

GRADE 3 GREEK

First edition

5 units

10 lessons • one quarter

A video for every lesson

FIRST EDITION

COURSE GUIDE

Greek is a treasure chest, and the twenty-four letters are the key. This short course hands an eight-year-old that key, one small handful of letters at a time: where the alphabet came from, how a Greek schoolboy scratched his letters into wax, why Jesus called himself the Alpha and the Omega, how a little dash called iota got into one of Jesus' most famous sayings, how Greek letters unlocked the Rosetta Stone, and why early Christians drew a fish. Every lesson is built around a real story and a real object: a 2,700-year-old prize jug, a hand-copied Greek Bible, the owl coins of Athens, a mosaic found under an English field.

Every lesson follows the same path. First comes **the story**, written to be read aloud. Then **how Greek works**: the week's new letters, their names, their shapes and their sounds. Then **say it out loud**, because the alphabet is learned by chanting, singing and sounding, a few happy minutes a day. Last, **try it**: the student makes letter cards for a growing treasure box, scratches letters into a homemade wax tablet, writes a secret message for the family to decode, letters an alphabet scroll, and ends the quarter by hosting a Greek Letter Feast.

By the end of the quarter the student can say, read and write all twenty-four Greek letters in order, small and capital, sound out short real Greek words, read about a dozen sight words including Θεός (God), ΙΧΘΥΣ (the fish sign) and the letter pair Α and Ω, and spot Greek hiding inside English words like telephone and dinosaur. No grammar, no tests on little marks, nothing to buy: just letters, stories and crafts, and a key that will open Greek for the rest of the student's life.

Most videos come from trusted teaching channels: Alpha with Angela (a missionary teacher's gentle Biblical Greek series), Daily Dose of Greek, The Religion Teacher, Got Questions Ministries, Learn Bright, Free School, Miacademy, Khan Academy, NativLang, TED-Ed and others. Every video was previewed for accuracy and content. A few are made for a slightly older audience; the lesson notes say so. You

will hear small differences in pronunciation between channels (classroom Erasmian, Koine and modern Greek); that is normal, and this course teaches the classroom sounds so that every letter stays distinct. Some channels end with an invitation to subscribe; you can stop the video when the teaching ends.

Start with Lesson 1.1 →

WHO IT IS FOR

Written for students in grade 3 (about ages 8–9) who can read English sentences aloud. No Greek at all is assumed: this is the front door of our Greek 3–8 sequence, and everything starts from zero. A parent or teacher reads the stories aloud or alongside, joins the chants and checks the letter cards. Sessions are short, about 20 to 30 minutes, three times a week. Nothing needs to be bought: every activity uses paper, index cards, crayons, scissors, tape and kitchen things.

HOW TO USE THIS COURSE

1. **The weekly rhythm.** The quarter has 10 lessons, one a week, each with three sessions of 20–30 minutes. Session 1 is the warm-up, the video, the story and the picture study. Session 2 is the activity and the Greek notebook. Session 3 is the worked examples, the practice and a recitation: the student chants the letters learned so far and reads the week's Greek out loud to the family. In the second week of each unit, use part of Session 3 for the unit review and the unit challenge.
2. **Chant it every day.** The alphabet is learned the way songs are: out loud, in rhythm, a few minutes a day. From Unit 2 on, open every session by chanting the letters learned so far, names and sounds, while touching each card: alpha says ah, beta says b, gamma says g. By Unit 4 the chant is the whole alphabet in two breaths. Five minutes of cheerful chanting beats an hour of silent staring.
3. **Story, then letters, then doing.** The core ideas are written to be read aloud. The paragraph marked *The story* tells what happened; *How Greek works* introduces the week's letters; *Say it out loud* gives the sounds and chants; *Try it* explains the activity. After each paragraph, ask the student to tell it back in his or her own words.
4. **About the little marks.** Real Greek prints small marks over some of its words: breathings and accents. In grade 3 the student simply copies the marks when a

word card shows them, the way you copy the dot on an i, and is never graded on them; the course prints them so the eye learns the real look of Greek. The letters themselves are the whole assignment this year.

5. **The letter cards and the treasure box.** In the very first lesson the student decorates a treasure box (any shoebox or tin) for letter cards. Every new letter gets a card: capital and small letter on the front, name and sound on the back. Sight words get their own cards too. Review the whole box at the start of Session 2 and Session 3: a card the student gets right three times in a row can move to a weekly pile. By the end of the quarter the box holds all 24 letters and about a dozen words: the key to Greek, made by hand.
6. **The word list.** The course teaches the 24 letters by unit, plus sight words read whole. Unit 1, two famous letters: α (alpha) and ω (omega). Unit 2, the first eight: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ. Unit 3, the middle eight: ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π. Unit 4, the last eight: ρ σ/ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω. Unit 5 reviews them all. The sight words, met along the way: Θεός (God), ἄλφα (alpha), ὠμέγα (omega), ἀλφάβητος (alphabet), βίβλος (book), ἄγγελος (angel), μικρός (small), μέγας (big), καί (and), ΙΧΘΥΣ (fish), ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Christ), ΑΘΕ (of the Athenians, on the owl coin), Πέτρος (Peter), Σοφία (wisdom), Φίλιππος (Philip), Μαρία (Mary), and the phrase from Revelation 1:8, τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, the Alpha and the Omega. The letter cards and word cards are the whole deck; a student who owns the box owns the course.
7. **The Greek notebook.** Use any notebook for the whole quarter. It holds the letter-writing practice, the copied words, the drawings and the little discoveries. Date every page. A page of carefully drawn letters from week 3, found again in week 9, shows the student how far he or she has come.
8. **Reading, not grammar.** This course never asks the student to change a Greek word, build a sentence or learn a grammar rule. The only grammar words used all quarter are capital letter, small letter, vowel, consonant and sound. Sight words are read whole, like stop on a stop sign. The grammar adventure begins in later grades; this year the student earns the key.
9. **Unit review and unit challenge.** Each unit ends with a short review (30 points), which may be done entirely out loud, and a unit challenge: the treasure box presented, the wax tablet shown and chanted, the secret message decoded, the alphabet scroll unrolled, and at last the Greek Letter Feast. Keep the challenge work in a folder or on the wall.

10. **The Greek Letter Feast.** In the last week, the family throws a small feast. The student chants the whole alphabet, reads the sight words from cards, shows the scroll, the ΙΧΘΥΣ plaque and the name plates, and serves a simple Greek snack: olives, bread, honey, grapes. Letters first, then dessert.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

UNIT 1 • WEEKS 1–2

A Treasure Called Greek

Why Greek is worth hunting for: the New Testament was first written in it, Jesus named himself with its first and last letters, and English words like telephone and dinosaur are Greek in disguise. The student meets α and ω, starts the Alphabet Treasure Box and becomes a word detective.

- 1.1 The Language of Alpha and Omega
- 1.2 English Speaks Greek

UNIT 3 • WEEKS 5–6

The Middle Letters (ι–π)

Why Jesus praised a letter as small as a pencil dash, and how Greek letters unlocked the Rosetta Stone. The student learns the middle eight letters, ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π, hunts for iotas in a real Greek Bible line, meets the false friends that fool English eyes, and writes a secret message.

- 3.1 One Little Iota
- 3.2 Letters That Unlock

UNIT 2 • WEEKS 3–4

The First Letters (α–θ)

How the Greeks turned borrowed Phoenician letters into the first full alphabet, and what a Greek schoolboy's day was like. The student learns the first eight letters, α β γ δ ε ζ η θ, molds them in dough and scratches them into a homemade wax tablet.

- 2.1 The Phoenician Gift
- 2.2 Writing Like a Greek

UNIT 4 • WEEKS 7–8

The Last Letters (ρ–ω)

The secret fish sign ΙΧΘΥΣ and the letters on the most famous coins of the ancient world. The student learns the last eight letters, ρ σ/ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω, makes the fish plaque, chants the whole alphabet at last and letters the Alphabet Scroll.

- 4.1 The Secret Sign of the Fish
- 4.2 The Whole Song

UNIT 5 • WEEKS 9–10

Reading Real Words

The key turns: the student sounds out whole Greek words, reads names that mean things (Peter the Rock, Sophia the Wisdom), writes his or her own name in Greek letters, reads the Alpha and the Omega straight from Revelation, and hosts the Greek Letter Feast.

5.1 Names That Mean Things

5.2 Alpha and Omega

WEEKLY PACING CALENDAR

WEEK	PLAN
1	• Session 1: Lesson 1.1 The Language of Alpha and Omega: warm-up, video, story and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 1.1 activity (the Alphabet Treasure Box and the first two letter cards) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice, and the first recitation out loud <i>Three short sessions a week is the usual rhythm: one to learn, one to make, one to practice and recite. Each session is 20 to 30 minutes; stop while it is still fun.</i>
2	• Session 1: Lesson 1.2 English Speaks Greek: warm-up, video, story and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 1.2 activity (the Word Detective poster) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 1 review and unit challenge (presenting the treasure box)
3	• Session 1: Lesson 2.1 The Phoenician Gift: warm-up, video, story and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 2.1 activity (five letter cards and dough letters) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
4	• Session 1: Lesson 2.2 Writing Like a Greek: warm-up, video, story and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 2.2 activity (the homemade wax tablet) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 2 review and unit challenge (the wax tablet show-and-chant)
5	• Session 1: Lesson 3.1 One Little Iota: warm-up, video, story and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 3.1 activity (the Jot Hunt) and Greek notebook

WEEK	PLAN
	Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
6	- Session 1: Lesson 3.2 Letters That Unlock: warm-up, video, story and picture study - Session 2: Lesson 3.2 activity (the Secret Message) and Greek notebook - Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation - Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 3 review and unit challenge (the Secret Message decoded)
7	- Session 1: Lesson 4.1 The Secret Sign of the Fish: warm-up, video, story and picture study - Session 2: Lesson 4.1 activity (the IXΘΥΣ plaque) and Greek notebook - Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
8	- Session 1: Lesson 4.2 The Whole Song: warm-up, video, story and picture study - Session 2: Lesson 4.2 activity (the Alphabet Scroll) and Greek notebook - Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation - Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 4 review and unit challenge (the scroll presented with the full chant)
9	- Session 1: Lesson 5.1 Names That Mean Things: warm-up, video, story and picture study - Session 2: Lesson 5.1 activity (My Name in Greek) and Greek notebook - Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
10	- Session 1: Lesson 5.2 Alpha and Omega: warm-up, video, story and picture study - Session 2: Lesson 5.2 activity (preparing the Greek Letter Feast) and Greek notebook - Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation - Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 5 review and unit challenge (the Greek Letter Feast) <i>Last week. Host the Greek Letter Feast: the student chants the whole alphabet for the family, reads the sight words from cards, shows the scroll, the IXΘΥΣ plaque and the name plates, and serves olives, bread, honey and grapes.</i>

MATERIALS

A shoebox, tin or sturdy bag to decorate as the Alphabet Treasure Box

Made in Lesson 1.1; holds the letter cards and word cards all quarter.

Index cards or paper cut into card-sized pieces

About 40 for the quarter: one for each of the 24 letters and one for each sight word.

Greek notebook (any notebook), pencil, crayons or colored pencils, and a fine-tip marker

For letter practice, drawings, the word-detective poster and the name plates.

Scissors, glue or tape, and a few sheets of printer paper or poster board

For the posters, the IXΘYΣ plaque and the Alphabet Scroll (several sheets taped end to end).

A piece of cardboard and dark crayons, and playdough or cookie dough

The cardboard and crayons make the wax tablet in Unit 2; the dough makes squishable letters.

Olives, bread, honey and grapes (or any simple snack), and a cloth

For the Greek Letter Feast in week 10.

GRADING

Grades come mostly from the daily work: the chanting, the letter-card reviews, the notebook and the practice, because an alphabet is learned by steady, cheerful repetition. A student who chants faithfully, keeps the treasure box growing and writes the letters carefully earns full credit.

PART	%
Recitation and letter cards (daily chanting, card reviews, reading aloud)	30
Greek notebook (dated pages, letter practice, copied words)	25
Practice exercises (matching, sounding out, spotting, corrected together)	15
Unit reviews	15
Unit challenges	15

Scale: A 90–100, B 80–89, C 70–79, D 60–69. Below 60: slow down, chant more, and repeat the letters with help. An alphabet cannot be rushed and cannot be failed by a student who keeps singing it.

- A letter counts when its name, shape and sound all arrive together: omega, round like a wide-open mouth, saying long O.
- The little marks over Greek words are copied, never graded. A missing accent costs nothing; a backwards letter just gets practiced again.

- Unit reviews may be done entirely out loud; the parent writes down the answers for a student who writes slowly.
- Pronunciation is graded on courage and consistency, not perfection. Any student who says Greek out loud every day is doing it right.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

You do not need to know one letter of Greek to teach this course. Every letter comes with its name, its sound and a plain-English hint (η says long AY as in they); every Greek word is spelled out in English letters beside it; and the videos do the demonstrating. Learn alongside your child: chant in the car, quiz each other with the letter cards at the table, and let your child catch your mistakes. An eight-year-old who gets to correct a parent's omega will never forget omega.

Why Greek for an eight-year-old? Because this is the age when alphabets go in easily and happily, the way songs do. The New Testament was first written in Greek, and a child who learns these letters now will one day open it without a locksmith; meanwhile the letters pay rent immediately, in English words like telephone and dinosaur, in math class (pi is a Greek letter), and in church art, where Α and Ω and the fish sign have been waiting seventeen hundred years for your child to read them.

The old Greek world was a pagan world, and the course says so honestly where it comes up: the owl on the Athens coin belonged to a goddess the Greeks imagined, and the course says imagined. The stories the Greeks told are told as stories; the living God is spoken of as real, because He is. Scripture is quoted from the King James Version, and every lesson ends in it. All videos were previewed; a few made for older students are flagged in the lesson notes.

PRINTABLE WORD LIST

VOCABULARY FOR THE COURSE

Classroom Erasmian. Classroom Erasmian, the pronunciation these Greek courses teach: every letter keeps its own sound, which is neither modern Greek nor a reconstructed ancient accent. θ is th, φ is f, χ is kh. A rough breathing adds h. Stress follows the accent written on the word, and the capital letters are that stressed syllable.

Every week's list is printed again inside that lesson. Say the capital letters loudest.

1.1 THE LANGUAGE OF ALPHA AND OMEGA

ἄλφα

alpha

AL-fah

name

alpha, the first letter

ENGLISH alpha

ὦμέγα

omega

oh-MEH-gah

name

omega, the last letter

ENGLISH omega

θεός

theos

theh-OS

noun

God

βίβλος

biblos

BIB-los

noun

a book

ENGLISH Bible

ἄγγελος

angelos

ANG-eh-los

noun

a messenger; an angel

ENGLISH angel

Ἰησοῦς

iesous

ee-ay-SOOS

name

Jesus

ἀμήν

amen

ah-MAYN

greeting

amen; so be it

ENGLISH amen

ἀγάπη

agape

ah-GAH-pay

noun

love

φῶς

phos

FOHS

noun

light

ζωή

zoe

zoh-AY

noun

life

εἰρήνη

eirene

ay-RAY-nay

noun

peace

1.2 ENGLISH SPEAKS GREEK

μικρός

mikros

mee-KROS

adjective

small

ENGLISH micro-

μέγας

megas

MEH-gas

adjective

great

ENGLISH mega-

πλανήτης

planetes

plah-NAY-tays

noun

a wanderer; a planet

ENGLISH planet

άστήρ

aster

as-TAYR

noun

a star

ENGLISH aster

γῆ

ge

GAY

noun

earth, land

ENGLISH geography

ὕδωρ

hudor

HOO-dohr

noun

water

ENGLISH hydro-

πῦρ

pur

POOR

noun

fire

ENGLISH pyre

γράμμα

gramma

GRAM-mah

noun

a letter of the alphabet

ENGLISH grammar

τῆλε

tele

TAY-leh

adverb

far off

ENGLISH tele-

βίος

bios

BEE-os

noun

life

ENGLISH biology

χρόνος

chronos

KHRO-nos

noun

time

ENGLISH chronology

2.1 THE PHOENICIAN GIFT

ἀλφάβητος

alphabetos

al-FAH-bay-tos

noun

the alphabet

ENGLISH alphabet

ἄρτος

artos

AR-tos

noun

bread

δῶρον

doron

DOH-ron

noun

a gift

ENGLISH donate

ἔργον

ergon

EHR-gon

noun

a work, a deed

ENGLISH energy

δένδρον

dendron

DEHND-ron

noun

a tree

ENGLISH dendro-

ἄνθος

anthos

AN-thos

noun

a flower

ENGLISH anthology

βροχή

broche

bro-KHAY

noun

rain

γάλα

gala

GAH-lah

noun

milk

ENGLISH galaxy

δεῖπνον

deipnon

DAYP-non

noun

a meal, supper

ἐλαία

elaia

eh-LYE-ah

noun

an olive

ἡμέρα

hemera

hay-MEH-rah

noun

a day

2.2 WRITING LIKE A GREEK

διδάσκαλος

didaskalos

dee-DAS-kah-los

noun

a teacher

ENGLISH didactic

μαθητής

mathetes

mah-thay-TAYS

noun

a learner, a disciple

ENGLISH mathematics

γραφή

graphe

grah-FAY

noun

a writing; Scripture

ENGLISH graph

σχολή

schole

skho-LAY

noun

leisure for study; a school

ENGLISH school

θρόνος

thronos

THRO-nos

noun

a throne

ENGLISH throne

θησαυρός

thesauros

thay-sow-ROS

noun

a treasure

ENGLISH thesaurus

παιδεία

paideia

pye-DAY-ah

noun

training, education

πίναξ

pinax

PEE-naks

noun

a tablet, a board

γραφεῖον

grapheion

grah-FAY-on

noun

a writing place; a stylus

κηρός

keros

kay-ROS

noun

wax

αὐλή

aule

ow-LAY

noun

a courtyard

3.1 ONE LITTLE IOTA

καί

kai

KYE

conjunction

and

ἰῶτα

iota

ee-OH-tah

name

iota, the smallest letter

ENGLISH iota

οὐρανός

ouranos

oo-rah-NOS

noun

heaven, the sky

νόμος

nomos

NO-mos

noun

a law

ENGLISH economy

ναός

naos

nah-OS

noun

a temple

νήσος

nesos

NAY-sos

noun

an island

ὄνομα

onoma

O-no-mah

noun

a name

ENGLISH anonymous

ἰατρός

iatros

ee-ah-TROS

noun

a physician

ENGLISH psychiatry

ναῦς

naus

NOWS

noun

a ship

νεφέλη

nephele

neh-FEH-lay

noun

a cloud

ἶρις

iris

EE-ris

noun

a rainbow

ENGLISH iris

3.2 LETTERS THAT UNLOCK

βασιλεύς

basileus

bah-see-LEWS

noun

a king

ENGLISH basilica

πύλη

pule

POO-lay

noun

a gate

πόλις

polis

PO-lis

noun

a city

ENGLISH metropolis

κλείς

kleis

KLAYS

noun

a key

ξένος

xenos

KSEH-nos

noun

a stranger, a guest

ὄφθαλμός

ophthalmos

of-thal-MOS

noun

an eye

ENGLISH ophthalmology

πλοῖον

ploion

PLOY-on

noun

a boat

ὁδός

hodos

ho-DOS

noun

a road

ENGLISH exodus

ὄρος

oros

O-ros

noun

a mountain

βιβλίον

biblion

bee-BLEE-on

noun

a little book

ENGLISH bibliography

γλῶσσα

glossa

GLOHS-sah

noun

a tongue; a language

ENGLISH glossary

4.1 THE SECRET SIGN OF THE FISH

ἰχθύς

ichthus

ikh-THOOS

noun

a fish

Χριστός

Christos

khris-TOS

noun

Christ, the Anointed One

ENGLISH Christ

υἱός

huios

hwee-OS

noun

a son

σωτήρ

soter

soh-TAYR

noun

a savior

σταυρός

stauros

stow-ROS

noun

a cross

ἐκκλησία

ekklesia

ehkk-lay-SEE-ah

noun

an assembly; a church

ENGLISH ecclesiastical

ποιμήν

poimen

POY-MAYN

noun

a shepherd

ἀμνός

amnos

AM-NOS

noun

a lamb

ῥῆμα

hrema

HRAY-mah

noun

a word, a saying

ENGLISH rhetoric

σάρξ

sarx

SARKS

noun

flesh

σῖτος

sitos

SEE-tos

noun

grain, wheat

4.2 THE WHOLE SONG

Ἀθῆναι

Athenai

AH-THAY-nye

noun

Athens

ENGLISH Athens

γλαῦξ

glaux

GLOWKS

noun

an owl

ἀργύριον

argurion

ar-GOO-ree-on

noun

a silver coin

νόμισμα

nomisma

NO-mis-mah

noun

a coin

ENGLISH numismatics

δῆμος

demos

DAY-mos

noun

the people

ENGLISH democracy

στρατιώτης

stratiotes

strah-tee-OH-tays

noun

a soldier

χρυσός

chrusos

khroo-SOS

noun

gold

ψυχή

psuche

psoo-KHAY

noun

soul, life

ENGLISH psychology

ὠδή

ode

oh-DAY

noun

a song

ENGLISH ode

χορός

choros

kho-ROS

noun

a dance; a chorus

ENGLISH chorus

φύλλον

phullon

FOOL-lon

noun

a leaf

5.1 NAMES THAT MEAN THINGS

Πέτρος

Petros

PEH-tros

noun

Peter, a rock

ENGLISH Peter

πέτρα

petra

PEH-trah

noun

a rock

ENGLISH petrify

σοφία

sophia

so-FEE-ah

noun

wisdom

ENGLISH philosophy

Φίλιππος

Philippos

FEE-lip-pos

noun

Philip, a lover of horses

ENGLISH Philip

Μαρία

Maria

mah-REE-ah

noun

Mary

ENGLISH Mary

Σίμων

Simon

SEE-mohn

noun

Simon

Ἰωάννης

Ioannes

ee-oh-AN-nays

noun

John

ENGLISH John

Παῦλος

Paulos

POW-los

noun

Paul

ENGLISH Paul

Ἀνδρέας

Andreas

and-REH-as

noun

Andrew

σοφός

sophos

so-FOS

adjective

wise

ENGLISH sophomore

εὐαγγέλιον

euangelion

ew-ang-EH-lee-on

noun

good news, a gospel

ENGLISH evangel

5.2 ALPHA AND OMEGA

πρῶτος

protos

PROH-tos

adjective

first

ENGLISH prototype

ἔσχατος

eschatos

EHS-khah-tos

adjective

last

ENGLISH eschatology

ἀρχή

arche

ar-KHAY

noun

a beginning

ENGLISH archaeology

τέλος

telos

TEH-los

noun

an end

ENGLISH teleology

πνεῦμα

pneuma

PNEW-mah

noun

spirit, breath

ENGLISH pneumonia

ἀλήθεια

aletheia

ah-LAY-thay-ah

noun

truth

χάρις

charis

KHAH-ris

noun

grace, favor

ENGLISH charity

βασιλεία

basileia

bah-see-LAY-ah

noun

a kingdom

καινός

kainos

kye-NOS

adjective

new

μαρτυρία

marturia

mar-too-REE-ah

noun

a witness, testimony

εὐλογία

eulogia

ew-lo-GEE-ah

noun

a blessing

ENGLISH eulogy

UNIT 1

A TREASURE CALLED GREEK

Hidden in plain sight, all around you, is a treasure: a language called Greek. The whole New Testament was first written in it. The words telephone, dinosaur and galaxy are made of it. And in the last book of the Bible, Jesus names himself with its first and last letters: I am Alpha and Omega. The key to this treasure is an alphabet of twenty-four letters, and this quarter you are going to earn the whole key, letter by letter. In this first unit you meet the two famous letters themselves, alpha and omega, learn where Greece is, and build the treasure box that will hold your letter cards all quarter long.

Then you turn word detective, because English has been quietly borrowing from Greek for centuries. Tele means far and phone means voice, so a telephone is a far-voice. Micro means small and scope means looker, so a microscope is a small-looker. Even the word planet is Greek for wanderer, because the Greeks watched five stars that would not stay put. By the end of this unit you will have two letters in your box, a word-detective poster on the wall, and a very good reason to want the other twenty-two letters: they open things.

PREREQUISITES

- Can read English sentences aloud, with a grown-up nearby for the long words
- No Greek at all: this is the very first course in our Greek 3–8 sequence, and it starts from zero
- Has a shoebox or tin, index cards, pencil and crayons ready for the quarter

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can tell what language the New Testament was first written in.
- ☐ I can find Greece on a map or globe.
- ☐ I can say the names, sounds and shapes of α (alpha) and ω (omega), small and capital.
- ☐ I can tell what Jesus means by calling himself the Alpha and the Omega.
- ☐ I can take apart telephone, microscope and planet and tell what the Greek pieces mean.
- ☐ My Alphabet Treasure Box is decorated, and the α and ω cards are inside.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press:** A detective-story workbook in which cracking the Greek alphabet solves the mystery. The perfect sidekick for this whole course.
- **Song School Greek, by Classical Academic Press:** Songs and chants for young beginners. The alphabet songs pair happily with this quarter; nothing in it is required.
- **Famous Men of Greece (free online):** Free at Project Gutenberg, also in print from Memoria Press. Hero stories from the land of the alphabet, perfect for family read-alouds all quarter.

Not required. Every activity in this unit works with paper, pencil, scissors and the free links below. School Launch has no ties to these authors, publishers or companies.

LESSONS IN THIS UNIT

1.1 The Language of Alpha and Omega

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

1.2 English Speaks Greek

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

UNIT 1 REVIEW

Answer out loud or on paper; a parent may write for the student. The letter cards may sit on the table face down for emergencies. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

What language was the New Testament first written in, and why is that a good reason to learn its alphabet?

2. **5 pts**

Say the names and sounds of α and ω, and draw each one, capital and small.

3. **5 pts**

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus says: I am Alpha and Omega. What does he mean?

4. **5 pts**

Crack these words into Greek pieces with meanings: telephone, microscope.

5. 5 pts

What does planet mean in Greek, and why did the Greeks choose that name?

6. 5 pts

Which Greek word means small and which means big: μικρός, μέγας? Name one English word each one hides in.

ANSWER KEY

1. Greek. Learning the Greek alphabet is the first step toward one day reading the New Testament in the very letters it was written in.
2. Alpha, ah as in father: A and α. Omega, long O as in tone: Ω and ω.
3. Alpha is the first Greek letter and omega is the last, so Jesus is saying he is the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, with everything in between held by him.
4. Telephone: tele (far) + phone (voice), the far-voice. Microscope: micro (small) + scope (looker), the small-looker.
5. Wanderer. Five lights in the sky drifted through the star patterns on their own paths instead of staying put, so the Greeks called them the wanderers.
6. μικρός means small (microscope, microphone); μέγας means big (megaphone, mega; even omega, the big O).

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE TREASURE BOX, PRESENTED

The student presents the Alphabet Treasure Box to the family: the decorated box, the α and ω cards read aloud by name and sound, and the Word Detective poster, with every word on it cracked apart out loud.

The presentation ends with the student teaching the family the meaning of the Alpha and the Omega in Revelation 1:8, in his or her own words.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The box	The box is decorated, named and holds the α and ω cards, each with shapes on the front and name and sound on the back.
The letters	Both letters were read aloud correctly, capital and small, name and sound.
The poster	The poster has at least six words cracked into Greek pieces with meanings, and the student read the whole poster aloud.
The meaning	The student explained what Jesus means by Alpha and Omega, in his or her own words.

UNIT 1 • A TREASURE CALLED GREEK • LESSON 1.1 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 20-30 MINUTES

1.1 THE LANGUAGE OF ALPHA AND OMEGA

OBJECTIVES

- Tell what language the New Testament was first written in.
- Find Greece on a map and tell one thing about the Greek alphabet's great age.
- Say and write the first and last Greek letters: α (alpha) and ω (omega), small and capital.
- Tell what Jesus means in Revelation 1:8 by calling himself Alpha and Omega.
- Begin the Alphabet Treasure Box with the first two letter cards.

Warm-up. Say the English alphabet out loud. Now say just the first letter and the last letter: A and Z. If a king said, 'I am the A and the Z,' what do you think he would mean? Hold that thought: today you meet the real first and last letters, in the alphabet Jesus himself used, and you start collecting the whole set.

WATCH

Ancient Greece for Kids | Learn all Ancient Greek history with this fun overview

Learn Bright · 8:55

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RchSJSJAbc0>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Watch for where Greece sits on the map, all those islands and mountains, and listen for things the Greeks gave the world. The alphabet is the gift this course unwraps.

Note: A cheerful overview made for children. It mentions the Greek gods and myths as part of history; they were stories the Greeks told, not true ones, and the lesson says so too.

BACKUP VIDEO

Greek Alphabet Song (Erasmian Pronunciation) | Logos Bible Software

Logos Bible Study App · 1:31

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwgz4lc-TFU>

At the end of Session 1, and again any day you like: this is the course's theme song. Chant along even though you only know two letters so far; by Unit 4 you will own every word of it.

KEY TERMS

Greek

The language of Greece, spoken and written for about three thousand years. The New Testament was first written in it.

capital letter and small letter

Every Greek letter has a big shape and a little shape, just like A and a. Alpha is A and α; omega is Ω and ω.

alphabet (ἁλφάβητος)

A set of letters in a fixed order. The word is Greek: alpha-beta, the names of the first two letters, like calling ours the ay-bee.

alpha (ἁλφα)

The FIRST Greek letter: capital A, small α. It says ah, as in father.

omega (ὠμέγα)

The LAST Greek letter: capital Ω, small ω. It says a long O, as in tone. The name means big O.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

ἄλφα

alpha

AL-fah

name

alpha, the first letter

ENGLISH alpha

ὠμέγα

omega

oh-MEH-gah

name

omega, the last letter

ENGLISH omega

θεός

theos

theh-OS

noun

God

βίβλος

biblos

BIB-los

noun

a book

ENGLISH Bible

ἄγγελος

angelos

ANG-eh-los

noun

a messenger; an angel

ENGLISH angel

Ἰησοῦς

iesous

ee-ay-SOOS

name

Jesus

ἀμήν

amen

ah-MAYN

greeting

amen; so be it

ENGLISH amen

ἀγάπη

agape

ah-GAH-pay

noun

love

φῶς

phos

FOHS

noun

light

ζωή

zoe

zoh-AY

noun

life

εἰρήνη

eirene

ay-RAY-nay

noun

peace

CORE IDEAS

The story. When Matthew, John, Peter and Paul wrote the books of the New Testament, they did not write in English. English did not exist yet! They wrote in Greek, the language almost everybody around the Mediterranean Sea could read. For about two thousand years, children have been learning these same twenty-four letters so they could read those same books. And the letters never retired: they are hiding in your own words, like telephone and dinosaur and galaxy, and your math class will hand you one someday and call it pi. Greek is not a locked-up old language. It is a treasure chest, and this quarter you are going to be given the key.

The first and the last. In the last book of the Bible, Jesus says something amazing: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending' (Revelation 1:8). Alpha (AL-fah) is the FIRST letter of the Greek alphabet, and omega (oh-MEH-gah) is the LAST. It is as if Jesus said, 'I am the A and the Z': the beginning of everything and the end of everything, with all of it held between. Christians loved this so much that for seventeen hundred years they have painted and carved Α and Ω in their churches. Once you can read these two letters, you will start spotting them everywhere, and you will know exactly who they are talking about.

How Greek works: meet your first two letters. Alpha: capital Α, small α. The capital looks just like our A, because our A is alpha's grandchild. The small α looks like a little fish swimming left. Alpha says **ah**, as in father. Omega: capital Ω, small ω. The capital looks like a big horseshoe standing on two feet; the small ω looks like a curly w. Omega says a long **O**, as in tone, and its name means big O (mega = big). Two letters, twenty-two to go, and you already own the two most famous ones.

Say it out loud. Point to each shape and say its name and sound: Α, α, alpha, ah. Ω, ω, omega, long O. Say the two names like a tiny chant: AL-fah... oh-MEH-gah. Then say the phrase Christians have read aloud for centuries, the way it sounds in Greek: τὸ Ἀλφὰ καὶ τὸ Ὠ (toh AL-fah kye toh OH), the Alpha and the Omega. You just read your first Greek out loud. That counts.

Try it. This week you make the Alphabet Treasure Box: a shoebox or tin, decorated with Greek flair, that will hold one card for every letter you earn this quarter. Today it gets its first two treasures: the α card and the ω card, capital and small on the front, name and sound on the back.

PICTURE STUDY



Christ Pantocrator, Unknown mosaicist, About 1090–1100 · Mosaic of gold and colored glass · Monastery of Daphni, near Athens, Greece

Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain

High in the dome of a Greek monastery near Athens, made of thousands of tiny glass tiles, Christ looks down holding a jeweled book. He has held it there for more than nine hundred years. The letters beside his head, IC XC, are Greek shorthand for Jesus Christ, the first and last letters of each name. Artists wrote in Greek because their Bibles were in Greek, the very language you are starting today.

Look closely

- Find the book in his left arm. The New Testament was written in Greek; a Greek artist would never paint Christ without the Book.
- Find the letters beside the halo: IC on one side, XC on the other, Greek shorthand for Jesus Christ.
- Look closely at the gold background: it is not paint but thousands of tiny glass tiles, each one set by hand.
- Find the cross built into the circle of the halo behind his head: only Christ wears that kind.

Talk about it

1. The artist made Christ's eyes serious and kind at the same time. How do you think tiny tiles can show a feeling?

2. Why would an artist write a name in shorthand letters instead of spelling it all out?
3. This mosaic is over nine hundred years old and the letters still say the same thing. What does that tell you about letters?

ACTIVITY

The Alphabet Treasure Box

Every treasure hunter needs a chest. Today you make the box that will hold every letter you earn this quarter, and you drop in the first two treasures.

You will need

- A shoebox, tin or sturdy bag
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers, and paper to cover the box if you like
- 2 index cards and a pencil

Steps

1. Decorate the box so it looks like it holds treasure: waves and columns, gold coins, or a big A and Ω on the lid. Write your name on it: this is YOUR alphabet.
2. Make the alpha card. Front: capital A and small α, drawn big and dark. Back: its name, alpha, and its sound, ah as in father.
3. Make the omega card. Front: capital Ω and small ω. Back: omega, long O as in tone.
4. Practice the flip game: look at the front, say the name and sound, flip and check. Then let someone quiz you.
5. Put both cards in the box and close the lid like it matters. Twenty-two letters to go.

Tips

- Draw each letter BIG, at least as tall as your thumb. Little letters hide their shapes.
- Say the name and sound out loud every time you draw the letter: alpha, ah. Your ears help your hand remember.
- Small ω is one smooth wiggle, like drawing the top of a heart twice. Try it in the air first.

Check your work

- ☐ My box is decorated and has my name on it.
- ☐ The α card and ω card are inside, each with capital and small on the front, name and sound on the back.

- ☐ I can say both letters' names and sounds without peeking.
- ☐ I played the flip game with someone in my family.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a row of capital Α and a row of small α, saying alpha, ah as you write each one.
2. Write a row of capital Ω and a row of small ω, saying omega, long O as you write each one.
3. Copy the Greek phrase from Revelation, just the shapes, like drawing: τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ. Under it write: the Alpha and the Omega.
4. Draw a little map: the sea, Greece on its edge, and a star where Athens is. Label it GREECE.

From history. The letters IC XC beside Christ's halo in Greek art are the first and last letters of ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Jesus Christ (the rounded C is simply an old way of drawing the Greek S-letter, sigma), with a little line over them to show letters were skipped, the way we write Dr. for Doctor. Greek scribes loved these holy abbreviations: they wrote the greatest names in the smallest space, and artists have copied them for over a thousand years. By the end of this course you will be able to read both letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ that the shorthand keeps.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. A church window shows two letters: Α and Ω. Read them and tell what they mean.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Name the first: capital alpha, the FIRST Greek letter.
2. Name the second: capital omega, the LAST Greek letter.
3. Remember Revelation 1:8: Jesus calls himself Alpha and Omega.

Answer: Alpha and omega, the first and last letters: the window is saying Jesus is the beginning and the ending, like the A and the Z of everything.

Example 2. Which of these is the SMALL alpha: A, α, ω?

▼ **Show solution**

1. A is alpha's capital shape, big like our A.
 2. ω is small omega, the curly-w shape.
 3. α is the little fish-shape: small alpha.
-

Answer: α. It says ah, as in father.

Example 3. The word alphabet is hiding two Greek letter names. Find them.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Say it slowly: al-pha-bet.
 2. Alpha is the first Greek letter.
 3. Beta (which you will meet in Unit 2) is the second.
-

Answer: Alpha and beta, the first two Greek letters. The Greek word is ἀλφάβητος (al-FAH-bay-toss): alphabet means alpha-beta, just as if we called ours the ay-bee.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** What language was the New Testament first written in?

▼ **Show answer**

Greek. English did not exist yet, and Greek was the language almost everybody around the Mediterranean could read.

2. **Easy** Say the name and sound of each: α, ω.

▼ **Show answer**

α is alpha, and it says ah as in father. ω is omega, and it says a long O as in tone.

3. **Easy** Which Greek letter is FIRST in the alphabet, and which is LAST?

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha (α) is first; omega (ω) is last. That is why Jesus calling himself Alpha and Omega means the beginning and the ending.

4. **Medium** Match each shape to its name: A, ω, Ω, α. (Names: small alpha, capital alpha, small omega, capital omega.)

▼ **Show answer**

A capital alpha; ω small omega; Ω capital omega; α small alpha.

5. **Medium** A friend says, 'Greek is a dead language nobody uses.' Give two ways Greek letters are still at work today.

▼ **Show answer**

Any two: people in Greece still read and speak Greek; Christians read the Greek New Testament; A and Ω are painted and carved in churches; Greek letters work in math and science, like pi; English words like alphabet and telephone are built from Greek.

6. **Medium** In Revelation 1:8, why does Jesus pick the FIRST and LAST letters to describe himself, instead of two middle letters?

▼ **Show answer**

Because first and last mean the beginning and the ending: everything starts with him and ends with him, and everything in between is his too. Two middle letters could not say that.

7. **Hard** Omega means big O in Greek (mega = big). Greek has ANOTHER letter that says a shorter o sound, called omicron, the small o (micron = small). Why do you think Greek wanted two different O letters?

▼ **Show answer**

Because Greek has two different O sounds: a short one (as in pot) and a long one (as in tone). Greek gave each sound its own letter, omicron the small o and omega the big O, so readers always know which sound to say.

8. **Challenge** Go on a two-letter treasure hunt this week: look for A, α, Ω or ω anywhere in real life, in church, in a book, on a screen, in a math book, and report your finds.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: A and Ω appear on crosses, banners, windows and communion tables; ω and α appear in science and math books; alpha shows up in words like alphabet. One honest find, named and read aloud, earns the point.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading ω as an English w because of its shape. It is omega, a long O sound; Greek has no w sound at all.
- Saying alpha like the a in cat. Alpha says ah, as in father: open your mouth wide and let it out.
- Thinking capital and small letters are different letters. A and α are the same letter in two sizes, just like A and a.
- Thinking Greek is dead and gone. It is alive in Greece, in the church, in math class and inside English words; this course is about a living key.

Make it a game • Alpha-Omega Slap. Lay the two letter cards face up, far apart on the table. A parent calls a name, a sound or a clue ('omega!'... 'ah as in father!'... 'the LAST letter!'), and the student slaps the right card and says its name and sound. Mix in trick calls ('the letter that starts the alphabet!'). One point per clean slap; ten points wins. Add every new letter card to the game as the quarter grows.

Scripture. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8, KJV)

Jesus names himself with the first and last letters of the alphabet you are starting today. Learn the letters and the verse opens like a door: he is the beginning, the ending, and everything between.

UNIT 1 • A TREASURE CALLED GREEK • LESSON 1.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 20–30 MINUTES

1.2 ENGLISH SPEAKS GREEK

OBJECTIVES

- Tell what tele, phone, micro and scope mean, and build telephone and microscope from them.
- Tell why the Greeks called the planets wanderers.
- Spot Greek pieces hiding inside big English words.
- Review α and ω by name, shape and sound.
- Make the Word Detective poster.

Warm-up. Quick quiz from your treasure box: hold up the α card and the ω card; say each name and sound. Now count on your fingers how many 'Greek' things you said yesterday without knowing it: telephone? video? music? church? All Greek! Today you become a word detective and learn to catch English speaking Greek.

WATCH

Latin and Greek Root Words - Language Skills for Kids!

Miacademy & MiaPrep Learning Channel · 4:10

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWyX8vl6kMs>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph. Count how many word pieces you already met in this lesson, and listen for new ones to add to your poster.

Note: The video covers Latin roots too; tele, micro and phone are on the Greek team. Families doing our Latin courses can enjoy sorting which is which.

BACKUP VIDEO

Latin and Greek roots and affixes | Reading | Khan Academy

Khan Academy · 6:23

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiaPqgwJFo4>

If you want a second detective lesson: more roots, more words to take apart. Pause whenever a word appears and guess its pieces before the video tells you.

KEY TERMS

root

A word piece that carries a meaning. Greek roots hide inside English words like gears inside a clock.

phone

Greek for voice or sound. A telephone carries a voice from far away; a microphone makes a small voice big.

tele

Greek for far. Telephone, television, telescope: far-voice, far-seeing, far-looker.

micro (μικρός)

Greek for small. The Greek word is μικρός (mik-ROSS). A microscope is a small-looker: it looks at small things.

planet

Greek for wanderer. The Greeks watched five stars that would not stay put in the star patterns, and called them the wanderers.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

μικρός

mikros

mee-KROS

adjective

small

ENGLISH micro-

μέγας

megas

MEH-gas

adjective

great

ENGLISH mega-

πλανήτης

planetes

plah-NAY-tays

noun

a wanderer; a planet

ENGLISH planet

άστήρ

aster

as-TAYR

noun

a star

ENGLISH aster

γῆ

ge

GAY

noun

earth, land

ENGLISH geography

ὕδωρ

hudor

HOO-dohr

noun

water

ENGLISH hydro-

πῦρ

pur

POOR

noun

fire

ENGLISH pyre

γράμμα

gramma

GRAM-mah

noun

a letter of the alphabet

ENGLISH grammar

τῆλε

tele

TAY-leh

adverb

far off

ENGLISH tele-

βίος

bios

BEE-os

noun

life

ENGLISH biology

χρόνος

chronos

KHRO-nos

noun

time

ENGLISH chronology

CORE IDEAS

The story. Long before telescopes, Greek shepherds and sailors watched the night sky and noticed something odd. The stars moved together, all in one piece, like polka dots on a slowly turning umbrella, except for five of them. Those five drifted through the star patterns, night after night, each on its own path. The Greeks called them planetai: the wanderers. When later ages learned those wandering lights were whole worlds, they kept the Greek name. Every time you say planet, you are saying wanderer in Greek, and remembering those watchful Greek eyes.

The detective's secret. English does this constantly. When English needs a word for a new invention, it loves to build one out of Greek pieces. Tele (far) + phone (voice) = telephone, the far-voice. Tele + scope (looker) = telescope, the far-looker. Micro (small) + scope = microscope, the small-looker. Micro + phone = microphone, the small-voice-made-big. Even dinosaur is Greek: deinos (terrible) + sauros (lizard), the terrible lizard. A word detective who knows a few Greek pieces can walk up to a giant English word, snap it apart, and read its secret.

How Greek works: your letters are the badge. Here is the wonderful part: the pieces inside those English words were first written in Greek letters, the very letters you are collecting. The Greek word for small is μικρός (mik-ROSS), and there at the end swims your little α's cousin-sound; the Greek word for big is μέγας (MEH-gass), the mega hiding in omega (big O!) and in megaphone (big-voice). You cannot read all those letters yet. That is exactly why this course exists: every letter you earn makes more of the treasure readable.

Say it out loud. Chant your two letters first: alpha, ah; omega, long O. Then say the detective pairs in rhythm, English then meaning: TE-le, far! PHO-ne, voice! MI-cro, small! SCO-pe, looker! Now build words out loud: far-voice... telephone! Small-looker... microscope! Big-voice... megaphone! Say μικρός (mik-ROSS, small) and μέγας (MEH-gass, big) three times each: your first real Greek word pair, little and big.

Try it. This week you make the Word Detective poster: six big English words cut apart into their Greek pieces, each piece labeled with its meaning and a little drawing. It goes on the wall next to your treasure box, and you may add captured words to it all quarter.

PICTURE STUDY



A Philosopher Giving a Lecture on the Orrery, Joseph Wright of Derby, About 1766 · Oil on canvas · Derby Museum and Art Gallery, England
Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain

An orrery is a little machine of the heavens: brass rings for the planets' paths, a lamp for the sun. In this famous painting, a philosopher (Greek for wisdom-lover!) shows one to his friends, and the sun-lamp lights up every face. Look at the two children leaning over the rings: they are watching the wanderers, the planetai the Greeks named, go round and round.

Look closely

- Find the light. The lamp stands where the sun goes, so every face is lit the way the planets are lit: from the middle.
- Find the two children. The painter made them the brightest and most curious faces in the room.
- Follow the brass rings. Each ring is the path of one wanderer, one planet, around the sun.
- Find the man taking notes on the left. Discoveries get written down; that is what letters are for.

Talk about it

1. The children get the best spot at the orrery. Why do you think the painter put them there?

2. Planet means wanderer. After seeing this model, do the planets really wander, or do they follow paths? Who set the paths?
3. Psalm 19 says the heavens declare the glory of God. How can a machine in a dark room help someone hear that?

ACTIVITY

The Word Detective poster

Time to catch English speaking Greek. You will take six big words, snap them into their Greek pieces, and pin the evidence to the wall.

You will need

- A sheet of poster board or printer paper (tape two together for more room)
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers, and a pencil
- Scissors and glue if you want to cut the word pieces apart for real

Steps

1. Write the title at the top: ENGLISH SPEAKS GREEK, with a magnifying glass drawn around the O if you like.
2. Pick six words from the case files: telephone, telescope, microscope, microphone, megaphone, dinosaur, planet, alphabet.
3. Write each word big, then draw a lightning crack between its pieces: tele | phone.
4. Under each piece write its meaning: far | voice. Then write the secret meaning of the whole word: the far-voice.
5. Draw a little picture for each word: a far-away voice flying to an ear, a terrible lizard, a wandering star.
6. Present the poster to your family: read each word, snap it apart out loud, and reveal its secret meaning.

Tips

- Say each piece out loud as you write it: tele, far! The detective's mouth helps the detective's memory.
- Planet and dinosaur do not crack into two pieces the same way; write wanderer and terrible lizard under them instead.
- Leave empty space at the bottom labeled NEW CAPTURES, for Greek words you catch later in the quarter.

Check your work

- ☐ My poster has at least six words, each cracked into pieces or labeled with its Greek secret.

- ☐ Every piece has its meaning written under it.
- ☐ I read the whole poster out loud to someone.
- ☐ There is a NEW CAPTURES corner waiting for more words.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then practice a row of α and a row of ω, saying each name and sound as you write.
2. Take apart three words into pieces with meanings: telephone, microscope, megaphone.
3. Copy the Greek pair with their sounds and meanings: μικρός (mik-ROSS), small; μέγας (MEH-gass), big.
4. Write one sentence: Planet is Greek for wanderer, and draw a wandering star among steady ones.

From history. The Greeks knew exactly five wanderers, the five planets you can see with just your eyes: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Nobody saw the farther ones until telescopes, far-lookers, were invented two thousand years later. And when astronomers finally spotted new planets, they still reached for Greek and Roman names to label them. The wanderers got found by an invention with a Greek name, and filed under Greek-style names, twenty centuries after the shepherds first counted them.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Crack the word telescope and find its secret meaning.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Snap it: tele | scope.
2. Tele means far; scope means looker.
3. Put the meanings together.

Answer: Telescope = the far-looker: a tool for looking at far-away things. Greek pieces, English machine.

Example 2. A megaphone makes your voice louder. Use its Greek pieces to say exactly what its name means.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Snap it: mega | phone.
2. Mega means big (remember omega, the big O); phone means voice.
3. Put them together.

Answer: Megaphone = big-voice. The name tells you just what the cone does to your voice.

Example 3. Which is which: μικρός and μέγας? One means small, one means big.

▼ **Show solution**

1. μικρός sounds like micro, as in microscope, the small-looker.
2. μέγας sounds like mega, as in megaphone, the big-voice.

Answer: μικρός (mik-ROSS) is small; μέγας (MEH-gass) is big. You can already hear Greek words telling you their meanings.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** What do these Greek pieces mean: tele, phone, micro?

▼ **Show answer**

Tele means far; phone means voice or sound; micro means small.

2. **Easy** Why did the Greeks call the planets wanderers?

▼ **Show answer**

Because five lights in the night sky would not stay put in the star patterns; they drifted, or wandered, along their own paths, so the Greeks named them planetai, wanderers.

3. **Easy** Flash round from the treasure box: say the name and sound of α and of ω.

▼ **Show answer**

α: alpha, ah as in father. ω: omega, long O as in tone.

4. **Medium** Crack these words into pieces and give the secret meaning: telephone, microscope.

▼ **Show answer**

Telephone: tele (far) + phone (voice), the far-voice. Microscope: micro (small) + scope (looker), the small-looker.

5. **Medium** Build the English word from the Greek pieces: far + looker; big + voice.

▼ **Show answer**

Telescope (the far-looker) and megaphone (the big-voice).

6. **Medium** Which Greek word means small and which means big: μέγας, μικρός? Say both out loud.

▼ **Show answer**

μικρός (mik-ROSS) means small, like micro; μέγας (MEH-gass) means big, like mega.

7. **Hard** Dinosaur comes from Greek deinós (terrible) + sauros (lizard). A scientist finds a tiny new lizard fossil and names it microsauros. What did the name just tell everyone?

▼ **Show answer**

That it is a small lizard: micro (small) + sauros (lizard). Scientists still build names from Greek pieces so the name itself describes the creature.

8. **Challenge** Be a word detective at dinner tonight: catch one English word that you suspect is speaking Greek, and bring it to the poster. (Hints hide in school subjects, instruments and machines.)

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: music, church, school, photograph, video games' hero, math words like geometry. Any catch the student can crack or ask about earns the point; add real Greek finds to the NEW CAPTURES corner.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Mixing up phone (voice) with photo (light). A telephone carries voices; a photograph is light-writing. Listen for the n.
- Thinking word pieces are just trivia. They are keys: one piece like micro unlocks microscope, microphone and a dozen more words.

- Forgetting that these pieces are real Greek words written in Greek letters. μικρός and μέγας are the originals; micro and mega are their English costumes.
- Rushing past the letters. Review α and ω every session; the detective work only gets better as the letter collection grows.

Make it a game • Snap the Word. A parent calls out a word from the poster (telescope! megaphone! microscope!), and the student must snap it apart out loud with karate-chop hands: tele, CHOP, scope: far-looker! One point per clean snap with both meanings. Then reverse: the parent gives meanings (small-voice-made-big!) and the student builds the word. First to ten points gets to stamp one NEW CAPTURE onto the poster.

Scripture. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Psalm 19:1, KJV)

The Greeks watched the wanderers and gave them a name; the psalm tells us what the whole sky is doing: declaring the glory of the God who set every path. Word detectives and star watchers are both reading somebody's handiwork.

UNIT 2

THE FIRST LETTERS (α–θ)

Alphabets have a birthday. Long ago, Phoenician traders sailed the Mediterranean with a wonderful trick: a small set of letters for writing down words. But their letters had a hole in them: no vowels, no letters for the ah and eh and oh sounds. The Greeks borrowed the Phoenician letters, and then did something new: they gave the vowels their own letters, every sound its own sign, and made the first full alphabet, the great-grandparent of the very letters you are reading right now. Our A was once alpha; our B was once beta. In this unit you collect the first eight Greek letters, α β γ δ ε ζ η θ, and you meet the oldest piece of Greek alphabet writing ever found: a sentence scratched on a jug that was the prize in a dancing contest, 2,700 years ago.

Then you go to school, Greek style. A Greek boy learned his letters the way you are learning them: out loud, by heart, and by hand, scratching them with a pointed stylus into a wooden tablet coated with wax. When the tablet filled up, he smoothed the wax flat and started again: a reusable notebook, no batteries required. A Greek painter named Douris painted a man holding exactly such a tablet on a drinking cup 2,500

years ago, and you will study it, and then build a wax tablet of your own. Eight letters in the box by the end of this unit, one third of the key.

PREREQUISITES

- Knows α and ω by name, shape and sound (Unit 1)
- Has the Alphabet Treasure Box ready and growing
- Can tell what an alphabet is, and why Greek is worth the hunt

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can say the first eight letters in order: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta.
- ☐ I can say each letter's sound and show its small and capital shapes: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ.
- ☐ I can tell what the Greeks added to the Phoenician letters, and why it mattered.
- ☐ I can tell the story of the Dipylon jug, the oldest Greek alphabet writing we can read.
- ☐ I can write all eight small letters with my own hand, in order.
- ☐ All eight letter cards are in my treasure box, and I chant them at the start of every session.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press:** The detective-story alphabet workbook: its early chapters drill exactly the letters in this unit.
- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel):** Free. A missionary teacher's gentle Biblical Greek series; her alphabet and handwriting lessons are perfect extra practice for this unit.
- **A Greek Hupogrammon, by Harvey Bluedorn (Trivium Pursuit):** A copywork-first Greek alphabet book: trace, copy, repeat. A good fit for a student who loves the wax tablet.

Not required. Every activity in this unit works with paper, pencil, scissors and the free links below. School Launch has no ties to these authors, publishers or companies.

2.1 The Phoenician Gift

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

2.2 Writing Like a Greek

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

UNIT 2 REVIEW

Answer out loud or on paper; a parent may write for the student. The wax tablet may be used for the writing questions. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

Chant the first eight letters in order, names and sounds. (Parent checks against the cards; one slip allowed.)

2. **5 pts**

Write the eight small letters in order.

3. **5 pts**

What did the Greeks add to the Phoenician letters, and why did it matter?

4. **5 pts**

Tell the story of the Dipylon jug in two or three sentences.

5. **5 pts**

Trap question: what does η say, and what English letter does it pretend to be?

6. **5 pts**

How did a Greek schoolboy write and erase, and which letter of the word Θεός can you already name and sound out first?

ANSWER KEY

1. Alpha ah, beta b, gamma g as in go, delta d, epsilon eh, zeta dz, eta long AY, theta th as in think.
2. α β γ δ ε ζ η θ, each recognizable, with γ and ζ hanging their tails below the line.
3. Letters for the vowels, the open sounds like ah and eh. With vowels, every sound in a word could be written down: the first full alphabet, the ancestor of our own.
4. A clay wine jug from Athens, about 740 B.C., scratched with a line of early Greek letters saying the nimblest dancer wins it as a prize. It is the oldest Greek alphabet writing we can still read.
5. Eta says long AY, as in they. It pretends to be an English n (and its capital H pretends to be an H), but it is a Greek vowel.
6. He scratched letters into a wax tablet with a pointed stylus and erased by smoothing the wax with the flat end. Θεός (God) starts with theta, θ, the th as in think.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE WAX TABLET, SHOWN AND CHANTED

The student presents the homemade wax tablet to the family with all eight letters scratched neatly in order, tells how a Greek schoolboy used the real thing, and performs the Unit 2 chant: all eight letters, names and sounds, standing up, Greek-school style.

Then comes the test the wax was made for: a family member chooses one letter to erase, and the student smooths it away and rewrites it from memory.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The tablet	The tablet shows all eight letters, α through θ, in order, scratched clearly.
The chant	The chant was delivered standing, names and sounds, with at most one slip.
The telling	The student told how the tablet and stylus worked: pointed end for writing, flat end for erasing.
The rewrite	The erased letter was rewritten from memory, correct shape, name and sound.

2.1 THE PHOENICIAN GIFT

OBJECTIVES

- Tell how the Greeks borrowed Phoenician letters and added vowels, making the first full alphabet.
- Say the names, sounds and shapes of α β γ δ ε, small and capital.
- Tell the story of the Dipylon jug, the oldest readable Greek alphabet writing.
- Explain why the word alphabet is made of the first two letter names.
- Make the first five Unit 2 letter cards and squishable dough letters.

Warm-up. Try to write the word banana with NO letters for a, like this: bnn. Now read bnn out loud. Could you tell it from bone or bean? That was the Phoenicians' problem: letters, but no vowels. Today you find out what the Greeks did about it, and you collect five letters at once, your biggest haul yet.

WATCH

The day the Greeks invented vowels - History of Writing Systems #8 (The Alphabet)

NativLang · 3:47

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gL18gFhRwq4>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Watch for the Phoenician letters sailing to Greece, and for the moment the vowels get their own signs: that is the birthday of the full alphabet.

Note: A fast, friendly cartoon made for a general audience; a few big words fly by, and they can all be ignored. The one idea to catch: the Greeks gave vowels their own letters.

BACKUP VIDEO

Greek Language History and Origin - World History for Kids | Educational Videos by Mocomi

MocomiKids · 1:21

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3ALeLjQ1TE>

A one-minute cartoon recap of where Greek and its alphabet came from; good for Session 3 review.

KEY TERMS

Phoenicians

Sea-trading people from the coast beyond Greece who carried their letters wherever they sailed. The Greeks borrowed the letters and improved them.

consonant

A letter for a sound you make by blocking air with lips or tongue: b, g, d. Phoenician letters were almost all consonants.

Dipylon jug

A clay jug from Athens, about 740 B.C., scratched with the oldest Greek alphabet sentence we can read: a prize for the best dancer.

vowel

A letter for an open, singable sound: ah, eh, oh. The Greeks were the first to give every vowel its own letter.

beta (β)

The second Greek letter: capital B, small β. It says b, and with alpha it names the whole ἀλφάβητος, the alphabet.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

ἀλφάβητος

alphabetos

al-FAH-bay-tos

noun

the alphabet

ENGLISH alphabet

ἄρτος

artos

AR-tos

noun

bread

δῶρον

doron

DOH-ron

noun

a gift

ENGLISH donate

ἔργον

ergon

EHR-gon

noun

a work, a deed

ENGLISH energy

δένδρον

dendron

DEHND-ron

noun

a tree

ENGLISH dendro-

ἄνθος

anthos

AN-thos

noun

a flower

ENGLISH anthology

βροχή

broche

bro-KHAY

noun

rain

γάλα

gala

GAH-lah

noun

milk

ENGLISH galaxy

δεῖπνον

deipnon

DAYP-non

noun

a meal, supper

ἐλαία

elaia

eh-LYE-ah

noun

an olive

ἡμέρα

hemera

hay-MEH-rah

noun

a day

CORE IDEAS

The story. Nearly three thousand years ago, Phoenician trading ships crisscrossed the Mediterranean, and they carried something lighter than gold and more valuable: letters. A small set of signs, one for each sound, so anyone could write anything. But the Phoenician set had a gap. It had signs for b and g and d, the blocked sounds, and almost none for the open, singable sounds: ah, eh, oh. Written Phoenician was like bnn for banana: the reader had to guess. The Greeks took the gift, and then they fixed the gap. They gave every vowel its own letter: ah got alpha, eh got epsilon, and more. Now every sound in a word could be written down. It was the first full alphabet, and it worked so well that the Romans borrowed it from the Greeks, and we borrowed it from the Romans. Your own A is alpha's grandchild, and your B is beta's.

The dancing prize. How do we know how old Greek letters are? Because of a jug. In Athens, archaeologists found a clay wine jug made about 740 B.C., and someone had scratched a line of Greek letters around its shoulder. The words say, roughly: whoever of all the dancers now dances most nimbly, this is his prize. The jug was a trophy for the best dancer at a party, 2,700 years ago! Those scratched letters are the oldest Greek alphabet writing anyone can still read, and here is the wonder: a person who knows the Greek alphabet, which will be you, in about eight weeks, can look at that ancient jug and recognize letters on it.

How Greek works: five new letters. Meet today's haul. **Alpha**, Α α, says ah as in father; you own this one already. **Beta**, Β β, says b; the capital looks just like our B, and the small β is a tall fancy b. **Gamma**, Γ γ, says g as in go; the capital is like a table missing two legs, and the small γ hangs its tail below the line like a little y. **Delta**, Δ δ, says d; the capital is a perfect triangle, and a river mouth shaped like a triangle is still called a delta. **Epsilon**, Ε ε, says eh as in bed; it is the e in μέγας (MEH-gass), big, from your word poster. Anchor words to remember them by: alpha starts ἀλφάβητος (al-FAH-bay-toss, alphabet); beta is the B in βίβλος (BIB-loss), the Greek word for book that gave us the word Bible; gamma starts galaxy; delta is the river triangle; epsilon is the eh in μέγας.

Say it out loud. Chant the five in order, name then sound, while touching each card: alpha, ah! beta, b! gamma, g! delta, d! epsilon, eh! Do it three times, then shuffle the cards and say them out of order. Then the big connection, out loud: alpha, beta... ἀλφάβητος... ALPHABET! The thing itself is named after the first two letters, like calling our alphabet the ay-bee.

Try it. This week you make the five letter cards for the box, and then you make letters you can squish: roll playdough or cookie dough into snakes and bend them into α, β, γ, δ and ε, saying each name and sound as you shape it. Letters you have built with your hands stay built in your head.

PICTURE STUDY



The Dipylon Jug, Unknown potter and scribe of Athens, About 740 B.C. · Painted clay wine jug (an oinochoe) with letters scratched after firing · National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain

This jug was a trophy. Around its shoulder, someone scratched a line of Greek letters saying that whoever danced most nimbly of all the dancers would win it as a prize. That scratch, made about 740 B.C., is the oldest Greek alphabet writing anyone can still read. It is older than Rome. And the letters on it are the same letters you are putting in your treasure box this week.

Look closely

- Find the scratched line of letters around the jug's shoulder, under the neck. It was written by hand, by someone at a party, not by a machine.
- Notice the painted zigzags and patterns. The potter decorated every band; the jug was meant to be a handsome prize.
- The early letters lean and wobble; some even face backwards. The alphabet was brand new in Greece, and spelling rules were loose.
- Find the jug's handle and spout: it is a wine pitcher, a real party jug, not a museum invention.

Talk about it

1. Why do you think the very oldest Greek writing we have is something playful, a dancing prize, instead of a law or a king's boast?

2. The writer scratched letters on a finished jug, like writing on a trophy with a nail. What would you scratch on a prize you were giving?
3. This jug survived 2,700 years. What are the letters you write today capable of outliving?

ACTIVITY

Five cards and squishable letters

Five letters at once is a real treasure haul. First the cards for the box, then letters you can actually squish, roll and rebuild.

You will need

- 5 index cards and a pencil or marker
- Playdough, modeling clay or cookie dough
- A tray or sheet of wax paper to build on

Steps

1. Make the five cards: front shows capital and small (A α, B β, Γ γ, Δ δ, E ε), back shows the name and sound (alpha, ah as in father; beta, b; gamma, g as in go; delta, d; epsilon, eh as in bed).
2. Add each card's anchor word to the back: alphabet for α, βίβλος/Bible for β, galaxy for γ, river delta for δ, μέγας for ε.
3. Roll dough into snakes and build each SMALL letter: α is a fish loop, β is a tall stem with two bumps, γ hangs a tail, δ is a circle wearing a flag, ε is a backwards 3 with a tongue. Say the name and sound as you build.
4. Build capital Δ, the triangle, and capital Γ, the two-legged table. Compare them with their small shapes.
5. Quiz time: a family member points at a dough letter; you say its name and sound. Then squish them all flat, Greek-schoolboy style, and build two of them again from memory.
6. Put the five cards in the treasure box with α and ω. Seven letters owned!

Tips

- Always build small letters sitting on an imaginary line, with γ's tail hanging below it, like a monkey's tail below a branch.
- Say it as you shape it: delta, d, delta, d. The hands and the mouth teach each other.
- If dough is not handy, trace the letters giant-sized on paper and walk your fingers along them.

Check your work

- ☐ All five cards are made, with shapes, names, sounds and anchor words.
- ☐ I built all five small letters in dough and said their names and sounds.
- ☐ I rebuilt at least two letters from memory after squishing them.
- ☐ The treasure box now holds seven letter cards, and I can chant them.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: α β γ δ ε, saying name and sound as you write.
2. Write the five capitals: Α Β Γ Δ Ε, and circle the two that look just like English capitals.
3. Copy the word ἀλφάβητος (al-FAH-bay-toss), just the shapes, and write under it: alphabet means alpha-beta.
4. Draw the Dipylon jug with its scratched line of letters, and write its age: about 2,700 years old.

From history. The Greeks never pretended the letters were their own invention. They called them phoinikeia grammata, 'Phoenician letters,' an honest thank-you note built right into the name. But the vowels were Greece's own addition, and that one improvement made the alphabet complete enough to carry poems, laws, Gospels, and your name. A borrowed gift, improved and passed on: that is how most treasures travel.

Practice habit. From today, open every Greek session the same way: lay out your letter cards in alphabet order and chant them through, name and sound, while touching each card. It takes one minute now and three minutes by the end of the course, and it is the whole secret. An alphabet chanted daily cannot be lost.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. What is the name and sound of this letter: δ ? And what English thing still carries its name?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Match the shape: a circle wearing a little flag is small delta.
2. Recall its sound: d.
3. Recall the anchor: a triangle-shaped river mouth.

Answer: Delta, which says d. A river mouth shaped like its capital, the triangle Δ , is still called a delta, like the Mississippi Delta.

Example 2. Put these letters in alphabet order: ϵ , α , δ , β , γ .

▼ **Show solution**

1. Chant the order you learned: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon.
2. Match each sound of the chant to its card.

Answer: α , β , γ , δ , ϵ : alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon.

Example 3. Why could a Phoenician write bd but not bed? And which of your new letters fixes it?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Phoenician letters covered blocked sounds like b and d, the consonants.
2. The open singable eh in the middle is a vowel, and Phoenician had no letter for it.
3. The Greeks gave eh its own letter.

Answer: Phoenician had no vowel letters, so the eh had to be guessed. The Greek letter epsilon (ϵ) writes the eh, so bed can be spelled sound by sound.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the first five letters in order, with their sounds.

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha, ah; beta, b; gamma, g as in go; delta, d; epsilon, eh as in bed.

2. **Easy** What did the Greeks add to the Phoenician letters?

▼ **Show answer**

Vowel letters: their own signs for the open sounds like ah and eh, so every sound in a word could be written. That made the first full alphabet.

3. **Easy** What was the Dipylon jug a prize for?

▼ **Show answer**

Dancing: the letters scratched on it say, roughly, that the nimblest of all the dancers wins it. It is the oldest Greek alphabet writing we can read, from about 740 B.C.

4. **Medium** Point to (or write) the small letter for each sound: b, d, g, ah, eh.

▼ **Show answer**

b: β. d: δ. g: γ. ah: α. eh: ε.

5. **Medium** Sort these letters into vowels and consonants, and say each one's sound: α, β, γ, δ, ε, ω.

▼ **Show answer**

Vowels (open, singable sounds): α ah, ε eh, ω long O. Consonants (blocked sounds): β b, γ g, δ d. The Greeks' great gift was giving the vowels their own letters.

6. **Medium** The word alphabet is built from two Greek letter names. Which two, and what would our alphabet be called if we named it the same way?

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha and beta, the first two letters. Naming ours the same way would make it something like the ay-bee (or ay-bee-see).

7. **Hard** Your little cousin writes GRDN on a birthday card and says it spells garden. What is missing, which people wrote that way long ago, and which of your Greek letters would fix the first missing sound?

▼ **Show answer**

The vowels are missing: G-R-D-N has no letters for ah and eh. The Phoenicians wrote that way, all consonants. The Greek letter alpha (α) writes the ah in gar-, and epsilon (ε) writes the eh in -den.

8. **Challenge** The scratchy Dipylon letters were written right at the alphabet's start in Greece, and some letters even face backwards. Write your five new small letters once with your usual hand, then once with your OTHER hand, and compare with the jug's wobble. What do you notice about new writers in any century?

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: the other-hand letters wobble, lean and sometimes flip, just like the jug's. New writers wobble the same way in 740 B.C. and today; practice, not talent, makes letters straight.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Writing small γ sitting on the line like a v. Gamma hangs its tail below the line, like a monkey's tail under the branch.
- Saying gamma like the g in giant. Gamma always says the hard g, as in go and galaxy.
- Mixing up β and δ when drawing. Beta is a tall stem with two bumps on the right; delta is a round belly with a little flag on top.
- Chanting so fast the sounds blur. Name AND sound, every letter, every time: delta, d.

Make it a game · Dough Letter Duel. Two players, one lump of dough each. A parent calls a letter name or a sound ('delta!'... 'the letter that says g!'), and both players race to build the small letter in dough. First finished letter that is recognizable and said aloud with its sound wins the round. Five rounds; the champion gets to squish the loser's letters. Replay anytime with new letters as the box grows.

Scripture. “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;” (Proverbs 2:4, KJV)

The proverb is about seeking wisdom the way miners seek silver: on purpose, every day, with your sleeves rolled up. Letters are the shovels and lanterns of that treasure hunt; every card in your box is a tool for digging up wisdom later.

UNIT 2 · THE FIRST LETTERS (A-Θ) · LESSON 2.2 OF 10 · 3 SESSIONS OF 20-30 MINUTES

2.2 WRITING LIKE A GREEK

OBJECTIVES

- Say the names, sounds and shapes of ζ η θ, small and capital.
- Tell how a Greek schoolboy learned his letters with a wax tablet and stylus.
- Write all eight letters so far, α through θ, in order by hand.
- Spot the trap letter η, which looks like an English n but says long AY.
- Build a homemade wax tablet and scratch the eight letters into it.

Warm-up. Chant your letters from the box: alpha, ah; beta, b; gamma, g; delta, d; epsilon, eh, and the old friends α and ω. Now imagine your notebook could be erased flat with your thumb and used again forever. Greek students had exactly that. Today you meet three new letters, including the sneakiest letter in the whole alphabet, and then you build the Greek notebook yourself.

WATCH

Biblical Greek - How to write the Greek Alphabet - Free Greek

Alpha with Angela · 9:01

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xdl_EeiW1AQ

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph, with pencil ready: write along with her, especially your eight letters, α β γ δ ε ζ η θ.

Note: This lesson is part of Angela's numbered series, but it stands on its own; she writes the whole alphabet, and any letters or terms you have not met yet can simply be watched and ignored. Her sounds match our classroom sounds closely.

BACKUP VIDEO

Writing the Greek Alphabet: Lower Case

BibTheo · 5:49

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGvF1JSEu2I>

A second pen-on-paper demonstration of the small letters, good for Session 2 while the wax tablet dries. Watch your eight and copy along; the rest is preview.

KEY TERMS

wax tablet

A wooden board with a shallow tray of wax: the Greek student's reusable notebook. Write with a point, erase by smoothing the wax.

zeta (ζ)

The sixth letter: capital Ζ, small ζ. It says dz (or z), a little buzz, as at the end of adze or in zigzag.

theta (θ)

The eighth letter: capital Θ, small θ. It says th as in think, and it starts Θεός (theh-OSS), the Greek word for God.

stylus

The writing tool for wax: pointed on one end for writing, flat on the other for erasing.

eta (η)

The seventh letter: capital Η, small η. The trap letter: it LOOKS like an English n (or capital H) but SAYS long AY, as in they.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

διδάσκαλος

didaskalos

dee-DAS-kah-los

noun

a teacher

ENGLISH didactic

μαθητής

mathetes

mah-thay-TAYS

noun

a learner, a disciple

ENGLISH mathematics

γραφή

graphie

grah-FAY

noun

a writing; Scripture

ENGLISH graph

σχολή

schole

skho-LAY

noun

leisure for study; a school

ENGLISH school

θρόνος

thronos

THRO-nos

noun

a throne

ENGLISH throne

θησαυρός

thesauros

thay-sow-ROS

noun

a treasure

ENGLISH thesaurus

παιδεία

paideia

pye-DAY-ah

noun

training, education

πίναξ

pinax

PEE-naks

noun

a tablet, a board

γραφεῖον

grapheion

grah-FAY-on

noun

a writing place; a stylus

κηρός

keros

kay-ROS

noun

wax

αὐλή

aule

ow-LAY

noun

a courtyard

CORE IDEAS

The story. Picture a schoolboy in Athens 2,500 years ago. He gets up at dawn, and a trusted servant walks him to school, because school is not in his house. There is no backpack: he carries a wooden tablet with a bed of smooth wax in it, and a stylus, pointed at one end, flat at the other. The teacher says the letters aloud; the boy says them back, again and again, and scratches each one into the wax. When he makes a mistake, no eraser is needed: he rubs the wax smooth with the flat end and tries again. He memorizes poems by heart and recites them standing up. His whole school kit is one tablet, one stick, and his own voice, and with those three things Greek boys learned the alphabet so well that we are still using their letters.

The painter caught one. We do not have to imagine the tablet, because a Greek vase painter named Douris painted one for us, around 480 B.C., on a drinking cup. A man sits holding an open wax tablet, stylus lifted, caught in the exact moment between letters, thinking about what to write next. You can see the tablet's two wooden leaves, like a little book, and the point of the stylus. It is the oldest homework picture in the world, and the funny thing is how familiar it looks: change the tablet to a notebook and it could be you at the kitchen table tomorrow morning.

How Greek works: three new letters, one trap. Zeta, Ζ ζ, says dz, a bee-buzz of a sound, like the end of adze; plain z is fine too, as in zigzag. The capital is just like our Z; the small ζ is a fancy z with a curly tail. Eta, Η η, is the TRAP. The small η looks like an English n, and the capital Η looks like an English H, but eta is a VOWEL, and it says long AY, as in they. Say it now: eta, AY. You will meet this trap again and win. Theta, Θ θ, says th as in think: a circle with a line through its middle, like an eye looking at you. Theta starts the most important word in this course: Θεός (theh-OSS), God. Theta, eta, and the -os you will see on many Greek words: you can almost read Θεός already, and in Unit 5 you fully will.

Say it out loud. Chant all eight in order, names first: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta. Now sounds: ah, b, g, d, eh, dz, AY, th. Now the trap drill, three times, louder each time: eta is not n, eta says AY! Then whisper the week's treasure word the way a Greek would: Θεός, theh-OSS, and remember that θ think-sound starts it.

Try it. This week you build the wax tablet: a sheet of cardboard colored thick and dark with crayon, and a toothpick or pencil-point stylus to scratch pale letters into the waxy crayon. All eight letters go in, α to θ, and the flat of a spoon smooths your mistakes away, just like the flat end of a real stylus.

PICTURE STUDY



Man with a Wax Tablet, Douris, vase painter of Athens, About 480 B.C. · Red-figure painting on a clay drinking cup · Altes Museum, Berlin

Photo: Pottery Fan, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY-SA 3.0

The painter Douris decorated drinking cups in Athens about 2,500 years ago, and on this one he painted a writer at work: tablet open on his lap, stylus up, thinking. The tablet's two leaves close like a little book to protect the wax inside. This is the very tool Greek students learned their alphabet on, and this week you are building one.

Look closely

- Find the tablet's two leaves, joined like a book. Closed, the wax inside was safe in a schoolbag or under an arm.
- Find the stylus in his raised hand: pointed for writing, and the other end flat for smoothing out mistakes.
- Notice the figure is the red-orange of the clay, while the background is painted black around him: that is why it is called red-figure painting.
- Look at his eyes: Douris painted him looking at the tablet, mid-thought. What has he just written, or not written yet?

Talk about it

1. A wax tablet erases with one smooth rub. How would that change how brave you felt about trying a hard letter?

2. Why would a painter put a quiet moment of writing on a party cup instead of a battle or a race?
3. The man's tools were a board, wax and a stick, and Greek students learned the whole alphabet with them. What does that say about what learning really needs?

ACTIVITY

The homemade wax tablet

One board, one stick, one voice: the whole Greek school kit. Today you build the tablet, Greek-style on a budget, and scratch all eight of your letters into it.

You will need

- A piece of sturdy cardboard, about the size of this page or smaller
- Dark crayons (black, blue or purple work best), peeled, and some old newspaper under everything
- A toothpick, bamboo skewer or dried-out pen for the stylus, and a spoon for the eraser

Steps

1. Color the cardboard COMPLETELY with heavy, waxy crayon: press hard, layer it thick, leave no bare patches. This is your wax bed. (A real tablet's recipe: wooden frame, beeswax poured in.)
2. Make your stylus: a toothpick or skewer, point for writing. The back of a spoon is your smoother.
3. Scratch the eight small letters in order, big and bold: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ. Say each name and sound as you scratch.
4. Make a mistake on purpose, then erase it Greek-style: rub gently with the spoon's back (or color over it) and write again. No shame in the wax!
5. On the back or a second tablet, scratch the three new capitals: Ζ Η Θ.
6. Make the three new letter cards (ζ, η, θ) for the treasure box; give η a warning star and the words: says AY, not n!

Tips

- The thicker the crayon layer, the better the scratch shows. Two coats beat one.
- Scratch slowly and say the sound long: thhhh for θ. Slow scratching carves the letter into your memory too.
- Keep the tablet: next unit's letters will want a turn, and it makes a fine show-and-tell at the unit challenge.

Check your work

- ☐ My tablet is fully crayoned and scratches cleanly.

- ☐ All eight small letters are scratched in order, and I said each name and sound.
- ☐ I erased and rewrote at least one letter without fuss.
- ☐ The ζ, η and θ cards are in the treasure box, and η's card carries its warning.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: ζ η θ, saying name and sound as you write.
2. Write the whole set so far in order: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ, and read it back aloud.
3. Copy the word Θεός (theh-OSS, God), just the shapes, and circle the θ and the ς-shaped ending you will learn more about in Unit 4.
4. Draw a wax tablet and stylus, and label the pointed end WRITE and the flat end ERASE.

From history. Wax tablets refused to retire for a very long time: Greeks used them, Romans used them, and medieval students were still smoothing wax a thousand years after Douris painted his writer. Some tablets have been found with the schoolboy's exercises still in the wax, teacher's model line on top, pupil's wobbly copy underneath, homework frozen in time for two thousand years. The alphabet you are scratching this week was scratched by more children than anyone can count, and the wax remembers some of them still.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. A word starts with the letter η. An English reader says 'that's n.' Set them straight.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Recall the trap: η only LOOKS like n.
2. It is the Greek vowel eta.
3. Its sound is long AY, as in they.

Answer: It is eta, a vowel saying long AY. Greek has a different letter for the n sound (nu, coming in Unit 3).

Example 2. Which of your eight letters starts the Greek word for God, and what does it sound like?

▼ **Show solution**

1. The word is Θεός (theh-OSS).
2. Its first letter is the circle with a line: Θ θ.
3. Theta says th as in think.

Answer: Theta (θ), saying th. Θεός begins with the think-sound: theh-OSS.

Example 3. Put the whole collection in order: θ, α, ε, γ, ζ, β, η, δ.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Chant: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta.
2. Lay each card down as its name passes.

Answer: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the names and sounds of the three new letters: ζ, η, θ.

▼ **Show answer**

Zeta says dz (a buzzy z); eta says long AY as in they; theta says th as in think.

2. **Easy** What two tools did a Greek student bring to school, and how did he erase?

▼ **Show answer**

A wax tablet and a stylus: pointed end for scratching letters, flat end for smoothing the wax to erase.

3. **Easy** Chant all eight letters in order, names and sounds.

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha ah, beta b, gamma g, delta d, epsilon eh, zeta dz, eta AY, theta th.

4. **Medium** Trap check: which of these is the Greek vowel saying long AY, and what do the other two really say: η, θ, ζ?

▼ **Show answer**

η (eta) says long AY. θ (theta) says th as in think; ζ (zeta) says dz/z.

5. **Medium** Write (or build) the small letter for each sound: th, AY, dz, d, ah.

▼ **Show answer**

th: θ. AY: η. dz: ζ. d: δ. ah: α.

6. **Medium** The Greek word Θεός means God. Which of its letters do you already own, and what sound does it start with?

▼ **Show answer**

It starts with theta (θ), the th as in think: theh-OSS. The ε is owned too (eh); the o and ζ arrive in Units 3 and 4.

7. **Hard** Capital eta is H. An English reader sees HΘ and reads 'H-O with a line.' Untangle both letters for them, names and sounds.

▼ **Show answer**

H is capital eta, a vowel saying long AY (not H; Greek writes the h-sound a different way, with a small mark). Θ is capital theta, saying th as in think. So HΘ would sound like AY-th, not like 'hoth.'

8. **Challenge** Greek students recited standing up, out loud, every day. Try it: stand, hands behind your back, and recite all eight letters with sounds, then backwards from theta to alpha. Which direction was harder, and why do you think daily out-loud practice worked so well?

▼ **Show answer**

Backwards is harder for everyone: the chant is learned as a chain, each letter pulling the next. Saying it aloud daily builds that chain strong; the mouth and ears memorize together, which is exactly why this course chants every session.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading η as n. It is the vowel eta, long AY as in they. Give its card a warning star and quiz it often.
- Writing θ as an O with a dot. Theta's line goes all the way across the circle, like a belt, not a dot in the middle.
- Forgetting ζ hangs below the line. Its curly tail dips under, like γ's tail.
- Erasing in shame. Greek wax was MADE for erasing: smooth it flat, say the letter's name, and scratch again. Mistakes are part of the lesson plan.

Make it a game • Tablet Relay. Set the wax tablet (or a paper) at one end of the room and the family at the other. A parent calls a letter name or sound ('theta!'... 'the trap letter!'... 'the one that says dz!'); the student runs to the tablet, scratches the letter, and runs back saying its name and sound. One point per correct letter; a smooth-and-rewrite fixes any slip for half a point. Eight letters, eight runs; six points or more wins the stylus crown.

Scripture. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deuteronomy 6:7, KJV)

God told families to pass His words on diligently: at home, on the road, at bedtime, at breakfast. Letters, chanted a little every day, are how children have carried His words for thousands of years; your daily chant stands in a very old line.

UNIT 3

THE MIDDLE LETTERS (ι–π)

The smallest letter in the Greek alphabet is iota: a little dash, barely more than a pencil flick. And Jesus himself once pointed at it. When he promised that not 'one jot or one tittle' of God's law would pass away, the word jot WAS the letter iota, the tiniest letter there is. For centuries, scribes copied the Bible by hand, letter by letter, and even the smallest letter mattered, because every letter of God's word matters. In this unit you collect the middle eight letters, ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π, you hunt for iotas in a real line of the Greek Bible, and you sound out your very first whole Greek word: καί, which means and.

Then comes one of the best detective stories in history. For 1,400 years, nobody on earth could read Egyptian hieroglyphs; the picture-writing of the pyramids had fallen silent. Then soldiers digging a fort found a broken black stone with the same message carved three times, in three kinds of writing, and the bottom one was Greek, which scholars had never stopped reading. The Greek unlocked the rest. One alphabet, faithfully taught to children century after century, opened all of ancient Egypt. By the end of this unit you will have sixteen letters, two thirds of the key, and you will use them the way the code-breakers did: to write a secret message of your own.

PREREQUISITES

- Can chant and write the first eight letters, α through θ (Unit 2)
- Knows the trap: η looks like n but says long AY
- Opens every session with the letter-card chant, names and sounds

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can say the middle eight letters in order: iota, kappa, lambda, mu, nu, xi, omicron, pi.
- ☐ I can say each letter's sound and show its small and capital shapes: ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π.
- ☐ I can chant all sixteen letters so far, alpha to pi, without peeking.
- ☐ I can tell what jot means in Matthew 5:18, and why the smallest letter mattered to the scribes.
- ☐ I can read my first whole Greek word, καί (and), and tell the false friends apart: η, ν and π.
- ☐ I wrote a secret message in Greek letters, and someone decoded it with my letter cards.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press:** The detective theme of this workbook fits this unit perfectly: the Rosetta Stone lesson is code-cracking with the very same alphabet.
- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel):** Free. Gentle review lessons for every letter in this unit, with handwriting practice on screen.
- **A Greek Hupogrammon, by Harvey Bluedorn (Trivium Pursuit):** Copywork pages for exactly this stage: trace the letters, then copy real Greek words whole.

Not required. Every activity in this unit works with paper, pencil, scissors and the free links below. School Launch has no ties to these authors, publishers or companies.

LESSONS IN THIS UNIT

3.1 One Little Iota

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

UNIT 3 REVIEW

Answer out loud or on paper; a parent may write for the student. Letter cards may sit face down on the table for emergencies. 30 points.

1. (5 pts)

Chant the alphabet from alpha to pi, names and sounds. (Parent checks against the cards; one slip allowed.)

2. (5 pts)

Write the eight middle letters in order: iota to pi.

3. (5 pts)

What is a jot, where did Jesus mention one, and what was his promise about it?

4. (5 pts)

Read this word and tell what it means: καί.

5. (5 pts)

Tell the Rosetta Stone story in three or four sentences: what was found, why the Greek band mattered, and what got unlocked.

6. (5 pts)

False friends check: what do these really say: η, ν, ο versus ω?

ANSWER KEY

1. α alpha ah, β beta b, γ gamma g, δ delta d, ε epsilon eh, ζ zeta dz, η eta AY, θ theta th, ι iota i, κ kappa k, λ lambda l, μ mu m, ν nu n, ξ xi x, ο omicron short o, π pi p.
2. ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π, each recognizable, iota undotted, μ with its tail.
3. A jot is iota, the smallest Greek letter; in Matthew 5:18 Jesus promised that not one jot or tittle of God's law would pass away till all is fulfilled.
4. KYE: and. Kappa-alpha-iota, the student's first whole Greek word, read aloud.
5. In 1799 soldiers near Rosetta in Egypt dug up a broken stone carved with one message in three scripts: hieroglyphs, everyday Egyptian, and Greek. Scholars could still read the Greek, because Greek had never stopped being taught, so they knew what the stone said. By matching the Greek against the picture-signs, especially royal names, they cracked the hieroglyphs, and ancient Egypt's writing could be read again after 1,400 silent years.
6. η says long AY (not n); ν says n (not v); ο is the short o as in pot, while ω is the long O as in tone.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE SECRET MESSAGE, DECODED

The student presents the Secret Message challenge to the family: a short English sentence sound-spelled in Greek letters, handed over with the letter cards as the decoder's key.

While the decoder works, the student tells the Rosetta Stone story in his or her own words, gives one hint at most, and confirms the crack. The decoded message and the story told well complete the challenge.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The message	The message is written in correctly-formed Greek letters the student has earned, spelled by sound.
The key	The letter cards were organized as a clear decoder's key, names and sounds on the backs.
The story	The Rosetta story was told accurately: three scripts, the readable Greek band, the unlocking of the hieroglyphs.
The decoding	A family member decoded the message using the key, with at most one hint from the student.

3.1 ONE LITTLE IOTA

OBJECTIVES

- Say the names, sounds and shapes of ι κ λ μ ν, small and capital.
- Tell what jot means in Matthew 5:18 and why Jesus chose the smallest letter.
- Tell how scribes hand-copied the Scriptures letter by letter for centuries.
- Sound out the first whole Greek word: καί (kye), and.
- Copy a real Greek Bible line and hunt down its hiding iota.

Warm-up. Chant your eight letters, then answer this: what is the smallest thing in your house that would be a disaster to lose? A screw from your glasses? One puzzle piece? Today you meet the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet, and you find out that Jesus himself said even that little fellow is safe forever.

WATCH

Greek Lesson 1.7: Alphabet

Murray Vasser • 3:31

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsSUZfhQWel>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph. Watch and listen for your sixteen letters, and chant quietly along where you can.

Note: This is one lesson from a numbered series, but it stands happily on its own; any terms from other lessons can be ignored. It is made for older students, short and clear, and small pronunciation differences from our classroom sounds are normal.

BACKUP VIDEO

Biblical Greek Alphabet Song (Koine Pronunciation)

Biblical Greek • 1:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-hn2ZCsnJE>

Any session, as a change of tune: the whole alphabet sung through once.

KEY TERMS

iota (ι)

The ninth and SMALLEST Greek letter: capital I, small ι, a little dash. It says i as in bit (sometimes ee as in machine). In English, a jot.

scribe

A person whose work was copying books by hand, letter by letter, before printing was invented. Bibles were made by scribes for centuries.

καί

Greek for and, said KYE (rhymes with sky). Your first whole Greek word: kappa, alpha, iota, three letters you own.

jot

The old English word for iota, straight out of Matthew 5:18: not one jot shall pass from God's law. The tiniest letter, guaranteed forever.

nu (ν)

The thirteenth letter: capital N, small ν. It is the REAL n of Greek, though the small one looks like an English v. Remember: eta fakes n; nu IS n.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

καί

kai

KYE

conjunction

and

ἰῶτα

iota

ee-OH-tah

name

iota, the smallest letter

ENGLISH iota

οὐρανός

ouranos

oo-rah-NOS

noun

heaven, the sky

νόμος

nomos

NO-mos

noun

a law

ENGLISH economy

ναός

naos

nah-OS

noun

a temple

νῆσος

nesos

NAY-sos

noun

an island

ὄνομα

onoma

O-no-mah

noun

a name

ENGLISH anonymous

ἰατρός

iatros

ee-ah-TROS

noun

a physician

ENGLISH psychiatry

ναῦς

naus

NOWS

noun

a ship

νεφέλη

nephele

neh-FEH-lay

noun

a cloud

ἶρις

iris

EE-ris

noun

a rainbow

ENGLISH iris

CORE IDEAS

The story. One day, teaching on a mountainside, Jesus said something astonishing about letters. Till heaven and earth pass, he said, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). A jot is the Greek letter iota, the smallest letter in the alphabet, hardly more than a dash. A tittle is smaller still: a tiny horn on a letter, the kind of mark that tells one letter from its twin. Jesus was saying: God's word is so safe, so completely kept, that not even its tiniest letter will be lost. Not one iota.

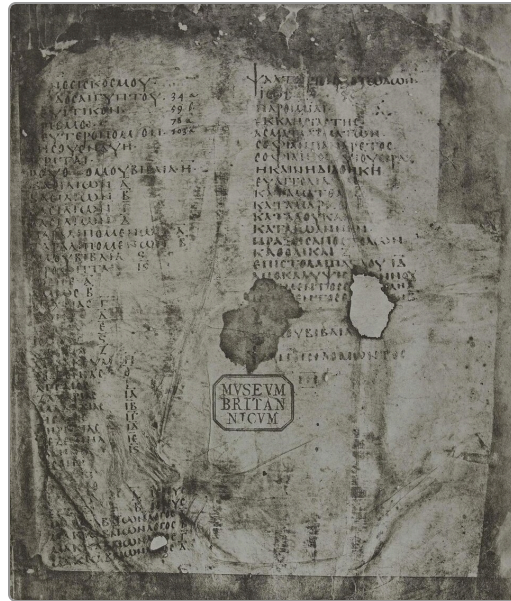
The letter-keepers. For most of history there were no printing presses. Every Bible was copied by hand, by scribes, letter after letter after letter. One famous Greek Bible, the Codex Alexandrinus, was hand-copied around A.D. 425, and you can look at its pages today: hundreds of sheets, every letter inked by a careful hand sixteen hundred years ago. Scribes counted letters to check their work. They knew what Jesus knew: in God's book, the smallest letter is worth keeping. When you copy Greek letters carefully into your notebook, you are doing scribe's work, in the scribes' own alphabet.

How Greek works: five new letters. **Iota, I ι**, the famous smallest: a short stick, no dot on top (it is not an i with a missing hat; it never had one). It says i as in bit, and sometimes ee as in machine. **Kappa, K κ**, says k, and looks like our K in both sizes. **Lambda, Λ λ**, says l; the capital is a tent with no floor, and the small λ is the tent with a flagpole leaning off the top. **Mu, Μ μ**, says m; the capital is our M, and the small μ hangs a straight tail below the line. It starts two words from your poster: μικρός (small) and μέγας (big). **Nu, Ν ν**, says n; the capital is our N, but the small ν looks like a v. Do not be fooled: ν is the REAL n. Remember the pair of tricksters side by side: η fakes being n (it says AY), and ν fakes being v (it says n).

Say it out loud. Chant the five: iota, i! kappa, k! lambda, l! mu, m! nu, n! Then chant the whole set from the top, alpha to nu, names only, then sounds only. And now the big moment: lay down three cards, κ α ι, and sound them out slowly: k... ah... i... kai... **καί**, said KYE, the Greek word for AND. You just read your first whole Greek word, and it is one you will see on every page of the Greek Bible forever. Say it proudly: **καί**, KYE, and!

Try it. This week is the Jot Hunt. You copy a real line of the Greek Bible, the opening of the Gospel of John, shapes only, like a scribe, and then you hunt for every iota in it. Fair warning: one iota in that line is hiding somewhere very sneaky, and finding it will teach you the best letter secret of the week.

PICTURE STUDY



A Page of the Codex Alexandrinus, Unknown scribes; facsimile printed for the British Museum, Hand-copied about A.D. 425; this facsimile page printed 1879–1883 · Ink on parchment (reproduced in a printed facsimile) · The codex is kept at the British Library, London

Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC0 (British Museum facsimile)

This is a page of a Greek Bible copied by hand around A.D. 425, called the Codex Alexandrinus. In 1627 it was given as a royal gift to the king of England. Look at it the way a scribe would: hundreds of pages like this one, every single letter drawn by hand, in all capitals, with almost no spaces between the words. The copyists worked this carefully because of what they were copying.

Look closely

- The letters march in two tidy columns, all capitals, nearly all the same height: that is a professional scribe's discipline.
- Try to find the ends of words. There are almost no spaces! Ancient readers were trained to split the river of letters as they read.
- Hunt for capital letters you own: A, Δ, E, K, M, N and more are all over the page.
- Find a capital iota, I: just a straight stroke, the smallest and simplest letter on the page, copied as carefully as all the rest.

Talk about it

1. Why would a scribe count his letters after copying a page, instead of just giving it a quick look?

2. This book took months or years of hand-work. What does the cost of a Bible then tell you about owning one now?
3. Jesus promised not one jot would pass away. How does a sixteen-hundred-year-old page full of jots back that promise up?

ACTIVITY

The Jot Hunt

Scribes copied; scribes counted. Today you do both, on a real line of the Greek Bible: the very first words of the Gospel of John.

You will need

- Your Greek notebook and a sharp pencil
- 5 index cards for the new letters, plus 1 card for καί
- A crayon or colored pencil for circling finds

Steps

1. A grown-up writes (or you copy from here) this line, big, at the top of a notebook page: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. It means: In the beginning was the Word. Copy the shapes carefully, like drawing; the little marks above the letters just get copied too, like dots on an i.
2. Read the line with your finger while a grown-up says it: en ar-CHAY ANE ho LO-gos. You are not sounding this one out yet; you are copying it like a scribe, shapes only.
3. Now the hunt: circle every iota in the line. Look hard. There is exactly ONE, and it is hiding: a tiny dash tucked UNDER the second η, like a kitten under a hen. Scribes called that a hidden iota; it rides under some vowels, the smallest letter in its smallest hiding place.
4. Count the letters you already own in the line (α, γ, ε, η, ν, λ and more), and circle your favorites.
5. Make the five new letter cards (ι, κ, λ, μ, ν; give ν a warning star: says n, not v!) and the proud first word card: καί on the front, and (said KYE) on the back.
6. Sound out καί from its cards for your family: k-ah-i, KYE, and!

Tips

- Copy slowly. A scribe's rule: better one beautiful line than three rushed ones.
- The little marks over the letters (breathings and accents) are copied like decorations this year, never graded.
- If the hidden iota stumps someone, give the clue: look UNDER the letters, not between them.

Check your work

- ☐ My copied line is neat, marks and all.
- ☐ I found the hidden iota under the ñ and circled it.
- ☐ The five new letter cards and the καί word card are in the treasure box.
- ☐ I read καί aloud to my family as my first whole Greek word.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: ι κ λ μ ν, saying name and sound as you write.
2. Write the whole alphabet so far, alpha to nu: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν, and read it back aloud.
3. Copy καί three times and write beside it: and, said KYE, my first Greek word.
4. Copy Matthew 5:18's promise in your own words: not even the smallest letter of God's word will be lost.

From history. The Codex Alexandrinus traveled like a treasure: copied around A.D. 425, kept for centuries in the Greek east, and in 1627 presented as a gift to King Charles I of England. Today it sits in the British Library, and scholars still consult it when checking the Greek text of the Bible. The letters a scribe inked sixteen hundred years ago are still doing their job, which is exactly what Jesus said about jots and tittles.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Sound out this Greek word with your cards: καί.

▼ Show solution

1. First letter: kappa, k.
2. Second: alpha, ah.
3. Third: iota, i. Blend them: k-ah-i, KYE.

Answer: καί, said KYE: the Greek word for and. Three letters, one word, fully read by you.

Example 2. Which is the real n: η or ν? And what does the other one say?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Recall the fakers' parade: η LOOKS like n but is the vowel eta.
 2. ν looks like ν but is nu.
 3. Nu is Greek's n sound.
-

Answer: ν (nu) is the real n. η (eta) says long AY, as in they.

Example 3. A scribe finishes copying a page of the Gospel and then counts every letter on it. Why?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Hand-copying invites small slips: a skipped word, a dropped letter.
 2. Counting letters catches a miss that eyes alone sail past.
 3. Remember whose words he is keeping.
-

Answer: Counting was his checking tool: if the count was off, something was missed, and in God's book even one lost iota was one too many.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the names and sounds of the five new letters: ι, κ, λ, μ, ν.

▼ **Show answer**

Iota, i as in bit; kappa, k; lambda, l; mu, m; nu, n.

2. **Easy** What is a jot, and who promised that not one of them would pass from God's law?

▼ **Show answer**

A jot is the letter iota, the smallest Greek letter. Jesus made the promise, in Matthew 5:18.

3. **Easy** Read your first Greek word aloud and tell what it means: καί.

▼ **Show answer**

KYE: it means and. Kappa, alpha, iota, sounded out and blended.

4. **Medium** Write (or point to) the small letter for each sound: k, l, m, n, i.

▼ **Show answer**

k: κ. l: λ. m: μ. n: ν. i: ι.

5. **Medium** Chant the whole alphabet so far, alpha to nu, and tell how many letters you now own.

▼ **Show answer**

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν: thirteen letters (plus ω waiting at the end of the line from Unit 1).

6. **Medium** The fakers' parade: what do η and ν look like, and what do they really say?

▼ **Show answer**

η looks like an English n but says long AY; ν looks like an English v but says n. The look lies; the chant tells the truth.

7. **Hard** The word μικρός (small) begins with μ, and the word καί begins with κ. Using your cards, sound out the first two letters of each word. Which whole word can you already read, and why not the other one, yet?

▼ **Show answer**

μι says mi; κα says ka. καί can be read whole, because all three of its letters (κ, α, ι) are owned. μικρός still hides ρ and ς, letters that arrive in Unit 4; by then it reads mik-ROSS, small.

8. **Challenge** Be a scribe: copy the line ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος one more time, as beautifully as you can, then count its letters and compare counts with a family member. Did you both get the same number? What does a mismatch tell a scribe?

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary (count the hidden iota and the count comes out one higher!). A mismatch tells the scribe to check again, letter by letter: exactly how real copyists guarded every jot.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Dotting the iota. ι never wears a dot; it is a plain small stroke. The dot belongs to English i.
- Reading ν as v. Nu says n, always. Greek does not have a v letter for you to find.

- Writing small μ without its tail. μ hangs a straight tail below the line; without it, it turns into a u.
- Thinking the little marks over Bible Greek are extra letters. They are breathings and accents; this year you just copy them, like the dot on an i, and no one grades them.

Make it a game · Jot Spot. A parent writes a row of mixed Greek letters from the box, hiding two or three iotas among them (and maybe a sneaky η pretending to be something else). On GO, the student circles every iota in ten seconds: one point per jot found, minus one for any dotted impostor circled by mistake. Then swap: the student hides jots for the parent. Three rounds each; most jots wins the scribe's quill.

Scripture. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:18, KJV)

The jot is iota, the smallest letter you now own. God keeps His word down to its littlest letter, which means every promise in it is kept too, the big ones and the small.

UNIT 3 · THE MIDDLE LETTERS (I-Π) · LESSON 3.2 OF 10 · 3 SESSIONS OF 20-30 MINUTES

3.2 LETTERS THAT UNLOCK

OBJECTIVES

- Say the names, sounds and shapes of ξ $\omicron$ π , small and capital.
- Tell the story of the Rosetta Stone and how Greek unlocked the hieroglyphs.
- Tell the difference between omicron (small o) and omega (big O), and meet pi the math letter.
- Build the false-friends watch-list: η , ν , and the letters still to come that fool English eyes.
- Write a secret English message in Greek letters for the family to decode.

Warm-up. Chant alpha to nu, then try this: say 'The cat sat' but write it in your head with Greek letters. Could a stranger read it? Only if they had your alphabet! Today you learn how a whole lost language got unlocked because the Greek alphabet never stopped being taught, and then you put the trick to work with a secret message of your own.

WATCH

Egyptian Hieroglyphs and the Rosetta Stone: the Discovery of the Rosetta Stone for Kids - FreeSchool

Free School · 7:14

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmd6lzx2ZkA>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Watch for the three bands of writing on the stone, and find the Greek letters in the bottom band: those are yours.

Note: Made for children and previewed. It shows Egyptian gods as pictures in the old carvings; they were the stories Egypt told, not true ones, and the stone itself is just a thank-you decree about a king.

BACKUP VIDEO

Why was the Rosetta Stone so important? - Franziska Naether

TED-Ed · 5:17

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8dZSySRX_g

For a deeper telling of the code-breaking, in Session 2 or 3: how scholars compared the three bands until the hieroglyphs gave up their secret.

KEY TERMS

hieroglyphs

Ancient Egypt's picture-writing. For 1,400 years nobody on earth could read it, until the Rosetta Stone.

xi (ξ)

The fourteenth letter: capital Ξ, small ξ. It says x as in box, a whole ks-sound in one squiggly letter.

Rosetta Stone

A broken black stone slab carved in 196 B.C. with the SAME message three times: hieroglyphs on top, everyday Egyptian script in the middle, and Greek at the bottom.

omicron (ο)

The fifteenth letter: capital O, small o. The SMALL o: a short o as in pot. Its big brother omega (ω) says the long O.

pi (π)

The sixteenth letter: capital Π, small π.

It says p, and math borrowed it for the number 3.14..., the famous pi.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

βασιλεύς

basileus

bah-see-LEWS

noun

a king

ENGLISH basilica

πύλη

pule

POO-lay

noun

a gate

πόλις

polis

PO-lis

noun

a city

ENGLISH metropolis

κλείς

kleis

KLAYS

noun

a key

ξένος

xenos

KSEH-nos

noun

a stranger, a guest

ὀφθαλμός

ophthalmos

of-thal-MOS

noun

an eye

ENGLISH ophthalmology

πλοῖον

ploion

PLOY-on

noun

a boat

ὁδός

hodos

ho-DOS

noun

a road

ENGLISH exodus

ὄρος

oros

O-ros

noun

a mountain

βιβλίον

biblion

bee-BLEE-on

noun

a little book

ENGLISH bibliography

γλῶσσα

glossa

GLOHS-sah

noun

a tongue; a language

ENGLISH glossary

CORE IDEAS

The story. Ancient Egypt wrote in hieroglyphs: owls, reeds, suns and eyes carved in stone. But languages can fall asleep. After Egypt's old religion ended, the last people who could read hieroglyphs died, and for 1,400 years the pyramids and temples kept their words to themselves. Nobody, not kings, not professors, could read one line. Then, in 1799, soldiers rebuilding a fort near the Egyptian town of Rosetta dug up a broken black stone covered in carving, and an officer noticed something electric: the stone said the same thing three times, in three different scripts. On top, hieroglyphs. In the middle, everyday Egyptian handwriting. And at the bottom: GREEK.

The key that never rusted. Here is the whole secret of the unlocking: scholars could still read the Greek, because Greek had never stopped being taught. Children had learned alpha-beta-gamma in an unbroken chain, teacher to student, for every one of those 1,400 years. So the scholars read the Greek band first; now they knew what the stone SAID. Then they matched it, name by name and word by word, against the mysterious bands above, especially the royal name Ptolemaios, Ptolemy, which they could hunt for in the hieroglyphs. It took over twenty years of patient matching, but the hieroglyphs finally woke up, and all of ancient Egypt's writing opened after them. One faithfully-taught alphabet unlocked another people's whole library. That is what alphabets are: keys.

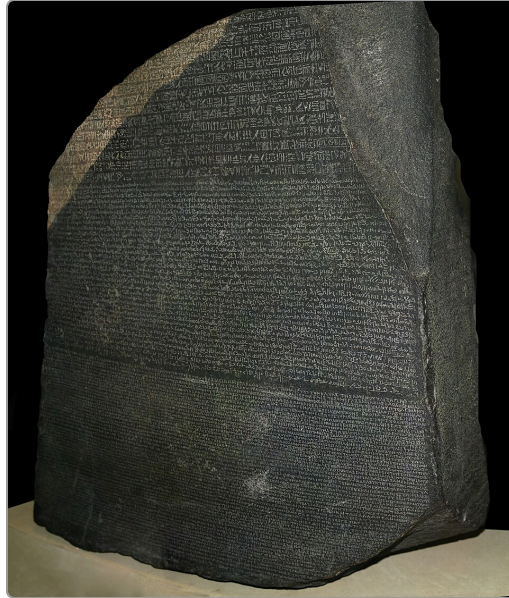
How Greek works: three new letters, and the watch-list. Xi, Ξ ξ, says x as in box: a ks-sound in one letter. The capital is three stacked bars; the small ξ is the curliest squiggle in the alphabet, fun to draw slowly. **Omicron**, Ο ο, is the small o, short as in pot. You already know its big brother: omega, ω, the big O, long as in tone. Small o, big O: Greek keeps them in separate letters. **Pi**, Π π, says p. The capital Π looks like a doorway; math borrowed the small π for the famous number: measure around a round plate's edge and it is about 3.14 times as far as straight across, and that number wears this Greek letter's name forever. Now update the false-friends watch-list in your

notebook: η looks like n but says AY; ν looks like v but says n; and next unit comes the biggest faker of all, ρ, which looks like p but is NOT (your real p is π, earned today).

Say it out loud. Chant the three: xi, x! omicron, short o! pi, p! Then the long chant, alpha to pi, sixteen letters: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π. Say the o-brothers back to back until the difference is easy: omicron, pot; omega, tone. Short o, looong O. Then read your word card again, καί, KYE, and smile: every message this week rides on sounds like these.

Try it. This week you write the Secret Message: a short English sentence, sound-spelled in Greek letters, for a family member to decode using your letter cards as the key. You are doing exactly what the Rosetta scholars did, in the other direction, and your decoder will discover exactly what they discovered: with the Greek alphabet in hand, locked things open.

PICTURE STUDY



The Rosetta Stone, Unknown Egyptian stone-cutters, Carved 196 B.C.; found 1799 · Carved granodiorite stone · British Museum, London

Photo: Hans Hillewaert, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY-SA 4.0

This broken slab is one of the most famous objects in the world, and the reason is written on its face three times. The same royal decree, a thank-you to King Ptolemy from 196 B.C., is carved in hieroglyphs, in everyday Egyptian script, and in Greek. Scholars who could read the Greek used it to crack the other two. Look closely at the bottom band: those letters are the ones in your treasure box.

Look closely

- Find the three bands: picture-signs on top, flowing script in the middle, neat rows of Greek capitals at the bottom.
- Get close to the bottom band (zoom if you can) and hunt for capitals you own: A, Δ, E, K, M, N, O, Π are all there.
- Notice the broken corners. Part of every band is missing; the code-breakers worked with a damaged key.
- The surface is packed edge to edge: carving stone was slow and costly, so not one finger-width was wasted.

Talk about it

1. Why did carving one message in three scripts turn out to be the luckiest decision in the history of reading?

2. The Greek band could still be read after 1,400 years because Greek never stopped being taught. Who taught it all those years, and to whom?
3. If you buried one message for people far in the future, what would you write, and in how many ways?

ACTIVITY

The Secret Message

Time to use the key the other way. You will sound-spell a short English sentence in Greek letters, and a family decoder will crack it with your letter cards, Rosetta-style.

You will need

- Paper and pencil, plus a fancier sheet for the final message if you like
- Your letter cards, laid out as the decoder's key
- 3 index cards for the new letters

Steps

1. First, make the three new letter cards (ξ, ο, π) and add them to the box. Chant alpha to pi once with the cards in a line.
2. Choose a short English sentence, four to six small words: THE DOG CAN NAP. MOM IS KIND. Short words, simple sounds.
3. Sound-spell each word with Greek letters, going by SOUND, not English spelling: dog becomes δογ, mom becomes μαμ, nap becomes ναπ. Use ε for eh, α for ah, ο for short o, ι for i. (No Greek letter for a sound like th in 'the'? Use θ: θε. Code-makers improvise!)
4. Write the message big and dark. Decorate it like a stone carving if you like: brown paper, torn edges.
5. Hand the decoder your letter cards as the key, name-and-sound sides up, and watch them work letter by letter. Help only when asked, like a patient Rosetta scholar.
6. When the message cracks, swap roles: let a parent sound-spell a one-word message in Greek letters for YOU to decode.

Tips

- Keep words short and sound-friendly: cat, dog, mom, dad, run, nap. Tricky English spellings (like 'night') fight the code; skip them this year.
- There is no Greek letter for some English sounds, and your letters ρ σ τ υ and friends are still in next unit's chest. Choose words that avoid what you have not earned yet, or improvise and tell the decoder your rule.

- Watch the decoder hit ν and η : if they fall for the fakers, grin and point at the watch-list.

Check your work

- ☐ The ξ , $\omicron$ and π cards are in the box, and I chanted alpha to pi.
- ☐ My message is sound-spelled in Greek letters I own.
- ☐ A family member decoded it with my cards as the key.
- ☐ I decoded a message back, and the false friends did not fool me.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: ξ $\omicron$ π , saying name and sound as you write.
2. Write the sixteen-letter chant and read it back: α β γ δ ϵ ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ $\omicron$ π .
3. Write the o-brothers side by side, $\omicron$ and ω , with their jobs: small $\omicron$ as in pot; big Ω as in tone.
4. Start the FALSE FRIENDS watch-list page: η says AY not n; ν says n not ν ; coming soon: ρ is not p (the real p is π).

From history. The young French scholar who finally cracked the hieroglyphs, Jean-François Champollion, had prepared his whole life without knowing it: he was a language-collecting prodigy who learned Greek young and loved alphabets. When the matching finally worked in 1822 and the signs turned into sounds before his eyes, he ran to his brother's office, cried 'I've got it!', and fainted. Keys are exciting things, and you are collecting one of the great ones.

Example 1. Decode this sound-spelled word with your cards: κατ.

▼ **Show solution**

1. κ is kappa: k.
2. α is alpha: ah.
3. τ is tau, a Unit 4 letter, but its sound is a plain t (a one-week sneak preview).
Blend: k-ah-t.

Answer: Cat! Sound-spelling writes English sounds in Greek letters; the decoder just sounds them back out. (And now you have met tau a week early: a free treasure.)

Example 2. Which o goes where? Sound-spell 'pot' and 'tone' and choose o or ω for each.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Pot has the short o: that is omicron, ο.
2. Tone has the long O: that is omega, ω.
3. Spell by sound: π-ο-τ and τ-ω-ν.

Answer: Pot: ποτ (short ο, omicron). Tone: τών sounds right as τ-ω-ν (long O, omega). Two o-letters, two jobs, no guessing.

Example 3. How did knowing Greek crack the hieroglyphs? Tell it in three steps.

▼ **Show solution**

1. The stone carried one message in three scripts, and the bottom one was Greek.
2. Scholars read the Greek, so they knew what the whole stone said.
3. They matched names like Ptolemy from the Greek band into the hieroglyph band, sign by sign, until the picture-letters gave up their sounds.

Answer: Read the known script, learn the message, match it against the unknown script: the Greek band was the key, because Greek had never stopped being taught.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the names and sounds of the three new letters: ξ, ο, π.

▼ **Show answer**

Xi, x as in box; omicron, short o as in pot; pi, p.

2. **Easy** What made the Rosetta Stone the key to the hieroglyphs?

▼ **Show answer**

It carried the same message three times, and the bottom band was Greek, which scholars could still read. Knowing what the stone said, they could crack the picture-writing above.

3. **Easy** Which letter is the small o and which is the big O: ω, ο? Give each one's sound.

▼ **Show answer**

ο is omicron, the small o, short as in pot. ω is omega, the big O, long as in tone.

4. **Medium** Write (or point to) the small letter for each sound: p, x as in box, short o, k, n.

▼ **Show answer**

p: π. x: ξ. short o: ο. k: κ. n: ν (not η, the faker!).

5. **Medium** Chant the sixteen letters, alpha to pi, then tell: how many letters are left to earn?

▼ **Show answer**

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π. Eight letters remain (ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω), and ω is already an old friend, so really seven strangers.

6. **Medium** What does π do in math class, and why is that a Greek letter's name?

▼ **Show answer**

Pi names the number 3.14...: go around a circle's edge and it is about 3.14 times as far as straight across. Mathematicians labeled the number with the Greek letter π, and every circle has carried a Greek letter since.

7. **Hard** Sound-spell these in Greek letters, using only letters you own: pan, dot, kid.

▼ **Show answer**

pan: παν. dot: δοτ works by sound with the preview letter τ, or δο plus a drawn τ until tau officially arrives; accept δοτ. kid: κιδ. Spelling by sound is the game; neat handwriting is the bonus.

8. **Challenge** The hieroglyphs slept for 1,400 years because nobody kept teaching them. Greek never slept. Write one sentence about who you could someday teach the Greek alphabet to, and recite alpha to pi as proof you carry the key.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: a little brother or sister, a friend, their own children someday. The point earned: alphabets survive by being taught, and the student is now a link in a very long chain.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Using ο and ω interchangeably. They are different letters for different sounds: short ο (pot) and long Ο (tone).
- Writing capital pi, Π, as an English TT. It is one letter, one doorway shape, one p-sound.
- Sound-spelling by English SPELLING instead of sound. The word 'come' sound-spells as kam-sounds (καμ), not with an o or a silent e; trust your ears, not English spelling.
- Forgetting the watch-list. Review the false friends out loud weekly: η says AY, ν says n, and ρ (coming next) is not p.

Make it a game • Rosetta Race. The student sound-spells three short English words in Greek letters on three slips (the harder the better, within the owned letters). The decoder (parent or sibling) races the clock with the letter cards as the key: two minutes per slip. Every cracked word scores the decoder a point; every word that survives uncracked scores the student two. Then swap roles. The winner is crowned Keeper of the Stone until next game.

Scripture. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25:2, KJV)

God wove secrets into His world on purpose, and gave people the joy of patiently searching them out. The Rosetta scholars searched for twenty years; your decoder will search for ten minutes; both taste the same honest delight.

UNIT 4

THE LAST LETTERS (ρ–ω)

Some letters carry secrets. ΙΧΘΥΣ is the Greek word for fish, and to the early Christians it was far more than a fish: its five letters are the first letters of five Greek words meaning Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. In dangerous times, a believer could draw a simple fish in the dust, and another believer would see a whole confession of faith in it. In this unit you learn the letters that make the fish sign work, ρ σ τ υ, including sigma, the letter with two shapes, one for the front of a word and one for the end, like a letter that puts on slippers at the door. You will read ΙΧΘΥΣ letter by letter and make the fish plaque to prove it.

Then the treasure chest closes with a click: φ χ ψ ω, the last four letters, and the whole alphabet is yours. You will chant all twenty-four in order, race the clock with your cards, and read real money: the silver owl coins of Athens, the most famous coins of the ancient world, carry the letters ΑΘΕ, short for 'of the Athenians,' and you will read them straight off the silver. The unit ends with the Alphabet Scroll: every letter, capital and small, lettered by your own hand on a scroll worth keeping.

PREREQUISITES

- Can chant and write the sixteen letters alpha to pi (Units 2–3)
- Can read καί and keeps the false-friends watch-list: η says AY, ν says n
- Opens every session with the letter-card chant, names and sounds

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can say the last eight letters in order: rho, sigma, tau, upsilon, phi, chi, psi, omega.
- ☐ I can say each letter's sound and show its shapes, including sigma's two small shapes: σ in front, ς at the end.
- ☐ I can chant the WHOLE alphabet, all twenty-four letters, alpha to omega, without peeking.
- ☐ I can read ΙΧΘΥΣ letter by letter and tell what its five letters stand for.
- ☐ I can spot the biggest false friend of all: ρ looks like p but says r; the real p is π.
- ☐ My Alphabet Scroll shows all twenty-four letters, capitals and smalls, and my treasure box is full.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press:** The final chapters finish the alphabet right alongside this unit; a satisfying case-closed for detective and student alike.
- **Song School Greek, by Classical Academic Press:** Songs for young beginners; its alphabet songs make fine victory laps now that the whole chant is yours.
- **Daily Dose of Greek alphabet videos (free site):** Free. A seminary teacher's site with short, clear alphabet videos, including the 37-second alphabet song this unit uses for backup.

Not required. Every activity in this unit works with paper, pencil, scissors and the free links below. School Launch has no ties to these authors, publishers or companies.

4.1 The Secret Sign of the Fish

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

4.2 The Whole Song

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

UNIT 4 REVIEW

Answer out loud or on paper; a parent may write for the student. This is the whole-alphabet review: cards face down unless an emergency strikes. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

Chant the whole Greek alphabet in order, alpha to omega, names and sounds. (One slip allowed.)

2. **5 pts**

Write the last eight small letters in order, rho to omega, and show sigma's TWO small shapes.

3. **5 pts**

Read IXΘΥΣ letter by letter, say the word, and tell what the five letters stand for.

4. **5 pts**

The false-friends final: what do these really say: ρ, η, ν, χ?

5. **5 pts**

What letters appear around the owl on an Athens coin, and what do they mean?

6. **5 pts**

Why did early Christians choose a fish as their quiet sign? Tell it in two or three sentences.

ANSWER KEY

1. α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω, with names and sounds: ah, b, g, d, eh, dz, AY, th, i, k, l, m, n, x, short o, p, rolled r, s, t, oo, f, kh, ps, long O.
2. ρ σ (and ζ for word-endings) τ υ φ χ ψ ω.
3. Iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma: ΙΧΘΥΣ, ich-THOOS, fish; the letters begin the Greek for Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.
4. ρ says rolled r (not p); η says long AY (not n); ν says n (not v); χ says the loch-sound kh (not x; the x is ξ).
5. ΑΘΕ, alpha-theta-epsilon, short for 'of the Athenians': the city's name stamped on its silver.
6. The Greek word for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ, spells the first letters of Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. In dangerous times a believer could draw a simple two-stroke fish, and a fellow believer would read the whole confession in it, while strangers saw only a doodle.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE ALPHABET SCROLL, PRESENTED

The grand unrolling: the student presents the Alphabet Scroll to the family, unrolling it while chanting the whole alphabet from memory, names and sounds, no peeking at the scroll ahead of the chant.

Then the student reads the coin letters ΑΘΕ and the fish ΙΧΘΥΣ from the wall plaque, and answers one surprise letter question from the family: a false friend, or a missing-letter gap.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The scroll	The scroll shows all twenty-four letters in order, capitals and smalls, neatly lettered and decorated.
The chant	The full chant was delivered from memory, names and sounds, with at most one slip.
The readings	ΑΘΕ and ΙΧΘΥΣ were both read aloud, letter by letter, and their meanings explained.
The surprise question	The family's surprise letter question was answered without the scroll's help.

4.1 THE SECRET SIGN OF THE FISH

OBJECTIVES

- Say the names, sounds and shapes of ρ σ/ς τ υ, small and capital.
- Explain sigma's two small shapes and when each is used.
- Catch the biggest false friend: ρ looks like p but says r.
- Read IXΘΥΣ letter by letter and tell what each letter stands for.
- Make the IXΘΥΣ plaque with the five letters and their five English words.

Warm-up. Chant alpha to pi. Now imagine you lived where being a Christian could get you arrested, and you wanted to find out, quietly, whether a stranger was a brother. No words allowed. What could you draw in the dust with one finger? Today you learn the early church's answer, and the four letters that make it work.

WATCH

What does the Christian fish symbol mean (ixthus / ictus)? | GotQuestions.org

Got Questions Ministries · 2:38

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6eVE43k0tk>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Listen for the five Greek words hiding behind the five letters of IXΘΥΣ; the lesson walks through them again right after.

Note: Short and made for a general audience; previewed and clear.

BACKUP VIDEO

The Meaning of the Jesus Fish Symbol (ICHTHUS)

The Religion Teacher · 2:40

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SEwR60aDGE>

A second short telling of the fish sign, good for Session 2 while the plaque is being drawn.

KEY TERMS

rho (ρ)

The seventeenth letter: capital P, small ρ. The biggest false friend in the alphabet: it looks like p but says a rolled r. The real p is π.

tau (τ)

The nineteenth letter: capital T, small τ. It says t, and it looks like a t that lost its hat-brim.

sigma (σ / ς)

The eighteenth letter, the s. It has TWO small shapes: σ anywhere in a word, ς only at the very end, like a letter that puts on slippers at the door. Capital: Σ.

upsilon (υ)

The twentieth letter: capital Y, small υ. It says a tight oo-sound (say oo with smiling lips, like the French u); plain oo is fine this year.

ΙΧΘΥΣ

Greek for FISH, said ich-THOOS. Its five letters begin five Greek words meaning Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior: the early church's secret sign.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

ἰχθύς

ichthus

ikh-THOOS

noun

a fish

Χριστός

Christos

khris-TOS

noun

Christ, the Anointed One

ENGLISH Christ

υἱός

huios

hwee-OS

noun

a son

σωτήρ

soter

soh-TAYR

noun

a savior

σταυρός

stauros

stow-ROS

noun

a cross

ἐκκλησία

ekklesia

ehkk-lay-SEE-ah

noun

an assembly; a church

ENGLISH ecclesiastical

ποιμήν

poimen

roy-MAYN

noun

a shepherd

ἀμνός

amnos

am-NOS

noun

a lamb

ῥῆμα

hrema

HRAY-mah

noun

a word, a saying

ENGLISH rhetoric

σάρξ

sarx

SARKS

noun

flesh

σῖτος

sitos

SEE-tos

noun

grain, wheat

CORE IDEAS

The story. In the church's first centuries, following Jesus could be dangerous. Roman officials sometimes hunted believers, so Christians learned to speak carefully, and sometimes to draw instead of speak. Their favorite drawing was a fish, two curved strokes anyone could trace in dust or scratch on a wall, and here is why. The Greek word for fish is **ΙΧΘΥΣ** (ich-THOOS), and its five letters are the first letters of five Greek words: **Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ**, Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. You do not need to read that whole phrase this year; you only read its five FIRST letters, and those five letters spell the fish. A believer could sketch a fish, and a fellow believer would see the whole confession folded inside it. A stranger would see a doodle of lunch.

Letter by letter. Walk through the sign like a code-breaker. **I** is iota, for Ἰησοῦς (ee-ay-SOOS), Jesus. **X** is chi (a Unit 4.2 letter, peeking in early), for Χριστός (chris-TOSS), Christ. **Θ** is theta, your think-letter, for Θεοῦ (theh-OO), God's. **Υ** is upsilon, new today, for Υἱός (hwee-OSS), Son. **Σ** is capital sigma, new today, for Σωτήρ (so-TARE), Savior. Five letters, five words, one fish: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.

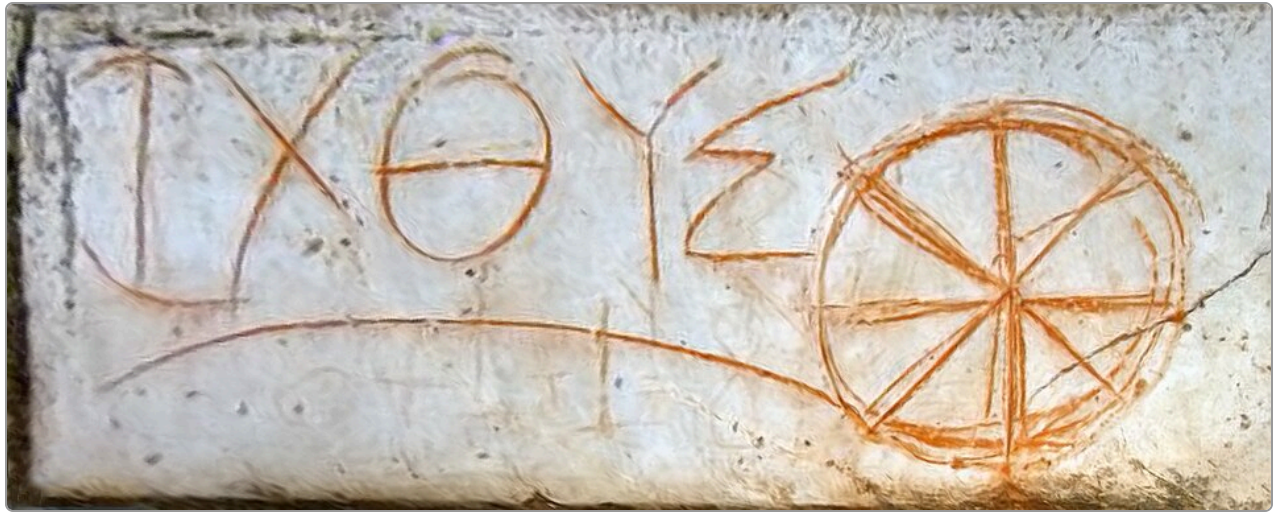
How Greek works: four new letters, one with two shapes. Rho, **Ρ ρ**, is the trap you were warned about: it looks exactly like our p, capital and small, but it says a rolled r,

the motorcycle-r, rrrr. Your real p is π ; say it aloud: rho is r, pi is p! **Sigma** says s and owns three shapes: capital Σ (a zigzag E), small σ for the front and middle of words, and small ς ONLY at the end of a word. Think of it as one letter that changes into slippers when it reaches the end of the word, the way you change at the door. You have been seeing ς for weeks at the ends of words like $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ and $\mu\acute{\iota}\kappa\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$; now you know its name. **Tau**, τ , says t, simple and friendly. **Upsilon**, υ , says the tight oo: round your lips to say oo while smiling. In $\text{IX}\Theta\text{Y}\Sigma$ it carries the oo of ich-THOOS.

Say it out loud. Chant the four: rho, r (roll it!); sigma, s; tau, t; upsilon, oo. Then the long chant, alpha to upsilon, twenty letters. Then read the fish, letter by letter, out loud: iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma... $\text{IX}\Theta\text{Y}\Sigma$, ich-THOOS, fish! And the meaning, like a quiet password: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. Finish with the false-friends drill: ρ is not p, the real p is π ; η is not n, the real n is ν .

Try it. This week you make the $\text{IX}\Theta\text{Y}\Sigma$ plaque: a big drawn fish, the five Greek letters along its body, and the five English words they stand for, lettered proudly, no hiding needed. It joins the wall beside your poster, and it is the first thing you have ever read that was once somebody's secret.

PICTURE STUDY



The Fish-Wheel Carving at Ephesus, Unknown early Christian carver, Early centuries A.D. · Carved marble · Ephesus, in modern Turkey

Photo: Mufunyo, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY-SA 3.0

In the ruins of Ephesus, a city where Paul preached and a letter of the New Testament was sent, a wheel like this is carved into the marble. It looks like a simple eight-spoked wheel, but look again: if you stack the five letters of IXΘYΣ one on top of another, I, X, Θ, Y, Σ, their lines overlap into exactly this wheel shape. Some scholars believe carvings like this were the fish-word folded even deeper: a secret sign inside a secret sign.

Look closely

- Count the spokes of the wheel: the crisscrossing lines are what I, X, Θ, Y and Σ make when stacked in one circle.
- Find the capital X hiding in the wheel: two crossing diagonals. Then find the I: the straight upright.
- Feel (with your eyes) how worn the marble is: centuries of feet, weather and hands have passed over this stone.
- Notice where it is carved: not in a church, but in the open street-stone of a busy city, where only the taught eye would notice.

Talk about it

1. Why might a believer carve a sign only fellow believers could read, rather than words anyone could?
2. Ephesus heard Paul preach and received a New Testament letter. What would it mean to a Christian there to pass this wheel on the street?

3. You can now read the letters hiding in the wheel. Who taught the first Ephesian who ever read it, do you suppose?

ACTIVITY

The IXΘΥΣ plaque

The early church folded a confession into five letters. Today you unfold it in full view: a fish, the letters, and the words, made to hang on the wall.

You will need

- A sheet of paper, card or poster board for the plaque
- Pencil, crayons or markers, and a fine-tip marker for the lettering
- 4 index cards for the new letters (plus one word card for IXΘΥΣ)

Steps

1. Draw a big, bold fish with two curved strokes, the simple way a believer could draw it in the dust. Practice the two strokes on scrap paper first: curve down, curve up, cross at the tail.
2. Letter the five capitals along the fish's body, large and evenly spaced: I X Θ Y Σ.
3. Under the fish, write the five English words in a column, one per letter: Jesus. Christ. God's. Son. Savior.
4. Read the plaque aloud, letter by letter, then the whole word: iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma... IXΘΥΣ, ich-THOOS, fish!
5. Make the four new letter cards (ρ with its warning: says r, NOT p; σ/ς with both small shapes drawn; τ; υ) and the IXΘΥΣ word card, and add them to the box.
6. Hang the plaque. Then teach one family member to draw the two-stroke fish and tell them what the five letters stand for.

Tips

- Capital Σ is a zigzag: three strokes out, three strokes back. Draw it slowly the first few times.
- Make the ρ card memorable: draw a little motorcycle beside it, rrrr.
- Letter the words thick and proud. This sign spent its first centuries whispering; your plaque gets to say it out loud.

Check your work

- ☐ My fish is drawn with the two simple strokes and the five capitals: I X Θ Y Σ.
- ☐ The five English words stand under their letters.

- ☐ I read the plaque aloud, letters, word and meaning, to my family.
- ☐ The ρ, σ/ς, τ and υ cards and the ΙΧΘΥΣ card are in the treasure box.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: ρ σ ς τ υ, saying name and sound as you write (σ and ς both belong to sigma).
2. Write the chant so far, alpha to upsilon, and read it back aloud.
3. Copy ΙΧΘΥΣ in capitals and write under it: fish, ich-THOOS; the letters stand for Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.
4. Update the FALSE FRIENDS watch-list: ρ says r, not p; the real p is π. Draw a little motorcycle next to rho.

From history. An old story says believers used the fish as a handshake of the dust: one stranger would idly draw a single curved stroke with a toe or a stick, just an arc, nothing to notice. If the other stranger completed the second arc, fish, brother, both knew. Whether or not it always happened just that way, the sign spread wherever the church did: scratched in catacombs in Rome, carved at Ephesus, and now lettered on your wall.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read ΙΧΘΥΣ letter by letter, then as a word.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Name each capital: iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma.
2. Blend the sounds: i-ch-th-oo-s.
3. Say it: ich-THOOS.

Answer: ΙΧΘΥΣ, fish, and the five letters stand for Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.

Example 2. A word ends with an s-sound. Which sigma shape goes there, and which goes everywhere else?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Sigma has two small shapes.
 2. σ works at the front and middle of a word.
 3. ς is the end-of-word shape, the slippers at the door.
-

Answer: ς at the end; σ everywhere else. That is why Θεός and μικρός end in ς .

Example 3. Trap check: read these two letters and give their sounds: ρ , π .

▼ **Show solution**

1. ρ looks like p but is rho.
 2. Rho says a rolled r.
 3. π is pi, the real p.
-

Answer: ρ says r (roll it: rrrr); π says p. The look-alike lies; the chant tells the truth.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the names and sounds of the four new letters: ρ , σ/ς , τ , υ .

▼ **Show answer**

Rho, rolled r; sigma, s (two small shapes, σ in front, ς at the end); tau, t; upsilon, tight oo.

2. **Easy** What does ΙΧΘΥΣ mean, and what do its five letters stand for?

▼ **Show answer**

Fish (ich-THOOS). The letters begin the Greek words for Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.

3. **Easy** Why did early Christians draw a fish instead of writing the words out?

▼ **Show answer**

Being a Christian could be dangerous; the fish looked like a doodle to strangers, but believers knew the confession folded inside its five letters.

4. **Medium** Which sigma shape belongs in each blank: the s at the START of a word, and the s at the END of a word?

▼ **Show answer**

Start (or middle): σ . End: ς . One letter, two shapes, like shoes outside and slippers at the door.

5. **Medium** Write (or point to) the small letter for each sound: rolled r, s, t, oo, p.

▼ **Show answer**

Rolled r: ρ . s: σ (or ς at a word's end). t: τ . oo: υ . p: π , never ρ !

6. **Medium** You now own the whole false-friends watch-list. Recite it: three Greek letters that fool English eyes, with what they really say.

▼ **Show answer**

η looks like n but says long AY; ν looks like v but says n; ρ looks like p but says r (the real p is π).

7. **Hard** The sight word Θεός ends in ς , and the sight word Σοφία begins with Σ . Explain why the same letter wears a different shape in each, and read both words aloud.

▼ **Show answer**

Both are sigma. At the end of Θεός (theh-OSS, God) it wears its end-shape ς ; at the front of Σοφία (so-FEE-ah, wisdom) it wears its capital Σ (small form σ).

Position picks the shape; the sound is always s.

8. **Challenge** Draw the two-stroke fish for someone who has never seen it, and explain its secret in under a minute, letter by letter. Then ask them to draw it back to you.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: the fish drawn with two curved strokes, ΙΧΘΥΣ spelled out, the five words named (Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior), and the listener's own fish drawn in return. Teaching it is the proof of owning it.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading ρ as p. It is the alphabet's biggest trap: rho says rolled r, and the real p is π . Drill it till it cannot catch you.
- Using σ at the end of a word. The end of a word always takes ς : Θεός, not Θεόσ.

- Reading Y as an English Y-sound. Upsilon says the tight oo (in IXΘYΣ it is the oo of ich-THOOS).
- Treating the fish as a magic charm. It is not a lucky symbol; it is a confession in code: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. The meaning is the treasure.

Make it a game • Password at the Gate. One player is the gatekeeper, holding the IXΘYΣ plaque out of sight. The other is a traveler who must get in by proving the sign: draw the two-stroke fish, then name the five letters in order, then give the password meaning (Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior). Each part done smoothly scores a point; a stumble lets the gatekeeper demand a bonus task (chant rho-sigma-tau-upsilon with sounds!). Three points opens the gate; then swap roles.

Scripture. “And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19, KJV)

Jesus called fishermen first, and promised to make them fishers of men. The church that grew from them chose a fish for its quiet sign; every IXΘYΣ ever scratched points back to this call by the lake.

UNIT 4 • THE LAST LETTERS (P–Ω) • LESSON 4.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 20–30 MINUTES

4.2 THE WHOLE SONG

OBJECTIVES

- Say the names, sounds and shapes of φ χ ψ ω, small and capital.
- Chant the WHOLE alphabet, all twenty-four letters, in order.
- Read the letters AΘE on the owl coins of Athens and tell what they stand for.
- Race the letter cards into alphabet order against the clock.
- Letter the Alphabet Scroll: all twenty-four letters, capitals and smalls.

Warm-up. Chant alpha to upsilon, twenty letters, and notice the strange feeling: you are four letters from the end of the quest. Greek children 2,400 years ago chanted this same list, in this same order, to the same finish line. Today you join them: the whole song, the whole key, the whole alphabet.

WATCH

Biblical Greek - The Greek Alphabet Song - Free Greek

Alpha with Angela · 2:50

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=749JoaGOCcg>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph: sing the whole alphabet with her, twice.
This is the week the whole song becomes yours.

Note: From Angela's numbered series, but it stands on its own; her sounds match our classroom sounds closely.

BACKUP VIDEO

Greek Alphabet Song

Daily Dose of Greek · 0:37

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxwawakLPxw>

The 37-second victory lap: sing it before every session this week, and at the unit challenge.

KEY TERMS

phi (φ)

The twenty-first letter: capital Φ, small φ. It says f, and it starts Φίλιππος (FEE-lip-poss), Philip, the horse-lover.

psi (ψ)

The twenty-third letter: capital Ψ, small ψ. It says ps as in lips, a whole ps-sound in one pitchfork-shaped letter.

AOE

The letters on the owl coins of Athens, short for 'of the Athenians.' Money that says whose it is, in letters you can read.

chi (χ)

The twenty-second letter: capital Χ, small χ. It says the rough h-sound of Scottish loch, a cat-hiss k-h. It starts ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (chris-TOSS), Christ.

omega (ω)

The twenty-fourth and LAST letter: capital Ω, small ω. The big O, long as in tone, and your oldest friend in the box.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

Ἀθῆναι

Athenai

ah-THAY-nye

noun

Athens

ENGLISH Athens

γλαῦξ

glaux

GLOWKS

noun

an owl

ἀργύριον

argurion

ar-GOO-ree-on

noun

a silver coin

νόμισμα

nomisma

NO-mis-mah

noun

a coin

ENGLISH numismatics

δῆμος

demos

DAY-mos

noun

the people

ENGLISH democracy

στρατιώτης

stratiotes

strah-tee-OH-tays

noun

a soldier

χρυσός

chrusos

khroo-SOS

noun

gold

ψυχή

psuche

psoo-KHAY

noun

soul, life

ENGLISH psychology

ὠδή

ode

oh-DAY

noun

a song

ENGLISH ode

χορός

choros

kho-ROS

noun

a dance; a chorus

ENGLISH chorus

φύλλον

phullon

FOOL-lon

noun

a leaf

CORE IDEAS

The story. The most famous money of the ancient world was the silver owl of Athens. On one side, the helmeted head of Athena, the made-up goddess the city was named for; on the other, her bird: a round-eyed owl, standing tall, with an olive sprig, and three Greek letters: ΑΘΕ, short for 'of the Athenians.' Traders from Egypt to Italy trusted these coins because the silver was honest, and for centuries the owls hardly changed. On the handsome later owls, like the one in this week's picture, the owl stands on a fat storage jar inside an olive wreath, with the mint-masters' names around it, and the Α and the ΘΕ split around the owl's head. Children in Athens learned their letters and could suddenly read their own pocket money. This week, that is you: you can READ MONEY that is over two thousand years old.

The same song, the same order. Here is a wonder worth noticing: Greek children learned the alphabet in the same order you are learning it. Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, the order has not budged in about 2,700 years. That order is itself a little ark, carried from teacher to child, century after century, through wars and empires and shipwrecks, and nobody ever lost it. When you finish today's chant, you will know the whole list, in the whole order, as one more child in the longest relay race in history.

How Greek works: the last four letters. Phi, Φ φ, says f: a circle run through by a pole. It starts Φίλιππος (FEE-lip-poss), Philip, a name that means horse-lover. Chi, Χ χ, says the rough sound in Scottish loch, like a cat warning you off, kh. You met it in ΙΧΘΥΣ, and it starts ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (chris-TOSS), Christ. (Mind the trap inside it: it looks like our x, but the x-sound belongs to ξ.) Psi, Ψ ψ, says ps as in lips: a pitchfork holding one whole double sound. Omega, Ω ω, you have known since the first day: the big O, the last letter, the end of the song. Twenty-four letters, and every one of them now answers when you call its name.

Say it out loud. The whole song, in two big breaths, touching each card: alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta, iota, kappa, lambda, mu... (breathe!) ...nu, xi, omicron, pi, rho, sigma, tau, upsilon, phi, chi, psi, OMEGA! Then sounds only, ah to long O. Then the races: shuffle all twenty-four cards and lay them in order against the clock. Beat your own time twice this week. Finish each session by reading the coin letters like a merchant: ΑΘΕ, alpha, theta, epsilon, 'of the Athenians!'

Try it. This week you letter the Alphabet Scroll: paper sheets taped end to end, rolled like an ancient book, with all twenty-four letters in order, capital beside small,

decorated as grandly as you please. It is the treasure map of the whole course, drawn by the only hand that matters: yours.

PICTURE STUDY



A Silver Owl of Athens, Unknown Athenian die-cutters and mint-workers, 2nd century B.C. (a 'New Style' tetradrachm) · Struck silver coin · Minted at Athens

Photo: Xuan Che, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY 2.0

This is a silver tetradrachm of Athens, four days' good wages in one coin. On one side, Athena in her crested helmet, the imaginary goddess the city took its name from; on the other, her owl, standing on a fat storage jar inside an olive wreath, with Greek letters all around: the mint-masters' names, and the proud ΑΘΕ, 'of the Athenians,' split around the owl's head. Merchants three seas away trusted this bird. And now you can read it.

Look closely

- Find the Α near the owl's head, then hunt for the Θ and Ε: the three letters of ΑΘΕ, split around the bird.
- Look at the owl's eyes: round and front-facing, the unmistakable owl stare that made the coin famous.
- Find the storage jar (an amphora) under the owl's feet and the olive wreath circling everything: olives were Athens' wealth.
- Compare the two sides: a face and a bird, a city's whole story in one pocket-sized silver flake.

Talk about it

1. Why would a city print 'of the Athenians' on its money in letters, instead of trusting the pictures alone?

2. Athena was a story the Greeks told, not a real goddess; the silver and the letters were real. Which parts of the coin still do their job today?
3. A child in Athens could read AΘE after learning the alphabet. What can you read this week that you could not read in September?

ACTIVITY

The Alphabet Scroll

Ancient books were scrolls: long rolls of writing, unrolled as you read. Your scroll holds the whole treasure: twenty-four letters, earned one by one since September, lettered by your own hand.

You will need

- 3 or 4 sheets of printer paper taped end to end (or a roll of paper), plus two pencils, dowels or sticks for the roll-bars
- Pencil first, then markers or crayons for the final lettering
- Your letter cards, laid out in order as the model

Steps

1. Tape the sheets end to end and tape a stick to each end, so the scroll rolls from both sides like a real one.
2. Rule light pencil lines, then letter the alphabet in order, capital beside small: A α, B β, Γ γ... all the way to Ω ω. Say each name and sound as you letter it.
3. Decorate the borders: owls, fish, jugs, waves, columns, anything from the quarter's stories.
4. At the top, letter a title in your best hand: ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ (the Greek word ἀλφάβητος in capitals), or The Alphabet Treasure.
5. Make the last four letter cards (φ, χ, ψ, and admire the ω card from week one) and complete the treasure box: all twenty-four letters, counted and chanted.
6. Roll the scroll, tie it with string or a ribbon, and practice the grand unrolling: you will present it at the unit challenge, chanting as it opens.

Tips

- Letter in pencil first; ink and color after. Scribes drafted too.
- Keep capitals one height and smalls one height; two light pencil lines per row keep the parade tidy.
- If a letter goes wrong, no wax to smooth, but a small paper patch glued over it works; scrolls were repaired all the time.

Check your work

- ☐ All twenty-four letters are on the scroll, in order, capital beside small.

- ☐ I said every name and sound while lettering.
- ☐ The scroll rolls, ties and unrolls for presentation.
- ☐ The treasure box is complete: twenty-four letter cards plus my word cards.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then a careful row of each new small letter: φ χ ψ ω, saying name and sound as you write.
2. Write the WHOLE alphabet, alpha to omega, small letters, from the chant, then check against the cards and fix any runaway.
3. Copy the coin letters ΑΘΕ and write beside them: of the Athenians, on the owl coins of Athens.
4. Write your card-race time today, and again after two more races this week: watch the number fall.

From history. Athens' owls were so trusted that when other cities and even faraway kingdoms minted money, they sometimes copied the owl, letters and all, hoping to borrow the coin's good name. Archaeologists have dug up owl coins, real and copied, from Egypt to Arabia to Afghanistan. The letters ΑΘΕ traveled farther than most Athenians ever did, which is what letters are best at: going where their writers cannot.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read the three letters on the owl coin: ΑΘΕ. Name them and tell what they stand for.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Α is capital alpha.
2. Θ is capital theta.
3. Ε is capital epsilon. Together: ΑΘΕ, the start of the Athenians' name.

Answer: Alpha, theta, epsilon: ΑΘΕ, short for 'of the Athenians,' the coin's way of saying whose money it is.

Example 2. Which letter says x as in box, and which looks like x but says something else?

▼ **Show solution**

1. The x-sound (ks) belongs to xi, ξ.
2. The letter that LOOKS like x is chi, χ.
3. Chi says the rough loch-sound, kh.

Answer: ξ (xi) says x as in box; χ (chi) looks like x but says the Scottish-loch kh, as in ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (chris-TOSS).

Example 3. The alphabet song ends with four letters. Chant from upsilon to the end, names and sounds.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Upsilon, tight oo.
2. Phi, f. Chi, kh.
3. Psi, ps. Omega, long O.

Answer: Upsilon oo, phi f, chi kh, psi ps, omega long O: and the song is complete, all twenty-four.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the names and sounds of the last four letters: φ, χ, ψ, ω.

▼ **Show answer**

Phi, f; chi, the rough kh of Scottish loch; psi, ps as in lips; omega, long O as in tone.

2. **Easy** Chant the whole alphabet, alpha to omega.

▼ **Show answer**

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω, all twenty-four, names and sounds, with at most one slip.

3. **Easy** What do the letters ΑΘΕ on the owl coins stand for?

▼ **Show answer**

'Of the Athenians': the coin announces whose money it is, in letters any alphabet-trained child could read.

4. **Medium** Write (or point to) the small letter for each sound: f, kh (loch), ps, long O, x (box).

▼ **Show answer**

f: ϕ. kh: χ. ps: ψ. long O: ω. x: ξ.

5. **Medium** Shuffle all twenty-four cards and lay them out in alphabet order. Record your time, then beat it once.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary; the race is the exercise. A full, correct line-up, however slow, scores the point; beating the time is the victory lap.

6. **Medium** Sort the look-alike pairs, sounds and all: χ and ξ; ω and o; ρ and π.

▼ **Show answer**

χ says kh (loch), ξ says x (box); ω is the long O, o the short o; ρ says rolled r, π says p.

7. **Hard** ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ is Christ in capitals. Read it letter by letter with your cards, then say it whole.

▼ **Show answer**

Chi, rho, iota, sigma, tau, omicron, sigma: ch-r-i-s-t-o-s, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, chris-TOSS, Christ. (Note rho behaving as r, and sigma twice, with the capital shape Σ both times.)

8. **Challenge** Greek children learned this same alphabet in this same order 2,400 years ago. Teach the whole song to someone in your house this week, with your cards as the model, and report who your student was and which letter they liked best.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: the relay continues. Full credit for any honest teaching session; favorite letters are usually θ, ξ or ψ, and every answer is correct.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading χ as English x. The x-sound belongs to ξ; chi says the rough loch-sound, kh.
- Writing ϕ as an o with a flag. The pole runs all the way through the circle, top to bottom.

- Racing the chant until letters blur or vanish. Fast is fun, but one clean, complete chant beats three sloppy ones; the review will ask for clean.
- Thinking the quest ends here. The letters are the key, not the treasure itself: Unit 5 starts turning the key, sounding out whole real words.

Make it a game • Alphabet Grand Prix. The full-deck race, now that the deck is full: shuffle all twenty-four letter cards and set a timer. Lap 1: lay them in alphabet order. Lap 2: chant the whole song, touching each card. Lap 3 (champions only): a parent pulls three cards from the line while the student's eyes are shut; the student names the missing letters from the gaps. Beat your own best time twice this week and take the checkered flag; family members may enter their own heats.

Scripture. “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” (Psalm 119:89, KJV)

Psalm 119 is itself an alphabet poem: one section for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph to tav, the way Greek runs alpha to omega. God's people have always learned their letters to learn His word, and His word outlasts every coin, scroll and empire the letters ever served.

UNIT 5

READING REAL WORDS

The key is cut; now it turns. With all twenty-four letters in the box, the student starts doing the thing the whole quarter aimed at: sounding out real Greek words, whole. And the first words are names, because Greek names are little sentences. Πέτρος means Rock. Σοφία means Wisdom. Φίλιππος means Horse-lover. And the sign Ϟ, woven into Christian art from Britain to Egypt for seventeen centuries, turns out to be two letters the student can now read: X and P, the first letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ. The student sounds out the great names, then writes his or her own name in Greek letters on a decorated name plate, and makes one for each member of the family.

Then the course comes full circle. In the very first lesson the student met two letters, alpha and omega, and a verse: I am Alpha and Omega. Now the student reads it in Greek, τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, every word earned, and discovers the same two letters beside a jeweled cross in a mosaic from A.D. 549. The quarter ends with the Greek Letter Feast: the whole alphabet chanted for the family, the sight words read from

cards, the scroll, the plaque and the name plates shown, and olives, bread, honey and grapes served by the newest reader of Greek in the house.

PREREQUISITES

- Can chant the whole alphabet, alpha to omega, names and sounds (Unit 4)
- Owns all twenty-four letter cards plus the word cards *καί* and *ΙΧΘΥΣ*
- Keeps the false-friends watch-list sharp: *η*, *ν*, *ρ* and *χ* hold no terrors

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can sound out a short real Greek word letter by letter and blend it.
- ☐ I can read the sight names and tell their meanings: *Πέτρος*, *Σοφία*, *Φίλιππος*, *Μαρία*.
- ☐ I can tell what the Chi-Rho sign is made of and what it stands for.
- ☐ I can read *τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὼ* and tell where it comes from.
- ☐ I can read all my sight-word cards: *Θεός*, *βίβλος*, *ἄγγελος*, *μικρός*, *μέγας*, *καί*, *ΙΧΘΥΣ*, *ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ*, *ΑΘΕ* and the rest.
- ☐ I hosted the Greek Letter Feast: chant, cards, scroll, plaque, name plates and the snack.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel)**: Free. Her early reading lessons are the natural next step for a student who finishes this course hungry; grade 4 Greek will meet her again.
- **Famous Men of Greece (free online)**: Free at Project Gutenberg, also in print from Memoria Press. Hero stories to read aloud at the feast and beyond; many heroes' names are now sound-out-able.
- **Daily Dose of Greek alphabet videos (free site)**: Free short videos for keeping the alphabet warm over the holidays; two minutes a day holds the whole quarter's treasure.

Not required. Every activity in this unit works with paper, pencil, scissors and the free links below. School Launch has no ties to these authors, publishers or companies.

5.1 Names That Mean Things

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

5.2 Alpha and Omega

3 sessions of 20–30 minutes

UNIT 5 REVIEW

The final review, best done out loud with the whole family listening. Cards face down; the student has earned the right to show off. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

Chant the whole Greek alphabet, alpha to omega, names and sounds, standing. (One slip allowed.)

2. **5 pts**

Read the Greek phrase and tell what it means and where it comes from: τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ.

3. **5 pts**

Read any five word cards drawn at random from the treasure box, with meanings.

4. **5 pts**

Name the two letters in the Chi-Rho and the five letters of ΙΧΘΥΣ, and tell what each sign stands for.

5. **5 pts**

The false-friends final exam: η, ν, ρ, χ, and sigma's two small shapes.

6. **5 pts**

Tell, in three or four sentences, the story of the two letters Α and Ω: where Jesus speaks them, and how Christians have used them since.

ANSWER KEY

1. α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω, names and sounds complete.
2. Toh AL-fah kye toh OH: the Alpha and the Omega, from Revelation 1:8, where Jesus names himself with the first and last letters.
3. Five clean readings from among: Θεός God, καί and, ΙΧΘΥΣ fish, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ Christ, ΑΘΕ of the Athenians, βίβλος book, ἄγγελος angel, μικρός small, μέγας big, ἀλφάβητος alphabet, Πέτρος Rock, Σοφία Wisdom, Φίλιππος Horse-lover, Μαρία Mary.
4. Chi-Rho: X and P, the first letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ. ΙΧΘΥΣ: iota, chi, theta, upsilon, sigma, fish, whose letters begin Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior.
5. η says long AY; ν says n; ρ says rolled r; χ says kh as in loch; sigma writes σ in front and middle, ς at the end of a word.
6. In Revelation 1:8 Jesus calls himself Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters, meaning the beginning and the ending. Christians began writing Α and Ω beside crosses and the Chi-Rho, in catacombs, on lamps and in golden mosaics like Ravenna's of A.D. 549. Seventeen centuries later the letters are still there, and the student can now read them anywhere they appear.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE GREEK LETTER FEAST

The course's grand finale and the unit challenge in one: the student hosts the Greek Letter Feast, performing the reading-aloud ceremony: the full alphabet chant, the Revelation phrase read in Greek and English, and five word cards drawn at random by the family.

Then the tour and the table: the family is walked past every made thing of the quarter (scroll, plaque, poster, name plates, wax tablet, treasure box), each family member is taught one Greek thing, and the foods of Greece are served by the newest reader of Greek in the house.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The ceremony	The ceremony was performed standing: full chant and the Revelation reading, with at most one slip.
The word cards	Five random word cards, drawn by the family on the spot, were read correctly with meanings.
The display	Every quarter-project was displayed and introduced: scroll, plaque, poster, plates, tablet and box.
The teaching and the feast	Each family member was taught one Greek thing, and the feast was served with proper festivity.

UNIT 5 • READING REAL WORDS • LESSON 5.1 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 20-30 MINUTES

5.1 NAMES THAT MEAN THINGS

OBJECTIVES

- Sound out whole Greek words letter by letter and blend them.
- Read the sight names and their meanings: Πέτρος (Rock), Σοφία (Wisdom), Φίλιππος (Horse-lover), Μαρία (Mary).
- Tell what the Chi-Rho sign  is made of and what it stands for.
- Read more sight words whole: βίβλος, ἄγγελος, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ.
- Sound-spell your own name in Greek letters on a decorated name plate.

Warm-up. Chant the whole alphabet, two breaths, touching the cards. Now think about your own name: does it MEAN something? Lots of names do, and Greek names wear their meanings right on their sleeves. Today the key finally turns: you sound out real words, and some of them are people.

WATCH

The Meaning of the Chi Rho Symbol

The Religion Teacher · 1:46

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDziwpYV3xA>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the second story paragraph. Watch for the two letters inside the sign, then draw a Chi-Rho in the air: big X, tall P through its middle.

Note: Short, clear and made for a general audience; previewed.

BACKUP VIDEO

Christian Symbols - Volume 1

Patristix · 5:52

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9U5hpMligic>

For Session 2 or 3: a tour of several early Christian symbols, including friends you now read, the fish and the Chi-Rho.

KEY TERMS

sounding out

Reading a word letter by letter, then blending the sounds: Π-έ-τ-ρ-ο-ς, peh... tross... Πέτρος! The skill this whole course was building.

Σοφία

Sophia, said so-FEE-ah. It means wisdom; Proverbs tells us to seek her like treasure.

Πέτρος

Peter, said PEH-tross. It means Rock: the name Jesus gave Simon the fisherman.

Φίλιππος

Philip, said FEE-lip-poss. It means horse-lover: phil (loving) + hippos (horse).

Chi-Rho (ΧΡ)

The sign made of X and P, the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ, drawn one on top of the other. Christians have woven it into art for seventeen centuries.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

Πέτρος

Petros

PEH-tros

noun

Peter, a rock

ENGLISH Peter

πέτρα

petra

PEH-traH

noun

a rock

ENGLISH petrify

σοφία

sophia

so-FEE-ah

noun

wisdom

ENGLISH philosophy

Φίλιππος

Philippos

FEE-lip-pos

noun

Philip, a lover of horses

ENGLISH Philip

Μαρία

Maria

mah-REE-ah

noun

Mary

ENGLISH Mary

Σίμων

Simon

SEE-mohn

noun

Simon

Ἰωάννης

Ioannes

ee-oh-AN-nays

noun

John

ENGLISH John

Παῦλος

Paulos

POW-los

noun

Paul

ENGLISH Paul

Ἀνδρέας

Andreas

and-REH-as

noun

Andrew

σοφός

sophos

so-FOS

adjective

wise

ENGLISH sophomore

εὐαγγέλιον

euangelion

ew-ang-EH-lee-on

noun

good news, a gospel

ENGLISH evangel

CORE IDEAS

The story. Greek names are little sentences. When Jesus met Simon the fisherman, he gave him a new name: Πέτρος (PEH-tross), Peter, which is simply the Greek word for Rock. Every time anyone said Peter's name, they said a tiny sentence about what Jesus would make of him. Σοφία (so-FEE-ah), Sophia, is the Greek word for wisdom, the very treasure Proverbs says to dig for. Φίλιππος (FEE-lip-poss), Philip, means horse-lover: phil, loving, plus hippos, horse, the perfect name in a land that prized fine horses. And Μαρία (ma-REE-ah) is Mary, the name the Gospels give the mother of Jesus. Names in Greek do not just point at people; they SAY something, and now you can read what they say.

Two letters behind his head. Here is one more famous sign you can now unlock. In art from Britain to Egypt you will meet this mark: Ϟ, a big X with a tall P rising through its middle. It is not an X and a P at all. It is the Greek letters X (chi) and P (rho), the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (chris-TOSS), Christ, stacked into one sign, the Chi-Rho. In this week's picture, a mosaic floor found under an English farm field, the Chi-Rho stands behind the head of one of the earliest pictures of Christ anywhere: Greek letters, laid in stone, at the far cold end of the Roman world. Wherever the good news traveled, the Greek letters traveled with it.

How Greek works: the key turns. Sounding out is three steps, and you own them all. Step one: NAME the letters (Π, έ, τ, ρ, ο, ς: pi, epsilon, tau, rho, omicron, end-sigma). Step two: SOUND them one at a time (p, eh, t, r, o, s), minding the false friends (that ρ is r!). Step three: BLEND, slow then fast: p-eh-t-r-o-s... PEH-tross! Try the method on your sight words: βίβλος (BIB-loss), book, the word that gave us Bible; ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os), angel, messenger, where the double γγ says ng, a secret worth knowing; μικρός (mik-ROSS), small, and μέγας (MEH-gass), big, old friends from the poster, now readable whole. The little marks above the words just come along for the ride, copied, never graded.

Say it out loud. Read the name parade with your finger under each letter, slow then smooth: Πέτρος, PEH-tross, Rock! Σοφία, so-FEE-ah, Wisdom! Φίλιππος, FEE-lip-poss, Horse-lover! Μαρία, ma-REE-ah, Mary! Then the word parade: Θεός, βίβλος, ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os, remember the ng!), μικρός, μέγας, καί. Then spell the great name in capitals, letter by letter: X-P-I-Σ-T-O-Σ, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, chris-TOSS. Every word read out loud this week is a door you opened yourself.

Try it. This week you make My Name in Greek: your own name, sound-spelled in Greek letters, lettered large on a decorated name plate, and a plate for each person in your family. Some English sounds will need clever choices, and that is half the fun; code-makers improvise, and so do you.

PICTURE STUDY



The Hinton St Mary Mosaic, Unknown Romano-British mosaicist, 4th century A.D. · Floor mosaic · Found at Hinton St Mary, England; now in the British Museum, London

Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain

In 1963, workmen in an English village uncovered a Roman floor, and in its central circle, this face: very possibly the earliest picture of Christ found in Britain, laid in tiny stones about sixteen centuries ago. How do we know who it is meant to be? Look behind the head: the Chi-Rho, X and P, the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ. The letters are the label, and this week you can read them.

Look closely

- Find the X and the P behind the head: the big crossed chi, and the tall rho rising through it with its loop at the top.
- Find the two pomegranates, one on each side: an old picture-promise of life, bursting with seeds.
- Study the stones themselves: little squares of local rock and tile, counted out by hand into a face.
- This was a FLOOR in a family's villa. Imagine choosing to walk your whole house around, not across, this circle.

Talk about it

1. Why would the artist label the portrait with two Greek letters instead of writing a whole name?

2. This mosaic was made about as far from Jerusalem as a Roman could live. How did the letters get there?
3. The Chi-Rho was lost under a field for centuries and then read at once by scholars. What kept the letters readable all that time?

ACTIVITY

My Name in Greek

Greek names mean things, and now your name gets the Greek treatment: sound-spelled in the letters you have earned, lettered on a plate worth hanging by your door.

You will need

- Card or stiff paper for the name plates, one per family member
- Pencil, then markers or crayons; string or tape for hanging
- Your letter cards as the spelling kit

Steps

1. Say your name slowly and listen for its SOUNDS, not its English spelling: Jack is dj-a-k; Sophie is s-o-f-ee.
2. Spell the sounds with Greek letters from your cards: use α for ah, ε for eh, ι for i/ee, ο for short o, ω for long O; κ for k, π for p, τ for t, φ for f, θ for th. No Greek letter for a sound (like j or w)? Pick the nearest and tell everyone your rule: code-makers improvise.
3. Letter your Greek name LARGE on the plate, pencil first, then color. Decorate the border with anything from the quarter: fish, owls, scrolls, jugs.
4. Make a plate for each family member, sounding out loud as you spell. Deliver each plate and read the Greek name to its owner.
5. If your name happens to be one of the real Greek names (Peter, Philip, Sophia, Mary, or cousins like Petra or Pippa), letter the REAL Greek spelling from this lesson and tell its meaning: you have a name with a built-in sentence.
6. Read the name parade once more from the plates: every door in the house now speaks a little Greek.

Tips

- Sounds, not spelling: English letters often lie (the gh in night!), but your Greek letters say exactly what they mean.
- Remember end-sigma: if a name ends in an s-sound, it ends in ς, like Πέτρος.
- Double letters in English (the nn in Anna) usually need only one Greek letter; spell the sound you hear.

Check your work

- ☐ My own name plate is lettered in Greek, large and decorated.
- ☐ Every family member has a plate, delivered and read aloud.
- ☐ I used end-sigma ς correctly if a name needed it.
- ☐ I can read every plate in the house without help.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then sound out and copy the four names with meanings: Πέτρος, Rock; Σοφία, Wisdom; Φίλιππος, Horse-lover; Μαρία, Mary.
2. Copy ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ in capitals and draw the Chi-Rho ☩ beside it, labeling which stroke is X and which is P.
3. Copy the ng-secret: ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os), angel; double γγ says ng.
4. Write your own name in Greek letters, best hand, and read it aloud to the room.

From history. The mosaic floor at Hinton St Mary lay hidden under an English field for about fifteen hundred years; a workman's spade found it in 1963. The experts knew the face's meaning at a glance, because they could read the two letters behind the head, taught to them in an unbroken chain from Greek schoolrooms to English ones. The British Museum lifted the whole floor and kept it; the letters, as usual, outlasted the house.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Sound out Πέτρος step by step.

▼ Show solution

1. Name the letters: pi, epsilon, tau, rho, omicron, end-sigma.
2. Sound them: p, eh, t, r (rho rolls, it is not p!), o, s.
3. Blend slow, then fast: p-eh-t-r-o-s... PEH-tross.

Answer: Πέτρος, Peter, the Greek word for Rock: the name Jesus gave Simon.

Example 2. What two letters make the Chi-Rho, and why those two?

▼ **Show solution**

1. The sign is a big X with a tall P through its middle.
2. X is chi and P is rho, Greek letters, not English X and P.
3. They are the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ.

Answer: Chi and rho, the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ: a name folded into a sign, readable by anyone the alphabet has been given to.

Example 3. Sound out βίβλος and tell what English word it gave us.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Letters: beta, iota, beta, lambda, omicron, end-sigma.
2. Sounds: b, i, b, l, o, s.
3. Blend: BIB-loss. It means book.

Answer: βίβλος, book, and from it comes Bible: THE Book. You just read the word behind the word.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Read the four names aloud and give their meanings: Πέτρος, Σοφία, Φίλιππος, Μαρία.

▼ **Show answer**

PEH-tross, Rock (Peter); so-FEE-ah, Wisdom (Sophia); FEE-lip-poss, Horse-lover (Philip); ma-REE-ah, Mary.

2. **Easy** What is the Chi-Rho made of, and what does it stand for?

▼ **Show answer**

The Greek letters X (chi) and P (rho) stacked together: the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ.

3. **Easy** Sound out and translate: μικρός, μέγας.

▼ **Show answer**

mik-ROSS, small; MEH-gass, big. The poster words, now read whole with your own letters.

4. **Medium** Sound out βίβλος and ἄγγελος, and report the ng-secret.

▼ **Show answer**

BIB-loss, book (whence Bible); ANG-el-os, angel or messenger. The secret: double γγ says ng, not g-g.

5. **Medium** Whose name means Rock, and who gave it to him? What does that name-sentence promise?

▼ **Show answer**

Πέτρος, Peter; Jesus gave it to Simon the fisherman. The name said what Jesus would make of him: a rock-steady witness.

6. **Medium** Philip means horse-lover: phil (loving) + hippos (horse). Using phil, what would a philosopher love? (Sophia is your clue.)

▼ **Show answer**

Wisdom: philosopher is phil + sophia, a wisdom-lover. Two of this week's words shaking hands inside an English one.

7. **Hard** Spell ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ letter by letter, naming each letter and its sound, and explain why an English reader might misread the first two.

▼ **Show answer**

Chi (kh), rho (r), iota (i), sigma (s), tau (t), omicron (o), sigma (s): chris-TOSS. An English eye sees X and P, but they are chi and rho; that misreading is exactly why the Chi-Rho looks like an XP to the untrained.

8. **Challenge** Go on a Chi-Rho and letter hunt in your church, your books or art online (with a parent): find a Chi-Rho, an Α and Ω pair, a fish, or any Greek lettering, and read what you find to your family.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: Chi-Rhos hide on banners, pulpits, vestments, hymnal covers and old paintings; Α and Ω flank crosses and communion tables. Any genuine find, read aloud and explained, earns the point.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading the Chi-Rho as English XP. They are chi and rho, the start of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ; the sign is a name, not initials.
- Letting ρ slip back to p inside words. Πέτρος has both: π says p, ρ says r. Point at each as you sound it.

- Forgetting the ng-secret: double γγ in ἄγγελος says ng. Say ANG-el-os, never ag-gel-os.
- Sound-spelling names by English spelling instead of sound. The plate for Sophie needs the sounds s-o-f-ee, no silent letters; Greek letters do not do silent.

Make it a game • The Name Auction. Lay the name plates and sight-word cards face down. Players take turns flipping one and reading it aloud, letter by letter, then whole, then giving its meaning (Rock! Wisdom! Book! And!). A perfect read-and-meaning wins the card into the player's treasure pile; a stumble returns it face down for the next player. Greek-reading grown-ups must read with one eye closed, for fairness. Most cards when the table is empty wins the crown of Σοφία.

Scripture. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” (Proverbs 22:1, KJV)

Greek names say things, but the proverb digs deeper: a good name is a life, not a label. Peter's name promised a rock, and by grace he became one; the name on your plate is waiting for the life you bring it.

UNIT 5 • READING REAL WORDS • LESSON 5.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 20–30 MINUTES

5.2 ALPHA AND OMEGA

OBJECTIVES

- Read the Revelation phrase in Greek: τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ, and tell what it means.
- Review all twenty-four letters and read every sight-word card in the box.
- Tell how Α and Ω have appeared in Christian art for seventeen centuries, and spot them in the Ravenna mosaic.
- Perform the reading-aloud ceremony: chant, cards, scroll, plaque, plates.
- Host the Greek Letter Feast.

Warm-up. Open the treasure box and look: twenty-four letter cards and a stack of words, every one earned. In week one you knew two letters. Today you read the verse those two letters came from, in Greek, all by yourself, and then we feast. Chant the whole alphabet once, slowly, like a march into the last lesson.

WATCH

The Meaning of the Alpha and Omega Symbols in the Bible

The Religion Teacher · 1:41

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syYwIQsFSik>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Watch for the two letters in art, then find them again yourself in this week's mosaic picture.

Note: Short, clear and previewed; made for a general audience.

BACKUP VIDEO

A Hidden Meaning in The Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8)

Reasons for Hope* Jesus · 3:01

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgtNow5m4ng>

For Session 2 or 3: a slower look at Revelation 1:8 and what the first-and-last picture tells us about the Lord.

KEY TERMS

τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ

Greek for 'the Alpha and the Omega' (toh AL-fah kye toh OH), from Revelation 1:8. The Ὠ is omega written out as the letter itself.

mosaic

A picture built from thousands of small colored stones or glass pieces. The Ravenna churches hold some of the most glorious mosaics ever made.

first and last

What alpha and omega ARE in the alphabet, and what Jesus says he IS to everything: the beginning and the ending.

ceremony

A doing-it-properly moment: standing up, speaking clearly, honoring the thing done. Your reading-aloud ceremony crowns the quarter.

feast

A meal with a meaning. The Greek Letter Feast celebrates a quarter of work with olives, bread, honey, grapes, and the whole alphabet said out loud.

VOCABULARY FOR THE WEEK

Erasmian sounds, so every letter stays distinct: α ah, ε eh, η ay, ι ee, ο o, ω oh, υ oo. αι says eye, ει ay, οι oy, αυ ow, ευ ew, ου oo. A rough breathing adds h. Capitals show the written accent.

πρῶτος

protos

PROH-tos

adjective

first

ENGLISH prototype

ἔσχατος

eschatos

EHS-khah-tos

adjective

last

ENGLISH eschatology

ἀρχή

arche

ar-KHAY

noun

a beginning

ENGLISH archaeology

τέλος

telos

TEH-los

noun

an end

ENGLISH teleology

πνεῦμα

pneuma

PNEW-mah

noun

spirit, breath

ENGLISH pneumonia

ἀλήθεια

aletheia

ah-LAY-thay-ah

noun

truth

χάρις

charis

KHAH-ris

noun

grace, favor

ENGLISH charity

βασιλεία

basileia

bah-see-LAY-ah

noun

a kingdom

καινός

kainos

kye-NOS

adjective

new

μαρτυρία

marturia

mar-too-REE-ah

noun

a witness, testimony

εὐλογία

eulogia

ew-lo-GEE-ah

noun

a blessing

ENGLISH eulogy

CORE IDEAS

The story. Ten weeks ago you met a verse: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (Revelation 1:8). Back then you could read exactly two of its letters. Now look at the Greek phrase John wrote down: τὸ Ἀλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ (toh AL-fah kye toh OH), the Alpha and the Omega. Read it with your finger: τό, the; Ἀλφα, Alpha, the first letter's own name; καί, and, your first-ever word; τό, the; Ὠ, omega itself, standing alone like a king. Every letter, every word, earned by you. The Lord who holds the beginning and the ending put his name where an eight-year-old with ten weeks of letters could read it. That is not an accident. That is an invitation.

Seventeen hundred years of A and Ω. Because of that verse, Christians began writing A and Ω beside crosses and the Chi-Rho, in catacombs, on lamps, on tombstones, in golden mosaics. In the church of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna in Italy, a mosaic finished in A.D. 549 shows a jeweled cross floating in a circle of ninety-nine stars, and beside its arms, small and bright, the two letters: A on one side, Ω on the other. The whole picture says in two letters what Revelation says in a sentence: the Lord of the cross is the first and the last. For nearly fifteen hundred years, visitors have looked up at that cross; this week, you will be one of the few children in your town who can READ it.

How Greek works: the grand review. No new letters today; instead, the whole kingdom passes in review. The chant, alpha to omega, names and sounds. The vowels in one hand: α ε η ι ο υ ω, the singable seven. The false friends, saluted and dismissed: η says AY, ν says n, ρ says r, χ says kh. Sigma's slippers: σ at the ends of words. The ng-secret in ἄγγελος. And the word cards, read whole, a quarter's harvest: Θεός, καί, ΙΧΘΥΣ, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, ΑΘΕ, βίβλος, ἄγγελος, μικρός, μέγας, ἀλφάβητος, Πέτρος, Σοφία, Φίλιππος, Μαρία. Fourteen words and phrases, twenty-four letters: the key, complete, polished, yours.

Say it out loud. This is the week of the reading-aloud ceremony, so practice it like a performer. Stand. Chant the alphabet in two breaths, touching nothing. Read τὸ Ἀλφα

καὶ τὸ Ὡ from the card, slowly and grandly. Read five word cards drawn at random by the family. End with the verse in English, by heart if you can: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. Bow. Feast.

Try it. The Greek Letter Feast: olives, bread, honey and grapes, the foods of Greece, spread on a cloth. Every wall piece on display: scroll, plaque, poster, plates. The ceremony performed. The family taught one thing each. The alphabet, which was a list of strangers in September, now a choir of twenty-four friends, with you as their conductor.

PICTURE STUDY



The Apse Mosaic of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Unknown mosaicists of Ravenna, Dedicated A.D. 549 · Apse mosaic of glass and stone · Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, Italy

Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC0

This is the east end of a church near Ravenna, Italy, finished in A.D. 549, within living memory of the Roman Empire's fall in the west. A jeweled cross floats in a midnight-blue circle of stars above a green paradise meadow. Now look closely beside the arms of the cross: two small letters glint in the gold, A on one side, Ω on the other. The whole golden sky is quoting Revelation 1:8, and you can read the quote.

Look closely

- Find the A and the Ω beside the arms of the cross: small, bright, and placed where no one lifting their eyes could miss them.
- Count a few of the stars in the blue circle; the makers set ninety-nine of them around the cross.
- Find the tiny face of Christ at the center of the cross, where the beams meet: the maker's quiet confession.
- Look at the meadow below: sheep, trees, birds and a figure with raised hands, a green world at peace under the starry cross.

Talk about it

1. Why put the first and last letters of the alphabet beside a cross? What is the mosaic preaching without a single sentence?

2. The makers finished this in A.D. 549, in hard and dangerous times. What does a sky full of stars and gold say about what they trusted?
3. Ten weeks ago these were just two odd shapes. What changed: the mosaic, or you?

ACTIVITY

The Greek Letter Feast

Ten weeks, twenty-four letters, one feast. Tonight the student is host, reader, teacher and conductor, and the family is the honored audience.

You will need

- Olives, bread, honey and grapes (or any simple snack), a cloth, and the family table
- Every wall piece and treasure: the scroll, the ΙΧΘΥΣ plaque, the word-detective poster, the name plates, the wax tablet, the treasure box
- One card lettered large for the reading: τὸ Ἀλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ

Steps

1. Set the feast: cloth on the table, the foods of Greece arranged, the wall pieces displayed around the room like a museum.
2. Make the reading card: τὸ Ἀλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ lettered large and beautifully, with the English beneath: the Alpha and the Omega.
3. Open the ceremony standing: chant the whole alphabet, names and sounds, no peeking.
4. The readings: the Revelation card read in Greek and English; then five word cards drawn at random by family members and read on the spot.
5. The tour: walk the family past scroll, plaque, poster, plates and tablet, telling each one's story in a sentence or two.
6. Teach and serve: teach each family member one Greek thing (a letter, a word, the fish, the Chi-Rho), then serve the feast. Host eats last, like a good host, and first in honor.

Tips

- Rehearse the ceremony once the day before, start to finish, including the bow.
- Let the family draw the random word cards; surprise is the spice of the readings.
- If a reading stumbles, smile, sound it out letter by letter, and finish: that IS the skill, performed live.

Check your work

- ☐ The feast was set and served: olives, bread, honey, grapes or an honest substitute.
- ☐ The full chant and the Revelation reading were performed standing, no peeking.
- ☐ Five random word cards were read correctly on the spot.
- ☐ Every family member was taught one Greek thing and can repeat it.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the whole alphabet one last time for the quarter, small letters, alpha to omega, your finest row yet.
2. Copy τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ and write beneath it: the Alpha and the Omega, Revelation 1:8.
3. Write the quarter's honor roll: every Greek word you can read whole, listed from memory first, then checked against the box.
4. Write two sentences: what was hardest this quarter, and what you can do now that September-you could not.

From history. Ravenna's mosaics survived because the city's great days ended: when power and money moved elsewhere, nobody could afford to redecorate, so the golden ceilings stayed exactly as the year 549 left them. Empires fell, languages shifted, and the two small letters beside the cross went on saying the same thing to everyone who had been taught to read them. You now belong to that company, and the course's motto was true: by making, letter cards, tablets, scrolls and plaques, a maker was made.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ word by word.

▼ Show solution

1. τό: tau + omicron, toh, the.
2. Ἀλφά: AL-fah, the letter alpha's own name. καί: KYE, and.
3. τό again, then Ὠ: omega, standing alone, OH.

Answer: Toh AL-fah kye toh OH: the Alpha and the Omega. Five words of Revelation, read in John's own letters.

Example 2. In the Ravenna mosaic, which letter stands on each side of the cross, and what are the two letters saying?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Beside one arm: Α, capital alpha, the first letter.
2. Beside the other: Ω, capital omega, the last.
3. Recall whose title that is.

Answer: Α and Ω, first and last: the mosaic is quoting Revelation 1:8, naming the Lord of the cross the beginning and the ending.

Example 3. A family member draws the καί card and the ΙΧΘΥΣ card at the feast. Perform both readings.

▼ **Show solution**

1. καί: kappa-alpha-iota, KYE, and.
2. ΙΧΘΥΣ: iota-chi-theta-upsilon-sigma, ich-THOOS, fish.
3. Add the fish's secret for full marks.

Answer: καί means and; ΙΧΘΥΣ means fish, and its letters begin Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. Two cards, two clean readings.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Read the phrase and tell where it comes from: τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ.

▼ **Show answer**

Toh AL-fah kye toh OH, the Alpha and the Omega, from Revelation 1:8.

2. **Easy** Chant the whole alphabet, then name the seven vowels.

▼ **Show answer**

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω; the vowels are α ε η ι ο υ ω.

3. **Easy** Why do Α and Ω appear beside crosses in Christian art?

▼ **Show answer**

Because of Revelation 1:8: Jesus calls himself Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters, meaning the beginning and the ending; artists wrote his title beside his cross.

4. **Medium** Speed round, read and translate: Θεός, καί, μικρός, μέγας, βίβλος.

▼ **Show answer**

theh-OSS, God; KYE, and; mik-ROSS, small; MEH-gass, big; BIB-loss, book.

5. **Medium** Final false-friends parade: η, ν, ρ, χ, and the two o-brothers. Sounds, please.

▼ **Show answer**

η long AY; ν n; ρ rolled r; χ kh as in loch; ο short o (pot), ω long O (tone).

6. **Medium** The Ravenna cross mosaic was finished in A.D. 549. About how many centuries have its Α and Ω been readable, and what kept them readable?

▼ **Show answer**

Nearly fifteen centuries. The mosaic kept the letters bright, and unbroken teaching, alphabet passed from teacher to child, kept readers coming who knew what they meant.

7. **Hard** In the Greek phrase, omega appears not as a word but as the letter itself: τὸ ᾠ, THE Omega. Why is naming a letter enough to make the point?

▼ **Show answer**

Because the letter IS the point: omega is the alphabet's own ending, so 'the Omega' means the ending of everything, just as 'the Alpha' means the beginning. The alphabet's order, learned by every schoolchild, is the picture the verse is painted on.

8. **Challenge** After the feast, write (or say) a one-paragraph letter to next year's you, who will start grade 4 Greek: what should future-you remember from the treasure box, and which word do you hand over first?

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary: keep chanting, trust the false-friends list, start with καί or Θεός. Any thoughtful handover earns the point; the box and the chant travel on to grade 4, where the letters start building words and sentences in earnest.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading τὸ ᾠ as a strange word. It is just omega written grandly as a letter-name: the Omega, the way we might say 'the A and the Z.'
- Rushing the ceremony. Slow readings sound grander and land better; a feast is not a race.

- Retiring the chant after the feast. Two minutes a week over the holidays keeps all twenty-four friends; grade 4 Greek will ask after every one of them.
- Thinking the letters were the treasure. They are the KEY; the treasure is everything they open, starting with the Book the quarter kept pointing at.

Make it a game • The Omega Gauntlet. The quarter's final boss battle, played at or after the feast. The family builds a gauntlet of five challenges from the treasure box: 1) the full chant, 2) three word cards read cold, 3) the false-friends parade, 4) one letter written blind (eyes closed!) from its name, 5) the Revelation phrase read grandly. Each challenge passed earns a grape or an olive, ceremonially awarded. Pass all five and the family proclaims the student Keeper of the Alphabet, with applause, which is the point.

Scripture. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8, KJV)

The verse that opened the course closes it, but now you read its two letters, and the Greek phrase they live in, with your own eyes. The Lord who is first and last kept every letter of His word for you; keep chanting yours.