

Appendix 4

Verb Syntax

Agreement

Normally, singular subjects take singular verbs, dual subjects take dual verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs in all modes that take personal endings (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, optative).

But, neuter plural subjects generally take singular verbs.

Uses of the infinitive

1. **Complementary infinitive**. Infinitive *complete* many verbs (such as *it is necessary* and *I want*) just as in English. ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐθέλει τὸν βασιλέα ιδεῖν. *The man wants to see the king.*
2. **Articular infinitive**. Infinitives modified by a neuter singular form of the definite article means *the act of (doing what the verb means)*. τὸ τρέχειν, (*the act of*) running.
3. **In indirect discourse**. One common way of expressing indirect speech uses the infinitive (with accusative subject). ὁ πᾶτηρ λέγει τὸν υἱὸν ἵππομανῆ εἶναι, *The father says that his son is horse-crazy.*

Uses of the subjunctive

Most subjunctives occur in dependent clauses.

1. **Purpose clauses**. ἵνα and ὅπως + subjunctive mean *so that, in order that*. ἵνα ἔλθῃ ὁ βασιλεὺς, *so that the king might come.*
2. **Hypothetical if-clause**. εἰ ἂν (contracted to ἐάν, ἥν, or ἄν) + subjunctive means *if x should happen*. So, ἐάν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποθάνῃ means *if the king should die.*
3. **Fear clauses**. Clauses that express fears for the future take subjunctive verbs and are introduced by μή (for fears that something *will* happen) and μή οὐ (for fears that something *will not* happen).
ὁ λαὸς φοβεῖται μή ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποθάνῃ, *The people are afraid that the king might die.*

ὁ λαὸς φοβεῖται μὴ οὐὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποθάνῃ, *The people are afraid that the king might not die.*

4. **Indefinite clauses.** Indefinite relative (*whoever, whatever*), temporal (*whenever*), local (*wherever*), and manner clauses (*however*) include the particle ἅν and take subjunctive verbs. See Chapter 22 for further details.

Subjunctives are sometimes the main verb in the sentence.

5. **Prohibitions in event aspect.** μὴ + an aorist (event) subjunctive forbids someone from taking an action. So,

μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε, *Do not enter.*

6. **Deliberative Questions.** Questions that are particularly difficult or befuddling can be expressed with subjunctive verbs. So,

ποῦ ᾔ ὁ παῖς, *Where in the world can the boy be?*

7. **Hortatory Subjunctive.** First-person subjunctives can be used to express urging. So,

διαλεγώμεθα, *Let's have a discussion.*

φύγω, *Let me flee, I had better flee.*

Uses of the optative

1. **If-clauses in remote reality.** “If” clauses that mean, *If it should turn out that x happens ...*, take optative verbs. εἰ ἀποθάνοι ὁ βασιλεὺς, *If it should turn out that the king dies,*

2. **Potential optative.** An optative verb with the particle ἅν expresses how things would turn out if certain contingencies were fulfilled. ἀποθάνοι ἅν ὁ βασιλεὺς, *<under those circumstances> the king would die.*

3. **Polite questions and answers.** Polite questions and answers are expressed as potential optatives. λέγοις ἅν; *Would you please speak?* λέγοιμι ἅν. *I would be glad to speak.*

4. **Optative of wish.** The optative is used to express wishes or hopes for the future. Either by itself or introduced by the particles εἴθε or εἰ γάρ, the optative can indicate a wish or hope for the future. εἴθε ἀποθάνοι ὁ βασιλεὺς, *Would that the king would die, I wish the king would die.*

5. **Optative in Secondary Sequence.** The optative often replaces an original indicative or subjunctive in a dependent clause in a sentence which is set in past time. See Chapter 23 for a discussion.