

THE SUPINE

The Supine is a verbal noun of the fourth declension, appearing only in the accusative singular (-um) and ablative singular (-ū) and limited to two usages.

I. The Supine in -um:

A. The Supine in -um may be used after verbs of motion to express purpose:

Legātōs ad Caesarem mittunt rogātum auxilium. They send envoys to Caesar to ask for help.

Stultitia est venātum ducere invītās canēs. It is folly to take unwilling dogs to hunt.

The construction is found most commonly with the verbs *īre* and *venīre*, followed by many phrases: *cubitum*, *dormitum*, *sessum*, *salūtātum*, etc.

The Supine in -um may take a direct object, though the construction was not very common:

Hannibal patriam dēfensum revocātus est. Hannibal was recalled to defend his country.

The Supine in -um, very common in early Latin, was not favored by Cicero and Caesar. It was frequent again in Sallust and Livy but in Later Latin was generally supplanted by the infinitive of purpose.

B. The Supine in -um was used with the passive infinitive of *īre* (*īrī*) to form the rare future passive infinitive:

Hās litterās redditum īrī putābam. I thought that this letter was going to be returned.

The construction was never common and was often replaced with a *futurum esse* (*fore*) *ut* construction: *Nuntiat fore ut foedus fieret.* He reported that a treaty would be made.

II. The Supine in -ū.

The Supine in -ū is used with a few adjective (and the nouns *fās*, *nefās*, and *opus*) to express an ablative of respect or specification:

mirabile dictū: marvelous to relate

facilis factū: easy to do.

sī hoc fās est dictū: if this is right to say.

nihil dignum dictū: nothing worthy of mention.