

Year 2 Term 3 Week 9 Day 1

Grammar: the Partitive Genitive

“Use **of** to form the GENITIVE...” says your little song but there are times when “of” does not quite give the most comfortable translation in English. The Partitive Genitive simple means the genitive case used to show **part** of a whole. The noun indicating the “whole” is in the genitive case.

"The simplest example is *pars civitatis* > 'part of the state.' Here, of course, the state (*civitas*) is the whole, and this 'party' is the part (*pars*). This [is] a useful reminder that the English expression 'all of the state' is not partitive, since 'all' is not a 'part'; consequently, you cannot use the genitive in Latin here, only an adjective: *omnis civitas...*"¹

I think the examples below will help you understand. In general I think you would probably manage the partitive genitive on an exam paper without a detailed knowledge of what it is so don't worry about it over much!

satis temporis "enough of time" or "enough time."

nihil clamoris "none of the shouting" or "no shouting"

nihil strepitus "none of the noise" or "no noise"

tertia pars solis "the third part of the sun"

quinque millia hominum "five thousand [of the] men"

primus omnium 'first of all' (with *omnium* in the genitive plural)

quis mortalium 'who of mortals' (with *mortalium* in the genitive plural)

nihil odii 'nothing of hatred' (with *odii* in the genitive singular)

tantum laboris 'so much work' (with *laboris* in the genitive singular) vs. *tantus labor* 'so great a labor' which has no genitive and therefore is not the partitive genitive

quantum voluptatis 'how much delight' (with *voluptatis* in the genitive singular)²

Bible example:

Fidelis sermo et omni acceptione dignus, quia Christus Iesus venit in mundum peccatores salvos facere quorum primus ego sum 1 Timothy 1:15

sermo is a false friend – it does not mean “sermon” it's usual meaning is “conversation, discussion, talk.” Here it means “a saying.” *Fidelis* describes the saying as does *dignus* (“worthy” not “dignified”) *omni acceptione*. *Quia* “that” – then comes the saying itself.

¹ [Classics Department](#) at the Ohio State University quoted in Gill, N.S. "How to Use and Recognize Partitive Genitive Case in Latin." ThoughtCo, Apr. 12, 2019, [thoughtco.com/partitive-genitive-or-genitive-latin-118442](https://www.thoughtco.com/partitive-genitive-or-genitive-latin-118442).

²Examples from: Gill, N.S. "How to Use and Recognize Partitive Genitive Case in Latin." ThoughtCo, Apr. 12, 2019, [thoughtco.com/partitive-genitive-or-genitive-latin-118442](https://www.thoughtco.com/partitive-genitive-or-genitive-latin-118442).