In general, the Latin subjunctive is a mood of hypothetical verbal activity, and as such is opposed to the indicative, the mood of facts/statement of facts. As its name suggests (lit. “joined under”), the subjunctive is often used in subordinate clauses, i.e. clauses introduced by a subordinating conjunction (e.g. “if,” “since,” “although,” “when”) that cannot stand on their own as sentences (i.e. they are subordinate to a main clause). Later we shall encounter instances where the subjunctive can be used in a main clause (e.g. to express potential action: “we may attend class tomorrow”). So far, we have seen the subjunctive used in a limited number of circumstances, i.e. conditionals, purpose clauses, and indirect commands.

I. Conditionals. Conditionals with indicative verbs are classified as “simple” and they are just that, i.e. you can translate the verbs literally and easily grasp the sense. One frequent and noteworthy conditional type employing the indicative is the Future More Vivid:

A. Future More Vivid: future indicative or future perfect indicative in the protasis (i.e. the subordinate “if” clause) + future indicative in the apodosis (i.e. the main clause). Examples:

1. si regina coronis poetam coronabit, tacebit (lit. “If the queen will crown the poet with crowns, he will be quiet”)
2. si regina coronis poetam coronaverit, tacebit (lit. “If the queen will have crowned the poet with crowns, he will be quiet”)

N.B.: in example #2, the future perfect is strictly logical, as the queen must first—at some point in the future—crown the poet before he will shut up. In English, we would not be so precise about the temporal sequence here (as Latin is in both examples), but would frame this idea by “If the queen crowns the poet with crowns, he’ll be quiet.”

B. Future Less Vivid: present subjunctive in the protasis + present subjunctive in the apodosis. Sometimes the perfect subjunctive may substitute for the present subjunctive, especially in the protasis. Examples:

1. si regina coronis poetam coronet, taceat (lit.” If the queen should crown the poet with crowns, he would be quiet”)
2. si regina coronis poetam coronaverit, taceat (lit., “If the queen should (have) crown(ed) the poet with crowns, he would be quiet”)

N.B.: it is easy to remember this condition as the “should/would” type, though “should” has largely fallen out of English usage. If
you prefer, you may translate the above condition: “If the queen were to crown the poet with crowns, he would be quiet.”

C. Present Contrary to Fact: imperfect subjunctive in the protasis, imperfect subjunctive in the apodosis. Examples:

1. *si poeta reginam audiret, gladium portaret* (“If the poet were listening to the queen, he would be carrying a sword”; i.e. he’s not now listening to the queen and so is not now carrying a sword)
2. *si regina a poetā audiretur, gladium portaret* (“If the queen were being listened to by the poet, he would be carrying a sword”)

D. Past Contrary to Fact: pluperfect subjunctive in the protasis, pluperfect subjunctive in the apodosis. Examples:

1. *si poeta reginam audivisset, gladium portavisset* (“If the poet had listened/would have listened to the queen, he would have carried a sword”; i.e. he didn’t listen to the queen in the past and so was not then carrying a sword)
2. *si regina a poetā audita esset, gladium portavisset* (“If the queen had been listened to by the poet, he would have carried a sword”)

E. Mixed Conditions: conditional types may be mixed as sense demands, especially contrary to fact conditionals. Example:

1. *si poeta reginam audivisset, gladium portaret* (“If the poet had listened/would have listened to the queen, he would carry a sword”; i.e. he didn’t listen to the queen in the past and so is not now carrying a sword)

II. Sequence of Tenses. Subjunctives in subordinate clauses will usually follow a prescribed sequence of tenses. For this purpose, tenses are classified as “primary” (i.e. present) or “secondary” (i.e. past), whether indicative or subjunctive, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>perfect (trs. “have/has ___-ed”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>pluperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future perfect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) if the main verb is primary, any subjunctive in a subordinate clause will be either present or perfect. In this primary sequence, the present subjunctive of the subordinate clause expresses incomplete action, i.e. action contemporaneous with or subsequent to
that of the main verb; the perfect subjunctive expresses completed action, i.e. action prior to that of the main verb.

A. Examples.

1. Purpose Clauses (introduced by *ut* or *ne*):

   regina poetis dona dat ne bellum gerant (“The queen is giving gifts to the poets in order that they may not wage war/so that they don’t wage war”)

   regina poetis dona dabit ne bellum gerant (“The queen will give gifts to the poets in order that they may not wage war/so that they won’t wage war”)

   regina poetis dona dedit ne bellum gerant (“The queen has given gifts to the poets in order that they may not wage war/so that they don’t wage war”)

   dona a regina poetis dantur ut bellum gerant (“Gifts are being given by the queen to the poets in order that they may wage war/so that they will wage war”)

2) if the main verb is secondary, any subjunctive in a subordinate clause will be either imperfect or pluperfect. In this secondary sequence, the imperfect subjunctive of the subordinate clause expresses incomplete action, i.e. action contemporaneous with or subsequent to that of the main verb; the pluperfect subjunctive expresses completed action, i.e. action prior to that of the main verb.

2. Indirect Commands (introduced by *ut* or *ne*):

   regina poetam orabat ut bellum gereret (“The queen was begging the poet that he wage war/to wage war”)

   regina poetam oravit ut bellum gereret (“The queen begged the poet that he wage war/the poet to wage war”)

   regina orabat ut poeta bellum gereret (“The queen was begging that the poet wage war/the poet to wage war”)

   regina poetam oraverat ut bellum gereret (“The queen had begged the poet that he wage war/to wage war”)

   poeta a regina orabatur ne bellum gereret (“The poet was being begged by the queen that he not wage war/not to wage war”)