9.2 Verbs formed with suffixes – darbības vārdu darināšana ar piedēkļiem

Verbs from nouns and adjectives: Many Latvian verbs are formed from nouns and adjectives by adding the suffixes -ā, -ē, -ī, -o, -inā which give us the infinitives -āt, -ēt, -īt, -ot, -ināt. Examples include:

gods	honour	→	godāt	to honour
slava	fame	→	slavēt	to praise
kluss	quiet	→	klusēt	to be quiet, to be silent
sāls	salt	→	sālīt	to salt
tīrs	clean	→	tīrīt	to clean
sēne	mushroom	→	sēņot	to pick mushrooms
miers	peace	→	mierināt	to comfort
mazs	small	→	mazināt	to decrease, reduce

Repetitive actions: A one-syllable verb can be modified by the addition of the suffix -ā or -ī to indicate a repetitive action:

braukt 'to travel, drive' → **braukāt** 'to travel, drive around'
spert 'to kick' → **spārdīt** 'to kick repeatedly'

Causative verbs – kauzatīvie darbības vārdi: By adding the suffixes -ē, -ī, -inā to a basically one-syllable (not including the reflexive verb ending) intransitive verb, we get a transitive verb which has the meaning of causing something or someone to do that action, e.g. **augt** 'to grow (intr.)' → **audzēt** 'to grow (tr.)', **mosties** 'to wake up (intr.)' → **modināt** 'to wake s.b. up (tr.)', **ēst** 'to eat' → **ēdināt** 'to feed'.

Prepositions – prievārdi

Prepositions are used with nouns or pronouns to indicate position in a particular location or time but they do also have other functions:

Grāmata ir uz galda.

The book is on the table.

Pulkstenis ir bez piecām seši.

It's five to six. (lit. The clock is six less five.)

Viņš ies bez manis.

He is going without me.

9.1 Prepositions and case

In Latvian prepositions govern different cases, i.e. the noun or pronoun needs to be put into the appropriate case following a preposition. Below are lists of prepositions divided according to the case which follows them. Note that the meanings are sometimes only approximate and only the main meanings are given. There may be other uses that are not covered. Prepositions can sometimes be difficult to translate as every language has different uses.

9.1.1 Prepositions + genitive

aiz behind

Saule noriet aiz kalna.

The sun is setting behind the hill.

ārpus outside

Ārpus mājas ir liels koks.

There is a big tree outside the house.

bez without

Es dzeru kafiju bez piena.

I drink coffee without milk.

kopš since

Es dzīvoju Skotijā kopš 1991. gada.

I've lived in Scotland since 1991. (lit. I live ...)

no from

of

off

out of

pēc according to

after

for

pie at

by

near

on

to

pirms before (in time)

priekš for

šāpus on this side (of)

uz¹ on

Es saņēmu e-pastu no Initas.

I received an e-mail from Inita.

Viņai bija bail no peles.

She was afraid of the mouse.

Grāmata nokrita no galda.

The book fell off the table.

Viņš iznāca no mājas.

He came out of the house.

Meklējiet informāciju pēc datuma!

Look for the information according to the date.

Pēc vētras bija daudz nogāztu koku.

After the storm there were many uprooted trees. (lit. ...knocked down trees.)

Sauciens pēc palīdzības.

A cry for help.

Viņa bija pie frizieres.

She was at the hairdresser's.

Viņiem ir vasarnīca pie ezera.

They have a summer house by the lake.

Pie upes ir skaists mežs.

There is a beautiful forest near the river.

Pie sienas karājas ģimenes fotogrāfijas.

There were family photographs on the wall. (lit. ...hanging on the wall.)

Nāciet pie galda!

Come to the table.

Dārzs ir jāsakopj pirms ziemas.

The garden has to be tidied up before winter.

Šī grāmata ir priekš tevis.

This book is for you.

Grāmatu veikals ir šāpus ielas.

The bookshop is on this side of the street.

Kaķis guļ uz spilvena.

The cat is sleeping on the cushion.

viņpus	on that/the other side	Viņpus ezera ir labs restorāns. There is a good restaurant on the other side of the lake.
virs	above	Virs galda ir skaista lustra. There is a beautiful chandelier above the table.
zem	below, under	Suns guļ zem galda. The dog is sleeping under the table.

- 1 Uz has two meanings depending on which case it takes: when it is followed by the genitive, it means 'on':

Uz galda bija tik daudz ēdiena. There was so much food on the table.

When it is followed by the accusative, it means 'to':

Kad tu brauksi uz Rīgu? When will you be travelling to Riga?

9.1.2 Prepositions + dative

līdz	until	Līdz atvaļinājumam ir vēl sešas dienas. There are another six days until the holidays.
	up to, as far as	Ejiet līdz krustojumam! Go as far as the crossing.
	to	Cik tālu ir līdz universitātei? How far is it to the university?
pa¹	by	Viņi gāja pa diviem uz reizu. They went two at a time. (lit. ... by two ...)

- 1 If referring to the manner, **pa** is used with the dative; however, if it is used with time or place, it is used with the accusative, see next section.

9.1.3 Prepositions + accusative

ap	around	Suns skrēja ap dārzu. The dog ran around the garden.
	about	Kaķis parādījās ap pusnakti. The cat appeared about midnight.
ar¹	'and'	Vasarā garšo zemenes ar krējumu. In summer strawberries and cream are delicious.

	with	Maizi griež ar nazi. Bread is cut with a knife.
caur ²	through	Saule spīd caur netīro logu. The sun is shining through the dirty window.
gar	along (the side of s.t.)	Mēs gājām gar upes malu. We went along the side of the river.
pa ^{2,3}	along (the length of s.t.)	Viņš gāja pa klāju. He went along the deck.
	by	Atsūti man ziņu pa e-pastu. Send me a message by e-mail.
	during	Pa dienu nāk miegs, jo pa naktīm nevaru gulēt. During the day (I)'m sleepy because (I) can't sleep during the night. (lit. ... during nights.)
	from	Es viņu redzēju pa gabalu. I saw him from a distance.
	in	Mēs pastaigājāmies pa parku. We went for a walk in the park. Es pa vakaru izlasīju grāmatu. I read the book in an evening.
		Viņa pa tumsu negrib iet ārā. She doesn't want to go out in the dark.
	on	Bērns daudzīja pa logu. The child was hammering on the window.
	through	Pa logu redzu daudz koku. Through the window I see many trees.
par	about	Par ko tu domā? What are you thinking about?
	as	Viņa strādā par skolotāju. She is a teacher. (lit. She works as a teacher.)
	by	Bezdarbība pieaugs par 5%. Unemployment will rise by 5%.
	for	Es nopirku ābolus par latu. I bought some apples for a lat.

pār	across	Paldies par padomu! Thank you for the advice!
		Bērni peldēja pār upi. The children were swimming across the river.
	over	Prezidentam ir liela vara pār valsti. The president has great power over the country.
pret	against, with	Kaķis cīnījās pret lielu suni. The cat was fighting with a big dog.
	for	Dodiet man, lūdzu, zāles pret klepu! Please give me some medicine for a cough!
	into	Viņam bija jāiet pret vēju. He had to walk into the wind.
starp	between	Lija sēž starp Pēteri un Andu. Lija is sitting between Peteris and Anda.
uz ³	to	Vasarā es braukšu uz Spāniju. In summer I'm going to Spain.

- 1 Most Latvian grammars say that **ar** takes the *instrumental case* – see Section 11.7.
- 2 There is a difference in the use of **caur** and **pa** to mean ‘through’: **caur** is used if there is a physical obstacle, **pa** is used if there is no obstacle:

Ugunsgrēkā viņi izlēca pa logu.

In the fire they jumped out of the (open) window. (lit. ...jumped through ...)

Suns izlēca pa logu laukā caur stiklu.

The dog jumped out through the glass window (i.e. through the glass).

- 3 See the notes about **pa** under Prepositions + dative and **uz** under Prepositions + genitive above.

9.2 Plurals

In the plural *all* prepositions take the dative case regardless of what they take in the singular:

no	from	Veikals ir atvērts no pulksten deviņiem. The shop is open from nine o'clock.
	of	Amons ir viens no galvenajiem dieviem ēģiptiešu mitoloģijā. Ammon is one of the main gods in Egyptian mythology.

9.3 Postpositions

A postposition is a word which is placed after the noun or pronoun it governs to indicate location or time, for example, when in English we say 'homeward', the '-ward' could be regarded as a postposition although it is a suffix making 'homeward' a single word. The word 'ago' could also be regarded as a postposition although it is not classed as such in English grammars, e.g. 'three months ago'. While in English postpositions are not common, Latvian has a few. As with prepositions, postpositions govern a particular case but in the plural this case agreement is kept so that the singular and plural forms take the same case. The examples will show this agreement in both the singular and plural forms.

9.3.1 Postpositions + genitive

dēļ	because of, for the sake of	Francijā orkāna dēļ slēgti ceļi. In France roads (are) closed because of the hurricane. Es to darīju viņu dēļ. I did that for their sake.
labad	for the sake of	Drošības labad. To be on the safe side. (lit. Safety for the sake of.)
pēc	for the sake of	Pārmaiņas pēc. For a change (lit. Change for the sake of.)

9.3.2 Postpositions + dative

pakaļ	after, behind	Suns skrēja kaķim pakaļ. The dog ran after the cat.
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There are a number of adverbs which are used as prepositions or postpositions in Latvian – these are known as *semi-prepositions* or *semi-postpositions*. Here are some examples to illustrate the different usages with the preposition **pret** ‘against’, the adverb **pretī** ‘opposite’ and the semi-preposition/semi-postposition **pretī** ‘towards’.

Preposition:	Cīņa pret nabadzību.	The fight against poverty.
Adverb:	Pretī bija liela, skaista māja.	Opposite there was a big, beautiful house.
Semi-postposition:	Viņš nāca man pretī.	He came towards me.

The difference between the adverb and the semi-preposition is that the adverb does not have a complement, i.e. it does not have a noun or a pronoun associated with it, whereas the semi-preposition/semi-postposition does. The difference between the preposition and the semi-preposition/semi-postposition is that, in this case, the preposition takes the accusative, but semi-prepositions/semi-postpositions always take the dative.

The most common semi-prepositions/semi-postpositions are:

apkārt	around	Viņi brauca apkārt pasaulei. They travelled around the world.
blakus	beside, next to	Viesnīca ir blakus biznesa centram. The hotel is next to the business centre.
cauri	through, throughout	Ceļojumi maijā un cauri vasarai. Trips in May and throughout summer.
garām	over, past	Asteroīds aizlidos tuvu garām Zemei. An asteroid will fly close past Earth.
līdzās	beside, along with	Līdzās vīnam, alus attiecas pie senākajiem alkoholiskajiem dzērieniem. Along with wine, beer dates back to (being) one of the oldest alcoholic drinks.
līdzī	(together) with	Nāciet man līdzī! Come with me.
pāri	over, across, past	Viņi brauca pāri upei. They went across the river. (lit. They travelled ...)
pretī	opposite, towards	Es gāju viņam pretī. I went towards him.

9.5 Prepositions and verb prefixes

Some prepositions are used as verb prefixes when they can have similar meanings to the original prepositions so it can be quite easy to guess the meaning of the verb:

Preposition: **no galda** off the table

Verb prefix: **nokrist** fall off

Sometimes both the preposition and the prefix are used together:

Grāmata nokrita no galda. The book fell off the table.

Conjunctions – saikļi

Conjunctions are words which join clauses, phrases or words. They are also used to connect two sentences. Words such as ‘and’, ‘but’ and ‘so’ are conjunctions.

In Latvian there are *simple conjunctions*, **vienkāršie saikļi**, which are just a single word, or *compound conjunctions*, **saliktie saikļi**, which have two words, e.g. **un** ‘and’ is a simple conjunction, **kaut gan** ‘even though’ is a compound conjunction as it is in English. There are also correlative conjunctions which are formed either in pairs, e.g. **ne vien . . . bet arī** ‘not only . . . but also’, or words are repeated to form a correlative conjunction, e.g. **gan . . . gan** ‘both . . . and’:

Šokolāde garšo ne vien bērniem, bet arī pieaugušajiem.

Not only children like chocolate, but also adults.

Viņam ir gan suns, gan kaķis.

He has both a dog and a cat.

Conjunctions are invariant, i.e. they always stay the same and do not add any endings or change in any other way. They can be divided into two groups: coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

10.1 Coordinating conjunctions – sakārtojuma saikļi

Coordinating conjunctions join two words, phrases, clauses or sentences of equal value:

Rūta un Maija

Ruta and Maija

Gundars izlasīs avīzi un tad ies iepirkties.

Gundars will finish reading the newspaper and then go shopping.

Coordinating conjunctions can be further divided into three subgroups, i.e. conjunctions which are used to connect words, phrases or clauses, e.g. **un** 'and'; conjunctions which indicate a contrast or an exception, e.g. **bet** 'but'; and conjunctions which present alternatives of equal value, e.g. **vai** 'or'. The conjunctions given below are not a complete list but they will give an idea of how to use them in a sentence, particularly the fact that in Latvian a comma must be used to separate most clauses (see Section 12.7).

10.1.1 Connecting conjunctions – vienojuma saikļi

gan ... gan	both ... and	Izrāde patiks gan jauniešiem, gan pieaugušajiem. Both young people and adults will like the performance.
kā ... tā	like ... like, as ... so	Kā vējiņš pūš, tā salmiņš danco. As the wind blows, so the straw dances (Latvian proverb). (A straw shows which way the wind blows.)
kā arī	as well as	Vajadzīgs mūrnieks, kā arī mūrnieka palīgs. Wanted: a bricklayer, as well as a bricklayer's assistant.
ne ... ne	neither ... nor	Ne uguns, ne ūdens viņus nespēj šķirt. Neither fire nor water can separate them (Latvian proverb). (They're as thick as thieves.)
ne tikai ... bet arī	not only ... but also	Cena kāps ne tikai gāzei, bet arī siltumam un elektrībai. Prices will rise not only for gas, but also for heating and electricity.

ne tikvien ...bet arī	not only ...but also	Ir jāpakļaujas ne tikvien likuma burtam, bet arī likuma garam. It's necessary to obey not only the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law.
ne vien ...bet arī	not only ...but also	Kļūdās ne vien spēlētāji, bet arī treneri un vadība. Not only the players, but also the trainers and management are making mistakes.
nedz ...nedz	either ...or, neither ...nor	Neesmu parādā nedz bankai, nedz kredītiestādei. I'm not in debt to either the bank or to a credit company.
te ...te	now ...now, at times ...at times	Vējš bija te auksts, te karsts. The wind was at times cold, at times hot.
tik ...tik	as ...as	Tik garš, tik plats. It's as broad as it is long.
tiklab ...kā arī	both ...and	Šim nolūkam lietojam tiklab tradicionālas, kā arī jaunas tehnoloģijas. For this purpose we use both traditional and new technologies.
un	and	Skaldi un valdi. Divide and rule.

10.1.2 *Contrasting conjunctions – pretstatījuma saikļi*

bet	but	Reti, bet labi. Rare but good (Latvian proverb). (lit. Rarely but well.) (Absence makes the heart grow fonder.)
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tomēr	still, however	<p>«Dinamo» trīs reizes atspēlējās, tomēr neuzvarēja. (The ice hockey team Riga) “Dinamo” recovered three times but still didn’t win.</p>
taču	however	<p>Mūsdienās sievietē pie stūres nav retums. Taču principi pēc kādiem sievietē un vīrietis izvēlas sev auto ir atšķirīgi. Today a woman at the steering wheel is not a rarity. However, the principles on which a woman and a man base their choice of car are different. (lit. ... choose themselves a car ...)</p>
turpretī	on the contrary, whereas	<p>Tika gūti septiņi vārti, turpretī netika ielaisti nevienī. Seven goals were gained, whereas none was conceded.</p>
turpretim	on the other hand, while	<p>Līdz jūnijam valdīja sausums un augstas temperatūras, turpretim pēdējās nedēļās daudzviet reģistrētas spēcīgas lietusgāzes. Until June there was a drought and high temperatures while in the last few weeks there have been heavy downpours in many places.</p>
bet tomēr	nevertheless	<p>Mācāties neatteikties, bet tomēr taupīt. Let’s learn not to give up (things), but nevertheless to save.</p>
ne ... bet arī	not ... but also	<p>Drīzumā ne tikai vilcieni, bet arī stacijas braukās pa sliedēm. In the near future, not only trains, but also stations will travel on rails.</p>
nevis ... bet	not ... but	<p>Pienenes – nevis nezāle, bet veselīgs dārzeņis! Dandelions – not a weed, but a healthy vegetable.</p>

10.1.3 Conjunctions presenting an alternative – šķīruma saikļi

jeb	or	tālrunis jeb telefons telephone (lit. or telephone) (Jeb gives an alternative with the same meaning; compare with vai below.)
vai	or	Vai gribi tēju vai kafiju? Do you want tea or coffee? (Vai gives two alternative possibilities; compare with jeb above.)
vai ...vai	either ... or	Vai nu maisā, vai gaisā. Either in the bag, or in the air (Latvian proverb). (Sink or swim.)
vai nu ...vai (arī)	either ... or	Ir tikai divi varianti, vai nu izvilks to sarkano bumbiņu, vai neizvilks. There are only two possibilities, either the little red ball will be drawn or it won't.

10.2 Subordinating conjunctions – pakārtojuma saikļi

A subordinating conjunction introduces a dependent clause, i.e. one which cannot stand alone as a sentence as it has no meaning without the main clause. In English conjunctions such as ‘because’ and ‘while’ are subordinating conjunctions. The examples given in this section do not constitute a complete list of these conjunctions, but they will give an idea of how they are used. It is particularly important to note that commas are used between most clauses (see Section 12.7).

10.2.1 Time – laika saikļi

iekam(s), iekām(s)	before	Trīs galvenās tautas dzīvoja šai zemē, iekam vācieši tajā ienāca: latvieši, igauņi un līvi. Three main nationalities lived in this land (i.e. the Latvian territory) before the Germans came into it – Latvians, Estonians and Livs.
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kad	when	Kad noticis, tad visi gudri. When (something has) happened, then everybody is wise (Latvian proverb). (If things were to be done twice, all would be wise.)
kamēr	while	Kamēr dzīvo, tikmēr mācies. While you live, learn (Latvian proverb). (lit... meanwhile learn.) (One is never too old to learn.)
kolīdz, līdzko	as soon as	Līdzko rēķins apmaksāts, notiek preces piegāde. As soon as the invoice has been paid, the goods are supplied.
tikko, tiklīdz (kā)	as soon as	Tiklīdz sāk runāt par mīlestības pazušanu, tur tā arī pazūd. As soon as there is talk of love disappearing, then it disappears.
kopš	since	Ir pagājis gandrīz gads, kopš mana iepriekšējā raksta! Almost a year has passed since my previous article.
pirms	before	Izslēdz televīziju, pirms ej gulēt! Switch the TV off before you go to bed.
tikmēr	meanwhile	Pasēdēsim Monmartrā ar grāmatiņu rokās, izliksimies, ka lasām, bet paši tikmēr noklausīsimies svešas sarunas. We'll sit in Montmartre with a book in our hands, we'll pretend we're reading, but meanwhile we'll listen to foreign conversations. (lit... with a little book...)

10.2.2 Purpose – nolūka saiklis

lai (plus conditional, see Section 8.8.3)	in order to	Lai iegūtu plašāku informāciju, apmeklējiet mūsu mājas lapu! In order to get more information, visit our website.
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10.2.3 Result – seku saikļi

tā ka so that **Laika gaitā arī citi mani kolēģi atstāja uzņēmumu, tā ka droši nebiju viens savās domās un sajūtās.**
Over time other colleagues also left the company
so that I was probably not alone in my thoughts and feelings.

10.2.4 Reason – cēloņa saikļi

tādēļ, ka; tāpēc, ka	because, since	<p>Bērnu skaits bērnudārzos pieaug gan tādēļ, ka palielinās dzimstība, gan tādēļ, ka tagad vairs vecmammās un vectēvi neauklē mazbērnus.</p> <p>The number of children in nursery schools is increasing not only because the birth rate is increasing, but also because grandmothers and grandfathers are no longer looking after (their) grandchildren.</p>
tā kā	since	<p>Tā kā tas bija mūsu pēdējais vakars Rīgā, mēs devāmies vēl vienu reizi uz operu.</p> <p>Since it was our last evening in Riga, we went to the opera one more time.</p>
tālab, ka	because	<p>Man šķiet nožēlojami, ka mati jākrāso trijās krāsās tālab, ka tā dara visas.</p> <p>It seems deplorable to me that hair has to be dyed in three colours (just) because everybody is doing it. (lit...because all females are doing it...)</p>
tāpēc	therefore	<p>Dārzeni un augļi ir bagātākais un dabīgākais vitamīnu avots, tāpēc tie jāēd katru dienu.</p> <p>Vegetables and fruit are the richest and most natural vitamin source; therefore they have to be eaten every day.</p>

10.2.5 Condition – nosacījuma saiklis

ja if **Neviens nevar valdīt, ja viņš neprot arī paklausīt.**
Nobody can rule if he doesn't also know how to obey
(Latvian proverb). (Through obedience learn to command.)

10.2.6 Concession – pielāvuma saikļi

kaut arī although **Kaut arī ziemu bieži uzskata par dārza tukšo gadalaiku, daudzi augi šajā laikā izceļas ar dažādām interesantām īpašībām.**

Although winter is often regarded as the empty time in the garden, many plants stand out with various interesting characteristics at this time.

kaut gan although **Tāda situācija var gadīties, kaut gan pats tādu pieredzējis neesmu.**

Such a situation can happen although I haven't experienced it myself.

lai arī even though **Lai arī uzņēmums vēl joprojām ir bērnu autiņos, ir jāturpina strādāt un atcerēties mērķus.**

Even though the enterprise is still in its infancy, it is necessary to continue to work and remember the aims. (lit....the enterprise is still in nappies,...)

lai gan although **Lai gan nedēļas vidū sals Latvijā mazināsies, brīvdienās tas atkal būs visai stiprs!**

Although the frost will lessen in Latvia in the middle of the week, at the weekend it will again be very hard.

10.2.7 Comparison – salīdzinājuma saikļi

kā as, like **Kā vista klukst, tā cāļi čiepst.**

As the hen clucks, so the chickens cheep
(Latvian proverb). (As the old cock crows, so does the young.)

nekā	than	Labāk ātrāk nekā vēlāk. Better earlier than later (Latvian proverb). (The sooner the better.)
it kā	as if	Viņš uzvedās, it kā nekas nebūtu bijis. He behaved as if nothing had happened. (lit. ...nothing had been.)
jo ...jo	the ...the	Jo mazāk stresa un vairāk miega, jo labāki rezultāti svara zaudēšanā. The less stress and the more sleep, the better (are) the results in losing weight.
tāpat kā	in the same way as	Tāpat kā labā popkultūrā ir kāda daļiņa mākslas, tāpat arī labā mākslā ir jābūt nelielam popkultūras elementam. (Nils Sakss, writer) In the same way that there is an element of art in good pop culture, there has to be a small element of pop culture in good art.

10.2.8 Substantiation – pamatojuma saiklis

jo	because	Tumsā gandrīz paklupu pret trepēm, jo neko nevarēja redzēt. In the dark I nearly I tripped up on the stairs because it was not possible to see anything.
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Cases – locījumi

We had a very brief look at cases in Chapter 3 when we looked at nouns and they have appeared in other chapters as well. In this chapter we are going to take a more in-depth look at the use of the different cases. The cases are very important in understanding Latvian as they cause nouns to have different endings, pronouns change according to the case, adjective endings change to agree with nouns in different cases and prepositions are followed by different cases.

11.1 Nominative – nominatīvs

11.1.1 Subject – darbības veicējs

The nominative is the basic form you will find in a dictionary, e.g. sniegs ‘snow’. It is the subject of the sentence and the agent or ‘doer’ of the verb; for example, in the sentence Bērni slēpo ‘The children are skiing’ bērni is the subject of the sentence. In the sentence Ziema ir auksta ‘Winter is cold’ ziema is the subject of the sentence.

In a passive construction the subject is still nominative:

Sniegavīri tiek celti katrā dārzā. Snowmen are being built in every garden.

11.1.2 Predicate with būt ‘to be’

In a construction using the verb būt ‘to be’ to characterize or identify the subject, both parts of the sentence are nominative:

Suns ir labs draugs.

A dog is a good friend.

Tas ir mans brālis.

That's my brother.

Viņa nav vairs bērns.

She is no longer a child.

Compare the last example with Section 11.2.6 regarding the use of the genitive in negative constructions using **būt**. In this example it has the meaning of ‘be’ in English but with the genitive it would mean ‘not have’, e.g. *Viņai nav bērnu* ‘she doesn’t have any children’.

Other verbs which are followed by a nominative in the same way as **būt** are, for example, **kļūt** ‘to become’, **tikt** ‘to become, to be’, i.e. the auxiliary in passive constructions:

Viņi ir kļuvuši bagāti.

They have become rich.

Spēle tika lietus dēļ pārtraukta.

The game was stopped because of the rain.

11.1.3 Saukt ‘to call’

The name in these constructions is in the nominative case while the person referred to is in the accusative:

Viņu sauc Anda.

She is called Anda.

11.1.4 ‘To have’

Since Latvian does not have an equivalent of the verb ‘to have’, the construction used is the possessor in the dative, the verb **būt** ‘to be’ and the possession in the nominative; however, this applies only to positive sentences and questions (see the genitive below for negative sentences, Section 11.2.6):

Man ir kakis.

I have a cat. (lit. To me is cat.)

Vai tev ir kakis?

Do you have a cat?

11.1.5 Impersonal constructions

Latvian has a number of impersonal constructions such as **man patīk** ‘I like’, **man garšo** ‘I like (for food and drink)’, etc. in which the nominative is used for what in English we would regard as the object of the sentence. However, since Latvian literally says, for example, ‘something is tasty to me’, it becomes more obvious that a nominative is needed:

Man negaršo piens.

I don’t like milk.

Viņam patīk hokeijs.

He likes ice hockey.

The nominative is used in other similar constructions:

Viņai sāp galva.

She's got a headache. (lit. To her hurts head.)

See Section 11.3 for other verbs which are used in impersonal constructions with the dative and have the logical object in the nominative.

11.1.6 Debitive

When using the debitive mood in constructions meaning 'must, have to', the nominative is used for what we might logically think of as the logical object of the sentence:

Man jāpērk jauni zābaki. I have to buy (some) new boots.

11.2 The genitive – ģenitīvs

11.2.1 Possession – piederības ģenitīvs

The basic function of the genitive is to show possession, answering the question 'whose?' and as such it is the equivalent of the English 's or of construction: meitenes grāmata 'the girl's book', mājas jumts 'the roof of the house', Raiņa dzeja 'the poetry of Rainis'.

The genitive is also used to describe the origin of something, for example, to talk about a language. In Latvian the phrase 'the language of the . . . people' is used: latviešu valoda 'the Latvian language, i.e. the language of the Latvian people', angļu valoda 'the English language', vācu valoda 'the German language'. Similarly, the genitive is used in any other construction where in English an adjective is used to describe the nationality: franču siers 'French cheese', itāļu vīns 'Italian wine', latviešu mūzika 'Latvian music'.

The genitive is used as the equivalent of English constructions using two nouns with the first one having an adjectival function, e.g. puķu dārzs 'a flower garden', pilsētas centrs 'the city centre', vilcienu stacija 'a train station'.

11.2.2 Composition, partitive genitive – vielas ģenitīvs, dalāmais ģenitīvs

This can be:

- the substance, vielas ģenitīvs: linu kleita 'a linen dress', koka galds 'a wooden table'

- elements of a whole, *dalāmais ģenitīvs*: putnu bars ‘a flock of birds’, studentu grupa ‘a group of students’
- the source which again denotes a part from the whole so is included under *dalāmais ģenitīvs* in Latvian: siera gabaliņš ‘a piece of cheese’, maizes šķēle ‘a slice of bread’.

11.2.3 Measurement – mēru ģenitīvs

In Latvian grammars this is classed as *dalāmais ģenitīvs* as it describes a divisible part of the whole. It is used:

- with weights and measures: kilograms sviesta ‘a kilogram of butter’, tējkarote cukura ‘a teaspoon of sugar’, litrs piena ‘a litre of milk’, kukulis maizes ‘a loaf of bread’
- with containers: pudele piena ‘a bottle of milk’, tase tējas ‘a cup of tea’, kastīte saldumu ‘a box of sweets’.

Note that in the case of containers the genitive is the second element in the construction. To put the genitive first in these constructions would give the first element an adjectival function and alter the meaning: piena pudele ‘a milk bottle’, tējas tase ‘a tea cup’.

11.2.4 Purpose – noderības ģenitīvs

The genitive is used to indicate the use or purpose of something: vīna glāze ‘a wine glass’, alus muca ‘a beer barrel’, veļas (mazgājamā) mašīna ‘a washing machine’ (lit. a clothes (washing) machine).

11.2.5 Sub-classification – pasugas jeb pielikuma ģenitīvs

The genitive is used for sub-classifications: ozola koks ‘oak tree’, gadalaiks ‘season’ (lit. year time, i.e. time of year), Budes kundze ‘Mrs Bude’.

In Latvia surnames only started being used at the beginning of the 19th century with the emancipation of serfs. Before that somebody would be identified as coming from the farm where they lived, Jauntulku Valdis ‘Valdis from Jauntulki’ – note that farm names are plural as a farm consists of a number of buildings. This construction is still sometimes used today in colloquial Latvian, e.g. Bērziņu Jānis lit. ‘Jānis of the Bērziņš’. See Sections 11.2.14 and 11.6 for more on addressing people.

11.2.6 'Not to have'

As already mentioned under the nominative (see Section 11.1.4), the construction meaning 'to have' uses the dative for the possessor together with the verb **būt** 'to be'. For negative sentences the possession, or rather the lack of it, goes into the genitive:

Viņam nav naudas. He has no money.

This is also true for the following verbs: **pietikt** 'to be enough, to be sufficient', **nepietikt** 'to not be enough, to not be sufficient', **trūkt** 'to lack, to be short of', **netrūkt** 'to not lack, to not be short of':

Vai pietiks resursu mūsu mazbērniem?

Will there be enough resources for our grandchildren?

Mums nepietiks pīragu.

We won't have enough bacon pies.

Viņai trūka pieredzes un zināšanas.

She didn't have enough experience and knowledge.

Koncertā ūdens un dubļu netrūka.

There was no lack of water and mud at the concert.

11.2.7 Subject and object genitives – subjekta un objekta ģenitīvi

A subject genitive is formed from an intransitive verb and indicates the doer of an action, e.g. **vilki gaudo** 'the wolves howl' becomes **vilku gaudošana** 'the howling of wolves' as a genitive construction:

Vilku gaudošana mani pamodināja. The howling of wolves woke me up.

An object genitive is formed from a transitive verb and indicates the object of an action, e.g. **ēdienu gatavo** '(one) prepares food' becomes **ēdiena gatavošana** 'food preparation, cooking' as a genitive construction:

Viens no maniem vaļaspriekiem ir ēdiena gatavošana.

One of my hobbies is cooking. (lit...food preparation.)

11.2.8 Descriptive genitive – īpašības ģenitīvs

The genitive is used to denote the quantity or quality of a noun, e.g. **goda vīrs** 'a man of honour', **liela apjoma projekts** 'a large-scale project'.

11.2.9 *Emphasis – pastiprinājuma ģenitīvs*

This genitive construction uses the same noun or adjective twice with the first one in the genitive case. In the case of adjectives, the second one takes definite adjective endings, e.g.:

Upe tek <u>līkumu līkumus</u>.	The river twists and turns. (lit. The river flows in <u>twists of twists</u> .)
Tā filma bija <u>labu labā</u>.	It was such a good film. (lit. That was the good of the good).

11.2.10 *Adjectives and adverbs plus genitive*

The genitive is used with the following group of adjectives:

bagāts	rich	<u>pieredzes</u> bagāts	rich in <u>experience</u>
cienīgs	worthy of	<u>uzslavas</u> cienīgs	<u>praiseworthy</u>
kārs	greedy	<u>naudas</u> kārs	greedy for <u>money</u>
pilns	full	<u>romantisma</u> pilns piedzīvojums	an adventure full of romanticism
vērts	worth	Tas nav <u>tā</u> vērts.	It's not worth <u>it</u> .

Similarly the genitive is used with the adverb *žēl* 'sorry':

Man <u>viņa</u> žēl.	I'm sorry for <u>him</u> .
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11.2.11 *Exclamations – izsaukuma ģenitīvs*

The genitive is sometimes used in exclamations:

<u>Tavu</u> brīnumu!	What a miracle! (lit. Of your miracles!)
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This example is a genitive plural although it does look exactly like an accusative singular.

11.2.12 *Compound nouns*

We have already seen a few examples of compound words in which the first element is genitive, e.g. *gadalaiks* 'season', *vaļasprieks* 'hobby, lit. free-time enjoyment', *galvaspilsēta* 'capital city'. Compound constructions are used for concrete concepts which are very often expressed by a single noun in English. See Section 3.4.3 for more on compound nouns.

11.2.13 *Prepositions plus genitive*

For the use of the genitive with prepositions, see Section 9.1.1.

11.2.14 *Genitive used for addressing people*

When talking about people formally the surname is used in the genitive together with **kungs** ‘Mr’ or **kundze** ‘Ms, Mrs’:

<u>Bekera</u> kungs	Mr Bekeris
<u>Ozoliņas</u> kundze	Ms/Mrs Ozolina

If the surname plus the title is used together with the first name to address an envelope, then the **dative** is used for the recipient of the letter but the surname stays in the genitive case:

Arvīdam <u>Bekera</u> kungam	To Mr Arvids Bekeris
Irmāi <u>Ozoliņas</u> kundzei	To Ms/Mrs Irma Ozolina

A polite salutation can be put in front of the name (note that in Latvian there is usually no space between the initial and the surname):

A. god. A.<u>Bekera</u> kungam	To esteemed Mr A. Bekeris
Ļ. cien. Ļ.<u>Ozoliņas</u> kundzei	To esteemed Mrs Ļ. Ozolina

Similarly, when talking about an aunt or an uncle, the name goes into the genitive case:

<u>Ernesta</u> onkulis	Uncle Ernests
<u>Mildas</u> tante	Aunt Milda

When talking about somebody in an official position, particularly when addressing them, a similar construction is used:

<u>Prezidenta</u> kungs	Mr President
<u>Profesores</u> kundze	Ms/Mrs Professor

11.3 The dative – datīvs

11.3.1 *Indirect object – darbības netiešais objekts*

This is the basic function of the dative and answers the question ‘to whom?’, e.g. ‘I gave my friend a book’ – in this sentence ‘my friend’ is the indirect

object as he/she is the receiver of the book. In English the indirect object can also be expressed by using the preposition 'to' so we can say 'I gave a book to my friend'. In Latvian we use the dative:

Es draugam iedevu grāmatu. I gave (my) friend a book.

In this type of function there is always a direct object in the accusative case, or direct or indirect speech, and the indirect object in the dative. Examples of verbs which would cause a noun to become an indirect object are:

atņemt to take away

Skolotāja viņam telefonu atņēma.

The teacher confiscated his phone.
(lit. The teacher to him phone took away.)

dot to give

Dodiet man savu e-pastu!

Give me your e-mail (address).

jautāt to ask

Viņa man jautāja, vai es biju paēdusi.

She asked me if I had eaten.

laupīt to steal

Kaimiņi mums laupa šo neaizmirstamo skatu.

The neighbours are robbing us
(of) this unforgettable view.

lūgt to ask, pray

Viņa lūdza mātei padomu.

She asked her mother for advice.

pastāstīt to tell

Pastāsti man pasaku!

Tell me a story!

pavēlēt to order (s.b. to do s.t.)

Vētras dēļ mums pavēlēja doties uz patvertni.

Because of the storm (they) ordered us to go to the shelter.

prasīt to ask

Robežsardzē mums prasīja brauciena mērķi un pases.

At the border control (they) asked us for our destination and passports.

rādīt to show

Aklš aklam ceļu rāda, abi iekrīt grāvī.

The blind man shows the blind man the way, both fall into the ditch (Latvian proverb). (The blind leading the blind.)

II Cases

rakstīt	to write
sacīt	to say
sniegt	to offer, hand
solīt	to promise
sūtīt	to send
teikt	to tell
vaicāt	to ask
vēlēt	to wish (s.b. s.t.)
veltīt	to dedicate

Viņš prezidentam rakstīja e-pastu.

He wrote an e-mail to the president.

Bet es tev saku ...

But I'm telling you ...

Smaidīdams viņš man sniedza roku.

Smiling he held out his hand to me.

Viņa man solīja piezvanīt.

She promised to phone me.

Jānis sūtīja Astrīdai rozes.

Janis sent Astrida (some) roses.

Viņš viņai teica, ka esot viņā iemīlējies.

He told her that he had fallen in love with her.

Viņi man vaicāja, vai runāju latviski.

They asked me if I speak Latvian.

Vēlu tev prieku un laimi!

I wish you happiness and luck.

Treneris atkāpās, jo grib laiku veltīt ģimenei.

The coach resigned because he wants to spend time with (his) family.
(lit. ... time dedicate to family.)

11.3.2 Adjectives plus dative

There are a few adjectives which are constructed with the dative case:

derīgs	useful	Pārdodu <u>lietošanai</u> derīgu samovaru. I am selling a working samovar. (lit. ... for <u>use</u> fit samovar.)
kaitīgs	harmful	Smēķēšana ir kaitīga <u>veselībai</u>. Smoking is harmful for (your) <u>health</u> .
līdzīgs	alike, similar	Viņa ir līdzīga <u>mātei</u>. She is like (her) <u>mother</u> .
mīļš	dear	<u>Man</u> tā dziesma ir ļoti mīļa. That song is very dear <u>to me</u> .

paklausīgs obedient

Aitu suns ir ļoti paklausīgs savam saimniekam.

A collie is very obedient to its owner.
(lit. Sheep dog ...)

pateicīgs thankful, grateful

Esmu jums pateicīgs.

(I) am grateful to you.

patīkams agreeable, pleasant

Man patīkams pārsteigums!

A pleasant surprise (for me)!

uzticīgs loyal

Viņš paliek uzticīgs saviem

politiskajiem uzskatiem.

He remains loyal to his political views.

The dative

11.3.3 Semi-prepositions plus dative

See Section 9.4 for details.

11.3.4 Verbs plus dative

These intransitive verbs, among others, always take the dative:

apnikt to get fed up with s.t.

Man apnicis gaidīt rindā.

I'm fed up of queuing.

atbildēt to answer, reply

Viņš man atbildēja, ka nevarot nākt.

He replied (to me) that he couldn't come.

atbilst to conform to, meet

Šī ierīce atbilst starptautiskajiem standartiem.

This equipment conforms to international standards.

atriebt to get one's revenge

Viņš bija apņēmies atriebt apspiedējiem.

He had made the decision to get his revenge on his oppressors.

garšot to like (food and drink)

Man garšo zemenes.

I like strawberries.

derēt to fit

Šie zābaki man neder.

These boots don't fit me.

draudēt	to threaten
gatavoties	to prepare, get ready
glaimot	to flatter
imponēt	to impress
iztapt	to please
kaitēt	to harm
kalpot	to serve
klausīt	to obey
palīdzēt	to help
pārmest	to reproach, criticize
pateikties	to thank
patikt	to like
piederēt	to belong

Mums draudēja ūdeni nepieslēgt.

We were threatened with not having our water connected.

Mēs gatavojamies atvaļinājumam.

We're getting ready for the holiday.

Skaidrs, ka man tas glaimoja.

It's clear that I was flattered by that.

Viņa izskats imponēja visiem.

His appearance impressed everybody.

Viņš grib visiem iztapt, palīdzēt, ticēt, klausīt.

He wants to please, help, believe, obey everybody.

Vēja enerģija daudz mazāk kaitē videi.

Wind energy is far less harmful to the environment.

Viņa kalpoja savai valstij.

She served her country.

See **iztapt**.

See **iztapt**.

Mums pārmeta, kāpēc mēs to darām.

We were criticized for doing that. (lit. ... why we are doing that.)

Treneris pēc uzvaras pateicās spēlētājiem.

The coach thanked the players after the win.

Visiem patīk saule.

Everybody likes the sun.

Ko dāvināt cilvēkiem, kam pieder viss.

What to give people who have everything. (lit. ... to whom everything belongs.)

pretoties to resist

**A vitamīns paaugstina
organisma spēju pretoties
dažādām infekcijām.**

Vitamin A increases the ability of an organism to fight various infections.

sāpēt to hurt

Viņai sāpēja galva.

She had a headache. (lit. To her hurt head.)

simpatizēt to like

Man viņi ļoti simpatizē.

I really like them.

ticēt to believe

Es tev ticu.

I believe you.

traucēt to disturb

Es viņai traucēju skatīties TV.

I was disturbing her watching TV.

uzticēties to trust

**Mēs zinām, ka viņiem nevar
uzticēties.**

We know that they can't be trusted.

11.3.5 Verbs with *pie-* and *uz-* prefixes plus dative

If the verbs formed with the prefixes *pie-* and *uz-* have the meaning of 'approach', then they are followed by a dative:

pieņākt to come up to

Viņš man pienāca.

He came up to me.

uzbrukt to attack

Kaimiņa suns man uzbruka.

The neighbour's dog attacked me.

11.3.6 Impersonal third-person constructions with dative

The verb in these constructions is always in the third person and the 'logical subject' is in the dative, the third example below is an equivalent construction in English. They are listed with the pronoun *man* 'to me' by way of example:

man gribas I want

Bērnam gribas ēst.

The child wants to eat.

man laimējas I am lucky

Kur citiem nelaimējās, man laimēsies!

Where others were unlucky, I will be lucky!

man liekas it seems to me

Vismaz man tā liekas.

At least it seems like that to me.

man nākas	I have to	Viņam daudz laika nākas pavadīt, lasot Latvijas medijus. <u>He</u> has to spend a lot of time reading the Latvian media.
man niez	I itch	Viņam niez. <u>He's</u> itching.
man salst	I am cold	Vai tev nesalst? Aren't <u>you</u> cold?
man slāpst	I am thirsty	Sunim slāpst. <u>The dog</u> is thirsty.
man sokas	I am successful	Lai tev labi sokas! (I hope) <u>you're</u> successful.
man šķiet	it seems to me	Man šķiet, ka skolotājam ir jāseko līdzī jaunākajām tendencēm. It seems <u>to me</u> that a teacher has to keep up with the latest trends.
man trūkst	I am lacking	Viņam trūkst elpas. <u>He</u> is short of breath.
man vajag	I need	Mums vienmēr gribas vairāk nekā <u>mums</u> vajag. We always want more than <u>we</u> need.
man veicas	I am successful	Lai jums un mums veicas! To your and our success! (lit. May <u>you</u> and <u>we</u> succeed.)

11.3.7 'To have'

Latvian does not have an equivalent of the verb 'to have'. Possession is expressed by using the dative for the possessor with the verb **būt** 'to be', the logical object is in the nominative in positive sentences and in the genitive with **nebūt** 'not to be' (see Section 11.2.6):

Viņiem ir skaists dārzs.

They have a beautiful garden. (lit. To them is beautiful garden.)

Pēterim ir jauna mašīna.

Peteris has a new car. (lit. To Peteris is new car.)

Viņai nebija naudas.

She didn't have any money. (lit. To her wasn't money.)

Man nebūs laika.

I won't have any time. (lit. To me won't be time.)

11.3.8 Impersonal third-person constructions with adverbs and dative

There are a few adverbs which are followed by the dative, e.g. *man ir auksti* ‘I am cold’; see Section 6.10.

11.3.9 Purpose or intention

This is normally expressed with ‘for’ in English:

Es krāju naudu atvalinājumam.

I’m saving money for (my) holiday.

Man iedeva naudu, lai es aizietu nopirkt ēdienu vakariņām.

(Somebody) gave me money to go and buy food for dinner.

11.3.10 Debitive

When using the debitive mood in constructions meaning ‘must, have to’, the dative is used for what we might logically think of as the logical object of the sentence:

Man jāpērk jauni zābaki. I have to buy some new boots.

If an adjective is used to describe a logical subject in the debitive, then this adjective also goes into the dative:

Skolotājai jābūt pacietīgai.

A (female) teacher has to be patient.

Turbo motors tev ļauj būt vienmēr pirmajam, ātrākajam, veiklākajam.

A turbo motor always allows you to be the first, the fastest, the most agile (masc.).

This is extended to an impersonal construction where the logical subject is missing:

Intervijā jābūt mierīgam. In an interview (one – masc.) has to be calm.

11.3.11 Infinitive būt ‘to be’ and infinitive passive plus dative

Where a logical subject is in the dative for grammatical reasons, e.g. in a construction such as *man patīk* ‘I like’, and this construction is followed by the infinitive *būt* and a noun or an adjective referring back to the subject, then these have to be in the dative to agree:

Vīnam patīk būt klaunam. He likes being a clown. (lit....to be clown.)

Man patīk būt anonīmam. I like to be anonymous.

This is extended to a subject-less construction with the infinitive **būt** and **klūt** ‘to become’:

Būt vai nebūt diennakts aptiekām?

(Should there) be or not be 24-hour pharmacies?

Būt godīgam, strādīgam, izpalīdzīgam, taupīgam – tas ir ne tikai labi, tas ir gudri.

To be honest, hard working, helpful, frugal – this is not only good, it is clever.

Kā klūt slavenai?

How does one become famous (fem.)? (lit. How to become famous?)

The same is true for a passive construction using the infinitive **tikt** ‘to become’ or **būt** ‘to be’ where the passive participle goes into the dative:

Tā ir briesmīga sajūta – būt nepienēmtam, nemīlētam.

That is a terrible feeling, not to be accepted, to be unloved.

Viņam ir labas izredzes tikt ievēlētam.

He has a good chance of being elected.

11.3.12 *Infinitive plus dative constructions*

In the infinitive construction which is the equivalent of the English ‘should’, the logical subject goes into the dative:

Ko mums tagad darīt? What should we do now?

11.3.13 *Active present participle -ot/-oties plus dative*

In a construction using the -ot/-oties participle, the logical subject of the participle clause is in the dative (see Section 8.7.2):

Tuvojoties vasarai, vērojams turistu skaitu pieaugums pilsētas centrā.

(With) summer approaching, an increase in the number of tourists can be seen in the town centre.

11.4 The accusative – akuzatīvs

11.4.1 *Direct object – darbības tiešais objekts*

This is the basic function of the accusative and answers the question ‘what?’, e.g. ‘I gave my friend a book’ – in this sentence ‘a book’ is the

direct object as it is the thing that is being given, i.e. it is the object of the verb, e.g.

Es draugam iedevu grāmatu.

I gave my friend a book.

The accusative

11.4.2 Time – laika akuzatīvs

Time phrases are put into the accusative case. These can show frequency ('how often?'):

Man katru dienu jābrauc uz darbu. I have to drive to work every day.

Or they can show duration ('how long?'):

Viņš gadu nostrādāja Īrijā. He worked in Ireland for a year.

The accusative is also used with adjectives such as *vecs* 'old' or *garš* 'long':

Viņa ir četrus gadus veca. She is four years old.

četrus gadus veca meitene a four-year-old girl

divas nedēļas garš atvaļinājums a two-week long holiday

11.4.3 Space – izplātījuma akuzatīvs

The accusative indicates 'how far?':

Esam veikuši garu ceļu.

We have come a long way.

11.4.4 Mass and measure – masas un mēra akuzatīvs

This function of the accusative is associated with verbs such as *bērt* 'to pour (solids)', *liet* 'to pour (liquids)', *griezt* 'to cut', *svērt* 'to weigh' and answers the question 'how much?'. It is also used for prices:

Viņa man nogrieza 3 metrus drēbes. She cut me 3 metres of the material.

Pieliet pus litru piena. Add half a litre of milk.

Viņa sver 65 kilogramus. She weighs 65 kilograms.

Tas maksā trīs latus. That costs three lats.

11.4.5 Measure – mēra akuzatīvs

There are a number of adjectives which are used to indicate how big, small, wide, etc. something is. These include, for example, *augsts* 'high',

biezs ‘thick’, dziļš ‘deep’, garš ‘long’, plats ‘wide’ and they are used with the accusative:

**Ēka ir trīs stāvus augsta.
kilometru gara iela**

The building is three storeys high.
a (one)-kilometre long street

11.4.6 Content – satura akuzatīvs

In this function the noun in the accusative is paired with a verb of the same derivation or with a similar meaning:

**dziedāt dziesmu
gulēt dziļu miegu**

to sing a song
to sleep soundly (lit. to sleep a deep sleep)

11.4.7 Exclamations

The accusative is also used in some exclamations:

Tos priekus!

What joy! (lit. Those joys!)

Tādu stulbu jautājumu!

Such a stupid question!

11.5 The locative – lokatīvs

11.5.1 Place – vietas lokatīvs

This answers the question ‘where?’:

Mēs ēdam virtuvē.

We eat in the kitchen.

**Pievakarē mēs iebraucām
pilsētā.**

We drove into the city in the early evening.

Viņš nometa papīru zemē.

He threw the paper to the ground.

Viņam ļoti patīk kāpt kalnā.

He really likes hill walking. (lit. ... to climb a hill.)

11.5.2 Time – laika lokatīvs

This answers the question ‘when?’ with regard to time periods such as a day, week, year, etc.:

Mums divos ir sapulce.

We have a meeting at two.

**Viņi brauc divreiz gadā
atvaļinājumā.**

They go on holiday twice a year.

Jūnijā braukšu uz Franciju.

I'm going to travel to France in June.

Piektdienās viņš spēlē futbolu.

On Fridays he plays football.

Nedēļas nogalē varēsīm atpūsties.

(We)'ll be able to relax at the weekend. (lit. ...at the end of the week.)

Vecos laikos dzīve bija grūtāka.

Life was more difficult long ago. (lit. In old times ...)

11.5.3 Manner – veida lokatīvs

This answers the question 'how?':

Viņa runāja klusā balsī.

She spoke in a quiet voice.

Viņš dzīvo nabadzībā.

He lives in poverty.

11.5.4 Reason – cēloņa lokatīvs

This function gives the reason for an action, in English it is expressed with 'in':

Pārsteigumā iepletu acis!

I opened my eyes wide in surprise.

Viņš sastinga izbrīnā.

He froze in astonishment.

11.5.5 Reference – ierobēžojuma lokatīvs

This function is associated with an adjective:

Viņa ir ļoti sāka augumā.

She is of very slight build.

Šis motocikls ir nepārspējams sacensībās.

This motorbike is unbeatable in races.

11.5.6 Purpose – nolūka lokatīvs

Latviešiem ļoti patīk iet ogās un sēnēs.

Latvians really like going to pick berries and mushrooms. (lit. ...to go in berries and mushrooms.)

Kad tu nāksi ciemos?

When are you going to visit me? (**ciems** means 'a place where one visits' and the expression **iet ciemos** means 'to visit s.b.')

11.5.7 Result – rezultāta lokatīvs

This shows the result of an action:

Viss sasala ledū.

Everything froze (into ice).

Viņš drēbes sameta kaudzē.

He threw the clothes into a heap (i.e. the heap was not there before, it is the result of the clothes being thrown).

11.5.8 Verbs prefixed with ie- plus locative

Viņš tevī ir iemīlējies.

He has fallen in love with you.

11.5.9 With verbs to indicate uninterrupted action

This function emphasizes the action of the verb by pairing it with a noun which has the same root:

Šī problēma sāk augt augumā. This problem is beginning to grow in size.

The gerund -šana is often used and the word viens 'one' can be added:

Bērns blāva vienā blausānā. The child screamed and screamed.
(lit. ...screamed in one scream.)

11.5.10 Weights and measures

The locative is used in constructions meaning 'a, per', e.g. 'a/per kilogram':

Bencīns maksā 95,9 santīmus litrā.

Petrol costs 95.9 santims a litre.

Āboli maksā 75 santīmus kilogramā.

Apples cost 75 santims a kilogram.

Torte maksā 95 santīmus gabalā.

The gâteau costs 95 santims a piece.

11.5.11 With items of clothing on the body

The locative is used to indicate the part of the body that a piece of clothing is on:

Velc mēteli mugurā!

Put your coat on. (lit. Pull coat onto back.)

Kārlim ir jaunas kurpes kājās. Karlis has got new shoes on his feet.

Latvian does not use possessive pronouns together with parts of the body referring back to the subject – it is understood in the above sentences that it is ‘your own back’ and ‘Karlis’ feet’.

11.5.12 Locatives as adverbs/prepositions

There are a few words which are in a locative form but which are classed as adverbs or prepositions. They are often used together with another noun:

Meža vidū atradām ūdenskritumu.

We found a waterfall in the middle of the forest.

Tajā restorānā ēdienu taisa acu priekšā.

In that restaurant (they) make the food in front of (your) eyes.

Ārā ir auksti.

It's cold outside.

11.5.13 Talking about colours

To ask about the colour of something Latvian uses the locative case:

Kādā krāsā izvēlēties tapetes?

What colour should (you) choose (for) wallpaper? (lit. In what colour ...)

Ja telpa ir patumša, ieteicamas tapetes gaišā krāsā.

If the room is a bit dark, wallpaper in a light colour is recommended.

If giving the colour of one specific item in answer to this type of question, the answer tends to be in the nominative to agree with the item rather than in the locative:

– **Kādā krāsā ir tavs kaķis?**

– What colour is your cat? (lit. In what colour ...)

– **Melns.**

– Black.

11.6 The vocative – vokatīvs

The vocative has only one function and that is that it is used in addressing people, animals or indeed things: **Jāni!**, **Elizabet!**, **Minka!**, **brālī!** ‘brother!’, **saulīt!** ‘sun!’. The vocative is frequently used to address people by their profession:

Dakter!

Doctor!

Skolotāj!

Teacher!

It is also used in addressing people in correspondence. There are several ways a person can be addressed in formal letters. First comes a salutation which means ‘(highly/very) esteemed’:

Masculine	Feminine
Augsti godātais	Ļoti cienītā
Augsti godājamais	Ļoti cienījamā
A. god.	Ļ. cien.
Godātais	Cienītā
Godājamais	Cienījamā
God.	Cien.

The short forms are more usual than the full forms. The adjective **cienītais** can be used to address a man, but **godātā** is not used to address a woman. The salutation is followed by the name which is in the vocative although not recognizable as such in the following examples apart from where the first name **Juris** is used. When the surname is followed by **kungs** ‘Mr’ or **kundze** ‘Mrs’, it must be in the genitive. Note that when the initial is used together with the surname, there is no space between the two:

Juri Ozola kungs!	Maija Ozolas kundze!
J.Ozola kungs!	M.Ozolas kundze!
Ozola kungs!	Ozolas kundze!
Juri Ozola kgs!	Maija Ozolas kdze!
J.Ozola kgs!	M.Ozolas kdze!
Juri Ozols!	Maija Ozola!
J.Ozols!	M.Ozola!

When we put the salutation together with the name, we get, for example:

A. god. J.Bērziņa kungs!	Cien. Maija Ozola!
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In an informal letter we can use **labdien** ‘good day’:

Labdien, Juri!	Labdien, Maija!
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For closer friends we can use **mīļais/mīļā** ‘dear’:

Mīļais Juri!	Mīļā Maija!
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When a name is specifically in the vocative, it is also possible to use the accusative **o** ending for the adjective:

Mīļo Juri!	Mīļo Maijuk!
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11.7 The instrumental – instrumentālis

This grammar does not list the instrumental as a separate case although many Latvian grammars do. It is still very much a controversial issue as to whether or not modern Latvian has an instrumental case. Its main use is with the preposition **ar** ‘with’; however, as the endings in the instrumental are exactly the same as the accusative in the singular and the dative in the plural, this grammar lists **ar** together with the prepositions taking the accusative:

Ir svarīgi iziet ar bērnu pastaigāties. It is important to go out for a walk with a child.

Skolotāja ar bērniem apsēdās aplī. The teacher sat in a circle with the children.

However, there are expressions which omit the preposition – these are now classed as adverbs or adverbial phrases if coupled with a verb:

iet kājām to go on foot

iet lieliem soļiem to walk (with) big steps

But:

braukt ar tramvaju, ar vilcienu to travel by tram, by train

A phrase such as **meitene sarkaniem matiem** ‘a girl (with) red hair’ might be encountered although it is more usual to say **meitene ar sarkaniem matiem**. Similarly:

Viņi apmainījās mīlām vēstulēm. They exchanged loving letters.

Again, in modern Latvian it is more usual to use **ar mīlām vēstulēm**.

An expression which has been retained and which still features the original instrumental endings (no longer listed in modern grammars) is **vienis prātis** ‘of the same opinion’:

Viņi visi ir vienis prātis par to. They are all of the same opinion about that.

First- and second-person singular pronouns are also sometimes still encountered in the old instrumental form (again not listed in modern grammars) rather than in the accusative:

Kurš nāks padziedāt ar manīm karaoki?

Who’s going to come and sing karaoke with me?

Es esmu ar tevīm neskatoties ne uz ko.

I’m with you no matter what. (lit. I’m with you not looking at anything.)

Syntax and punctuation – sintakse un interpunkcija

Syntax deals with how a sentence is made up. Here we are only going to describe the principal points, particularly in cases which might be difficult for English speakers.

12.1 Word order – vārdu secība

In general, Latvian follows the same word order as in English, i.e. subject, verb, object. However, for stylistic reasons Latvian word order can be more fluid, and it is therefore necessary to look at all the endings of the word to work out what the parts of speech are and, in the case of nouns, pronouns and verbs, what the cases (see Section 3.1.3) and person (see Section 8.1.1) are. Rather than listing different possibilities of Latvian word order, it is easier to list some of the elements of a sentence which must always be placed together or which take a certain position in a sentence.

- As already mentioned above, the normal word order is subject, verb, object:

Es ēdu brokastis.

I ate breakfast.

- An object is placed before a verb in an impersonal sentence with a passive meaning (see Section 8.5):

Brokastis ēda plkst. 08.00.

Breakfast was had at 0800 (hours).

- A verb can often be placed before its subject, particularly in narratives:

Kādā valstī dzīvoja ķēniņš, kam trīs dēli.

In some country (there) lived a king who (had) three sons.

- Important information is placed at the end of the sentence:

Šodien man jāiet uz interviju.

I have to go to an interview today (i.e. not any other activity or place).

Man jāiet uz interviju šodien.

I have to go to an interview today (i.e. not any other day).

Birojā pie sienas karājas glezna.

A painting is hanging on the wall in the office (i.e. a painting and not some other item).

Glezna karājas birojā pie sienas.

A painting is hanging on the wall in the office (i.e. on the wall and not some other place).

- Where a sentence has a direct and an indirect object, the indirect object is normally placed before the direct object:

Puisis deva meitenei rozes. The young man gave the girl some roses.

Puisis deva viņai tās. The young man gave her them.

If the order is reversed, then we want to emphasize that he gave roses to the girl rather than to another person:

Puisis deva rozes meitenei. The young man gave roses to the girl (and not his grandmother, for example).

Puisis deva tās viņai. The young man gave them to her.

- If a sentence has a direct and an indirect object but one of these is a pronoun, then the pronoun precedes the noun:

Puisis deva viņai rozes. The young man gave her (some) roses.

Puisis deva tās meitenei. The young man gave them to the girl.

In fact, it is more common to place the pronoun before the verb:

Puisis viņai deva rozes. The young man gave her (some) roses.

- Adjectives are generally placed before the noun they are describing:

skaista diena a beautiful day

- A genitive precedes the noun it is connected with:

studentes grāmata the (female) student's book

pudele piena a bottle of milk

If the order of the last phrase is reversed, then the meaning is changed:

piena pudele

a milk bottle

Latvian can have very long groups of genitives strung together which can be very difficult to decipher. An important thing to remember is that the order is the opposite of what it is in English as in Latvian the broadest concept comes first and the string progresses to the narrowest concept:

LU Baltu valodu katedras profesores Martas Rudzītes

(1924–1996) „Darbi latviešu dialektoloģijā” ir mācību grāmata filoloģijas studentiem.

(The book) *Darbi latviešu dialektoloģijā* (Papers in Latvian Dialectology) by Professor Marta Rudzite (1924–1996) of the Department of Baltic Languages at the University of Latvia is a text book for philology students.

- In more complex groups of words in a construction with a genitive or a pronoun, the adjective may be separated from its noun:

jaunā studentes grāmata

the (female) student's new book

viens no iemīļotājiem viņas darbiem

one of her most loved works

However, care must be taken to avoid ambiguity, for example, if we take the first example and change the ‘student’ to a ‘male student’, we get: **jaunā studenta grāmata**. We are now not sure whether it is a ‘new student’ or a ‘new book’ so for clarity we need to say:

studenta jaunā grāmata the (male) student's new book

- Pronouns and numerals are placed with the noun they are connected with:

mana grāmata

my book

divas grāmatas

two books

An additional adjective comes in the middle with numerals, see the previous point regarding pronouns:

divas skaistas grāmatas two beautiful books

- Interrogative particles (see Section 12.4) are always placed at the beginning of the sentence:

Kāpēc kaķi vienmēr krīt uz kājām?

Why do cats always land on their feet? (lit. ...always fall ...)

However, it would also be possible to start with a statement and follow this with the question word:

Kaķi vienmēr krīt uz kājām – kāpēc?

Cats always land on their feet – why?

- In a question beginning with a question word, the word order of the subject and the verb are often reversed:

Kāds šodien būs laiks?

What will the weather be like today? (lit. What like today will be the weather?)

- The dative constructions (see Section 11.3) follow the same order:

Man patīk puķes. I like flowers. (lit. For me pleasing are flowers.)

- As in English, a finite verb precedes an infinitive:

Man patīk lasīt. I like reading. (lit. ...to read.)

12.2 Members of a sentence – teikuma locekļi

In talking about the members of a sentence we mean ‘subject’, ‘object’, etc. As has been mentioned in various parts of the book, some of these members can be omitted in certain circumstances.

- The subject pronoun can be omitted because the verb shows which person it is:

Gāju uz veikalu. (I) went to the shop.

This is particularly the case in a complex sentence when the subject pronoun is not repeated:

Es gāju uz veikalu un satiku Pēteri.

I was going to the shop and met Peteris.

- Some verbs are used without a subject, especially verbs connected with weather:

Snieg. (It) is snowing.

- The third-person form of **būt** ‘to be’, i.e. **ir**, is often omitted in dative constructions in the present tense:

Cik tev (ir) gadu?

How old are you? (lit. How many years (are) to you?)

- See Sections 8.3.4, 8.8.4 and 8.8.5 for possible omissions in the present perfect, and debitive and relative moods.

12.3 Negation – nolieguma teikumi

The basic form of negating a sentence is by negating the verb. This is done by putting the prefix **ne-** on the verb:

viņš lasa	he reads	→	viņš nelasa	he doesn't read
viņš lasīja	he read	→	viņš nelasīja	he didn't read
viņš lasīs	he'll read	→	viņš nelasīs	he won't read

In the perfect tenses, the passive and other constructions using an auxiliary verb, it is the auxiliary which is negated:

viņš ir lasījis	‘he has read’	→	viņš nav lasījis	‘he hasn't read’
tilts tiek būvēts		→	tilts netiek būvēts	
‘the bridge is being built’			‘the bridge isn't being built’	
man (ir) jāiet	‘I have to go’	→	man nav jāiet	‘I don't have to go’

In English only one element of the sentence can be negative to make the meaning of the whole sentence negative. Latvian must have double or even triple negation so each element which is negative must be shown as such:

Viņš neko nelasa.

He doesn't read anything. (lit. He nothing doesn't read.)

Viņš nekad neko nelasa.

He never reads anything. (lit. He never nothing doesn't read.)

12.4 Questions – jautājuma teikumi

12.4.1 Questions using intonation

Colloquially the simplest way to ask a question is with intonation:

Tu esi paēdis? Have you eaten? (lit. You have eaten?)

12.4.2 Questions with *vai*

For yes/no questions, i.e. questions which anticipate the answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’, the particle *vai* is used at the beginning and normal word order does not change. *Vai* cannot be translated apart from including it in the English question construction:

Vai tu esi paēdis? Have you eaten?

Vai is also used in negative questions:

Vai tu neesi paēdis? Haven't you eaten?

12.4.3 Questions with *pronouns*

The pronouns *kas* ‘who, what’, *kurš/kura* ‘who, which’ and *kāds/kāda* ‘what (kind of)’ are used to introduce questions (see Section 4.5):

Kas vainas? What's the matter?

Kurš ir redzējis filmu Who has seen the film

«Rīgas sargi»? “Defenders of Riga”?

Kādas filmas tev patīk? What kind of films do you like?

12.4.4 Questions with *adverbs*

There are a number of interrogative adverbs which are used to introduce questions (see Section 6.4):

Cik tev gadu How old are you? (lit. How many to you years?)

(Note that *cik* is followed by the genitive if it has the meaning ‘how many’.)

Kā atrast staciju? How (do I) find the station? (lit. How to find ...)

Kur tu biji? Where were you?

12.5 Full stop – punkts (.)

Full stops are used very much as in English so do not usually cause any problems.

- They are used at the end of a sentence:

Šodien līst lietus. It's raining today.

- They are used in abbreviated words, e.g. **piem.** = **piemēram** ‘for example’, **plkst. 16:00** = **pulksten 16:00** ‘at 1600 (hours)’.
- However, full stops are not used for weights and measures, etc., e.g. **4 kg** ‘4 kilograms’.
- They are also not used in initialisms, e.g. **LR 3** = **Latvijas Radio 3**.
- One difference from English is that a full stop is used with ordinal numbers when using Arabic numerals, e.g. **2011. gada 10. novembrī**, ‘on 10th November (of the) 2011 (-th year)’, **2. stāvā** ‘on the 2nd floor’.

12.6 Exclamation mark – izsaukuma zīme (!)

An exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence which includes the following.

- A command:

Piezvani man sestdien!

Phone me on Saturday.

- An interjection or an exclamation, as well as to show surprise or express wishes. It is used more in Latvian than in English; for example, English would not always use an exclamation form for a command or for wishes:

Stop!

Stop!

Daudz laimes dzimšanas dienā!

Happy birthday!

Kaut nebūtu tik vējains!

I wish it wasn't so windy.

Tas nu gan bija labs koncerts!

That certainly was a good concert!

**Staigāt pa sliežu ceļiem
aizliegts!**

Do not walk on the rail tracks.

An exclamation mark is also used to indicate that a person is being addressed, i.e. when the vocative is used or in addressing a person in a letter:

Jāni!

Janis!

Augsti godātais (or A. god.)

Dear Mr Purenins

I.Pureniņa kungs!

12.7 Comma – komats (,)

Commas are used in Latvian much more than in English, the main reason being that they need to be used to separate most clauses in Latvian (see

Sections 4.6, 10.1 and 10.2). The following excerpt from a Latvian folk tale illustrates this use of commas:

Tālu jūrā, tur, kur virs ūdens paceļas četri melni klints ragi, tur jūras dziļumā atradās jūras ķēniņa skaistā pils.

Ļaudis gan sen bija dzirdējuši par šo pili un viņas dārgumiem jūras dibenā, bet vēl nevienam cilvēkam nebija izdevies ar savām acīm pili redzēt. Gan daudz drošu jūrnieku brauca to meklēt, bet dzīvs neviens neatgriezās.

Vecais jūras ķēniņš tikai reti atstāja savu pili, jo no saviem kalpiem viņš dabūja visu zināt, kas pasaulē notika.

Far away at sea, there where four black rocky cliffs rise above the water, there in the depths of the sea was the beautiful castle of the sea king.

People had long heard about this castle and its treasures at the bottom of the sea, but nobody had yet seen the castle with their own eyes. Many brave sailors travelled to find it, but nobody returned alive.

The old sea king rarely left his castle because he found out from his servants everything that happened in the world.

There are a few exceptions to this general rule, as below.

- Where **un** ‘and’ is used to join two subordinate clauses of equal value:

Viņš nebrauca uz Parīzi, jo māte bija slima un tēvs viens pats netika galā.

He didn't go to Paris because (his) mother was ill and (his) father couldn't cope on his own.

- Where **un** ‘and’ is used in a sentence which begins with a word or a phrase applying to the whole sentence:

Vakar viņš aizbrauca uz Parīzi un mēs aizgājām iepirkties.

Yesterday he travelled to Paris and we went shopping.

12.8 Semi-colon – semikols (;)

A semi-colon divides two parts of a sentence which are fairly independent of each other:

Kad izbraucis, tad jābrauc; kad ko iesācis, tad jāpabeidz.

When (you) have set out, then (you) have to travel; when (you) have started something, then (you) have to finish it (Latvian proverb).
(Never do things by halves.)

12.9 Colon – kols (:)

- A colon is used to introduce direct speech within indirect speech:

Vai tad tu nedzirdēji, ka tēvs teica: „Beidz muļķoties!”

Didn't you hear (your) father say, 'Stop acting daft!'.

- A colon follows a general word introducing examples of this word:

Šodien nopirku dažādus augļus: ābolus, bumbierus, mellenes.

I bought various fruit today: apples, pears, blueberries.

- A colon is used in place of a conjunction:

Viņš nevarēja paiet: viņš bija piedzēries.

He couldn't walk: he was drunk.

- A colon is used before an explanation of the first part of a sentence:

Cūka paliek cūka: izpeldējusies no jauna dubļos vārtās.

A pig remains a pig: having had a swim, it rolls around in the mud again (Latvian proverb). (You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.)

- Very often a colon is used in the 24-hour clock, although full stops are also used:

23:40

12.10 Single quotation marks – vienpēdiņas (, ')

Single quotation marks are used for plant and fruit varieties, e.g. **puķu zirņi**, 'Latvian Red' 'sweet peas Latvian Red', **āboli**, 'Dzidrie baltie', 'Clear White apples'. Quotation marks are normally written with the first one at the bottom and the second one at the top.

12.11 Double quotation marks – pēdiņas („”, « »)

Latvian uses either double quotation marks, the first at the bottom and the second at the top, or guillemets as follows.

- To indicate direct speech. Punctuation marks such as full stops, question marks, etc. are placed inside the quotation marks:

Pārdevēja jautāja: „Vai jūs vēl kaut ko vēlaties?”

The sales assistant asked, "Would you like anything else?"

- To indicate the names of books, works of art, sweets, drinks, magazines, etc.:

dzēriens «Rīgas Melnais balzams» the drink Riga Black Balsam

žurnāls „Santa” the magazine *Santa*

konfektes „Gotiņas” the sweets ‘Little Cows’
(a type of fudge)

Laimas Muktupāveles grāmata «Šampinjonu derība»

Laima Muktupavele's book *The Mushroom Testament*

- To show irony:

Tā nu gan bija „gudra” ideja! That was a “clever” idea!

12.12 Apostrophe – apostrofs (')

An apostrophe indicates a vowel which has been omitted, e.g. *mīlā mās'* (*māsa*) ‘dear sister’.

Appendix I

Second-/third-conjugation verbs ending in -ēt/-ēties

Reflexive verbs are in the same group as their non-reflexive counterpart so are not listed separately unless the non-reflexive counterpart is not commonly used.

Second conjugation

airēt	to row (a boat)
aplaudēt	to applaud
ārstēt	to treat (medically)
biedēt	to frighten
būvēt	to build
demonstrēt	to demonstrate
dēvēt	to call, name
draudzēties	to be friendly with s.b.
dzemdēt	to give birth
filmēt	to film
interesēt	to interest
īrēt	to rent
kaitēt	to harm
kausēt	to melt
kavēt	to hinder, miss
klauvēt	to knock
klusēt	to be silent
koncentrēt	to concentrate (tr.)
lādēt	to load
makšķerēt	to fish
meklēt	to look for
pīpēt	to smoke (a pipe)

publicēt	to publicize
pulcēties	to get together
reaģēt	to react
rūpēties	to look after
slavēt	to praise
smēķēt	to smoke
spēlēt	to play
studēt	to study
tērēt	to spend (money)
traucēt	to disturb
vēlēt	to vote
vinnēt	to win
zāģēt	to saw
zaudēt	to lose
zīmēt	to draw

Third conjugation

atbildēt	to answer
cerēt	to hope
derēt	to bet, fit
draudēt	to threaten
drebēt	to shiver
drīkstēt	to be allowed
dzirdēt	to hear
gribēt	to want
gulēt	to sleep (es guļu 'I sleep')
kaitēt	to be the matter (kas tev kaiš/kait 'what's the matter with you')
kustēt	to move
lādēt	to curse
līdzēt	to help
mācēt	to know how to do s.t. (es māku 'I know how to do s.t.')
mīlēt	to love
minēt	to mention, guess
peldēt	to swim
precēt	to marry
redzēt	to see
sāpēt	to hurt (man sāp kāja 'my leg hurts')
sēdēt	to sit (es sēdu [æ]/ sēžu 'I sit')

Appendix I

skanēt	to sound
slīdēt	to slide, slip
smirdēt	to stink
spīdēt	to shine
stāvēt	to stand
stenēt	to groan
svinēt	to celebrate
tecēt	to flow
ticēt	to believe
trīcēt	to tremble
tupēt	to squat
turēt	to hold
vaidēt	to moan
vajadzēt	to need (man vajag 'I need')
varēt	to be able to
vēlēt	to wish

Appendix 2

Reverse retrieval of verbs and nouns

First-conjugation verbs with stem changes

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
audz	2nd sing.	present	augt	to grow
bāžos	1st sing.	present	bāzties (virsū)	to bother s.b.
bāžu	1st sing.	present	bāzt	to shove
bēdz	2nd sing.	present	bēgt	to flee
beidzos	1st sing.	present/past	beigties	to end
beidzu	1st sing.	present	beigt	to finish
bijos	1st sing.	past	bīties	to be afraid
biju	1st sing.	present	būt	to be
birstu	1st sing.	present	birt	to pour
bīstos	1st sing.	present	bīties	to be afraid
braucu	1st sing.	present	braukt	to travel
brēcu	1st sing.	present	brēkt	to scream
briedīšu	1st sing.	future	briest	to swell
briedu	1st sing.	past	briest	to swell
brūc	2nd sing.	present	brukt	to collapse
brūku	1st sing.	present	brukt	to collapse
cēlos	1st sing.	past	celties	to get up
ceļos	1st sing.	present	celties	to get up
ceļu	1st sing.	present	celt	to lift
cenšos	1st sing.	present	censties	to try
centies	2nd sing.	present	censties	to try
centīšos	1st sing.	future	censties	to try

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
centos	1st sing.	past	censties	to try
cērtu	1st sing.	present	cirst	to chop (e.g. trees)
ciešos	1st sing.	present	ciesties	to restrain oneself
ciešu	1st sing.	present	ciest	to suffer
ciet	2nd sing.	present	ciest	to suffer
cieties	2nd sing.	present	ciesties	to restrain oneself
cietīšos	1st sing.	future	ciesties	to restrain oneself
cietos	1st sing.	past	ciesties	to restrain oneself
cietu	1st sing.	past	ciest	to suffer
cirtīšu	1st sing.	future	cirst	to chop (e.g. trees)
cirtu	1st sing.	past	cirst	to chop (e.g. trees)
dedz	2nd sing.	present	degt	to burn
devos	1st sing.	past	doties	to set off
devu	1st sing.	past	dot	to give
dīgstu	1st sing.	present	dīgt	to sprout
dodos	1st sing.	present	doties	to set off
dodu	1st sing.	present	dot	to give
dūcu	1st sing.	present/past	dūkt	to buzz
dūros	1st sing.	past	durties	to sting
dūru	1st sing.	past	durt	to stab
dzenos	1st sing.	present	dzīties	to pursue
dzenu	1st sing.	present	dzīt	to drive, chase away
dzēru	1st sing.	past	dzert	to drink
dzimstu	1st sing.	present	dzimt	to be born
dzinos	1st sing.	past	dzīties	to pursue
dzinu	1st sing.	past	dzīt	to drive, chase away
ēdīšu	1st sing.	future	ēst	to eat
ēdu	1st sing.	present/past	ēst	to eat
ēju	1st sing.	present	iet	to go
esi	2nd sing.	present	būt	to be
esmu	1st sing.	present	būt	to be
gāju	1st sing.	past	iet	to go
gāzīšu	1st sing.	past	gāzt	to overturn
gāžos	1st sing.	present	gāzties	to fall
gāžu	1st sing.	present	gāzt	to overturn
glābjos	1st sing.	present	glābties	to save oneself

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
glābju	1st sing.	present	glābt	to save s.b.
grābju	1st sing.	present	grābt	to grab, rake
grauzīšu	1st sing.	future	grauzt	to gnaw
graužu	1st sing.	present	grauzt	to gnaw
griezīšu	1st sing.	future	griezt	to cut, turn
griežos	1st sing.	present	griezties	to turn
griežu	1st sing.	present	griezt	to cut, turn
grimstu	1st sing.	present	grimt	to sink
gūlos	1st sing.	past	gulties	to lie down
guļos	1st sing.	present	gulties	to lie down
gūstu	1st sing.	present	gūt	to gain
guvu	1st sing.	past	gūt	to gain
ģērbjos	1st sing.	present	ģērbties	to get dressed
iepazīnos	1st sing.	past	iepazīties	to get to know s.b.
iepazīstos	1st sing.	present	iepazīties	to get to know s.b.
iepērcies	2nd sing.	present	iepirkties	to go shopping
iepērkos	1st sing.	present	iepirkties	to go shopping
ir	3rd sing./pl.	present	būt	to be
jaucos	1st sing.	present/past	jaukties	to interfere
jaucu	1st sing.	present/past	jaukt	to mix
jūtīšos	1st sing.	future	justies	to feel (intr.)
jūtīšu	1st sing.	future	just	to feel (tr.)
jūtos	1st sing.	present/past	justies	to feel (intr.)
jutu	1st sing.	past	just	to feel (tr.)
jūtu	1st sing.	present	just	to feel (tr.)
kaltīšu	1st sing.	future	kalst	to wither
kaltu	1st sing.	past	kalst	to wither
kaļu	1st sing.	present	kalt	to forge (metal)
kāpju	1st sing.	present	kāpt	to climb
kaujos	1st sing.	present	kauties	to fight
kauju	1st sing.	present	kaut	to slaughter
kāvos	1st sing.	past	kauties	to fight
kāvu	1st sing.	past	kaut	to slaughter
klājos	1st sing.	present	klāties	to spread over
klāju	1st sing.	present/past	klāt	to lay (e.g. table)
kliedz	1st sing.	present/past	kliegt	to shout

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
kļūstu	1st sing.	present	kļūt	to become
kļuvu	1st sing.	past	kļūt	to become
kod	2nd sing.	present	kost	to bite
kodīšu	1st sing.	future	kost	to bite
codu	1st sing.	past	kost	to bite
kopju	1st sing.	present	kopt	to look after
kožu	1st sing.	present	kost	to bite
krācu	1st sing.	present/past	krākt	to snore
krājos	1st sing.	present/past	krāties	to save (intr.)
krāju	1st sing.	present/past	krāt	to save (tr.)
krāpju	1st sing.	present	krāpt	to cheat
krauju	1st sing.	present	kraut	to load
krāvu	1st sing.	past	kraut	to load
kritīšos	1st sing.	future	kristies	to decrease
kritīšu	1st sing.	future	krist	to fall
kritos	1st sing.	past	kristies	to decrease
krītos	1st sing.	present	kristies	to decrease
kritu	1st sing.	past	krist	to fall
krītu	1st sing.	present	krist	to fall
kustīšu	1st sing.	future	kust	to melt
kēros	1st sing.	past	kerties	to catch hold of s.t.
kēru	1st sing.	past	kert	to catch
laid	2nd sing.	present	laist	to let
laidies	2nd sing.	present	laisties	to fly
laidīšos	1st sing.	future	laisties	to fly
laidīšu	1st sing.	future	laist	to let
laidos	1st sing.	past	laisties	to fly
laidu	1st sing.	past	laist	to let
laižos	1st sing.	present	laisties	to fly
laižu	1st sing.	present	laist	to let
laužos	1st sing.	present	lauzties	to wrestle
laužu	1st sing.	present	lauzt	to break
lecu	1st sing.	present	lēkt	to jump
lēcu	1st sing.	past	lēkt	to jump
leju	1st sing.	present	liet	to pour
lēju	1st sing.	past	liet	to pour

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
lemju	1st sing.	present	lemt	to decide
lēmu	1st sing.	past	lemt	to decide
līdīšu	1st sing.	future	līst	to crawl
līdu	1st sing.	past	līst	to crawl
liec	2nd sing.	present	likt	to put
liecies	2nd sing.	present	likties (gultā)	to lie down
liecīšos	1st sing.	future	liekties	to bend (intr.)
liecos	1st sing.	present/past	liekties	to bend (intr.)
liecu	1st sing.	present/past	liekt	to bend (tr.)
liekos	1st sing.	present	likties (gultā)	to lie down
lieku	1st sing.	present	likt	to put
lienu	1st sing.	present	līst	to crawl
lija	1st sing.	past	līt	to rain
līst	3rd sing.	present	līt	to rain
lūdzos	1st sing.	present/past	lūgties	to plead
lūdzu	1st sing.	present/past	lūgt	to ask
lūstu	1st sing.	present	lūzt	to break (intr.)
lūzīšu	1st sing.	future	lūzt	to break (intr.)
ļaujos	1st sing.	present	ļauties	to give way
ļauju	1st sing.	present	ļaut	to allow
ļāvos	1st sing.	past	ļauties	to give way
ļāvu	1st sing.	past	ļaut	to allow
māju	1st sing.	present/past	māt	to wave
maļu	1st sing.	present	malt	to grind
metīšu	1st sing.	future	mest	to throw
metos	1st sing.	present	mesties	to throw oneself
metu	1st sing.	present/past	mest	to throw
mirstu	1st sing.	present	mirt	to die
modīšos	1st sing.	future	mosties	to wake up
modos	1st sing.	past	mosties	to wake up
nāc	2nd sing.	present	nākt	to come
nācās	3rd sing.	past	nākties	to be necessary
nācu	1st sing.	past	nākt	to come
nav	3rd sing./pl.	present	nebūt	not to be

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
nešīšu	1st sing.	future	nest	to carry
ņēmos	1st sing.	past	ņemšos	to undertake
ņēmu	1st sing.	past	ņemt	to take
patīc	2nd sing.	present	patikt	to like
pērc	2nd sing.	present	pirkt	to buy
pērku	1st sing.	present	pirkt	to buy
pļauju	1st sing.	present	pļaut	to mow
pļāvu	1st sing.	past	pļaut	to mow
plēsīšu	1st sing.	future	plēst	to tear
plēšos	1st sing.	present	plēsties	to fight
plēšu	1st sing.	present	plēst	to tear
pratīšu	1st sing.	future	prast	to know (how to do s.t.)
pratu	1st sing.	past	prast	to know (how to do s.t.)
protu	1st sing.	present	prast	to know (how to do s.t.)
pūšu	1st sing.	present	pūst	to blow
pūt	2nd sing.	present	pūst	to blow
pūtīšu	1st sing.	future	pūst	to blow
pūtu	1st sing.	past	pūst	to blow
radīšos	1st sing.	future	rasties	to arise
radīšu	1st sing.	future	rast	to find
rados	1st sing.	past	rasties	to arise
radu	1st sing.	past	rast	to find
rāpjos	1st sing.	present	rāpties	to crawl
raujos	1st sing.	present	rauties	to decrease
rauju	1st sing.	present	raut	to pull
rāvos	1st sing.	past	rauties	to decrease
rāvu	1st sing.	past	raut	to pull
reibstu	1st sing.	present	reibt	to get dizzy
rejos	1st sing.	present	rieties	to abuse each other
rējos	1st sing.	past	rieties	to abuse each other
reju	1st sing.	present	riet	to bark
rēju	1st sing.	past	riet	to bark
riju	1st sing.	present/past	rīt	to swallow
roc	2nd sing.	present	rakt	to dig
rodos	1st sing.	present	rasties	to arise
rodu	1st sing.	present	rast	to find

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
roku	1st sing.	present	rakt	to dig
rūcu	1st sing.	present/past	rūkt	to roar
rūgstu	1st sing.	present	rūgt	to ferment
sāc	2nd sing.	present	sākt	to begin (tr.)
sācies	2nd sing.	present	sākties	to begin (intr.)
salstu	1st sing.	present	salt	to freeze
saucos	1st sing.	present/past	saukties	to go by the name of
saucu	1st sing.	present/past	saukt	to call
sēdies	2nd sing.	present	sēsties	to sit down
sēdīšos	1st sing.	future	sēsties	to sit down
sēdos	1st sing.	past	sēsties	to sit down
sēju	1st sing.	present/past	sēt	to sow
sēju	1st sing.	past	siet	to tie
sēžos	1st sing.	present	sēsties	to sit down
sienu	1st sing.	present	siet	to tie
sitīšu	1st sing.	future	sist	to hit
sitos	1st sing.	present/past	sisties	to knock against s.t.
situ	1st sing.	present/past	sist	to hit
skāru	1st sing.	past	skart	to touch
skrejos	1st sing.	present	skrieties	to chase each other
skrējos	1st sing.	past	skrieties	to chase each other
skreju	1st sing.	present	skriet	to run
skrēju	1st sing.	past	skriet	to run
skrienos	1st sing.	present	skrieties	to chase each other
skrienu	1st sing.	present	skriet	to run
skumstu	1st sing.	present	skumt	to be sad
slāpstu	1st sing.	present	slāpt	to be thirsty
slaucu	1st sing.	present/past	slaukt	to milk
slēdzos	1st sing.	present/past	slēgties	to lock (intr.)
slēdzu	1st sing.	present/past	slēgt	to lock (tr.)
slēpjos	1st sing.	present	slēpties	to hide (intr.)
slēpju	1st sing.	present	slēpt	to hide (tr.)
snaud	2nd sing.	present	snaust	to have a nap
snaudīšu	1st sing.	future	snaust	to have a nap
snaudu	1st sing.	past	snaust	to have a nap
snaužu	1st sing.	present	snaust	to have a nap

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
sniedzos	1st sing.	present/past	sniegties	to stretch (intr.)
sniedz	1st sing.	present/past	sniegt	to hand
snieg	3rd sing.	present	snigt	to snow
spēju	1st sing.	present/past	spēt	to be able
spēru	1st sing.	past	spert	to kick
spied	2nd sing.	present	spiest	to press
spiedies	2nd sing.	present	spiesties	to press close to s.t.
spiedīšos	1st sing.	future	spiesties	to press close to s.t.
spiedīšu	1st sing.	future	spiest	to press
spiedos	1st sing.	past	spiesties	to press close to s.t.
spiedu	1st sing.	past	spiest	to press
spiežos	1st sing.	present	spiesties	to press close to s.t.
spiežu	1st sing.	present	spiest	to press
sprāgstu	1st sing.	present	sprāgt	to burst
sried	2nd sing.	present	sriest	to judge
sriedīšu	1st sing.	future	sriest	to judge
sriedu	1st sing.	past	sriest	to judge
sriežu	1st sing.	present	sriest	to judge
stājos	1st sing.	present/past	stāties	to take one's stand
steidzos	1st sing.	present/past	steigties	to hurry
stiepjos	1st sing.	present	stiepties	to stretch (intr.)
stiepj	1st sing.	present	stiept	to stretch (tr.)
sūcos	1st sing.	present/past	sūkties	to seep
sūcu	1st sing.	present/past	sūkt	to suck
sveicu	1st sing.	present/past	sveikt	to greet
sveros	1st sing.	present	svērties	to weigh oneself
sveru	1st sing.	present	svērt	to weigh
svied	2nd sing.	present	sviest	to throw
sviedīšu	1st sing.	future	sviest	to throw
sviedu	1st sing.	past	sviest	to throw
sviežu	1st sing.	present	sviest	to throw
šaujos	1st sing.	present	šauties	to fight a duel
šauju	1st sing.	present	šaut	to shoot
šāvos	1st sing.	past	šauties	to fight a duel
šāvu	1st sing.	past	šaut	to shoot
šķīdīšu	1st sing.	future	šķīst	to splash
šķīdu	1st sing.	past	šķīst	to splash

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Tense</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
šķiet	3rd sing.	present	šķist	to seem
šķīros	1st sing.	past	šķirties	to separate (intr.)
šķita	3rd sing.	past	šķist	to seem
šķitīs	3rd sing.	future	šķist	to seem
šuju	1st sing.	present	šūt	to sew
šuvu	1st sing.	past	šūt	to sew
teicu	1st sing.	present/past	teikt	to say
tiec	2nd sing.	present	tikt	to become
tiecies	1st sing.	present	tikties	to meet
tiecos	1st sing.	present/past	tiekties	to be inclined
tiekos	1st sing.	present	tikties	to meet
tieku	1st sing.	present	tikt	to become
topu	1st sing.	present	tapt	to become
triecu	1st sing.	present/past	triekt	to drive s.t. off
trūkstos	1st sing.	present	trūkties	to be startled
trūktu	1st sing.	present	trūkt	to be lacking
vedīšu	1st sing.	future	vest	to lead
vedu	1st sing.	present/past	vest	to lead
veicas	3rd sing.	present	veikties	to fare
veicās	3rd sing.	past	veikties	to fare
veicu	1st sing.	present/past	veikt	to carry out
velc	2nd sing.	present	vilkt	to pull
velcies	2nd sing.	present	vilkties	to drag oneself
velkos	1st sing.	present	vilkties	to drag oneself
velku	1st sing.	present	vilkt	to pull
veros	1st sing.	present	vērties	to open (intr.)
vērsīšu	1st sing.	future	vērst	to turn (to)
vēršu	1st sing.	present	vērst	to turn (to)
veru	1st sing.	present	vērt	to open (tr.)
vijos	1st sing.	present/past	vīties	to twine
viju	1st sing.	present/past	vīt	to twist
vītīšu	1st sing.	future	vīst	to wither
vītu	1st sing.	past	vīst	to wither
zodz	2nd sing.	present	zagt	to steal
zodzies	1st sing.	present	zagties	to steal away
zogos	1st sing.	present	zagties	to steal away
zogu	1st sing.	present	zagt	to steal

Second-, fifth- and sixth-declension nouns with stem changes

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
adrešu	adrese	address
akmeņu	akmens	stone, rock
aktivitāšu	aktivitāte	activity
aktrišu	aktrise	actress
ambulanču	ambulance	out-patient clinic
amerikāņu	amerikānis	American man
amerikāniešu	amerikāniete	American woman
analīžu	analīze	analysis
anekdošu	anekdote	anecdote
angliešu	angliete	English woman
angļu	anglis	English man
ansambļu	ansamblis	ensemble, group
apkārtnu	apkārtne	neighbourhood, surroundings
aplukšņu	aploksne	envelope
aprikožu	aprikoze	apricot
aprīļa (gen. sing.)	aprīlis	April
aproču	aproce	bracelet
apskašu	apskate	tour
apstākļu	apstākļis	circumstance, condition
apvāršņu	apvārsnis	horizon
asiņu	asinis (fem. pl.)	blood
atbilžu	atbilde	answer
atlaižu	atlaide	discount, rebate
attieksmju	attieksme	attitude
atvilktņu	atvilktne	drawer
atzīmju	atzīme	mark, grade
augļu	auglis	fruit
aukļu	aukle	nanny
austrāliešu	austrālietis, austrāliete	Australian, Australian man/woman
aveņu	avene	raspberry
avīžu	avīze	newspaper
baīļu	bailes (fem. pl.)	fear

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ballīšu	ballīte	party
baļļu	balle	ball, dance
baložu	balodis	pigeon
biešu	biete	beetroot
bikšu	bikses (fem. pl.)	trousers
biļešu	biļete	ticket
bišu	bite	bee
blūžu	blūze	blouse
brāļu	brālis	brother
bremžu	bremzes (fem. pl.)	brakes
briežu	briedis	deer, stag
brīļu	brilles	glasses, spectacles
brīžu	brīdis	instant, moment
ceļu	celis	knee
celtņu	celtne	building
cenrāžu	cenrādis	price list
cepešu	cepetis	roast
cietokšņu	cietoksnis	fortress
cigarešu	cigarete	cigarette
cilšu	cilts (fem.)	tribe
cirvju	cirvis	axe
darbinieču	darbiniece	female employee, worker
dārzeņu	dārzenis	vegetable
dārzkopju	dārzkopis	gardener
dīļu	dilles (fem. pl.)	dill
dobju	dobe	flower bed
draudzeņu	draudzene	female friend
drēbju	drēbes (fem. pl.)	clothes
durvju	durvis (fem. pl.)	door
dvēseļu	dvēsele	soul
dvielu	dvielis	towel
dzejoļu	dzejolis	poem
dzimteņu	dzimtene	native land
dzīvju	dzīve	life
dzīvokļu	dzīvoklis	flat, apartment
egļu	egle	fir

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
elkoņu	elkonis	elbow
ērgļu	ērglis	eagle
ērģeļu	ērģeles (fem. pl.)	organ
finanšu	finanses (fem. pl.)	finance/s
francūžu	francūzis	French man
francūziešu	francūziete	French woman
frikadeļu	frikadele	meat ball
gaiļu	gailis	rooster; cockerel
gaiteņu	gaitenis	passage, corridor
galotņu	galotne	top, peak
garderobju	garderobe	cloakroom
gaumju	gaume	taste (in s.t.)
glāžu	glāze	glass
govju	govs (fem.)	cow
grāvju	grāvis	ditch
grieķiešu	grieķiete	Greek woman
gulbju	gulbis	swan
ģimeņu	ģimene	family
ierēdņu	ierēdnis	official, clerk
ieroču	ierocis	weapon
iestāžu	iestāde	institution, office
ietekmju	ietekme	influence
ietvju	ietve	path, pavement, sidewalk
igaunju	igaunis	Estonian, Estonian man
igauniešu	igauniete	Estonian woman
interesu	interese	interest
īriešu	īriete	Irish woman
izlašu	izlase	selection
izlietņu	izlietne	sink, basin
izrāžu	izrāde	performance
izstāžu	izstāde	exhibition
izvēļu	izvēle	choice
jauniešu	jaunieties, jauniete	male/female young person
jūdžu	jūdze	mile
kaimiņieņu	kaimiņiene	female neighbour
kaklasaišu	kaklasaite	(neck)tie

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
kapeņu	kapenes (fem. pl.)	sepulchre, vault
kāpņu	kāpnes (fem. pl.)	staircase
kapteiņu	kapteinis	captain
karalieņu	karaliene	queen
karaļu	karalis	king
karbonāžu	karbonāde	meat dipped in beaten egg and fried
karošu	karote	spoon
karšu	karte	map
kartupeļu	kartupelis	potato
kašu	kase	cash desk, booking office
katoļu	katolis	Catholic, Catholic man
katoliešu	katoliete	Catholic woman
kaudžu	kaudze	heap, pile
klašu	klase	classroom, form
klēšu	klēts (fem.)	barn
klinšu	klints (fem.)	cliff, rock
kokļu	kokle	board zither
kokteiļu	kokteilis	cocktail
konfekšu	konfekte	sweet, candy
konferenču	konference	conference
kotlešu	kotlete	rissole
krabju	krabis	crab
krāšņu	krāsns (fem.)	stove, oven
kreļļu	krelles (fem. pl.)	(string of) beads
krieviešu	krieviete	Russian woman
krustnešu	krustnesis	crusader
krūšu	krūtis (fem. pl.)	breasts, chest
kuiļu	kuilis	boar
kukuļu	kukulis	loaf
kuļu	kule	bag
kumelīšu	kumelītes (fem. pl.)	chamomile
kundžu	kundze	lady
kurpju	kurpe	shoe
kuršu	kursis	Courlander
kvīšu	kvīts (fem.)	receipt
ķermeņu	ķermenis	body

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ķieģeļu	ķieģelis	brick
ķimeņu	ķīmenes (fem. pl.)	caraway
ķīseļu	ķīselis	stewed fruit
ķiršu	ķirsis	cherry
lāču	lācis	bear
lappušu	lappuse	page
lašu	lasis	salmon
latviešu	latvietis, latviete	Latvian, Latvian man/woman
lauciniešu	lauciniete	countrywoman
leišu	leitīs	Lithuanian, Lithuanian man
leitišu	leitiete	Lithuanian woman
leļļu	lelle	doll, puppet
lībiešu	lībietis, lībiete	Liv, Liv man/woman
līču	līcis	bay, gulf
līdzekļu	līdzeklis	means
likteņa (gen. sing.)	liktenis	fate
līmeņu	līmenis	level
locekļu	loceklis	member
ļaužu	ļaudis (masc. pl.)	people
mākoņu	mākonis	cloud
māšu	māte	mother
mēbeļu	mēbeles (fem. pl.)	furniture
meiteņu	meitene	girl
melleņu	mellene	blueberry
mēļu	mēle	tongue
mēnešu	mēnesis	month
mērču	mērce	sauce
mēteļu	mētelis	coat
minūšu	minūte	minute
mirkļu	mirklis	moment
nakšu	nakts (fem.)	night
nažu	nažis	knife
nogaļu	nogale	end
nomāju	nomale	outskirts
nometņu	nometne	camp
novēļu	novele	short story

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
onkuļu	onkulis	uncle
padomju	padome	council, Soviet
palodžu	palodze	window sill
paparžu	paparde	fern
papēžu	papēdis	heel
pārraižu	pārraide	programme, broadcast
pavadoņu	pavadonis, pavadone	male/female (train/flight) attendant
peļu	pele	mouse
pērļu	pērle	pearl
piedurkņu	piedurkne	sleeve
pieminekļu	piemineklis	monument
piestātņu	piestātne	(bus) stop, pier
pīlādžu	pīlādzis	rowan
pilsonu	pilsonis	citizen
piļu	pils (fem.)	castle, palace
pīļu	pīle	duck
pīpju	pīpe	pipe
plīšu	plīts (fem.)	cooker
pludmaļu	pludmale	beach
plūmju	plūme	plum
poļu	polis	Polish, Polish man
prāmju	prāmis	ferry
preču	prece; preces (fem. pl.)	merchandise; goods
priekšnieču	priekšniece	female boss
priežu	priede	pine
prognožu	prognoze	forecast
pudeļu	pudele	bottle
puīšu	puisis	lad
pulksteņu	pulkstenis	clock, watch
pumpju	pumpis	pump
pusaudžu	pusaudzis	teenager, adolescent
puteņu	putenis	blizzard
radinieču	radiniece	female relative
rakstnieču	rakstniece	female writer
recepšu	recepte	recipe, prescription

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
reižu	reize	time
rezidenču	rezidence	residence
riteņu	ritenis	wheel
rīvju	rīve	grater
rožu	roze	rose
rubļu	rublis	rouble
rūpju	rūpes (fem. pl.)	care, concern
saimnieču	saimniece	female owner, lady of the house
salvešu	salvete	napkin, serviette
sanāksmju	sanāksme	meeting, conference
sāpju	sāpes (fem. pl.)	pain
sapņu	sapnis	dream
sekunžu	sekunde	second (time)
senču	sencis	ancestor
sēņu	sēne	mushroom
sieviešu	sieviete	woman
siržu	sirds (fem.)	heart
skapju	skapis	wardrobe, cupboard
skārņu	skārnis	butcher's shop
skatuvju	skatuve	stage (theatre)
skolnieču	skolniece	school girl
skursteņu	skurstenis	chimney
smadzeņu	smadzenes (fem. pl.)	brain
smilšu	smiltis (fem. pl.)	sand
spaiņu	spainis	bucket
specialitāšu	specialitāte	speciality
spēļu	spēle	game
spoguļu	spogulis	mirror
stāvokļu	stāvoklis	condition
strādnieču	strādniece	female worker, labourer
suņu	suns	dog
sveču	svece	candle
šallju	šalle	scarf
šķēļu	šķēle	slice
šķīvju	šķīvis	plate

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
šņabja (gen. sing.)	šņabis	vodka
šūpoļu	šūpoles (fem. pl.)	swing
tablešu	tablete	tablet, pill
takšu	taksis	taxi
tālrunu	tālrunis	telephone
tanšu	tante	aunt
tašu	tase	cup
telšu	telts (fem.)	tent
tevoču	tēvocis	uncle
tiesnešu	tiesnesis	referee, judge
tornu	tornis	tower
toršu	torte	gateau
trepju	trepes (fem. pl.)	stairs, ladder
trokšņu	troksnis	noise
tualešu	tualete	toilet
tūkstošu	tūkstotis	thousand
tunču	tuncis	tuna
tuneļu	tunelis	tunnel
ūdeņu	ūdens	water
uguņu	uguns	fire, light
universitāšu	universitāte	university
upju	upe	river
vāciešu	vācietis, vāciete	German man/woman
varavīkšņu	varavīksne	rainbow
varžu	varde	frog
vāžu	vāze	vase
veču	vecis	old man
vēstnešu	vēstnesis	envoy, herald
vēstuļu	vēstule	letter
vēžu	vēzis	crayfish
viedokļu	viedoklis	opinion
vienaudžu	vienaudzis	peer
viesmīļu	viesmīlis	waiter
vijoļu	vijole	violin
viļņu	vilnis	wave
virtuvju	virtuve	kitchen

Reverse
retrieval of
verbs and
nouns

Appendix 2

<i>Genitive plural</i>	<i>Nominative singular</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
vīriešu	vīrietis	man
zagļu	zaglis	thief
zāļu	zāle; zāles (fem. pl.)	hall; grass, herb; (fem. pl.) medicine
zemeņu	zemene	strawberry
zemestrīču	zemestrīce	earthquake
zemju	zeme	land, earth, ground
ziepju	ziepes (fem. pl.)	soap
ziežu	ziede	ointment
ziloņu	zilonis	elephant
zīmju	zīme	sign
zirnekļu	zirneklis	spider
zirņu	zirnīs	pea
zivju	zivs (fem.)	fish
zvaigžņu	zvaigzne	star
zviedriešu	zviedriete	Swedish woman
zvirbuļu	zvirbulis	sparrow
žakešu	žakete	jacket

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All the works listed here have been invaluable in the preparation of the present grammar. My sincere thanks go to all the authors.

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Internet resources

In addition to the resources listed in the bibliography, the following resources should prove to be useful for students of the Latvian language.

Latvian language

http://www.li.lv/images_new/files/pdf/Lat_language.pdf – general information on language

Dictionaries

<http://dictionary.site.lv/> – English–Latvian, Latvian–English dictionary

<http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vispareji/bilabc/ba.htm> – picture dictionary

<http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vispareji/pamatv/pamatv.htm> – basic dictionary
Latvian–English and Latvian–Russian

<http://www.eurotermbank.com/> – multilingual dictionary

<http://www.letonika.lv/> – dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc., some services need subscription

<http://www.tezaurs.lv/sv/> – Latvian dictionary

<http://www.vvk.lv/index.php?sadala=14&id=236> – online dictionaries (in Latvian)

Grammar

<http://letonika.lv/groups/default.aspx?g=5&r=1100&f=1> – word analysis: enter a word and find its conjugation or declension

<http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vispareji/lgramww/lgrame.htm> – Latvian grammar in English and Latvian; links to nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs, participles

Beginners' level practice

<http://ikindalikelanguages.com/labs/courses.php?id=46> – basic course
<http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/iesacejiem/> – interactive learning tool, themes include introductions, people, family, etc.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix/latvian.shtml> – audio essential holiday phrases
<http://www.byki.com/> – audio words and phrases
<http://www.digitaldialects.com/Latvian.htm> – interactive games for numbers and colours
<http://www.languagehelpers.com/members/latvian/online/languagehelper.html> – audio words and phrases
http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~naunicol/NNlatv_macib.html – language course for university students by Inga Klēvere-Wälchli and Nicole Nau, first five units with audio and teacher's notes for download
<http://www.transparent.com/languagepages/latvian/games.htm?link=body> – interactive games
http://www.valoda.lv/Papildus_Materiali/eapmaciba2/EN_default.htm – e-learning course

Intermediate/advanced level practice

http://lv.lefo.net/en/lmtests.html?all_exercises=1 – a variety of online tests, including language tests (in Latvian)
<http://nevienc.sytes.net/lv/lv.php?id=saturs> – advanced level language tests, links to nouns, loan words, style, etc. (in Latvian)
http://tulki.venta.lv/tulkosanas_vingrinajumi/AL – advanced English–Latvian translation exercises
<http://www.liis.lv/latval/orto/default.htm> – spelling + exercises (in Latvian)
<http://www.liis.lv/latval/testi/1.htm>, <http://www.liis.lv/latval/testi/2.htm>, <http://www.liis.lv/latval/testi/3.htm> – intermediate/advanced level language tests (in Latvian)
<http://www.np.gov.lv/index.php?id=503&top=0> – sample language test for citizenship, also tests on constitution and history

Special purposes

<http://valoda.ailab.lv/latval/vispareji/termini.htm> – Latvian–English business terms

Media

http://www.latvijasradio.lv/lapas/lv_tiesraide.htm – live radio
<http://www.listenlive.eu/latvia.html> – online radio stations

<http://www.tv24.lv/> – live TV
<http://www.tvnet.lv/> – TV and news site
<http://www.ltvzinas.lv/> – TV news
<http://www.ltvahivs.lv/ltv> – TV programme archive (some programmes need payment)
<http://tv3.lv/> – TV news, films, etc.
<http://www.leta.lv/index.php>, <http://video.leta.lv/> – national news agency (some services need payment but trial subscription is available)
<http://www.diena.lv/lat/home>, <http://www.diena.lv/lat/multimediji> – news
<http://zinas.nra.lv/sakums/>, <http://zinas.nra.lv/video/> – news
http://www2.la.lv/lat/latvijas_avize/jaunakaja_numura/latvijas.zias – news
<http://www.ir.lv/>, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/wwwIRlv> – news
<http://www.delfi.lv/>, <http://tv.delfi.lv/> – news and general site
<http://www.apollo.lv/portal/intro/680/> – news and general site

Literature and libraries

<http://www.e-biblioteka.lv/lv/> – online library – books, audio, video
http://www.gramatuklubs.lv/lv/e-gramatas/e-gramatas/index.php?cat_id=RS1CT09L – online books
<http://www.letonika.lv/literatura/default.aspx?> – Latvian classics online
<http://www.literature.lv/lv/index.html> – literature
<http://www.pasakas.net/jaunumi/> – video, audio and text children's stories, including many traditional folk tales

Live links

<http://www.scoop.it/t/latvian-language> – live links to many of these resources and new ones as they become available

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