

Defective Verbs



Latin verbs that lack one or more forms in their conjugations are known as **Defective verbs**. There are only three of these in the IGCSE syllabus¹: *coepisse*, *meminisse*, and *odisse*. They will not cause you much difficulty.

Coepisse is a third conjugation verb and it is defective in that it has no present tense.

Meminisse is a third conjugation verb. It has only a present tense but the form of that present tense is like the perfect of other third conjugation verbs.

Odisse is a fourth conjugation verb. It has a Perfect form that has present meaning (like *meminisse*) and also a pluperfect form that has imperfect meaning.

If this sounds complicated don't worry. I have set these verbs out for you below and if you say them through it will be come clear.

Coepisse

No present tense. (Remember it is “began” not “begin.”)

Perfect Tense:

I began	<i>coepī</i>
You began	<i>coepistī</i>
He began	<i>coepit</i>
We began	<i>coepimus</i>
You began	<i>coepistis</i>
They began	<i>Coepērunt, coepēre</i>

¹You also have to know the single word *inquit* which is part of the defective verb *inquam*.

Pluperfect:

I had begun	<i>coeperam</i>
You had begun	<i>coeperās</i>
He had begun	<i>coeperat</i>
We had begun	<i>coeperāmus</i>
You had begun	<i>coeperātis</i>
They had begun	<i>coeperant</i>

Future Perfect:

I shall have begun	<i>coeperō</i>
You will have begun	<i>coeperis</i>
He will have begun	<i>coeperit</i>
We shall have begun	<i>coeperimus</i>
You will have begun	<i>coeperitis</i>
They will have begun	<i>coeperint</i>

Passive

perfect:

I was begun	<i>Coeptus sum</i>
You were begun	<i>Coeptus es</i>
He was begun	<i>Coeptus est</i>
We were begun	<i>Coepti sumus</i>
You were begun	<i>Coepti estis</i>
They were begun	<i>Coepti sunt</i>

Pluperfect:

I had been begun	<i>Coeptus eram</i>
You had been begun	<i>Coeptus eras</i>
He had been begun	<i>Coeptus erat</i>
We had been begun	<i>Coepti eramus</i>
You had been begun	<i>Coepti eratis</i>
They had been begun	<i>Coepti erunt</i>

Future perfect:

I shall be begun	<i>Coepus ero</i>
You will be begun	<i>Coepus eris</i>
He will be begun	<i>Coepus erit</i>
We shall be begun	<i>Coepi erimus</i>
You will be begun	<i>Coepi eristis</i>
They will be begun	<i>Coepi erint</i>

Subjunctive Perfect: You can't translate subjunctives out of context but I've put some example English in the tables below:	
I may have begun	<i>coeperim</i>
You may have begun	<i>coeperīs</i>
He may have begun	<i>coeperit</i>
We may have begun	<i>coeperīmus</i>
You may have begun	<i>coeperītis</i>
They may have begun	<i>coeperint</i>

Pluperfect:

I might have begun	<i>coepissem</i>
You might have begun	<i>coepissēs</i>
He might have begun	<i>coepisset</i>
We might have begun	<i>coepissēmus</i>
You might have begun	<i>coepissētis</i>
They might have begun	<i>coepissent</i>

Subjunctive Passive Perfect:

I may have been begun	<i>Coeptus sim</i>
You may have been begun	<i>Coeptus sis</i>
He may have been begun	<i>Coeptus sit</i>
We may have been begun	<i>Coepti simus</i>
You may have been begun	<i>Coepti sitis</i>
They may have been begun	<i>Coepti sint</i>

Passive Pluperfect Subjunctive:

I might have been begun	<i>Coeptus essem</i>
You might have been begun	<i>Coeptus esses</i>
He might have been begun	<i>Coeptus esset</i>
We might have been begun	<i>Coepti essemus</i>
You might have been begun	<i>Coepti essetis</i>
hey might have been begun	<i>Coepti essent</i>

Memnisse

This verb has only the present, imperfect and future simple tense which look like the perfect tense, pluperfect tense and future perfect tense of a normal third conjugation verb:

Present:

I remember	<i>meminī</i>
You remember	<i>meministī</i>
He remembers	<i>meminīt</i>
We remember	<i>meminimus</i>
You remember	<i>meministis</i>
They remember	<i>meminērunt, meminēre</i>

Imperfect:

I was remembering	<i>memineram</i>
You were remembering	<i>meminerās</i>
He was remembering	<i>meminerat</i>
We were remembering	<i>meminerāmus</i>
You were remembering	<i>meminerātis</i>
They were remembering	<i>meminerant</i>

Future:

I will remember	<i>meminerō</i>
You will remember	<i>memineris</i>
He will remember	<i>meminerit</i>
We will remember	<i>meminerimus</i>
You will remember	<i>memineritis</i>
They will remember	<i>meminerint</i>

Subjunctive You can't translate subjunctives out of context but I've put some example English in the tables below:

Present:

I may/would remember	<i>meminerim</i>
You may/would remember	<i>meminerīs</i>
He may/would remember	<i>meminerit</i>
We may/would remember	<i>meminerīmus</i>
You may/would remember	<i>meminerītis</i>
They may/would remember	<i>meminerint</i>

Imperfect:

I might have remembered	<i>meminissem</i>
You might have remembered	<i>meminissēs</i>
He might have remembered	<i>meminisset</i>
We might have remembered	<i>meminissēmus</i>
You might have remembered	<i>meminissētis</i>
They might have remembered	<i>meminissent</i>

Odisse

is a fourth conjugation verb.

Present:

I hate	<i>ōdī</i>
You hate	<i>ōdistī</i>
He hates	<i>ōdit</i>
We hate	<i>ōdimus</i>
You hate	<i>ōdistis</i>
They hate	<i>ōdērunt, ōdēre</i>

Imperfect:

I was hating	<i>ōderam</i>
You were hating	<i>ōderās</i>
He was hating	<i>ōderat</i>
We were hating	<i>ōderāmus</i>
You were hating	<i>ōderātis</i>
They were hating	<i>ōderant</i>

Future:

I will hate	<i>ōderō</i>
You will hate	<i>ōderis</i>
He will hate	<i>ōderit</i>
We will hate	<i>ōderimus</i>
You will hate	<i>ōderitis</i>
They will hate	<i>ōderint</i>

Subjunctive You can't translate subjunctives out of context but I've put some example English in the tables below:

Present:

I would/may hate	<i>ōderim</i>
You would/may hate	<i>ōderīs</i>
He would/may hate	<i>ōderit</i>
We would/may hate	<i>ōderīmus</i>
You would/may hate	<i>ōderītis</i>
They would/may hate	<i>ōderint</i>

Imperfect:

I might have hated	<i>ōdissem</i>
You might have hated	<i>ōdissēs</i>
He might have hated	<i>ōdisset</i>
We might have hated	<i>ōdissēmus</i>
You might have hated	<i>ōdissētis</i>
They might have hated	<i>ōdissent</i>

These three words will be unlikely to trip you up if you just remember that they **are** defective. The context will generally help you to get the correct tense.