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Latin Irregular Verbs Sum & Possum:

Sum is the verb "to be". Possum is the verb "to be able". Neither will ever take a direct object.

That is why we should say, it is I, not it is me. However, people say it is me all of the time. When dealing with the verb (to be) think of the verb as being followed by an equal sign. "To be" does take a predicate nominative.

Sometimes, the verb will be followed by a noun, a pronoun or even an adjective but they will always be considered to be in the nominative case.

The farmer is a poet. Farmer = poet. What is on one side of the verb equals what is on the other side.

Farmer = poet and poet = farmer. In Latin both nouns would take nominative endings and also agree in number and gender.

In English, which is not an inflected language, we might not think in terms of nominative for the word poet, unless we are in a grammar school English class. That might explain people's reluctance to accept (it is I) (it is he). We fall into the speech pattern that we most often hear which is ,(it is him or it's them).

The verb to be is also frequently followed by prepositional phrases. The phrases will be put into either the ablative or accusative case. The case will depend on the preposition introducing the phrase.

He was in the house. In the house is an ablative phrase. He walked into the house. Into the house is an accusative phrase. But they are not direct objects.

The woman is pretty. Pretty is a predicate adjective. pretty = woman= nominative case.

The soldier is strong and brave. Strong and brave are adjectives. strong/brave = soldier= nominative case.

The verb possum, to be able, is a compound of sum, to be. A prefix is added to forms of sum to form possum in Latin

Infinitives [to + a verb] follow the verb to be able. He is able to lead. Potest ducere. In English we sometimes say, He can lead the troops, but even if you said that in Latin, you would still need the infinitive as, he can is the same as he is able. This infinitive is called a complementary infinitive and it completes the meaning of be able.

At this point all you really need to know is that sum and possum do not take direct objects.

The verb charts for Sum (I am) and Possum (I am able) are very easy to learn . See the charts on the next two pages.

1	2	3	4	5	6
sum	eram	ero	fui	fueram	fueo
es	eras	eris	fuisti	fueras	fueris
est	erat	erit	fuit	fuerat	fuerit
sumus	eramus	erimus	fuimus	fueramus	fuerimus
estis	eratis	eritis	fuistis	fueratis	fueritis
sunt	erant	erunt*	fuerunt	fuerant	fuerint

Look closely at the Verb To Be in its 6 tenses.

Memorize column one.

Column 2 & 3 look very much like the endings for regular tenses 5-6 and then 4-5-6 of Sum look like regular 4-5-6 endings with "fu" used as a prefix.

The English form of the verb "to be":

1	2	3	4	5	6
I am	I was	I will be	I have been	I had been	I will have been
you are	you were	you will be	you have been	you had been	you will have been
he is	he was	he will be	he has been	he had been	he will have been
we are	we were	we will be	we have been	we had been	we will have been
you are	you were	you will be	you have been	you had been	you will have been
they are	they were	they will be	they have been	they had been	they will have been

To turn this chart into possum just add pos or pot to the first 3 tenses of sum and potu to tenses 4-5-6. (shortcut) Change fu to potu.

In tenses 1-2-3 choose pos if the verb starts with s. There will always be a double ss.

If the verb does not start with s use pot.

1	2	3	4	5	6
possum	poteram	potero	potui	potueram	potuero
potes	poteras	poteris	potuisti	potueras	potueris
potest	poterat	poterit	potuit	potuerat	potuerit
possumus	poteramus	poterimus	potuimus	potueramus	potuerimus
potestis	poteratis	poteritis	potuistis	potueratis	potueritis
possunt	poterant	poterint	potuerunt	potuerant	potuerint

English form of the verb "to be able":

I am able	I was able	I will be able	I have been able	I had been able	I will have been able
you are able	you were able	you will be able	you have been able	you had been able	you will have been able
he is able	he was able	he will be able	he has been able	he had been able	he will have been able
we are able	we were able	we will be able	we have been able	we had been able	we will have been able
you are able	you were able	you will be able	you have been able	you had been able	you will have been able
they are able	they were able	they will be able	they have been able	they had been able	they will have been able

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