

A Subjunctive Story

Marcus et Sextus in traha sedent. (Marcus est puer sapiens. Sextus est puer stultus.)

Equus trahit traham per silvam magnam. Subito, Marcus dextram pone aurem ponit.

Sextus: O, Marce, cur dextram pone aurem ponis?

Marcus: Dextram pone aurem pono ut audiam.

Sextus: Al Dextram pone aurem ponis ut audias.

Magister: Marcus dextram pone aurem ponit ut audiat.

Sextus: O, Marce, quid audis?

Marcus: Audio lupos. (Lupi ululant.)

Marcus surgit.

Sextus: O, Marce, cur surgis?

Marcus: Surgo ut videam.

Sextus: Al Surgis ut videas.

Magister: Marcus surgit ut videat.

Sextus: O, Marce, quid vides?

Marcus: Video lupos. Lupi celeriter currunt.

Marcus arcum capit.

Sextus: O, Marce, cur capis arcum?

Marcus: Capio arcum ut sagittas emittam.

Sextus: Al Capis arcum ut sagittas emittas.

Magister: Marcus capit arcum ut sagittas emittat.

Marcus sagittam in nervo ponit. Marcus retrahit sagittam.

Marcus emittit sagittam.

Sextus: O, Marce, cur sagittam emittis?

Marcus: Emitto sagittam ut lupos necem.

Sextus: Al Emittis sagittam ut lupos neces.

Magister: Marcus emittit sagittam ut lupos necet.

Marcus: Euge! Euge! Lupum sagitta mea necavit!

Sextus: O, Marce, cur necas lupos?

Marcus: Neco lupos ne nos edant.

Sextus: Al Necas lupos ne nos edant.

Simple drawings will make this story clear. For 'traha', a box on curly runners. For the 'silva magna', a few ordnance survey conifers. For the wolves, a savage head or two at the far edge of the board, and some lifelike howling from the teacher.

Don't rush through the story. Go one sentence at a time, and ask questions about it before going on - Qui sedent? Ubi sedent? Quis trahit traham? etc.

When you get to the first 'ut' and subjunctive, stress 'ut' and the ending, repeating it once or twice.

The present subjunctive active of all regular conjugations is introduced in the singular. Tabulate these as they occur, somewhere where there is plenty of room. At the end of the story the class can provide the forms of the plural. 'Ne' will need some stressing.

When the story has been finished and the subjunctive forms tabulated, ask, 'How would you express in Latin, "To do something or other"?'

When this is established, and the fact that the infinitive is not used for this has been well rubbed in, ask, 'How would you express the opposite of this?' It may take a little repetition of the appropriate part of the story to get them to tell you that 'Ne' is used.

Later on, an addition could be: Marcus equum flagello pulsat.

Sextus: O, Marce, cur equum pulsas?

Marcus: Pulso equum quo celerius currat.

But used too early, this would cloud things.

Finally the whole story can be put into the past tense to introduce the imperfect subjunctive.

J.F. Gravett

Every man desires to live long: but no man would be old.

Expotant homines perlongam degere vitam;

Sed mihi dic vere: quis cupit esse senex?

H.H.H.

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When men grow virtuous in their old age, they only make a sacrifice to God of the devil's leavings.

Ille homo, qui coepit plus esse senilibus annis,

Quod Satanus sprevit, fert tibi, Christe, sacrum.

H.H.H.

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Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through.

Talis lex sane est, tua qualis, aranea, tela:

Perrumpit crabro, musca pusilla perit.

H.H.H.

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