Independent Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

General: Latin has three moods or "manners of verbal action". The *indicative* mood is used for statements of fact and questions. The *imperative* mood expresses a command. The *subjunctive* is used to express idea, intent, desire, uncertainty, potentiality, or anticipation. The subjunctive is found primarily in subordinate clauses, but some independent uses also exist. Its use is subtle and best learned from long exposure to the original texts. But general rules do exist.

A. Jussive and Hortatory Subjunctive:

The Jussive (*iubeo, -ere, iussi, iussus*) and Hortatory (*hortor, -ari, -atus sum*) are used to express a command or an exhortation:

Veniat!	Let him come! (Jussive)
Veniamus!	Let's come! (Hortatory)

The Jussive occurs in the third person, the Hortatory in the first.
        The negative is introduced by ne: *Ne hoc faciat!* Let him not do this!

B. Potential Subjunctive:

The subjunctive may be used to express an action which might possibly occur:

Haec credas.	You might believe these things.
Dicas eum hominem bonum esse.	You might say he is a good man.

Past potentiality is expressed by the imperfect subjunctive:
        Crederes eum hominem bonum esse. You might have believed he was a good man.

C. Deliberative Subjunctive:

The present and imperfect subjunctives are used to *deliberate* about something, often in a rhetorical question:

Quid faciam?	What am I to do?
Quid facerem?	What was I to do?

The negative is introduced by *non*.

D. Optative Subjunctive

The Optative (*opto -are*) is used for a future wish capable of fulfillment, introduced by *utinam* or *ut* (negative *utinam ne* or *ne*):

Utinam veniat!	Would that he may come!
Utinam ne veniat!	Would that he may not come!

Contrary to fact wishes use the imperfect subjunctive for present time and pluperfect subjunctive for past time:

Utinam veniret!	Would that he were coming (but he is not).
Utinam venisset!	Would that he had come (but he did not).