

Greek *for* Children

– Primer A –

Koine/New Testament Greek
Revised Edition



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Greek for Children Primer A
Revised Edition

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Preface to the Revised Edition

This revision of *Greek for Children Primer A* differs in major respects from the first edition. While the sequence is similar in some places, much of the vocabulary is different. The audio and video files designed to accompany the first edition no longer correspond to the material in the revised edition. Visit ClassicalAcademicPress.com for additional supplemental components.

There were several reasons for this revision. Most of all, bringing in two new authors to write *Greek for Children Primer B* and *Greek for Children Primer C* meant re-evaluating *Primer A* and its place in the series as a whole. We wished to ensure that the first book fit the overall trajectory of the three books. In addition, the text was expanded to give more practice. You will find that each chapter now includes at least ten sentences for translation. Chapter verses are explored in more depth, giving students an opportunity to draw inferences from context and to use vocabulary that they have already acquired. There are additional grammatical exercises in each chapter to aid students in the mastery of concepts and forms. Every effort has been made to introduce material gradually, with careful review of previous concepts.

We hope that this revision will assist your students in attaining mastery of the rudiments of Greek. As students learn to read God's Word in its original language, we hope that the fruits of this labor will be a blessing to both the mind and the soul.



Introduction to the Student Edition

“But, for mine own part, it was Greek to me.”

—William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*

You may have heard the expression “It’s all Greek to me.” You’ll hear this variation on Shakespeare’s line when someone wants to say, “It’s really hard” or “I don’t understand it.” We hope that when you have reached the end of this book, you will find Greek not so hard after all.

A Bit of History

The Greek alphabet goes back to the ninth century before Christ. Before the alphabet, Greek was written in a script known as Linear B, which you will learn about later in this book.

The famous epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are the earliest surviving pieces of literature in the Greek language. There were many dialects, or different varieties, of Greek. By the fifth and fourth centuries BC, one of the most important was the one that the citizens in and around the powerful city of Athens used. This dialect is called “Attic” after the name of the region around Athens—Attica. Philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle), historians (such as Thucydides), and dramatists (such as Sophocles and Euripides) wrote their master works in this dialect.

The Greek presented in this series of books is a later development of Attic known as Koine (“common”) or Hellenistic Greek. It was spoken and written throughout the Mediterranean region after the conquests of Alexander the Great, and it continued in everyday use through the time of the Roman emperor Constantine. (Greek after this period is known as Byzantine or medieval Greek.) Koine Greek is the language in which the New Testament was written, as well as that into which Hebrew Scriptures were translated, a version known as the Septuagint.¹

We wish to give ambitious students the foundation they will need should they decide to read works in Attic Greek by authors such as Plato or Sophocles. For this reason, we have often included notes in the teacher’s edition on Attic Greek forms or usage where they differ from Koine. These forms are purely optional and are given only for the edification of the student who is having no trouble mastering the Koine forms and vocabulary as they are given.

This book is designed so that each chapter should take about a week of daily work to complete. Most of that time should be dedicated to memorizing new forms (or “paradigms”) and vocabulary as well as to reviewing

1. In this series, Greek Scripture quotations are from the SBL Greek New Testament. English Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.



materials from previous chapters. Every effort has been made to present a reasonable amount of material in each chapter, but some chapters are going to be more difficult than others. Such material may take longer than average. Additional ideas about pacing and methods can be found in the introduction to the teacher's edition.

For a little more practice using Greek vocabulary, we've included an ongoing story for each unit that a parent or teacher can access online on the Greek for Children Primer product page at classicalacademicpress.com (under the Support tab). The story is mostly in English, but you can fill in the blanks with the correct Greek vocabulary words to find out what's happening with Simon, a Jewish boy from New Testament times who—like you—is just beginning to learn Greek too.

Benediction

Always keep the end in mind—your goal is a glorious and noble one. Learning the Greek language is a worthwhile pursuit because of the way that it shapes both the mind and the spirit. Your knowledge will enable you to read God's Word in its original language. It will give you the opportunity to access some of the greatest literature ever written. As C.S. Lewis wrote of his classical education: "Hardly any lawful price would seem to me too high for what I have gained by being made to learn Latin and Greek."²

May your study of Greek cultivate your mind and nurture the higher aspirations of your spirit.

Hints for using this book to learn Greek:

- You should aim to master all the vocabulary and word endings in each chapter before moving on to the next. This includes all the forms of vocabulary words, or the dictionary entry. You'll find that your progress will rapidly slow down if you focus only on learning the English definition of words.
- Flash cards can be an incredibly useful tool, *if* you use good methods. You'll find a summary of our recommendations, based on some good brain science, in appendix G.
- English words that are **boldface** in the main chapters are technical, grammatical words and are glossed in appendix D. Familiarity with these words will go a long way toward helping you learn the Greek language. (The words that are boldface in the cultural segments in each unit are not included in the glossary. Instead, they are terms to remember that are significant to Greek history, geography, and culture.)

2. C.S. Lewis, *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 64.





- The derivatives provided are provided for two reasons—to boost your knowledge of English words and to give your brain an extra clue or pathway for remembering Greek vocabulary.
- Learning Greek accents is an important part of learning the language. While originally the accents marked the pitch of vowels (like musical notes), the practice of using accents is still helpful both in learning vocabulary and in truly appreciating the beauty of the language. Because you learn by both seeing *and* hearing, you should practice saying your Greek words aloud as often as possible. Accents help you pronounce words correctly and consistently, and pronouncing words aloud consistently will help you remember how to spell them. We've presented information throughout the book on the basic rules of accents to help you recognize and apply patterns.



Chapter 1

Sounding It Out

Introduction

The Greek alphabet has a long history. It begins with the hieroglyphics used by the Egyptians and later adapted by other peoples, including the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians, famous for their extensive trading network, introduced their alphabet to the Greeks, who took the symbols and adapted them yet again to suit their own language and its sounds. Our first evidence of the Greek alphabet is from the ninth century BC. Some letters later fell out of use by the Greek classical period (fifth century BC). Since then, the Greek alphabet has remained the same, with seven **vowels** and seventeen **consonants**.

Writing Greek

As you begin your study of Greek, you'll find that one of the first challenges is that it is not only a different language, but it uses a different alphabet too. To get past the latter difficulty, take advantage of the practice at the end of this chapter and the practice paper we supply in appendix C. Remember when you learned to form English letters? You are learning new letters now, and this new alphabet needs the same amount of attention and practice. Just pretend you are in Greek kindergarten.

Pronouncing Greek

In the Greek Letters table, you will see that many of the sounds the Greek letters make are familiar. Others will be new to your ears. Work on your Greek pronunciation by sounding out all the words that you encounter in your vocabulary, sentences, and chapter verses. This will help you to become more comfortable and confident in your knowledge.

Some Greek vowels will have more than one pronunciation based on whether they are “long” or “short.” This is different from “long” and “short” vowels in English, because for Greek, these terms refer to *how long* it takes to pronounce a vowel. In English, even though we use the terms *long* and *short*, what we really mean is that each vowel is actually pronounced differently; we're not referring to how long it takes to say its sound. Musicians will recognize that in Greek, a long vowel is approximately equivalent to a half note while a short vowel is equivalent to a quarter note. (We will explore vowels more in chapter 3.) The accepted way to show whether a vowel is long or short is to include a sign called a **macron** over it (e.g., ē, ō or ī, ā, ū). A macron over a vowel means that it is long. The word *macron* in Greek means . . . “long” (good guess!).

Greek Letters

Letter		Name	Transliteration	Pronunciation
A	α	alpha	a, ā	as in <i>plot</i> ; when long, as in <i>plod</i>
B	β	beta	b	as in <i>boy</i>
Γ	γ	gamma	g	as in <i>got</i>
Δ	δ	delta	d	as in <i>dog</i>
E	ε	epsilon	e	as in <i>get</i>
Z	ζ	zeta	z	as in <i>zoo</i>
H	η	eta	ē	as in <i>they</i>
Θ	θ	theta	th	as in <i>thistle</i>
I	ι	iota	i, ī	when short, as in <i>auditorium</i> ; when long, as in <i>machine</i>
K	κ	kappa	k	as in <i>kite</i>
Λ	λ	lambda	l	as in <i>lime</i>
M	μ	mu	m	as in <i>math</i>
N	ν	nu	n	as in <i>nose</i>
Ξ	ξ	xi	x	as in <i>oxen</i> (never as in <i>xylophone</i>); the letter's name is pronounced "ksee"
O	ο	omicron	o	as in <i>not</i>
Π	π	pi	p	as in <i>pistol</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "pee"
P	ρ	rho	r	as in the Spanish <i>r</i>
Σ	σ, ς	sigma	s	as in <i>soup</i>
T	τ	tau	t	as in <i>tea</i>
Υ	υ	upsilon	u, ū	as in the German <i>ü</i> (a bit like the English <i>ew!</i> — the sound you make when you are disgusted). The sound is difficult to approximate in English. Try saying <i>ee</i> but draw your lips into an <i>o</i> shape.
Φ	φ	phi	ph	as in <i>telephone</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "fee"
X	χ	chi	ch	as in <i>Bach</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "khee"
Ψ	ψ	psi	ps	as in <i>oops</i> (never as in <i>psychology</i>); the letter's name is pronounced "psee"
Ω	ω	omega	ō	as in <i>node</i>



Nasal Gamma

The letter gamma— γ —sounds like the *ng* in the word *sing* before consonants pronounced in the back of the throat: γ , κ , χ , ξ (*g*, *k*, *ch*, *x*). Here they are:

γ , Γ	/ng/ as in <i>finger</i>
$\gamma\kappa$, $\Gamma\kappa$	/ngk/ as in <i>sink</i>
$\gamma\chi$, $\Gamma\chi$	/ngch/ (no good English example)
$\gamma\xi$, $\Gamma\xi$	/ngks/ as in <i>thinks</i>

You'll learn more about consonant combinations in chapter 2. Stay tuned!

Learning the Greek Alphabet

If you have studied the Greek alphabet on the previous page, you can see that you already know several Greek letters—especially capital letters! This is because the Greeks and Romans borrowed their alphabets from the same people, the Phoenicians, and the English borrowed their alphabet from the Romans. So our alphabet and the Greek alphabet are cousins!

Let's look at the fifteen letters that are almost identical between the Greek and English alphabets:

	Greek Letter			English Letter	
Alpha	A	α	➔	A	a
Beta	B	β	➔	B	b
Delta	Δ	δ	➔	D	d
Epsilon	E	ϵ	➔	E	e
Zeta	Z	ζ	➔	Z	z
Eta	H	η	➔	H	h
Iota	I	ι	➔	I	i
Kappa	K	κ	➔	K	k
Mu	M	μ	➔	M	m
Nu	N	ν	➔	N	n
Omicron	O	\omicron	➔	O	o
Sigma	Σ	σ , ς	➔	S	s
Tau	T	τ	➔	T	t
Upsilon	Υ	υ	➔	U	u
Chi	X	χ	➔	X	x

Of the twenty-four letters in the Greek alphabet, here are fifteen that you already recognize from English. But there are some letters and sounds that are missing too. In the standard Greek alphabet, there is no equivalent to Q, and the letters H, Y, and X make significantly different sounds in Greek than in English.



Glazed earthenware polyhedron (a solid figure with many plane faces) inscribed with Greek letters, 2nd or 3rd century AD

The other Greek letters make almost the same sounds in Greek as they do in English. In other words, you already know over half of the Greek alphabet. Now you may be tempted to call a β a *b* or an ϵ an *e*, but they are in fact a beta and an epsilon. Each Greek letter has its own name, so be careful not to call a Greek letter by the name of an English letter.

There are nine additional letters ($\gamma, \theta, \lambda, \xi, \pi, \rho, \phi, \psi, \omega$) that probably look unfamiliar to you. These nine new letters will be fun to learn and won't take you long to master. Once you have mastered your Greek alphabet, you will be able to form and read words in Greek. In just a few weeks, you will be reading Greek words easily.

By the way, Greek makes a great code language. You can teach your friends the Greek alphabet and write secret messages to them that no one else will be able to read!

Suggestions for Studying the Greek Alphabet

Practice writing your Greek letters frequently—lowercase and uppercase. When you write a Greek letter, say its name *and* say the sound it makes.

Say or, even better, sing the Greek alphabet until you can do so without hesitating.

Practice sounding out all your vocabulary at the beginning of each new chapter. Ask a friend or teacher to say the words while you practice writing them out correctly. This way you will develop a sense for Greek as a spoken language.

Write each Greek letter on the front of a note card and write its name, pronunciation, and transliteration on the back. Practice saying the names of the letters when you see the letter and vice versa.

Using your note cards, practice placing the letters in the correct Greek alphabetical order.

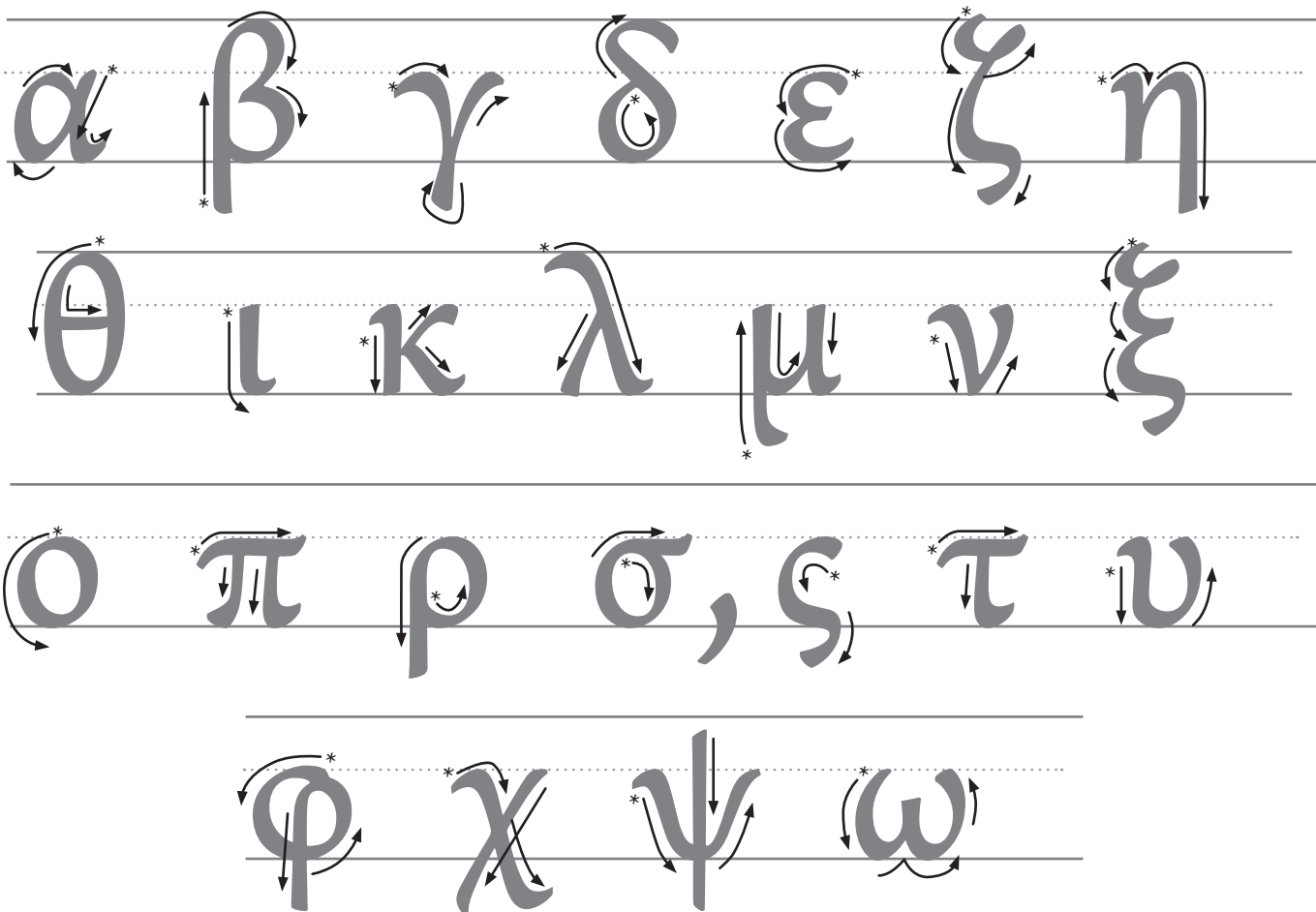
Remember that you will master your Greek alphabet best if you review it frequently, even if you review it only briefly each time. These first few weeks, it would be good to review it twice a day, once during the day and once in the evening before bed (even if it's just for five minutes). You can bring your Greek letter flash cards anywhere with you to practice.

During the next few weeks, you will have written practice that will help you study, review, and memorize the Greek alphabet.



A. Greek Letters: Patterns and Practice—Lowercase

Using the following diagrams of lowercase letters as patterns, practice the letters on notebook paper, or use the templates under the Support tab on the product page at Classicalacademicpress.com. Say the name of each letter aloud as you write it. The asterisks near each letter show you where to place your pen or pencil first as you write it.



*A coin of Alexander the Great
from the 4th century BC*

B. Greek Letters: Patterns and Practice—Uppercase

Using the following diagrams of uppercase letters as patterns, practice the letters on notebook paper, or use the practice template in appendix C or online. Say the name of each letter aloud as you write it. The asterisks near each letter show you where to place your pen or pencil first as you write it.



C. Alphabet Recognition

In this exercise are several English words spelled with Greek letters. If you sound out the Greek word, you should hear yourself saying an English word! Try it, and see if you can figure them all out. Some are easy and some are hard.

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. βωτ _____ | 7. στεπ _____ |
| 2. σατ _____ | 8. τρικ _____ |
| 3. ασκ _____ | 9. Βαχ _____ |
| 4. νατ _____ | 10. γρυτ _____ |
| 5. λιψ _____ | 11. στρεγγθ _____ |
| 6. πη _____ | 12. οβη _____ |



- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 13. λιγκ _____ | 22. σογγ _____ |
| 14. λωφ _____ | 23. κωτ _____ |
| 15. γητ _____ | 24. ταξ _____ |
| 16. φλεξ _____ | 25. γυδ _____ |
| 17. τημ _____ | 26. μωτ _____ |
| 18. στιξ _____ | 27. σοφτ _____ |
| 19. πρη _____ | 28. φωμ _____ |
| 20. δεντ _____ | 29. δραφτ _____ |
| 21. φιζ _____ | |

Now, try to spell these English words with Greek letters. Be sure to say the word out loud and spell it from what it sounds like, not what it looks like!

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. cat _____ | 17. throng _____ |
| 2. ball _____ | 18. Loch Ness _____ |
| 3. go _____ | 19. brink _____ |
| 4. trim _____ | 20. belt _____ |
| 5. lend _____ | 21. brain _____ |
| 6. zoo _____ | 22. truth _____ |
| 7. men _____ | 23. frog _____ |
| 8. block _____ | 24. bone _____ |
| 9. flips _____ | 25. late _____ |
| 10. smoke _____ | 26. float _____ |
| 11. stinks _____ | 27. dark _____ |
| 12. fed _____ | 28. fling _____ |
| 13. lick _____ | 29. faith _____ |
| 14. backs _____ | 30. neck _____ |
| 15. glass _____ | 31. throw _____ |
| 16. foot _____ | |

Chapter 2

Consonants and Consonant Combinations

In the following table of the Greek alphabet, the vowels are in a darker background than the consonants. Do you remember how many vowels Greek has? How about consonants?

Greek Vowels and Consonants

Letter	Name	Transliteration	Pronunciation
A α	alpha	a, ā	as in <i>plot</i> ; when long, as in <i>plod</i>
B β	beta	b	as in <i>boy</i>
Γ γ	gamma	g	as in <i>got</i>
Δ δ	delta	d	as in <i>dog</i>
E ε	epsilon	e	as in <i>get</i>
Z ζ	zeta	z	as in <i>zoo</i>
H η	eta	ē	as in <i>they</i>
Θ θ	theta	th	as in <i>thistle</i>
I ι	iota	i, ī	when short, as in <i>auditorium</i> ; when long, as in <i>machine</i>
K κ	kappa	k	as in <i>kite</i>
Λ λ	lambda	l	as in <i>lime</i>
M μ	mu	m	as in <i>math</i>
N ν	nu	n	as in <i>nose</i>
Ξ ξ	xi	x	as in <i>oxen</i> (never as in <i>xylophone</i>); the letter's name is pronounced "ksee"
O ο	omicron	o	as in <i>not</i>
Π π	pi	p	as in <i>pistol</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "pee"
P ρ	rho	r	as in the Spanish <i>r</i>
Σ σ, ς	sigma	s	as in <i>soup</i>
T τ	tau	t	as in <i>tea</i>
Υ υ	upsilon	u, ū	as in the German <i>ü</i> (a bit like the English <i>ew!</i> — the sound you make when you are disgusted). The sound is difficult to approximate in English. Try saying <i>ee</i> but draw your lips into an <i>o</i> shape.
Φ φ	phi	ph	as in <i>telephone</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "fee"
X χ	chi	ch	as in <i>Bach</i> ; the letter's name is pronounced "khee"
Ψ ψ	psi	ps	as in <i>oops</i> (never as in <i>psychology</i>); the letter's name is pronounced "psee"
Ω ω	omega	ō	as in <i>node</i>

What Is a Consonant? What Is a Vowel?

There are two basic types of sounds that we make when we speak: *consonants* and *vowels*. It takes both consonants and vowels to build syllables and words. Consonants are transition letters that begin or end a syllable and tend to stop or constrict the air that flows out of your mouth (like *t*, *s*, or *n*). Vowels are the center of syllables, sounds that make you open your mouth and let air keep coming out (like *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*).

The chart on the previous page has all the Greek vowels (α , ϵ , η , ι , o , υ , ω) shaded. The rest of the letters are all consonants. This is similar to English: Our vowels are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, and sometimes *y*—the rest are all consonants. You can see that our vowels come right from the Greek vowels—see how similar they look? You will always see at least one vowel in every Greek word, just as in English.

Consonant Families—Spelling and Sound

Consonants come in different varieties. Having some familiarity with the types of consonants will be very helpful when you begin your study of how Greek verbs and nouns change their spelling. Here are the basic groups of consonants in Greek.

Stops

This group of consonants includes any sound that causes your breath to stop briefly while making the sound. The stopped consonants include the labial, velar, and dental consonants.

- **Labial:** This group's name comes from the Latin word *labia*, meaning "lip." Try speaking these sounds, and notice how you employ your lips to pronounce them: β , π , ϕ .
- **Velar:** This group's name comes from the name for the soft palate in the back of your throat called the *velum*. When you speak the following consonant sounds, notice how your tongue touches your velum: γ , κ , χ .
- **Dental:** These are the consonants that will remind you to floss, because they are made by your tongue touching your teeth (Latin, *dens*, *dentis*): τ , δ , ζ , θ .

Sibilants

ζ and σ/ς are called **sibilant** consonants because they produce a hissing noise (Latin, *sibilare* = to hiss, whistle). Note that ζ is both a dental and a sibilant. It doesn't follow the same rules as dental consonants do when it combines with other letters.

Nasals

The **nasal** consonants sound as if they are (and actually are) made through your nasal cavity (nose): μ , ν , γ -nasal (see more about *gamma nasal* later in this chapter).

Liquids

The **liquid** consonants are λ and ρ ; no one is quite sure why they are called "liquids," but the Greeks called them that, and the name has stuck!



Consonant Combinations

Let's look at the ways that various classes of consonants can combine:

Combinations of Consonants

Labial	+	Sibilant		Dental	+	Sibilant
β				τ		
π	σ	→	ψ	δ	σ	→ σ
φ				θ		

Velar	+	Sibilant
γ		
κ	σ	→ ξ
χ		

The table summarizes some consonant combinations that result in changes to *spelling* that you will encounter later on in your study of Greek. When you try speaking the first two letters together, you will notice that they mostly result in the sounds shown on the right side of the equation. You might have thought about the way that in English $k + s = x$. If you have, you should not be surprised to learn that in Greek $\kappa + \sigma$ is spelled ξ . Consonants that result from combining two consonant sounds are called “double consonants.” These include ξ , ψ , and sometimes, ζ .

Remember that the letter gamma has various different sounds depending upon what letter follows it. The letter γ combines with *three* other letters to make a special sound. The rule is that whenever a γ comes before κ , χ , or another γ (velars), then it makes an *ng* sound, similar to the *ng* in “song.” When γ is pronounced together with a velar, we call it a **gamma nasal** because of the nasal sound produced by the combination.

$\gamma\kappa = ngk$ σαλπικτής (trumpeter), pronounced sal-pingk-tés

$\gamma\chi = ngch$ τυγχάνω (happen) = pronounced tung-chá-nō

$\gamma\gamma = ng$ σύγγραμμα (writing) = pronounced súng-gram-ma

The best way to become comfortable with saying Greek words and sounds is to practice. Sound out your vocabulary words each time you study them. Be sure to say each sentence aloud before you translate it. Practice with a friend or your dog, but don't give up!

We will direct you back to this section as a reference when we encounter verb stem and noun base changes, which often involve the blending of consonant sounds. The exercises in this chapter will help you to learn consonant blends and to review what you learned last week. Next chapter we will study ways that Greek vowels can combine and blend!



Bust of Alexander the Great
from Alexandria, 3rd century BC

A. Greek Letter Sounds

Spell out the following combinations of Greek letters. Each group should make an English word.

1. δροπ _____
2. πλαν _____
3. γλαδ _____
4. τραπ _____
5. πιγκ _____
6. στιξ _____
7. στραπ _____
8. φατ _____
9. λανδ _____
10. πλαντ _____

B. Make Greek "Words"

Using your new knowledge of Greek consonant combinations, write the following English words in phonetically correct Greek.

Example: stand στανδ

1. sting _____
2. bank _____
3. rang _____
4. pond _____
5. lapse _____
6. lamb _____

C. List the Consonants

List the consonants associated with each of the terms.

1. labials: _____
2. velars: _____
3. dentals: _____
4. nasals: _____
5. liquids: _____
6. sibilants: _____
7. stops: _____

D. Spelling Greek Consonant Blends

Write the Greek letters that result from the following combinations of Greek consonants. The first exercise has been completed for you as an example.

- $\kappa + \sigma =$ ξ
1. $\beta + \sigma =$ _____
 2. $\gamma + \sigma =$ _____
 3. $\delta + \sigma =$ _____
 4. $\chi + \sigma =$ _____
 5. $\theta + \sigma =$ _____
 6. $\varphi + \sigma =$ _____
 7. $\tau + \sigma =$ _____
 8. $\pi + \sigma =$ _____



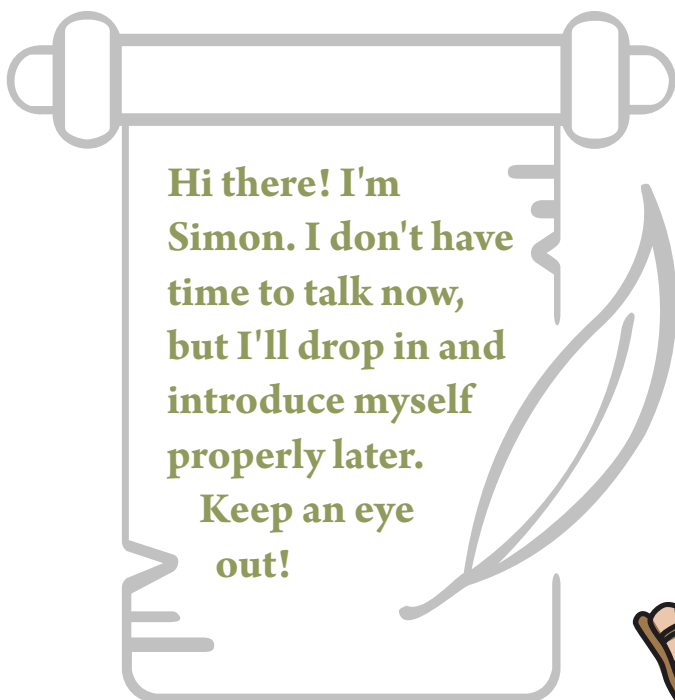
E. Alphabetical Greek Consonants

Write out in their correct order the consonants in Greek with their upper and lower cases.

- 1. _____ 10. _____
- 2. _____ 11. _____
- 3. _____ 12. _____
- 4. _____ 13. _____
- 5. _____ 14. _____
- 6. _____ 15. _____
- 7. _____ 16. _____
- 8. _____ 17. _____
- 9. _____



A page from a 4th-century AD Greek New Testament



Hi there! I'm
 Simon. I don't have
 time to talk now,
 but I'll drop in and
 introduce myself
 properly later.
 Keep an eye
 out!



Chapter 3

Vowels and Diphthongs

What Are the Vowels in Greek?

Greek has twenty-four letters, fewer than in the alphabet that we use, and yet it has seven vowels. Here they are:

The Seven Greek Vowels

Vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation
α	a, ā	short as in plot; long as in plod
ε	e	as in get
η	ē	as in they
ι	i, ī	short as in auditorium, long as in machine
ο	o	short as in not
υ	u, ū	as in the German ü (a bit like the English ew! the sound you make when you are disgusted). The sound is difficult to approximate in English. Try saying ee but draw your lips into an O shape.
ω	ō	long as in node

Grammar

The Length or Quantity of Vowels

As already mentioned in chapter 1, the Greek language has a melodic quality. To use a musical analogy, some Greek vowels act like quarter notes and others like half notes. If you know the length of a vowel, you know its *quantity*. The vowels that take a longer time to pronounce are long; those that take half the time to say are short. Some vowels are always long; these are eta and omega (the name *o-mega* means “big o”—that is, it’s bigger than an *o-micron*, meaning “little o”). Other vowels are always short; these are epsilon and omicron. Alpha, iota, and upsilon, however, can be either long or short. When one of these vowels is long, it can be marked with a macron (Greek for “long”): ā, ī, ū. In particular words, these vowels are either always long or always short.

Diphthongs or Vowel Blends

In the last chapter, we learned how certain consonants blend or combine to create different sounds. In this chapter, we'll look at how Greek vowels do the same thing. When vowels blend or combine together, they are called **diphthongs** (pronounced "DIF-thongz"). A diphthong is a combination of two vowels in one syllable, in which the first vowel runs quickly into the other without having its own distinct emphasis.



All diphthongs are long except *ai* and *oi* at the end of a word. Greek has seven main diphthongs. The chart shows what they are and how to pronounce them.

The Seven Main Greek Diphthongs

Diphthong	Transliteration	Pronunciation
αι	ai	as in <i>aisle</i>
ει	ei	as in <i>fate</i>
οι	oi	as in <i>oil</i>
αυ	au	as in <i>cow</i>
ευ	eu	as in <i>true</i> (a difficult combination to pronounce, but just say ε and merge it quickly into an ou sound as in <i>ou</i> below)
ου	ou	as in <i>soup</i>
υι	ui	as in <i>queen</i>

Note how all the diphthongs end in either *iota* or *upsilon*. This can help you easily determine whether something is a diphthong or not.

Vowel Combinations That Are *Not* Diphthongs

No other vowel combinations are diphthongs. This means that each vowel is pronounced separately in individual syllables rather than blending together. Here are a few vowel pairs that are *not* diphthongs:

ιε	i-e
ιη	i-ē
ια	i-a
εα	e-a

When you see these pairs of vowels, pronounce each letter separately rather than trying to combine them into one sound.



Iota Subscript

Finally, you will soon encounter a small mark called an **iota subscript** below certain vowels. Originally, it was a regular iota written on the line following another vowel (called an **iota adscript**). Eventually, because it was no longer pronounced, it was slipped underneath the preceding vowel. Whenever a vowel has an iota subscript, it is automatically a *long* vowel. Iota subscripts appear under **α**, **η**, and **ω**. When an alpha has an iota subscript, pronounce it as the long version of the vowel: **α** = *ā*. The iota subscript does not change the pronunciation of **η** or **ω**.

When a capital letter that would normally have an iota subscript begins a word, the iota subscript is written beside the vowel as an iota adscript. Here is what that looks like: **Αι**, **Ηι**, **Ωι**.

In the exercises below, you'll notice that words that begin with vowels or diphthongs have marks above the first vowel or diphthong. These are called *breathing marks*, and you will learn about them in chapter 4.

Syllables and Syllable Division with Vowels

Syllables in Greek words always have one vowel or diphthong in them. If the vowel is followed by one consonant, that consonant goes with the following syllable. If a word ends in a consonant, then the final syllable would end with that consonant, e.g., *πρό-σω-πον*. If the vowel is followed by two or more consonants, the first usually belongs to that vowel's syllable and all the others to the following syllable. Diphthongs count as single vowels when dividing a word into syllables. All other vowel combinations are divided into two or more syllables. Study the following examples of the syllable division (syllabication) of some common Greek words. The meaning of the Greek words is given in parentheses.

Examples:

δικαιοσύνη	justice	δι-και-ο-σύ-νη
κύων	dog	κύ-ων
οὐρανός	sky, heaven	οὐ-ρα-νός
αἰτία	responsibility	αἰ-τί-ᾱ
ἰᾱτρός	doctor	ἰ-ᾱ-τρός
ἀλήθεια	truth	ἀ-λή-θει-α
γεωργός	farmer	γε-ωρ-γός
εὐνοια	goodwill	εὐ-νοι-α
οἶκος	home	οἶ-κος
ἄστήρ	star	ἄσ-τήρ

A relief carving shows the personification of the people of Athens being crowned by Democracy, ca. 336 BC.



A. Syllables and Diphthongs

Divide the following words into syllables, underline the diphthongs in the Greek words, and transliterate (spell the Greek word using English letters).

Note: Some words will *not* have diphthongs. Make sure to pronounce them aloud. Omegas (ω) are transliterated as ō.

		Syllabication	(Transliteration)
Example:	εὐτυχής (fortunate)	<u>εὐ</u> -τυ-χής	eu-tu-chés
1.	θαυμάσιος (marvelous)	_____	_____
2.	δεινός (terrible)	_____	_____
3.	παιδίον (child)	_____	_____
4.	καινός (new)	_____	_____
5.	εἰρήνη (for peace)	_____	_____
6.	παιδεύω (I educate)	_____	_____
7.	ποίημα (poem)	_____	_____
8.	εἰρήνη (peace)	_____	_____
9.	πλοῖον (ship)	_____	_____
10.	θεός (God)	_____	_____
11.	ἔπαινος (praise)	_____	_____
12.	ναυτικόν (fleet)	_____	_____
13.	πλοῦτος (wealth)	_____	_____
14.	κοινός (common)	_____	_____
15.	θέατρον (theater)	_____	_____

D. Grammar

Answer the following questions.

1. What is a diphthong? _____

2. What are the seven main Greek diphthongs? _____
3. What is the mark beneath the following letters called? α , η , ω _____
4. With uppercase letters that begin a word, the iota is written _____
the vowels _____, _____, and _____. In these
cases, the iota is called an *iota adscript*.
5. Does the iota subscript or adscript change the pronunciation of a vowel? _____



Chapter 4

Accents and Pronunciation

Accents

Greek letters are beautiful—their shapes are graceful and they are often adorned with marks that wave and curl. These marks make Greek look even more mysterious to an English speaker’s eyes. The purpose of these marks is to give you guidance on how to pronounce a word properly and sometimes to give you clues about how a word is used. The vowels tell you how long to pronounce a syllable. The **accents** tell you the pitch or change of pitch on that syllable. A rough breathing mark tells you to pronounce the word with an *h* sound at the beginning of a word.

Other marks that you will see include new punctuation marks. Study the chart to see what each mark is called and what it is used for.

Greek Accents, Breathing Marks, and Punctuation

	Mark	Name	Use
Accent Marks	´	acute	Accent
	`	grave	Accent
	˜ or ˆ	circumflex	Accent
Breathing Marks	῀	rough breathing	For making an <i>h</i> sound in front of a word starting with a vowel or ρ
	῁	smooth breathing	For making no sound in front of a word starting with a vowel
Punctuation	;	question mark	For indicating a question
	·	semicolon <i>and</i> colon	For marking the end of an independent clause or beginning a list

Greek Accents

In addition to the new alphabet that you've learned, there are special marks that Greek words have which indicate how to pronounce the word. Their placement on a word also can affect the meaning.

We refer to some of these marks as accents. In English, accent refers to the syllable that receives stress. Say the word *carpenter*. Which part of the word did you emphasize? Did you say *CAR-pen-ter*, *car-PEN-ter*, or *car-pen-TER*? Most of you said *CAR-pen-ter*, because that's how you say the word in English. The stress falls on the first syllable—*CAR-pen-ter*. If you said it with the accent on the second or third syllable, you would confuse your listeners, and some people would not know what you were talking about. Whenever you emphasize the syllable in a word, you are *stressing* that part of the word.

In Greek, especially before the period of the New Testament, the accent marks signified the *pitch* or change in pitch of a vowel or diphthong. If you are familiar with musical terms, you've probably learned that pitch has to do with whether a note is rising or falling. This concept applied to accented vowels and diphthongs in Greek. The three accent marks are:

´	acute
`	grave
˜ or ˆ	circumflex

In Koine Greek, pitch had already been mostly lost, as it is in Modern Greek. The accents became signs of which syllable to stress. For now, practice saying accented syllables as if they were stressed syllables.

In Greek, there are rules about where an accent can be placed, and which of the three accent marks go on which letters. For now, it is important to learn the accents of words when you memorize vocabulary and forms.

Practice pronouncing the following words (you may listen to your teacher as he or she says these words).

Example: γράμμα, *GRAM-ma*

1. δούλος
2. σαρκοφάγος
3. φιλέω
4. τακτὸς



A pottery shard showing a young Greek man writing with a stylus on a folding wax tablet



Breathing Marks

Whenever a Greek word begins with a vowel or a ρ (rho), it always has a small mark over the first letter (or second letter of a diphthong). This mark is called a breathing mark, and there are two kinds: rough and smooth. The **rough breathing mark** looks like a backward apostrophe (´), and the **smooth breathing mark** looks like an apostrophe (´). The rough breathing mark means you pronounce the word with an *h* sound. Therefore ἴτ is pronounced *heat*. When ρ begins a word in Greek, it is always written with a rough breathing mark. In English, we transliterate this as *rh*, as in *rh*etoric (comes from ῥήτωρ); *rh*inoceros (comes from ῥίς, ῥινός); and *rh*apsody (comes from ῥαψωδία).

The smooth breathing mark means that there is no extra sound, so ἴτ is pronounced *eat*. The smooth breathing mark does not change the pronunciation of the letter over which it is written. When transliterating, we write *h* for the rough breathing and do not write anything for the smooth.

A rough or smooth breathing mark occurs over a vowel if it is the first letter of a word, unless it is part of a diphthong. If the word begins with a diphthong, the breathing mark appears over the second vowel of the diphthong. Likewise, if a diphthong is accented, the accent and breathing mark always appear over the second vowel in a diphthong. The accents and breathing marks over uppercase letters appear to the left of that letter. A breathing mark goes before an accent and under a circumflex if they must be combined.

Here are three verses from the New Testament that illustrate what these accents and breathing marks look like (breathings are underlined):

- ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν. (Acts 17:28)
For in him we live and move and have our being.
- εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιείτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιείτε. (1 Corinthians 10:31)
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God.
- Ἦσαν δὲ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ . . . (Mark 10:32a)
And they were on the road . . .

Note that diacritical marks (breathing marks and accents) appear before uppercase letters rather than on top of them.

Practice transliterating the following words:

1. αἰρετικός _____
2. ἄλφα _____
3. ῥύγχος _____
4. ἐσπέρα _____
5. ὤμος _____
6. ῥάδιος _____

Punctuation

Greek punctuation is very similar to English punctuation. Periods (.) and commas (,) are the same in Greek as in English. The two differences are the question mark and the semicolon. The Greek punctuation for a question is the semicolon (;) and the sign for a semicolon and colon is a dot raised to the middle point of a line (·). So if you ask a question in Greek, don't end it with a question mark. Use a semicolon, like this—τί ὄνομά σοί ἐστιν; (τί ὄνομά σοί ἐστιν;) (“What is your name?”).

More on Syllabication

It is time to review and expand upon what you have learned about syllables:

- A syllable must include a vowel or a diphthong: ἄν-θρῶ-πος
- A vowel combination that does *not* form a diphthong is divided: πισ-τεύ-ει, ὄγ-δο-ος
- When a consonant appears between two vowels, it goes with the following vowel or diphthong: ἄν-θρῶ-πος
- A consonant group (two or more consonants) that does not make a single sound is divided: καρ-δί-α, ἄν-θρῶ-πος
- Double consonants are divided: ἐκ-κλη-σί-α

Be sure to practice your syllabication whenever you encounter a new vocabulary list.

The rule for all Greek words is that the accent can fall only on the last three syllables of a word. These three syllables have names: **antepenult**, **penult**, and **ultima**. These names are based on Latin. Can you guess what ultima means? That's right—the last. So the pen-ult is short for *paene-ultima*, the almost-last, or second-to-last. The ante-pen-ult is the syllable *before* the almost-last—the third-to-last (e.g., ἄνθρωπος has its accent on the antepenult, δούλος has its accent on the penult, and ἀδελφός has its accent on the ultima).

Long Marks, or “Macrons”

As you learned in chapter 3, Greek vowels have quantity. You will see macrons (plural of *macron*) included over long alpha (ā), long iota (ī), and long upsilon (ū) in vocabulary and paradigms in this series. Use these symbols to help you learn noun patterns and pronunciation. Be aware that most Greek texts outside of textbooks do not include these symbols.



A medieval illuminated manuscript showing Byzantine Greek writing



A. Pronunciation and Transliteration

Listen to your teacher pronounce the following Greek words. Practice pronouncing them yourself, then transliterate the Greek word on the line in the right-hand column.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. κύων | (dog) | _____ | 9. ῥήτωρ | (speaker) | _____ |
| 2. ἵππος | (horse) | _____ | 10. ζῶον | (animal) | _____ |
| 3. ὄρνις | (bird) | _____ | 11. ὕπνος | (sleep) | _____ |
| 4. ἔως | (dawn) | _____ | 12. ἀήρ | (air) | _____ |
| 5. γεωργός | (farmer) | _____ | 13. δράμα | (drama) | _____ |
| 6. παράδειγμα | (example) | _____ | 14. πλοῦτος | (wealth) | _____ |
| 7. βούς | (cow/bull) | _____ | 15. πῦρ | (fire) | _____ |
| 8. ἑσπέρα | (evening) | _____ | | | |



B. Pronunciation, Accents, and Syllables

Practice saying each of these Greek words out loud, paying special attention to the accent. Divide each word into its syllables. Tell the kind of accent that the word has, and if there is a breathing mark, tell which one. If the vowel has an iota adscript or subscript, write it beside or underneath the English vowel. Finally, tell the name of the syllable on which the accent falls.

	Divided syllables	Transliteration	Accent and breathing	Accented syllable
Example: ἅγιος	ἅ-γι-ος	há-gi-os	acute, rough	antepenult
1. κῆρύω				
2. λαμβάνω				
3. ὄρα				
4. ἄνθρωπος				
5. ἀποθνήσκετε				
6. Ἀσία	Ἄ-σί-ᾱ			
7. ἄγω				
8. ἁμαρτωλός				
9. εἶδομεν				
10. ταῦτα				
11. προφήτης				
12. λυθῶ				
13. πνεῦμα				
14. Ἄννα	Ἄν-να			
15. ὁδοῖς				
16. θεραπεύει				
17. κατέλαβε				



C. Accents, Breathing Marks, and Punctuation

Fill in the box by giving the names for the Greek accents, breathing marks, and punctuation.

Mark	Name
´	
˘	
˜ or ˆ	
˙	
ˊ	
;	
·	

D. Grammar

Fill in the blanks in the sentences.

- When you indicate the pitch on a part of a Greek word, this is called an _____.
- In Greek, breathing marks only go over vowels or diphthongs and the consonant _____ when they start a word.
- An accent or breathing mark will appear over the _____ letter of the diphthong.
- Write the Greek question mark. _____
- The Greek question mark looks just like the English _____.
- Write the Greek semicolon. _____
- What are the names of the only three syllables over which an accent can occur in a Greek word?
_____, _____, _____
- What is the mark beneath the following letters called α , η , ω ?
An _____

A. The Greek Alphabet

Write the twenty-four Greek letters in order. Include upper- and lowercase forms of each letter and the name of the letter. Write an asterisk (*) beside the seven vowels.

Uppercase	Lowercase	Name
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		
21.		
22.		
23.		
24.		

B. Consonants and Consonant Combinations Review

Pronunciation and Syllabication

Write out these words in phonetically correct English letters with hyphens between the syllables. Add the proper accent over the English vowel. The first word is completed for you as an example.

	Transliteration and syllabication	Meaning of Greek word
1. γεωργός	ge-ōr-gós	farmer
2. πέμπω		I send
3. ἐπιστολή		letter
4. ἀπλῶς		simply
5. ἱερόν		temple
6. τέχνη		art, skill
7. δῆλος		clear
8. ὀφθαλμός		eye
9. ἁμαρτωλός		sinner
10. Ἰησοῦς		Jesus
11. στρατιώτης		soldier

Types of Consonants

List the consonants associated with each of the terms.

- labials: _____
- velars: _____
- dentals: _____
- nasals: _____
- liquids: _____
- sibilants: _____
- stops: _____



Spelling Greek Consonant Blends

Write the Greek letter that results from the following combinations of Greek consonants.

1. β, π, or φ + σ = _____
2. γ, κ, or χ + σ = _____
3. δ, θ, or τ + σ = _____



The Greek palindrome in this ancient church mosaic translates as "Wash the sins, not just the face."

C. Vowels and Diphthongs

Pronunciation and Syllabication

- Underline the diphthongs in the words below.
- Write out these words in phonetically correct English letters with hyphens between the syllables. Write the accented syllables correctly.

	Transliteration and syllabication	Meaning of Greek word
1. λείπω	_____	I send
2. παιδεύω	_____	I educate
3. ἀκούω	_____	I hear
4. οὐρανός	_____	sky, heaven
5. παιδίον	_____	child
6. οἰκία	_____	house
7. ἀδελφός	_____	brother

The Seven Diphthongs

Remember, a diphthong is a vowel blend. Greek has seven main diphthongs. What are they?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | |

D. Accents and Punctuation

Types of Accents

Practice saying each of these Greek words out loud, paying special attention to the accent. Divide each word into its syllables. Tell the kind of accent that the word has, and if there is a breathing mark, tell which one. Finally, write the name of the syllable on which the accent falls. The first exercise is completed for you.

	Divided syllables	Accent and breathing	Accented syllable
ἅγιος	ἅ-γι-ος	acute, rough	antepenult
1. ἥλιος	_____		
2. πλοῖον	_____		
3. βασιλείᾱ	_____		
4. εἰρήνη	_____		
5. ἀγορᾶ	_____		



Unit I Review Crossword Puzzle

Fill in the blanks, then complete the puzzle.

DOWN

1. An iota _____ is sometimes written below the vowels α , η , and ω .
3. The _____ consonants are β , π , and ϕ .
4. The Greek _____ mark looks just like the English semicolon.
5. All syllables must include a _____ or a diphthong.
7. Breathing marks go over only vowels or diphthongs and the letter _____ when they start a word.
9. The _____ breathing mark looks like a backward apostrophe and makes the sound *h*.
11. The _____ consonants are ζ and σ .
13. When you are dividing a word into syllables, a single consonant goes not with the *preceding*, but the _____ vowel or diphthong.
16. The _____ accent points upward and to the right.
17. Whenever gamma comes before a velar consonant, it makes what is known as a gamma _____ sound.
18. The _____ consonants are γ , κ , and χ .
19. The second-to-last syllable is called the _____.
21. When you place stress on a syllable, this is called an _____.

ACROSS

2. The _____ accent can look like a squiggle or a dome.
6. The iota subscript does not change the _____ of a vowel.
8. The _____ breathing mark looks like a backward apostrophe and does not make a sound.

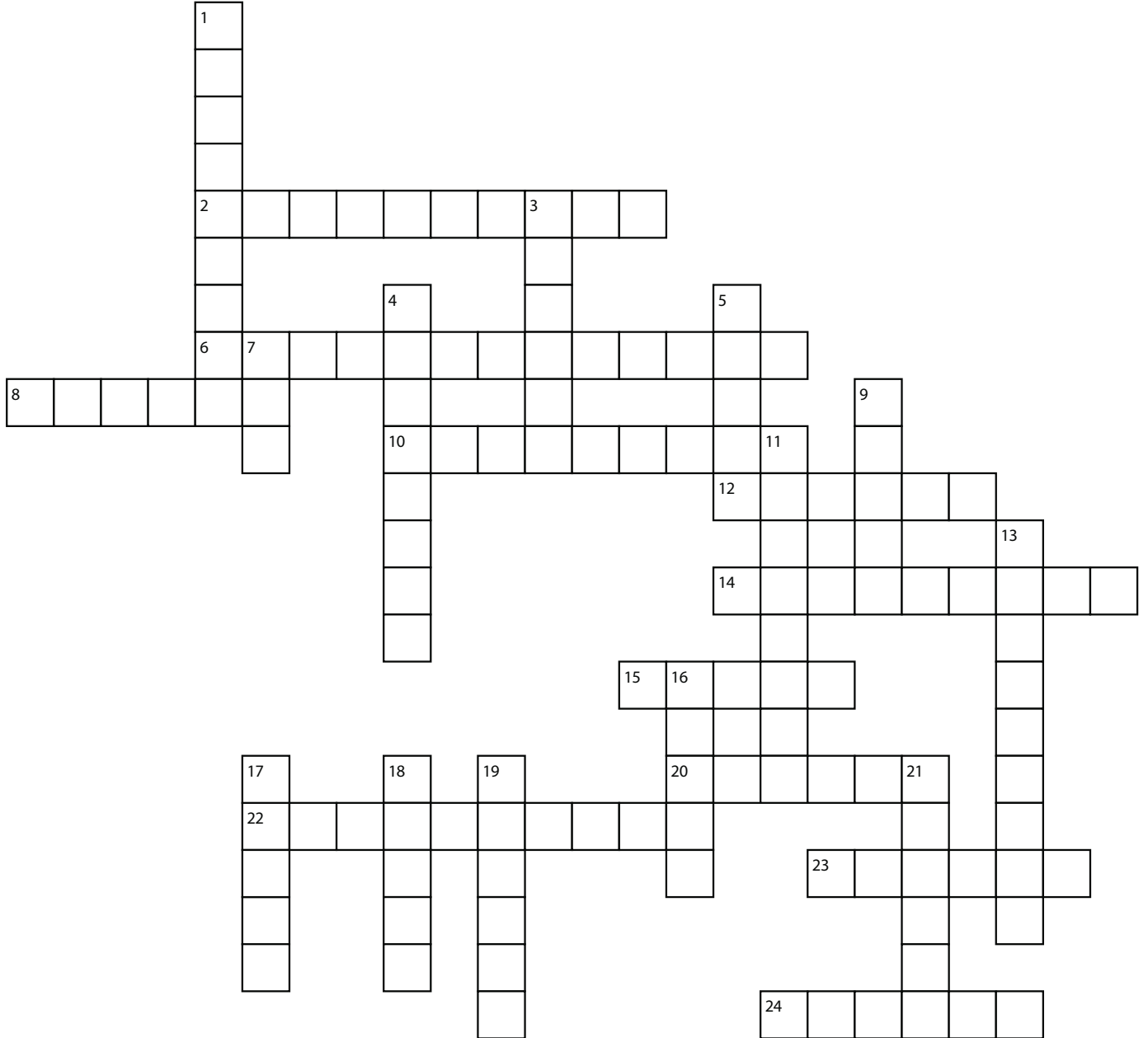
Review

10. The only three _____ over which an accent can occur in a Greek word are the antepenult, penult, and ultima.
12. The _____ consonants are λ and ρ .
14. A vowel blend is called a _____.
15. The _____ consonants are μ and ν .
20. The final syllable of a word is called the _____.
22. The third-to-last syllable is called the _____.
23. If a word begins with a diphthong and the first syllable is accented, the accent will appear over the _____ letter of the diphthong.
24. δ , Θ , and τ are classified as _____ consonants.



Hi there! My name is Simon, and I'm learning Greek too. Come and meet me online at the Support tab on the *Greek for Children Primer A* page at classicalacademicpress.com. Click on "diglot weave" and learn a little bit about life in my village during Bible times!

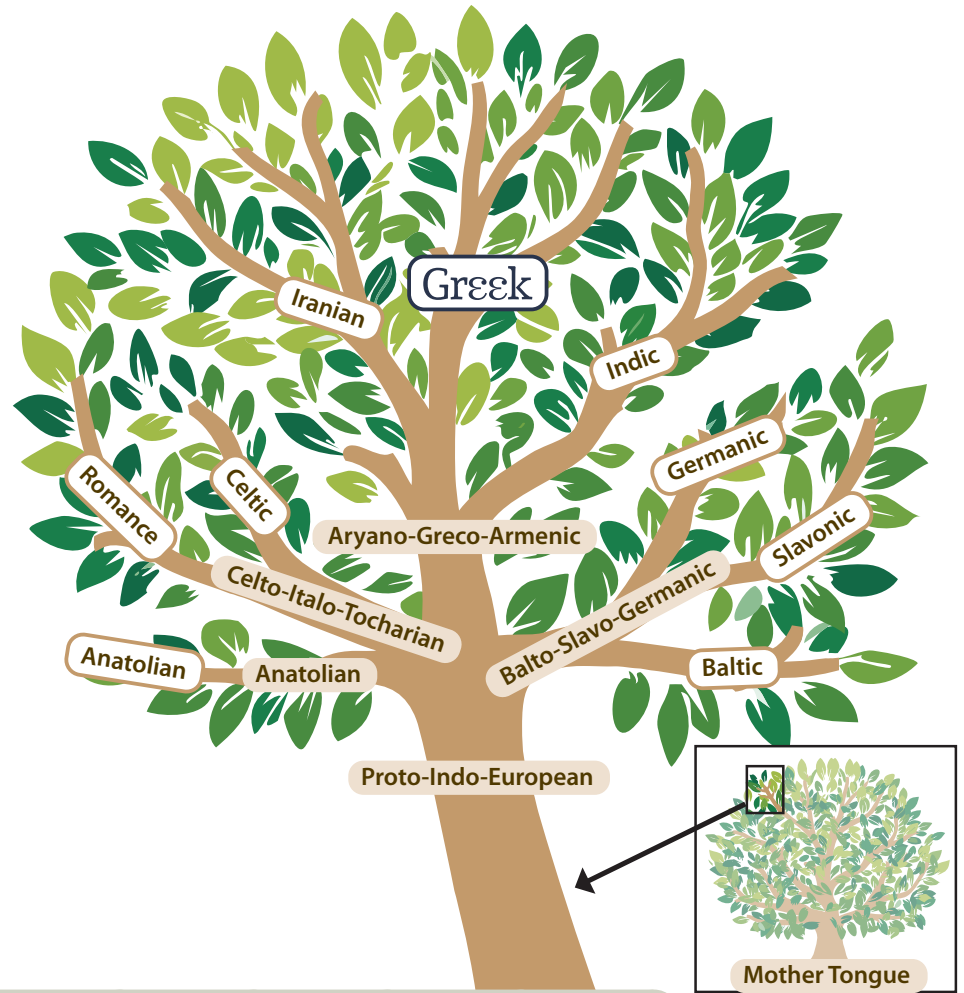






UNIT I GREEK CULTURE IN FOCUS

THE History of the Greek Language



PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN, 4500 TO 2500 BC

Did you know that English, Greek, German, Latin, Sanskrit, Russian, and many other languages belong to the same family tree? They all descend from an ancient language called proto-Indo-European (PIE). *Proto* means “early,” and *Indo-European* means that these languages are spoken throughout India and Europe. We have no written record of the existence of proto-Indo-European. Instead, scholars have compared ancient and modern languages to determine the existence of a common ancestor language. Study these common words, or cognates, in five daughter languages of PIE. Can you see or hear the family resemblance?

English	German	Latin	Greek	Sanskrit	Theoretical PIE Roots
Mother	Mutter	māter	mētēr	māṭṛ	māter-
Father	Vater	pater	patēr	pitár	páté(r)-
Three	drei	trēs	treis	tráyas, trī	trei-
Foot	Fuss	pēs	pous	pât-	pēd-



Many scholars believe that the original speakers of PIE lived around the steppes (dry, grassy plains) of southern Russia and Ukraine. Some of these migrated to the Balkans, where they spoke proto-Greek, the ancestor of all varieties of Greek.

This tablet showing Linear B writing is from the 13th century BC.



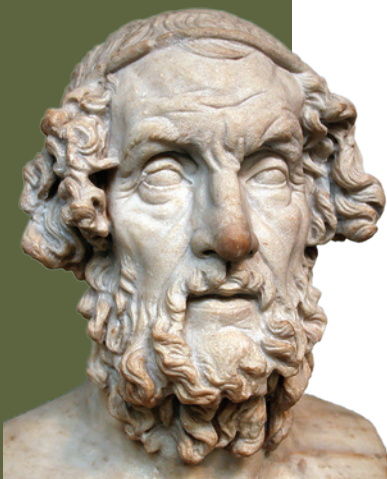
MYCENAEAN GREEK/LINEAR B, 1600 TO 1100 BC

Proto-Greek was not written down, but we do have written records of trade lists and inventories written in the earliest recorded form of Greek—Mycenaean Greek. Mycenaean Greek was not written using the Greek alphabet you are learning; instead, it was written in a script called Linear B. Linear B is not an alphabet, but a syllabary, which means that each symbol represents a single syllable rather than a single sound. Take a look at the following examples of Greek words written in two ways—one using Linear B signs and one using the now-familiar Greek alphabet:

Linear B	Transliteration	Greek	English
𐀢𐀺	do-ra	δῶρα	gifts
𐀡𐀢	pa - ter	πατήρ	father

ANCIENT GREEK, 1100 TO 330 BC

When the Mycenaean civilization collapsed, Linear B and the Greek art of writing disappeared. During the period from 1100 to 800 BC, Greece endured a period of poverty and decline known as the Greek Dark Age. Throughout this period, many epics were passed down orally from generation to generation. But around 800 BC, the Greeks adopted a new writing system, which they soon began to use for trade, public inscriptions, graffiti, and literature—including the two epics attributed to Homer: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.



A bust of Homer



Instead of using the old Mycenaean symbols, this new alphabet borrowed from the alphabet of the powerful and wealthy Phoenicians, with whom the Greeks had begun to trade. The new Greek alphabet spread quickly and helped propel the prosperity and cultural influence of the Greeks. As Greek trade and literacy increased, a new form of government, *democracy*, began to emerge.

Ancient Greek included many dialects, but Athenian Greek, or Attic Greek, became the dominant literary dialect. Attica was the intellectual center of Greece, and after Athens was conquered by the Macedonians under Alexander the Great, peoples throughout the East began to use a simplified form of Attic Greek.



This famous mosaic of Alexander the Great was found in the ruins of Pompeii.

KOINE OR HELLENISTIC GREEK, 330 BC TO AD 330

This dialect quickly evolved into the common Greek of commerce and everyday living now known as “common” or Koine Greek. This is the form of the language in which the New Testament and the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) were written.

BYZANTINE GREEK, AD 330 TO 1453

Over time, Greek grammar gradually lost the common use of word endings, gained new structures, and acquired a richer vocabulary through contact with neighboring peoples. In the Byzantine Empire, a dialect called Byzantine Greek was spoken, or at least written, in the Greek-speaking areas of the old Roman empire until the Ottoman Turks conquered the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, in 1453.



MODERN GREEK, AD 1453 TO PRESENT

Modern Greek is spoken in Greece, of course, but also in Cyprus and parts of Albania. Approximately fifteen to twenty-five million people speak Greek today. While the pronunciation and some word forms have changed over the millennia, the core vocabulary is largely the same.

ENGLISH

About 5 percent of our modern English words are borrowed from Greek roots—especially scientific, medical, and technical terms. Words that are borrowed from one language into another are called *derivatives*. The word *technical* itself is a derivative from the Greek word τέχνη, which means art, skill, or method of making a thing.

