

GREEK WRITING

The alphabet

Lower case

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ / ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω

Upper case (normally only for the first letter of proper names and the first letter of a direct quotation):

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

Breathings

- A Greek word that begins with a vowel sound shows a **“rough” breathing** (´) if it begins with an “h” sound: ἑκατόν = “hekatón” εἶς = “heis”
 - Greek words beginning with a *rho* or *upsilon* always show a rough breathing: ῥυθμός = “rhythmos” ὑπέρο = “hyper”
- Otherwise, a Greek word that begins with a vowel sound shows a **“smooth” breathing** (˘): ὀκτώ = “octo” εἴκοσι = “eikosi”

Accents

- Most words in Greek have a single accent, a raised tone on a single, short vowel sound.
- A forward slash (“/” called the **“acute”** accent) above the letter marks the **single short vowel** sound with the accent.
 - The acute accent on a long vowel sound means the accent is spoken on the **second half (mora)** of the long sound: ὦ = οὦ
- If the accent falls on **first half (mora)** of a **long vowel sound**, then the second half has a falling tone. The combination is designated with a stylized version of the rising tone (“/”) followed by the falling tone (“\”), called a **circumflex** (“~”): ὄο → ὠ, οὖ → οῦ
- When the rising tone of the acute accent at the end of a word is diminished or negated by having to pronounce the next word, the mark is inverted: the forward slash (“/”) is flipped to a backward slash (“\”), called the **“grave”** accent: τὸ → τὸ δῶρον
- Placing the accent:
 - On most Greek words, the **“recessive”** rule determines the placement of the accent. This means:
 - If the **last syllable** of the word contains a **single short vowel**, the accent “recedes” **two** syllables: δίδοτε. It can recede only to the last short vowel sound of this syllable (never to the first mora), so the accent appears as an acute (“/”): ἀνθρώπος, δώσατε (= δούσατε)
 - But if the word has **only two syllables and the last syllable of the word contains a single short vowel**, the accent recedes to the first syllable (δότε) or the first mora of a long vowel sound: δῶρον (= δόρον)
 - If the **last syllable** of the word contains a **long vowel sound**, the accent “recedes” only **one** syllable: διδότη. It can recede only to the second mora of this syllable, so the accent always appears as an acute (“/”): παραδώσω (= παραδοῶσω = παραδοῶσο)
 - Some nouns, adjectives and pronouns accent case endings or the final mora of their stem (μήτηρ, μητρός, μητρὶ, μητέρα).
 - Conjunctions and prepositions normally accent their final syllables: ἀλλά, περί.
 - **Proclitics** (such as ὁ, ἡ) act like prefixes to a word and so rarely bear an accent. **Enclitics** (such as τις, τι) act like suffixes to a word and so generate an accent only if too many unaccented syllables would result otherwise: ἀνθρώπος-ἐστιν, ἀνθρώπων-τινῶν

Punctuation

- Greek indicates a **period** (.), a **half-stop** (·), a **comma** (,), and the **question mark** (;).

THE GREEK ALPHABET: SOUNDS and COMBINATIONS

SHORT VOWELS

α “ah”
ε “eh”
ι “ih”
ο “o”
υ “u”

LONG VOWELS

ᾱ “aah” or **ἠ** “ay”
ῆ “ay”
ῑ “ee”
ῶ “oh”
ῦ “ooh”

DIPHTHONGS and CONTRACTIONS: two consecutive vowels can merge into a single sound.

<u>vowel + ι forms a diphthong</u>	<u>vowel + υ forms a diphthong</u>	<u>α, ε and ο contract:</u>	<u>α, ε and ο contract:</u>
α + ι = αι “eye”	α + υ = αυ “ow!”	α + α = ᾱ	ε + α = η
ᾱ + ι = ᾶι “aah” usually written α		α + ε = ᾶ	ε + ε = ει
ε + ι = ει “ay”	ε + υ = ευ “eu”	α + ο = ω	ε + ο = ου
ῆ + ι = ῆι “ay” usually written η			
ο + ι = οι “oy”	ο + υ = ου “oo”		
ω + ι = ωι “oh” usually written ω			
υ + ι = υι “wi”			

CONSONANTS

	<u>Labial</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	
unvoiced	π p	τ t	κ k	
voiced	β b	δ d	γ g	
aspirated	φ ph	θ th	χ kh	
+ σ	ψ ps	σ s	ξ ks	ζ = σδ
nasals	μ m	ν n	γ ng	
liquids		λ l	ρ r	

Rules for the end of a Greek word:

- A Greek word can **end** only in a **vowel, -v, -q or -ς**.
- If necessary, consonants will drop from the end until the word reaches an allowable final sound (σῶματ → σῶμα).
- A word ending in **-σι** can add a final **-ν** (“nu-movable”) to make pronunciation easier: εἴκοσι εἴσι → εἴκοσιν εἴσιν.