

GRADE 4 GREEK

First edition

5 units

10 lessons • one quarter

A video for every lesson

FIRST EDITION

COURSE GUIDE

This short course is the reading year of Greek for a fourth grader: the year the alphabet stops being a chart on the wall and becomes a working tool in the mouth. Every lesson is built around a real thing a student can see: the marble bust of Homer, whose songs Greek children knew before Greece could write; a whole law code carved in a stone wall on Crete; Archimedes leaping from his bath shouting one Greek word; the great dome of Hagia Sophia; the oldest complete song on earth, cut into a little marble column; dinosaur names; a Gospel book written in silver on purple pages; and a 2,500-year-old vase where the painter wrote his heroes' names beside them, waiting for someone who can read.

Every lesson follows the same path. First comes **the story**. Then **how Greek works**: the letters, teams and marks the story opens up, explained for a fourth grader. Then **say it out loud**, because Greek is learned by chanting, sounding and reading aloud. Last, **try it**: the student runs alphabet card races, carves (in crayon) a stone inscription, builds diphthong sliders, drums the stressed syllables of Greek words, letters a purple page, and finishes the quarter by hosting a family Greek Reading Evening.

There is no grammar this year: no cases, no verb endings, nothing to decline. The whole aim is fluent, confident sounding-out: by the end of the quarter the student can chant the alphabet at speed, read ALL-CAPITAL inscriptions and small-letter words alike, handle all six diphthongs and both breathing marks, treat any accent as stress-this-syllable, count to ten in Greek letters, and read about fifteen real Greek sight words, from εὑρηκα (HEW-ray-ka, I have found it!) to Κύριε ἐλέησον (KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son, Lord, have mercy), words the student will keep meeting for the rest of his or her life.

Most videos come from trusted teaching channels: Alpha with Angela (a missionary teacher's gentle Biblical Greek series), Bedtime History,

TED-Ed, World History Encyclopedia, Smarthistory, the Getty Museum, Southern Seminary, National Geographic, polyMATHY, RobWords and latintutorial. Every video was previewed for accuracy and content. A few are made for a slightly older audience; the lesson notes say so, and you can watch what fits. 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 4 (about ages 9–10) who read English comfortably. The course follows our grade 3 Greek, but does not require it: Unit 1 re-teaches the whole alphabet at speed, so a student starting fresh can begin here with some extra chanting in the first two weeks. A parent or teacher reads along, joins the chants and checks the practice. Nothing needs to be bought: every activity uses paper, index cards, pencil, crayons and household things.

HOW TO USE THIS COURSE

1. **The weekly rhythm.** The quarter has 10 lessons, one a week, each with three sessions of 30–40 minutes. Session 1 is the warm-up, the video, the teaching 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 alphabet 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.** Letters and sounds are learned the way multiplication tables are: out loud, in rhythm, a few minutes a day. Open every session by chanting the alphabet in two breaths (alpha to mu, nu to omega), then running whichever card decks exist so far: letters, diphthongs, sight words. 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 or read by the student. The paragraph marked *The story* tells what happened; *How Greek*

works explains the letters and marks; *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.** Greek prints breathing marks and accents over its words. The student learns to read a rough breathing as h (ἅγιος is HA-gee-os) and any accent as stress-this-syllable, and simply copies the marks when writing. Students are never graded on accents; the course prints them so the eye learns the real look of Greek.
5. **Three card decks.** The course runs on three growing decks. First, the 24 letter cards (made fresh in Unit 1, or carried over from our grade 3 course). Second, six diphthong cards from Unit 2. Third, about fifteen sight-word cards, Greek on the front, meaning and pronunciation on the back, added lesson by lesson. Review the full decks at the start of Session 2 and Session 3; a card read rightly three times in a row can move to a weekly pile.
6. **The word list.** A sight word is read whole and understood whole, like a face you recognize; nothing is declined or conjugated this year. The course teaches these, in this order. Unit 1: ἀλφάβητος (the alphabet itself, alpha-beta!). Unit 2: εὑρηκα (I have found it!), ἅγιος (holy), Ἁγία Σοφία (Holy Wisdom), ὥρα (hour), ἵππος (horse), ἄγγελος (messenger, angel). Unit 3: the numbers εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε (one to five), Ὀλυμπιάς (Olympiad), μουσική (music). Unit 4: δεινός (terrible) and σαῦρος (lizard), which together make dinosaur, ποταμός (river), ρινόκερος (rhinoceros, read for fun), βιβλία (books), Χριστός (the Anointed One), βαπτίζω (I dip). Unit 5: the vase names ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ, and the prayer words Κύριε ἐλέησον (Lord, have mercy) and Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (Jesus Christ). This list is the sight-word deck; a student who can read every card aloud owns the course.
7. **The Greek notebook.** Use any notebook for the whole quarter. It holds the alphabet race charts, the diphthong lists, the Greek-numeral tables, the copied sight words and the plans for the Reading Evening. Date every page. Neat pages matter: a student who can find his own chart from week 3 in week 9 has learned how to study.
8. **Where the student stands.** A student coming from our grade 3 Greek already knows the letter names and sounds; this year makes them fast, adds the diphthongs, breathings, accents and numerals, and puts them to work on real words. A newcomer starts at Unit 1 and simply chants a little extra. Real grammar, the famous endings, begins in grade 5; this year's only grammar words are letter,

capital, small letter, vowel, consonant, diphthong, breathing mark, accent and syllable.

9. **Unit review and unit challenge.** Each unit ends with a short review (30 points), which may be done orally, and a unit challenge: a stone inscription with an alphabet Grand Prix record, a labeled dome of Hagia Sophia, a Greek-numeral family poster with a backyard stadion race, a Build-a-Beast presentation, and at last the Greek Reading Evening. Keep the challenge work in a folder.
10. **The Greek Reading Evening.** In the last week, the student hosts a short family evening: he or she sings or chants the alphabet, reads every sight-word card aloud, shows the labeled vase and the purple page, reads Κύριε ἐλέησον and explains what it means and where it comes from, and serves bread, olives, honey and grapes. It is the course's graduation: the family watches a child read Greek.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

UNIT 1 • WEEKS 1–2

The Alphabet Comes Back

The whole alphabet re-mastered at racing speed, with Homer's sung poems as the story of a world before writing; then the oldest Greek writing itself: capitals cut in stone, no spaces, no small letters, sometimes plowing back and forth boustrophedon, read straight off the great law wall of Gortyn.

- 1.1 Four and Twenty Letters
- 1.2 Letters Cut in Stone

UNIT 2 • WEEKS 3–4

The Tricky Bits

Archimedes leaps from his bath shouting εὕρηκα, and the six diphthongs, two vowels with one sound, come into the deck; then the breathing marks: the tiny signs that put the H in holy, in ἅγιος and in Hagia Sophia, the church of Holy Wisdom.

- 2.1 Eureka! Two Letters, One Sound
- 2.2 The Breathing Marks

UNIT 3 • WEEKS 5–6

Counting and Singing

Greek letters do double duty as numbers, α´ is 1 and ι´ is 10, and the Greeks counted whole years by Olympiads; then the oldest complete song on earth, cut into the Seikilos stone, introduces the accents: the little marks that are the music of Greek, all read the same simple way, stress this syllable.

3.1 Letters That Count

3.2 The Music of Greek

UNIT 4 • WEEKS 7–8

Real Words Everywhere

The student's new reading power is let loose on real words: dinosaur is δεινός + σαῦρος (terrible lizard), hippopotamus is river-horse, rhinoceros is nose-horn; and the church's everyday words, Bible, angel, Christ, baptize, turn out to be Greek words the student can now sound out, silver on purple in the oldest Gospel books.

4.1 Science Speaks Greek

4.2 Church Words Are Greek

UNIT 5 • WEEKS 9–10

First Reading

Reading goes live: the student reads the heroes' names off Exekias' 2,500-year-old vase, AXI/MEYΣ and AIAΣ, then reads the two Greek words the whole church has prayed for two thousand years, Κύριε ἐλέησον, and graduates at the family Greek Reading Evening.

5.1 Names on the Vase

5.2 Kyrie Eleison

WEEKLY PACING CALENDAR

WEEK	PLAN
1	• Session 1: Lesson 1.1 Four and Twenty Letters: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 1.1 activity (the letter cards and the Alphabet Grand Prix) 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. Add a few minutes of card racing on the other days if you like.</i>
2	• Session 1: Lesson 1.2 Letters Cut in Stone: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study

WEEK	PLAN
	• Session 2: Lesson 1.2 activity (the stone inscription) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 1 review and unit challenge (the inscription and the Grand Prix record)
3	• Session 1: Lesson 2.1 Eureka! Two Letters, One Sound: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 2.1 activity (the diphthong sliders and the bathtub experiment) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
4	• Session 1: Lesson 2.2 The Breathing Marks: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 2.2 activity (the Breathing Sorter and the dome) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 2 review and unit challenge (the labeled dome and the Sorter demonstration)
5	• Session 1: Lesson 3.1 Letters That Count: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 3.1 activity (the Greek-number scavenger hunt) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
6	• Session 1: Lesson 3.2 The Music of Greek: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 3.2 activity (Accent Drums and the paper stele) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 3 review and unit challenge (the numeral poster and the stadion race)
7	• Session 1: Lesson 4.1 Science Speaks Greek: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 4.1 activity (Build-a-Beast) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
8	• Session 1: Lesson 4.2 Church Words Are Greek: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 4.2 activity (the purple page) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 4 review and unit challenge (Build-a-Beast presented)

WEEK	PLAN
9	• Session 1: Lesson 5.1 Names on the Vase: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 5.1 activity (the labeled vase) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation
10	• Session 1: Lesson 5.2 Kyrie Eleison: warm-up, video, teaching and picture study • Session 2: Lesson 5.2 activity (rehearsing the Reading Evening) and Greek notebook • Session 3: Worked examples, practice and recitation • Session 3 (end of unit): Unit 5 review and unit challenge (the family Greek Reading Evening) <i>Last week. Host the Greek Reading Evening: the student chants the alphabet, reads every sight-word card, shows the vase and the purple page, reads Κύριε ἑλέησον and explains it, and serves bread, olives, honey and grapes.</i>

MATERIALS

Greek notebook (any notebook)

One for the quarter: race charts, diphthong lists, numeral tables, copied sight words and the Reading Evening plan.

Index cards or paper cut into card-sized pieces, and a box, bag or binder ring to keep them

For the three decks: 24 letter cards, 6 diphthong cards and about 15 sight-word cards.

Pencil, crayons or colored pencils, and a fine-tip marker

For the cards, the race charts, the stone inscription and the labeled vase. A metallic (silver or gold) crayon or gel pen makes the purple page shine.

A sheet of gray card or paper, and a sheet of purple paper

Gray for the crayon-engraved stone inscription in Unit 1; purple for the silver-lettered Gospel page in Unit 4. Coloring white paper works fine.

A measuring cup, a bowl or tub, and a small waterproof toy

For the eureka experiment in Unit 2: watching the water rise exactly as much as the toy pushed in.

Bread, olives, honey and grapes, and a cloth

For the family Greek Reading Evening in week 10. Any simple snack works.

GRADING

Grades come mostly from the daily work: the chanting, the card-deck reviews, the notebook and the practice, because reading is learned by steady, honest repetition. A student who chants faithfully, keeps a neat notebook and reads aloud without fear earns full credit.

PART	%
Recitation and card decks (daily chanting, letter races, sight-word reviews, reading aloud)	35
Greek notebook (dated pages, charts, copied words)	20
Practice (sounding out, matching, derivative-spotting, corrected with the answers)	15
Unit reviews	15
Unit challenges	15

Scale: A 90–100, B 80–89, C 70–79, D 60–69. Below 60: repeat the chants and card decks with help.

- A sound counts, a guess does not: a word is read rightly when every letter got its true sound and the stressed syllable landed where the accent sits.
- Accents and breathing marks are copied, never graded. A missing accent costs nothing; η read as n costs the point.
- Unit reviews may be done orally for a student who writes slowly; the parent writes down the answers.
- 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 Greek to teach this course. Every letter and word comes with its sound spelled out in plain English (ἵππος is HIP-poss), every chant is written in full, and the videos do the demonstrating a specialist would. Learn alongside your child:

race the alphabet cards against each other, let your child teach you the diphthongs, and be beaten gracefully at the Grand Prix. A parent who is cheerfully learning teaches more than any speech about why Greek matters.

Why spend a whole year just on reading? Because fluency is the gate everything else walks through. A child who can sound out any Greek word without flinching will find grade 5's grammar easy, and in the meantime owns something real: Bible, angel, Christ and baptize are Greek words, the New Testament was written in this alphabet, and the church's oldest prayer is two Greek words this course teaches. Every hour here also pays off in English spelling and science vocabulary, from alphabet to dinosaur.

The Greek world was a pagan world, and this course says so honestly. Homer's heroes, Achilles and Ajax on the vase, are the stories the Greeks told, stirring and sad and not true the way the Gospel is true; the lessons say so plainly. Hagia Sophia's long history, church for a thousand years, then mosque, is told plainly and warmly too. The videos were all previewed; a few (RobWords, polyMATHY, the seminary lecture in Unit 4) are made for older audiences, and the lesson notes say so.

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 FOUR AND TWENTY LETTERS

βῆτα

beta

BAY-tah

name

beta, the second letter

ENGLISH beta

γάμμα

gamma

GAM-mah

name

gamma

ENGLISH gamma

δέλτα

delta

DEHL-tah

name

delta

ENGLISH delta

ἔψιλον

epsilon

EH-psee-lon

name

epsilon

ζῆτα

zeta

ZAY-tah

name

zeta

ἦτα

eta

AY-tah

name

eta

ENGLISH eta

θῆτα

theta

THAY-tah

name

theta

ENGLISH theta

κάππα

kappa

KAP-pah

name

kappa

λάμβδα

lambda

LAMB-dah

name

lambda

μῦ

mu

MOO

name

mu

νῦ

nu

NOO

name

nu

1.2 LETTERS CUT IN STONE

ἐπιγραφή

epigraphe

eh-pee-grah-FAY

noun

an inscription

ENGLISH epigraph

στήλη

stele

STAY-lay

noun

a standing stone

ENGLISH stele

δίκη

dike

DEE-kay

noun

justice; a lawsuit

δικαστής

dikastes

dee-kas-TAYS

noun

a judge

μάρτυς

martus

MAR-toos

noun

a witness

ENGLISH martyr

ὄρκος

horkos

HOR-kos

noun

an oath

ψήφισμα

psephisma

PSAY-fis-mah

noun

a decree, a vote

πολίτης

polites

po-LEE-tays

noun

a citizen

ἄρχων

archon

AR-khohn

noun

a ruler

ENGLISH archon

βουστροφηδόν

boustrophedon

boost-ro-fay-DON

adverb

as the ox plows, line turning back on line

Κρήτη

Krete

KRAY-tay

noun

Crete

ENGLISH Crete

2.1 EUREKA! TWO LETTERS, ONE SOUND

εὔρηκα

heureka

HEW-ray-kah

verb

I have found it

ENGLISH eureka

αἰών

aion

eye-OHN

noun

an age

ENGLISH aeon

εἰκών

eikon

ay-KOHN

noun

an image

ENGLISH icon

οἶνος

oinos

OY-nos

noun

wine

εὐχή

euche

ew-KHAY

noun

a prayer

αἷμα

haima

HEYE-mah

noun

blood

ναύτης

nautes

NOW-tays

noun

a sailor

βοῦς

bous

BOOS

noun

an ox

Ζεύς

Zeus

ZEWS

noun

Zeus, in the Greek stories

αὐλός

aulos

ow-LOS

noun

a pipe

οικία

oikia

oy-KEE-ah

noun

a house

2.2 THE BREATHING MARKS

ἅγιος

hagios

HAH-gee-os

adjective

holy

ῥα

hora

HOH-rah

noun

an hour

ENGLISH hour

ἵππος

hippos

HIP-pos

noun

a horse

ENGLISH hippopotamus

ἥλιος

helios

HAY-lee-os

noun

the sun

ENGLISH helium

ἱερόν

hieron

hee-eh-RON

noun

a temple, a holy place

ὕμνος

humnos

HOOM-nos

noun

a hymn

ENGLISH hymn

Ἑλλάς

Hellas

hehl-LAS

noun

Greece

ENGLISH Hellene

ῥόδον

hrodon

HRO-don

noun

a rose

ἕξ

hex

HEHKS

number

six

ἐπτά

hepta

hehp-TAH

number

seven

ἐορτή

heorte

heh-or-TAY

noun

a feast

3.1 LETTERS THAT COUNT

εἷς

heis

HAYS

number

one

δύο

duo

DOO-o

number

two

τρεῖς

treis

TRAYS

number

three

τέσσαρες

tessares

TEHS-sah-rehs

number

four

πέντε

pente

PEHN-teh

number

five

στάδιον

stadion

STAH-dee-on

noun

a stadion, a race length

ENGLISH stadium

Ὀλυμπιάς

Olumpias

o-loom-pee-AS

noun

an Olympiad, the four years between Games

ENGLISH Olympiad

στέφανος

stephanos

STEH-fah-nos

noun

a wreath

ENGLISH Stephen

ἔλαιον

elaion

EH-lye-on

noun

olive oil

ἄγών

agon

ah-GOHN

noun

a contest

ENGLISH agony

δρόμος

dromos

DRO-mos

noun

a race, a course

νικητής

niketes

nee-kay-TAYS

noun

a victor

3.2 THE MUSIC OF GREEK

μουσική

mousike

moo-see-KAY

noun

music

ENGLISH music

λύρα

lura

LOO-rah

noun

a lyre

ENGLISH lyre

κιθάρα

kithara

kee-THAH-rah

noun

a cithara, a lyre

ENGLISH guitar

ῥυθμός

hruthmos

hrooth-MOS

noun

rhythm

ENGLISH rhythm

μέλος

melos

MEH-los

noun

a tune; a limb

ENGLISH melody

ᾶδω

ado

AH-doh

verb

I sing

χορδή

chorde

khor-DAY

noun

a string

ENGLISH cord

τόνος

tonos

TO-nos

noun

a pitch; a stretching

ENGLISH tone

ὠδός

odos

oh-DOS

noun

a singer

ψάλλω

psallo

PSAL-loh

verb

I pluck; I sing a psalm

ENGLISH psalm

ἦχος

echos

AY-khos

noun

a sound

ENGLISH echo

4.1 SCIENCE SPEAKS GREEK

δεινός

deinos

day-NOS

adjective

fearful; mighty

ENGLISH dinosaur

σαῦρος

sauros

SOW-ros

noun

a lizard

ENGLISH dinosaur

ῥινόκερως

hrinokeros

hree-NO-keh-rohs

noun

a nose-horn beast

ENGLISH rhinoceros

παλαιός

palaaios

pah-lye-OS

adjective

old

ENGLISH paleontology

ὀστέον

osteon

os-TEH-on

noun

a bone

ζῶον

zoon

ZOH-on

noun

a living creature

ENGLISH zoo

φύσις

phusis

FOO-sis

noun

nature

ENGLISH physics

γένος

genos

GEH-nos

noun

a family, a kind

ENGLISH genus

εἶδος

eidos

AY-dos

noun

a form, a kind

κεφαλή

kephale

keh-fah-LAY

noun

a head

στόμα

stoma

STO-mah

noun

a mouth

ENGLISH stomach

4.2 CHURCH WORDS ARE GREEK

βαπτίζω

baptizo

bap-TEE-zoh

verb

I dip, I baptize

ENGLISH baptize

εὐχαριστία

eucharistia

ew-khah-ris-TEE-ah

noun

thanksgiving

ENGLISH Eucharist

ἀπόστολος

apostolos

ah-POS-to-los

noun

one who is sent; an apostle

ENGLISH apostle

διάκονος

diakonos

dee-AH-ko-nos

noun

a servant

ENGLISH deacon

ἐπίσκοπος

episkopos

eh-PIS-ko-pos

noun

an overseer

ENGLISH bishop

πρεσβύτερος

presbuteros

prehs-BOO-teh-ros

noun

an elder

ENGLISH priest

βάπτισμα

baptisma

BAP-tis-mah

noun

baptism

ENGLISH baptism

προσευχή

proseuche

pro-sew-KHAY

noun

a prayer

λειτουργία

leitourgia

lay-toor-GEE-ah

noun

a public service

ENGLISH liturgy

ψαλμός

psalmos

psal-MOS

noun

a psalm

ENGLISH psalm

παράκλητος

parakletos

pah-RAH-klay-tos

noun

a helper, an advocate

5.1 NAMES ON THE VASE

Ἀχιλλεύς

Achilleus

ah-khil-LEWS

noun

Achilles

Πάτροκλος

Patroklos

PAH-tro-klos

noun

Patroclus

Ἕκτωρ

Hektor

HEHK-tohr

noun

Hector

Τροία

Troia

TROY-ah

noun

Troy

ἥρωας

heros

HAY-rohs

noun

a hero

ENGLISH hero

ἀμφορεύς

amphoreus

am-fo-REWS

noun

a two-handled jar

ENGLISH amphora

δόρυ

doru

DO-roo

noun

a spear

ἀσπίς

aspis

as-PIS

noun

a shield

μάχη

mache

MAH-khay

noun

a battle

κλέος

kleos

KLEH-os

noun

glory, fame

όπλίτης

hoplites

ho-PLEE-tays

noun

a heavy-armed soldier

ENGLISH hoplite

5.2 KYRIE ELEISON

κύριος

kurios

KOO-ree-os

noun

lord, master

ἐλεέω

eleeo

eh-leh-EH-oh

verb

I have mercy

ἔλεος

eleos

EH-leh-os

noun

mercy

ἁμαρτία

hamartia

hah-mar-TEE-ah

noun

a sin

σωτηρία

soteria

soh-tay-REE-ah

noun

salvation

δέσις

deesis

DEH-ay-sis

noun

a petition

ἱκεσία

hikesia

hee-keh-SEE-ah

noun

a supplication

οἰκτιρμός

oiktirmos

oyk-tir-MOS

noun

compassion

βοήθεια

boetheia

bo-AY-thay-ah

noun

help

λατρεία

latreia

lah-TRAY-ah

noun

worship, service

δέομαι

deomai

DEH-o-mye

verb

I ask, I pray

UNIT 1

THE ALPHABET COMES BACK

Before Greek children could read, they listened. The two greatest stories Greece ever told, the Iliad and the Odyssey, were not books at first: they were songs, fifteen thousand lines and more, carried whole in the memories of singers who could pour them out evening after evening by firelight. The blind poet Homer stands at the head of that long line of singers, and when the Greeks finally got an alphabet, his songs were among the first things they wrote down, as if the whole nation said: these must never be lost. This quarter you become one of the readers those letters were invented for. In this unit the alphabet comes back, all four and twenty letters, and comes back fast: names, sounds, both shapes, chanted from memory and raced on cards against the clock.

Then you will read Greek the way the first Greek readers did: CUT IN STONE, ALL IN CAPITALS, WITH NO SPACES AND NO SMALL LETTERS AT ALL, and sometimes written boustrophedon, 'as the ox turns plowing': one line marching left to right, the next turning and marching right to left with every letter mirrored. On the island of Crete a whole wall of law, twelve tall columns of it, still stands after twenty-four centuries, waiting for readers. By the end of this unit you will chant the alphabet in under half a minute, read words in capitals or small letters, and have carved (in crayon) an inscription of your own.

PREREQUISITES

- Can read English comfortably and enjoys a race (our grade 3 Greek teaches the letters gently; a newcomer simply chants extra this unit)
- Has a notebook, index cards and pencil ready for the quarter
- Can commit to three short sessions a week, with a few minutes of card chanting on the days between

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can chant the whole Greek alphabet from alpha to omega, from memory, in two breaths.
- ☐ I can say the name, the sound and both shapes (capital and small) of any letter shown to me.
- ☐ I can name the trap letters that fool English eyes (η, ρ, ν, υ, ω) and give their true sounds.
- ☐ I can read a word written in ALL CAPITALS, even with no spaces around it.
- ☐ I can write a short line boustrophedon and read one back.
- ☐ My 24 letter cards are made (or refreshed), and my best Grand Prix time is written on the race chart.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel)**: Free. A missionary teacher's gentle Biblical Greek series; her alphabet lessons are this unit's main videos, and the whole series is good extra review.
- **The Children's Homer, by Padraic Colum (free online)**: Free at Project Gutenberg (look for The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy), also in print. The Iliad and Odyssey retold for children; the perfect read-aloud while the alphabet that wrote them down comes back.
- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press**: A detective-story workbook that drills the alphabet. The right prescription if this unit's speed feels too fast.

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.

1.1 Four and Twenty Letters

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

1.2 Letters Cut in Stone

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

UNIT 1 REVIEW

Answer aloud or on paper. Letter cards and notebook charts may be used for checking after each answer, not during; the goal is letters known by heart. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

Chant the Greek alphabet from alpha to omega, from memory. (Parent checks against the chart; one slip allowed.)

2. **5 pts**

The parent shows any six letter cards, shuffled. Give each letter's name, sound, and other shape (capital for small, small for capital).

3. **5 pts**

Name the five trap letters and the true sound of each.

4. **5 pts**

Read aloud from the stone: ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ. Then write it in small letters with its little marks.

5. **5 pts**

Tell, in two or three sentences, how Homer's poems survived before writing, and what the Greeks did with them once the alphabet came.

6. **5 pts**

What does boustrophedon mean? Read this line, which is on its return trip: ΣΟΤΗΒΑΦΛΑ.

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.
2. Six for six, e.g. shown H: eta, says AY, small shape η. Any six done correctly earns the points.
3. η eta says AY, not n; ρ rho says r, not p; ν nu says n, not v; υ upsilon is the vowel oo/ü, not y; ω omega is long o, not w.
4. al-FA-bay-toss, alphabet; in small letters ἀλφάβητος, with the smooth breathing and the accent restored.
5. Bards carried the Iliad and Odyssey whole in memory and sang them for generations; Homer himself was said to be blind. When the alphabet arrived, the songs were among the first things written down, so they could never be lost.
6. 'As the ox turns plowing': lines alternate direction, with letters mirrored on the right-to-left lines. Read right to left it is ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ, alphabet.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE INSCRIPTION AND THE RECORD LAP

Present the unit's two proofs together: the finished stone inscription (name, motto, one honest boustrophedon line) and the Alphabet Grand Prix race chart with the week's record lap. The student reads the inscription aloud, finger tracing the ox-turn, then runs one live record attempt, the full shuffled deck, names and sounds, against the clock, witnessed and signed by a family member on the chart.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The inscription	The inscription is in true Greek capitals, name built by sound, with a correctly mirrored boustrophedon line.
The race chart	The race chart shows dated times from both weeks and a marked personal record, witnessed and signed.
The live lap	The live lap was run aloud, names and sounds, with no more than two stumbles.
The explanation	The student explained boustrophedon and why old Greek has no small letters, in his or her own words.

UNIT 1 • THE ALPHABET COMES BACK • LESSON 1.1 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 30-40 MINUTES

1.1 FOUR AND TWENTY LETTERS

OBJECTIVES

- Tell how Homer's poems were sung from memory before Greece could write, and why the alphabet was used to save them.
- Chant the whole alphabet from memory, alpha to omega, in two breaths.
- Give the name, sound and both shapes of every letter.
- Name the trap letters (η, ρ, υ, ω) and give their true sounds.
- Make or refresh the 24 letter cards and set a first Grand Prix time.

Warm-up. Sing the English ABC song, then try to say it BACKWARD from G to A. Hard, isn't it? You know those letters by heart, but only in order, like beads on a string. This week you get your Greek letters back, and you will know them better than that: any letter, any order, at racing speed. First, though, a question: how would you keep a story safe if nobody in the world could write? The Greeks had an answer, and it was fifteen thousand lines long.

WATCH

Biblical Greek - Lesson 9 - Alphabet part 1 - Free Greek.

Alpha with Angela · 23:41

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

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph. Chant the letters along with her, out loud, every time she does.

Note: A real teaching lesson, nearly 25 minutes; feel free to split it across two sessions. It is part of her numbered series, but it stands on its own, and any unfamiliar terms she mentions can simply be ignored. Her pronunciation may differ a little from our classroom sounds; small differences between channels are normal, and this course teaches the classroom (Erasmian) sounds.

BACKUP VIDEO

How to Sound Out Ancient Greek Words - Your First Ancient Greek Lesson!

polyMATHY · 19:27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge-mq6ZnceU>

For Session 2 or 3, once the chant is steady: watch him sound out real Greek words letter by letter, exactly the skill this whole quarter builds.

KEY TERMS

alphabet

The letter set itself, named for its own first two letters: alpha + beta. Greek even has a word for it, ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss), your first sight word.

consonant

A letter that stops or shapes the breath: β, γ, δ and friends. Greek has seventeen.

vowel

A letter you can sing: α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ, ω. Greek has seven, two more than English, because it gives long E and long O their own letters.

bard

A singer who carries poems in memory. Homer's poems lived in bards' memories for generations before they were written down.

sight word

A word you read whole, like a friend's face, without stopping to spell it. This course collects about fifteen of them.

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.

βῆτα

beta

BAY-tah

name

beta, the second letter

ENGLISH beta

γάμμα

gamma

GAM-mah

name

gamma

ENGLISH gamma

δέλτα

delta

DEHL-tah

name

delta

ENGLISH delta

ἔψιλον

epsilon

EH-psee-lon

name

epsilon

ζῆτα

zeta

ZAY-tah

name

zeta

ἦτα

eta

AY-tah

name

eta

ENGLISH eta

θῆτα

theta

THAY-tah

name

theta

ENGLISH theta

κάππα

kappa

KAP-pah

name

kappa

λάμβδα

lambda

LAMB-dah

name

lambda

μῦ

mu

MOO

name

mu

νῦ

nu

NOO

name

nu

CORE IDEAS

The story. Long before Greek children could read, they could listen, and what they listened to was Homer. The Iliad, the story of the war at Troy, and the Odyssey, the story of one soldier's ten-year journey home, are together more than twenty-seven thousand lines of poetry, and for generations there was no way to write any of it down. Singers called bards learned the poems whole, the way you know a song without ever seeing its words on paper, and sang them evening after evening in kings' halls and village squares. The Greeks said Homer himself was blind: a man who carried two of the greatest stories on earth entirely in the dark of his own memory. Then, around twenty-eight centuries ago, the Greeks met an alphabet (they borrowed the idea from Phoenician sea-traders and improved it by adding vowels), and one of the first great labors of the new letters was to catch Homer's songs and hold them still, so they could never be lost. It worked. You can read both poems this afternoon.

Why letters are a treasure. Think what a strange and wonderful trick writing is. A bard's memory dies with the bard; a parchment can burn; but an alphabet, once a nation learns it, is almost impossible to lose, because it lives in every head at once. Twenty-four letters, each with a name, a sound and two shapes, are enough to trap any word ever spoken, a king's law, a shepherd's song, a prayer, and hand it unchanged to a child born three thousand years later. That is why this course spends a whole quarter making you fast and sure with those twenty-four: they are the key ring, and every door after this, every word, every inscription, every page of the Greek New Testament, opens with them.

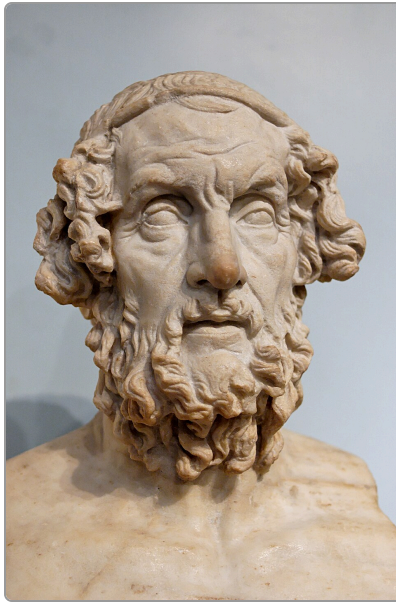
How Greek works: the four and twenty. Here is the whole set, names and classroom sounds: α alpha (a as in father), β beta (b), γ gamma (g as in go), δ delta (d), ε epsilon (e as in bed), ζ zeta (dz), η eta (long ay, as in they), θ theta (th as in think), ι iota (i as in bit, or ee as in machine), κ kappa (k), λ lambda (l), μ mu (m), ν nu (n), ξ xi (x as in box), ο omicron (o as in pot), π pi (p), ρ rho (a rolled r), σ sigma (s, written ς at the end of a word), τ tau (t), υ upsilon (say oo with round lips, like French u), φ phi (f), χ chi (the scraped h of Scottish loch), ψ psi (ps as in lips), ω omega (long o, as in tone). Five of

them are traps that fool English eyes: η looks like n but says AY; ρ looks like p but says r; ν looks like v but says n; υ looks like y but is a vowel, oo/ü; and ω is not a w, it is long o. Know the traps and the rest is friendly.

Say it out loud. The week's goal is the two-breath chant, from memory: breath one, alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta, iota, kappa, lambda, mu; breath two, nu, xi, omicron, pi, rho, sigma, tau, upsilon, phi, chi, psi, omega. Chant it walking, chant it at the table, chant it in the car. Then drill the traps as a call-and-answer: a parent says 'eta!' and you answer 'AY, not n!'; 'rho!', 'r, not p!' Finish each session by reading your first sight word, the alphabet's own name: ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss), alphabet. Hear alpha and beta hiding in it? The word is a tiny chant all by itself.

Try it. This week you make (or dust off and repair) the 24 letter cards, capital and small letter on the front, name and sound on the back, and then you hold the first heats of the Alphabet Grand Prix: the full deck, shuffled, read against the clock, with every time recorded on a race chart in your notebook. The chart will follow you all quarter, and your times will tumble.

PICTURE STUDY



Bust of Homer, Unknown Roman sculptor, copying a Greek original, Roman, about A.D. 1–100, after a Greek original of about 150 B.C. · Marble · British Museum, London

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

No one knows what Homer really looked like; he lived centuries before anyone thought to carve portraits. So Greek sculptors imagined him, and this is what they imagined: an old man, blind, listening. The eyes are carved half-closed and unseeing, but the face is not sad; it is full of attention, as if the poet is hearing the next line of the song. Roman workshops copied this imagined Homer again and again, because every educated Roman wanted the great poet's face in the library.

Look closely

- Look at the eyes first: the sculptor had to show blindness in stone, and did it with lids half-lowered over eyes with no gaze.
- Find the band tied around his hair: a fillet, the Greek mark of honor, worn by victors and poets.
- Study the deep lines of the forehead and cheeks: this is a face that has worked hard at remembering for a lifetime.
- Notice that the lips are slightly parted. Many think the sculptor meant to show Homer mid-song.

Talk about it

1. Why might the Greeks have liked the idea that their greatest poet was blind? What does it say about where the poems lived?

2. This face was invented centuries after Homer died. Does that make the portrait a lie, or a kind of honor? What is the difference?
3. Homer's songs survived because people treasured them enough to write them down. What words have been treasured enough to be written and kept for you?

ACTIVITY

The letter cards and the Alphabet Grand Prix

Racing drivers know their course so well they could drive it blindfolded. By the end of this week you will know the alphabet that well, and you will have the race chart to prove it.

You will need

- 24 index cards (or last year's letter deck, repaired and refreshed)
- Pencil, crayons and a fine-tip marker
- A clock or phone timer, and a notebook page ruled into a race chart

Steps

1. Make or refresh the deck: on the front of each card, the capital and small letter, big and bold (A a); on the back, the name and sound (alpha, 'a as in father').
2. Mark the five traps: put a small red corner on η, ρ, ν, υ and ω as a warning flag.
3. Rule the race chart in your notebook: columns for date, event and time.
4. Heat one, in order: lay the cards out alpha to omega, saying each name aloud, against the clock. Record the time.
5. Heat two, shuffled: shuffle the deck, then read name + sound off the fronts as fast as you can go, no peeking at backs. Record it.
6. Heat three, the backward lap: lay the deck out omega to alpha. Slower is fine; finishing is winning. Record it.
7. Race again in Session 3 and watch the times fall. Your best time of the week goes on the chart in marker: the record to beat in week 2.

Tips

- Say every letter OUT LOUD in every heat. A silent race trains the eyes and leaves the mouth behind.
- If one letter keeps stalling you, pull it out and tape it to the bathroom mirror for a day. Tomorrow it will be your fastest.
- Parents make excellent rival drivers. A parent who fumbles theta is a gift to the whole family.

Check your work

- ☐ All 24 cards are made, front and back, with the five traps flagged.
- ☐ I ran all three heats and recorded every time.
- ☐ I can chant the alphabet in two breaths from memory.
- ☐ My best time is written large on the race chart.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the whole alphabet from memory in small letters, two rows of twelve. Check against a card and fix any letter that went missing.
2. Write the five trap letters with their true sounds: η AY, ρ r, ν n, υ oo/ü, ω long o.
3. Copy your first sight word three times, saying it as you write: ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss), alphabet.
4. Rule the Grand Prix race chart and enter this week's times.

From history. How do you hold fifteen thousand lines in your head? The bards had helps built into the poetry itself: a strict drumbeat rhythm in every line, and ready-made phrases that recur like refrains, the wine-dark sea, rosy-fingered dawn, swift-footed Achilles. The rhythm told the singer the shape of the next line before he reached it. Memory, it turns out, loves music, which is why this course makes you chant everything.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. A card shows η. Name it, sound it, and say why it is a trap.

▼ Show solution

1. Name: eta.
2. Sound: long AY, as in they.
3. The trap: English eyes read it as n, but Greek's n is ν (nu).

Answer: Eta, saying AY. It looks like English n but is a vowel; the real n is ν.

Example 2. Sound out the sight word ἀλφάβητος, one letter at a time.

▼ **Show solution**

1. α-λ-φ-ά: al-FA (the accent on á marks the stressed syllable).
2. β-η: bay (eta says AY, not n!).
3. τ-ο-ς: toss (that ς is just sigma's end-of-word shape).

Answer: al-FA-bay-toss: alphabet, the word built from alpha and beta themselves.

Example 3. Which letters do you hear at the start of these English words, in Greek: think, box, lips?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Think starts with th: that is θ, theta.
2. Box ends with x, but at the start of a Greek word that sound is ξ, xi.
3. Lips ends with ps: as one Greek letter, ψ, psi.

Answer: θ (theta), ξ (xi), ψ (psi): the three two-sounds-in-one-letter consonants English spells with pairs.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Chant the alphabet aloud in two breaths. Then say which letters begin and end it.

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha through mu, then nu through omega; it begins with alpha (α) and ends with omega (ω).

2. **Easy** Give the name and sound: θ, λ, χ, ω.

▼ **Show answer**

Theta, th as in think; lambda, l; chi, the scraped h of loch; omega, long o as in tone.

3. **Easy** Which Greek letter says each of these? The f sound; the dz sound; the ks sound.

▼ **Show answer**

φ (phi); ζ (zeta); ξ (xi).

4. **Easy** How did the Iliad and the Odyssey survive before Greece could write?

▼ **Show answer**

Bards learned them whole, by heart, and sang them from memory, generation after generation, until the alphabet came and the songs were written down.

5. **Medium** The five trap letters are η, ρ, ν, υ, ω. For each, say what an English reader wrongly sees and what the letter truly says.

▼ **Show answer**

η looks like n but says AY (eta); ρ looks like p but says r (rho); ν looks like v but says n (nu); υ looks like y but is the vowel oo/ü (upsilon); ω looks odd like w but is long o (omega).

6. **Medium** Sound out ἀλφάβητος syllable by syllable, and say which syllable the accent tells you to stress.

▼ **Show answer**

al-FA-bay-toss; the accent sits on the second syllable (φά), so that one is stressed: al-FA-bay-toss.

7. **Hard** Greek has seven vowels to English's five. Name all seven, and explain what Greek does with its two extras.

▼ **Show answer**

α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ, ω. The extras are η and ω: Greek gives long E (eta) and long O (omega) their own letters instead of making ε and ο do double duty.

8. **Challenge** A bard could change a line and nobody could check; a written line can be checked forever. Why did that matter so much when the words being written down were the words of God? (Think of the Greek New Testament.)

▼ **Show answer**

Writing fixes words so they can be copied, compared and corrected: every reader can check today's copy against older ones. When the apostles wrote the New Testament in Greek letters, the message was held still, the same for every church and every century, which is exactly what you want when the words are God's.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading the traps with English eyes: η as n, ρ as p, ν as v. Drill the red-flagged cards until the traps can't catch you.

- Chanting with a chart in hand all week. Peek on Monday, glance on Wednesday, and by Friday chant with the chart face-down.
- Racing silently. The Grand Prix is run with the mouth; eyes-only laps don't count.
- Writing ς in the middle of a word or σ at the end. Sigma is σ everywhere except the last letter, where it relaxes into ς: watch the ending of ἀλφάβητος.

Make it a game • Alphabet Grand Prix: Family Cup. Shuffle the letter deck and set the timer. Each family member drives a lap: flip cards one at a time, saying name and sound; a wrong sound is a two-second penalty, called out gleefully by the pit crew. Fastest clean lap wins the Family Cup (a mug from the cupboard, solemnly awarded). The student may spot younger siblings half the deck, and should still win.

Scripture. “We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.” (Psalm 78:4, KJV)

The Greeks passed Homer down because they loved him; God's people pass down something better, his praises and his works, from generation to generation.

An alphabet is one of His good tools for the handing-down, and this week you sharpened it.

UNIT 1 • THE ALPHABET COMES BACK • LESSON 1.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 30-40 MINUTES

1.2 LETTERS CUT IN STONE

OBJECTIVES

- Tell what the Law Code of Gortyn is and how old Greek writing looked: all capitals, no spaces, sometimes boustrophedon.
- Explain what boustrophedon means and read a short line written that way.
- Match every capital letter to its small letter at speed.
- Read a word printed ALL IN CAPITALS without stumbling.
- Crayon-engrave a stone inscription of your own, with one line boustrophedon.

Warm-up. TRYREADINGTHISLINEOUTLOUDWITHNOSPACESATALL. You did it, didn't you? It felt strange for a moment, and then your eyes learned the trick: find the words yourself. Every reader in old Greece did that on every line, in capitals, often on stone. Today you read the way they read, and you will never again complain that your handwriting has to be neat.

WATCH

THE ALPHABET EXPLAINED: The origin of every letter

RobWords · 16:15

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

WHEN TO WATCH

After the second story paragraph. Watch for the moment the Greek letters appear and march onward into our own: A was once an ox's head, and your alphabet is older than you dreamed.

Note: Made for older viewers, fast and fun; watch what fits and stop when attention runs out. He traces English letters, but the road runs straight through Greece.

BACKUP VIDEO

Boustrophedon, Writing Like the Plow Turns

latintutorial · 1:25

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cvpsj_xE7TQ

Right after the How Greek works paragraph: ninety seconds that show the ox-turning lines doing their thing.

KEY TERMS

inscription

Writing cut into something hard, stone, metal or clay, meant to last. The oldest Greek we have is inscriptions.

capital letters

The big letter shapes (Α Β Γ Δ), the only shapes Greek had for its first centuries. Stone-cutters love straight lines.

boustrophedon

'As the ox turns plowing': writing that runs left to right, then turns and runs right to left with mirrored letters, line by line, like a plow going up and down a field.

small letters

The little rounded shapes (α β γ δ), invented many centuries later by scribes writing fast with pens on parchment.

law code

A city's rules written out in order for everyone to see. Gortyn's was carved into a public wall: law you could walk up and read.

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.

ἐπιγραφή

epigraphe

eh-pee-grah-FAY

noun

an inscription

ENGLISH epigraph

στήλη

stele

STAY-lay

noun

a standing stone

ENGLISH stele

δίκη

dike

DEE-kay

noun

justice; a lawsuit

δικαστής

dikastes

dee-kas-TAYS

noun

a judge

μάρτυς

martus

MAR-toos

noun

a witness

ENGLISH martyr

ὄρκος

horkos

HOR-kos

noun

an oath

ψήφισμα

psephisma

PSAY-fis-mah

noun

a decree, a vote

πολίτης

polites

po-LEE-tays

noun

a citizen

ἄρχων

archon

AR-khohn

noun

a ruler

ENGLISH archon

βουστροφηδόν

boustrophedon

boost-ro-fay-DON

adverb

as the ox plows, line turning back on line

Κρήτη

Krete

KRAY-tay

noun

Crete

ENGLISH Crete

CORE IDEAS

The story. On the island of Crete, in the ruined city of Gortyn, there stands a curved stone wall covered edge to edge in Greek letters: twelve tall columns of writing, about six hundred lines, carved around 450 B.C. It is a law code, the rules of the city set in stone where every citizen could walk up and read them, laws about property and families and fairness, the longest Greek inscription ever found. And it is written in the old way: ALL CAPITALS, NO SPACES, and boustrophedon (boo-stro-FAY-don), 'as the ox turns plowing.' One line reads left to right; at the line's end the writing turns like a plowman's ox and comes back right to left, with every letter flipped into its mirror image; then it turns again. Your eye plows back and forth down the wall, never wasting a trip. The wall has stood through twenty-four centuries of sun, war and earthquake, and a reader who knows the letters, which now means you, can stand in front of it today and begin.

Small letters came later. For roughly its first thousand years, Greek had one case: capitals. Α, Β, Γ, straight-backed and square-shouldered, because chisels like straight lines. The little rounded letters you have been writing, α, β, γ, were invented many centuries later by scribes copying books at speed with pens on parchment: a pen glides and loops where a chisel must bite, and the capitals relaxed into quick, round, joined-up shapes. That is why every Greek letter has two shapes, and why they sometimes look so unlike (Σ and σ, Η and η): they are the same letter dressed for two different jobs, one for stone, one for the page. A good reader owns both outfits. By the way, this is also why the oldest copies of the New Testament are written entirely in capitals with no spaces: the scribes of those first centuries were still writing the old way.

How Greek works: reading in capitals. Here is the alphabet in its stone clothes: Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω. Most capitals are honest cousins of their small letters (Κ κ, Τ τ, Ο ο), but a few change costume completely, and you should drill the quick-change artists: Σ is σ/ς, Η is η (still ΑΥ, still not an English H!), Ω is ω, Γ is γ,

Δ is δ, Λ is λ, Π is π. And capitals drop the little marks: no accents, no breathing marks, so ἀλφάβητος in stone is ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ. To read ALLCAPSRUNTOGETHER, do what Greek readers did: sound the letters steadily out loud and let your ear find the word-edges; the mouth discovers words the eye cannot see. For boustrophedon, add one trick more: at the end of each line, turn with the ox, read the next line right to left, and let the mirrored letters point you the way they are marching.

Say it out loud. Chant the alphabet twice, once from the small-letter cards, once from a capitals row you have written yourself. Then read these aloud from capitals: ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ (al-FA-bay-toss, there it is in its stone dress); the first line of the alphabet as a stonecutter would give it, ΑΒΓΔΕ; and your own name, once you have built it in Greek capitals in the activity. Keep the rule of the mouth: when capitals run together, read steadily aloud and trust your ear.

Try it. This week you become a stonecutter, with a crayon for a chisel: a stone-gray card, your name and your family's motto in Greek capitals, and one line written boustrophedon with honestly mirrored letters. It is this unit's challenge piece, so cut, that is, color, with care.

PICTURE STUDY



The Law Code of Gortyn, Unknown Greek stonecutters, About 450 B.C. · Inscription carved in a curved wall of stone blocks · Gortyn, Crete

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

This is law you can lean on: the great inscription of Gortyn on Crete, twelve columns of city law carved into a public wall about 450 B.C., the longest ancient Greek inscription ever found. The lines run boustrophedon, back and forth like a plowed field, and the letters are the plain square capitals of the old alphabet. Citizens of Gortyn could stand where the photographer stood and read their own rights off the wall.

Look closely

- Run your eye along a single line of letters: every stroke was hammered through a chisel, letter by letter, by a human hand.
- Compare the rows: see how level and evenly spaced they are. The cutters ruled guide lines first, just as you rule your notebook.
- Look for letters you know: A, O, T, E and II are easy to spot even from a distance.
- Notice the blocks behind the letters: the wall curves gently. It was later built into a round public building, and the law curved with it.

Talk about it

1. Why carve laws into a public wall instead of keeping them in a book only officials could hold? What does stone say that paper doesn't?

2. The lines run boustrophedon, so a reader's eye never jumps back across the wall. When might that trick actually be easier than our way?
3. God wrote His law on tables of stone, and Gortyn carved its law on a wall. What is alike about the two, and what is utterly different?

ACTIVITY

The stone inscription

Stonecutters cannot erase. Today you plan like one, letter like one, and produce the piece that anchors this unit's challenge: your own inscription, capitals only, with one proud line of boustrophedon.

You will need

- A sheet of gray card, or white paper colored stone-gray with crayon
- A dark crayon or marker for 'carving', and a pencil for ruling guide lines
- A ruler, and a scrap sheet for practicing first

Steps

1. Rule faint pencil guide lines across the card, as the Gortyn cutters did, three or four lines' worth.
2. Build your name in Greek capitals on scrap paper first, matching sounds, not English letter shapes: Mark becomes MAPK, Sophia becomes ΣΟΦΙΑ, Jack starts with the Greek I (IAK...), since Greek has no J. Use your letter cards as the parts bin.
3. Choose a short family motto in English (three to six words, like BY MAKING WE BECOME MAKERS or MERCY AND TRUTH), and plan it in capitals with no spaces, the old way.
4. Line 1: carve (color boldly) your name in Greek capitals, left to right.
5. Line 2: carve the first half of your motto left to right; line 3: turn like the ox and carve the rest RIGHT TO LEFT with the letters mirrored. Pencil the mirrored letters lightly first; mirroring is harder than it looks.
6. Finish the stone: add a hairline crack or two and shade the edges so the card reads as weathered rock. Date your inscription in the corner, like an archaeologist's label.
7. Read the whole inscription aloud to someone, running your finger along the boustrophedon turn so they can follow the plow.

Tips

- Capitals drop the little marks: no accents or breathings on an inscription, which is one reason stonecutting is restful.

- If a letter comes out wrong, do what real cutters did: work the mistake into the design and carry on. Stone forgives nothing and teaches planning.
- Mirror-check line 3 in an actual mirror: if it reads correctly there, you mirrored it right.

Check your work

- ☐ My name is spelled by sound in Greek capitals.
- ☐ The motto runs in capitals with no spaces, and its second line is honestly mirrored, right to left.
- ☐ The card looks like stone: guide lines, weathering, a dated corner.
- ☐ I read the whole inscription aloud, including the boustrophedon turn, to a listener.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the capital alphabet from memory: A to Ω in two rows. Check and fix.
2. Write the quick-change pairs side by side: Σ σ/ς, Η η, Ω ω, Γ γ, Δ δ, Λ λ, Π π.
3. Copy ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ in capitals, then ἀλφάβητος in small letters beneath it, and note what the capitals dropped (spaces aside: the breathing and the accent).
4. Write one line of English boustrophedon (left to right, then mirrored right to left) and have someone else read it back.

From history. The Gortyn wall survived because later builders thought it too handsome to waste: they reused the inscribed blocks, letters and all, inside a Roman odeon, a roofed concert hall. The wall spent centuries as a music hall's backdrop, which the stonecutters would have found either insulting or delightful. Archaeologists found the laws exactly where the Romans left them, curved around the stage.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read this stone-style word aloud: ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Convert the costume: A=α, Λ=λ, Φ=φ, Β=β, Η=η (AY!), Τ=τ, Ο=ο, Σ=ς at the end.
2. Sound it steadily: al-fa-bay-tos.
3. Recognize the sight word: ἀλφάβητος.

Answer: al-FA-bay-toss, alphabet. Capitals drop the breathing and accent, but the word is an old friend.

Example 2. A line of an inscription ends and the next line is boustrophedon. The next line shows (reading left to right) ΣΟΤΗΒΑΦΛΑ. What does it really say?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Boustrophedon means this line marches right to left: read it from its right end.
2. Right to left, the letters run Α-Λ-Φ-Α-Β-Η-Τ-Ο-Σ.
3. Sound it: al-fa-bay-tos.

Answer: ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ, alphabet, written on the ox's return trip.

Example 3. Build the name Philip in Greek capitals, by sound.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Ph is one Greek letter: Φ.
2. i-l-i-p: Ι, Λ, Ι, Π.
3. Assemble: Φ-Ι-Λ-Ι-Π.

Answer: ΦΙΛΙΠ (and the Greeks did spell the name with Φ: it is a Greek name, 'horse-lover,' and Philip of Macedon was Alexander's father).

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** What is the Law Code of Gortyn: where is it, roughly when was it carved, and what is written on it?

▼ **Show answer**

A curved stone wall at Gortyn on Crete, carved about 450 B.C., holding the city's laws, twelve columns, the longest ancient Greek inscription found.

2. **Easy** What does boustrophedon mean, and what does the writing do?

▼ **Show answer**

'As the ox turns plowing': one line runs left to right, the next runs right to left with mirrored letters, back and forth down the stone.

3. **Easy** Match the capitals to their small letters: Σ, Η, Γ, Ω, Δ.

▼ **Show answer**

Σ → σ (ς at word's end); Η → η; Γ → γ; Ω → ω; Δ → δ.

4. **Medium** Why did small letters not exist for Greek's first thousand years, and who finally invented them?

▼ **Show answer**

The oldest writing was cut in stone, and chisels want straight capital shapes; small rounded letters were invented centuries later by scribes writing fast with pens on parchment, where strokes glide and join.

5. **Medium** Read aloud: ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘ. Then say which of those capitals looks most different from its small letter.

▼ **Show answer**

Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta. Eta changes most (Η versus η), with gamma and delta close behind (Γ/γ, Δ/δ).

6. **Medium** Why do capitals carry no breathing marks or accents, and where in this course did you already read a word without them?

▼ **Show answer**

The little marks belong to the later small-letter book hand; stone capitals never used them. ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ in this lesson is ἀλφάβητος with its marks dropped.

7. **Hard** The oldest copies of the New Testament are written INCAPITALSWITHNOSPACES. Using this lesson's reading rule, explain how a reader ever managed, and try the rule on this English line: GODISLOVE.

▼ **Show answer**

Readers sounded the letters steadily aloud and let the ear find the word-edges; reading in the ancient world was almost always reading aloud. GODISLOVE separates itself as soon as you say it: God is love.

8. **Challenge** Design a two-line boustrophedon inscription for your bedroom door: line 1 your name in Greek capitals left to right, line 2 any three-letter English word mirrored right to left. Write it, then prove line 2 with a mirror.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary. Full credit if the name is built by sound from real Greek capitals, line 2 truly runs right to left with mirrored letters, and the mirror test reads correctly.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Spelling your name by English letter shapes instead of sounds. Greek has no letter for J or for the English H sound at all; build the name from what you HEAR.
- Forgetting the costume changes: writing Σ in the middle of small-letter words or η for H's sound. Drill the quick-change pairs.
- Mirroring the line order but not the letters in boustrophedon. The ox turns, and every letter turns with it.
- Adding accents and breathing marks to capitals. Stone drops the little marks; so should your inscription.

Make it a game • The Stonecutter's Apprentice. A parent writes a short word in Greek capitals on paper (ΑΛΦΑ, ΒΗΤΑ, or the student's own name) and 'weathers' it, covering one letter with a coin as if the stone had chipped. The apprentice must read the word aloud AND name the missing letter. Three correct restorations earn the apprentice a chisel upgrade (a fresh crayon); five make them Master Cutter, who then weathers words for the parent to restore.

Scripture. “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” (Exodus 31:18, KJV)

Gortyn carved its best wisdom in stone so it would last and all could read it. God did the same for His law, and did it first, writing with no chisel but His own finger. When law matters, it goes in stone; when it matters most, God Himself is the stonecutter.

UNIT 2

THE TRICKY BITS

A king of Syracuse suspected his goldsmith of cheating, and asked the cleverest man in the city to prove it without melting the crown. Archimedes thought and thought, and then stepped into a bath that was filled too full, watched the water rise around him, and saw the whole answer at once. He leaped out and ran home shouting one Greek word, εὑρηκα (HEW-ray-ka), 'I have found it!', and that word begins with this unit's first treasure: a diphthong, two vowels gliding together into one sound. Greek has six of them, αι, ει, οι, αυ, ευ, ου, and once you own them, whole shelves of Greek words snap into focus, because the language is full of them from end to end.

Then come the smallest marks in Greek with the biggest job. Greek has no letter H; instead, a tiny curl over a word's first vowel tells you whether to breathe. The rough breathing (᾿) adds an h: ἅγιος (HA-gee-os), holy, wears one. The smooth breathing (᾿) is silent: ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os), messenger, wears that one. The emperor Justinian built the most famous church in the world and named it Ἁγία Σοφία, Holy Wisdom, and when English writes Hagia Sophia, that capital H was put there by a Greek breathing mark. By the end of this unit you will read both marks without blinking, sort words into their H team and silent team, and know where the ng in angel comes from too.

PREREQUISITES

- Can chant the alphabet from memory in two breaths (Unit 1)
- Can give the name, sound and both shapes of any letter card, including the five traps
- Can read a short word in capitals, like ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΣ, out loud

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can say the six diphthongs with their keywords: αι (aisle), ει (eight), οι (oil), αυ (now), ευ (eh-oo said quickly), ου (food).
- ☐ I can spot the diphthongs inside printed Greek words and sound the words out.
- ☐ I can tell the eureka story and read εὕρηκα aloud.
- ☐ I can read a rough breathing as h and a smooth breathing as silence, every time.
- ☐ I can sort my word cards into the H team and the silent team without mistakes.
- ☐ I can read ἅγιος, Ἀγία Σοφία, ὥρα, ἵππος, ἄγγελος and ἀλφάβητος aloud, and explain the ng in ἄγγελος.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Greek Alphabet Code Cracker, by Classical Academic Press:** The detective workbook's later chapters drill diphthongs and breathings, exactly this unit's tricky bits.
- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel):** Free. Her second alphabet lesson is this unit's backup video, and her early lessons give gentle extra practice with the little marks.
- **Famous Men of Greece (free online):** Free at Project Gutenberg, also in print from Memoria Press. Hero stories to read aloud; the Archimedes chapter pairs with this unit's eureka lesson.

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 Eureka! Two Letters, One Sound

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

2.2 The Breathing Marks

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

UNIT 2 REVIEW

Answer aloud or on paper. The card decks may be used for checking after each answer, not during. The goal is diphthongs and breathings read rightly, every time. 30 points.

1. **5 pts**

Say the six diphthongs with their keywords.

2. **5 pts**

Tell the eureka story in three or four sentences, and read the famous shout from its card: εὐρηκα.

3. **5 pts**

What do the two breathing marks tell a reader? Demonstrate on ἅγιος and ἄγγελος.

4. **5 pts**

Sort aloud into the H team and the silent team: ὥρα, ἀλφάβητος, ἵππος, ἄγγελος, εὐρηκα.

5. **5 pts**

Read Ἀγία Σοφία aloud, give its meaning, and explain where English found the H in Hagia Sophia.

6. **5 pts**

What sound does γγ make, and in which of this unit's words do you hear it? How many syllables are in εὐρηκα, and why not four?

ANSWER KEY

1. αι aisle, ει eight, οι oil, αυ now, ευ eh-oo said quickly, ου food.
2. King Hiero suspected his goldsmith of mixing silver into a gold crown; Archimedes, stepping into an overfull bath, saw that the rising water measures exactly the space a body takes, so a cheat's bulkier crown would push aside more water. He ran home shouting εὑρηκα, HEW-ray-ka, 'I have found it!' The test caught the goldsmith.
3. Rough (') adds h, smooth (') adds nothing: ἅγιος is HA-gee-os (holy), ἄγγελος is ANG-el-os (messenger).
4. H team: ὥρα, ἵππος, εὔρηκα. Silent team: ἀλφάβητος, ἄγγελος.
5. ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a, Holy Wisdom, Justinian's great church. English turned the rough breathing over the first alpha into a real letter H.
6. γγ says ng, as in ἄγγελος, ANG-el-os. εὔρηκα has three syllables, εὔ-ρη-κα, because the diphthong ευ is one beat, not two.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE DOME AND THE SORTING BEE

Present the labeled dome of Hagia Sophia (ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ in capitals, Ἀγία Σοφία in small letters with its marks) and tell its story in a minute: who built it, what the name means, what the breathing mark did to the English spelling. Then hold the family sorting bee: the full word-card pile shuffled, sorted into H team and silent team at speed, every card read aloud, palm up and breath honest.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The labeled dome	The dome is labeled both ways, capitals bare and small letters fully marked, with the meaning given.
The one-minute story	The one-minute story names Justinian, Holy Wisdom and the borrowed H.
The sorting bee	The sorting bee was clean: every card read aloud correctly and pocketed on the right team.
The diphthongs	The student can say the six diphthongs with keywords without peeking, εὔρηκα's three beats included.

2.1 EUREKA! TWO LETTERS, ONE SOUND

OBJECTIVES

- Tell the story of Archimedes, the crown and the bath, and what εὔρηκα means.
- Say the six diphthongs with their keywords: αι, ει, οι, αυ, ευ, ου.
- Spot diphthongs inside printed Greek words and sound the words out.
- Make the six diphthong slider cards and add them to the daily chant.
- Show with a measuring cup how Archimedes' bath answered the king's question.

Warm-up. Say these English words slowly and listen to your mouth: OIL. NOW. AISLE. Each one glides from one vowel sound into another, two sounds riding one smooth slide. English does it without noticing; Greek does it on purpose, six ways, and writes each slide with two vowels holding hands. Today you learn all six, and the first word you read with them is the most famous shout in the history of science.

WATCH

How taking a bath led to Archimedes' principle - Mark Salata

TED-Ed · 3:01

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijj58xD5fDI>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph: three minutes that show exactly what Archimedes saw rising around him in the tub.

Note: Short, clear and previewed. It explains the science simply; the Greek shout is this lesson's department.

BACKUP VIDEO

The real story behind Archimedes' Eureka! - Armand D'Angour

TED-Ed · 4:42

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v86Yk14rf8>

For Session 2 or 3, if the first video leaves the family wanting more: how the bath story was told and retold, and what Archimedes probably did next.

KEY TERMS

diphthong

Two vowels gliding together into one sound, read as one team: αι, ει, οι, αυ, ευ, ου. Greek for 'two sounds.'

syllable

One beat of a word. A diphthong counts as ONE beat: εὔ-ρη-κα has three syllables, not four.

eureka

English's spelling of εὔρηκα (HEW-ray-ka), 'I have found it!', Archimedes' shout, still used today when an idea strikes.

keyword

An English word that locks a sound into memory: οι as in oil, αυ as in now. One keyword per diphthong and the set is yours.

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.

εὔρηκα

heureka

HEW-ray-kah

verb

I have found it

ENGLISH eureka

αἰών

aion

eye-OHN

noun

an age

ENGLISH aeon

εἰκών

eikon

ay-KOHN

noun

an image

ENGLISH icon

οἶνος

oinos

OY-nos

noun

wine

εὐχή

euche

ew-KHAY

noun

a prayer

αἷμα

haima

HEYE-mah

noun

blood

ναύτης

nautes

NOW-tays

noun

a sailor

βοῦς

bous

BOOS

noun

an ox

Ζεύς

Zeus

ZEWS

noun

Zeus, in the Greek stories

αὐλός

aulos

ow-LOS

noun

a pipe

οἰκία

oikia

oy-KEE-ah

noun

a house

CORE IDEAS

The story. Twenty-two centuries ago in Syracuse, a rich Greek city on the island of Sicily, King Hiero ordered a crown of pure gold for the gods. When it came back from the goldsmith it weighed exactly what it should, but the king smelled a trick: what if the smith had kept some gold and mixed in cheaper silver to make up the weight? Nobody could tell without melting the crown, which would ruin it. The king handed the puzzle to Archimedes, the greatest mind in the city, a man who built machines, measured circles and loved a hard problem more than dinner. Archimedes carried the puzzle around for days. Then, stepping into a public bath that a servant had filled too full, he watched the water slosh over the rim, exactly as much water as the space his body took up, and the whole answer stood up in his mind at once: silver is lighter than gold, so a cheater's crown must be bulkier than a pure one, and bulk can be measured by the water it pushes aside, without so much as scratching the crown. He was so happy, the story says, that he leaped from the tub and ran home through the streets shouting εὕρηκα! εὕρηκα!, 'I have found it! I have found it!' (And the crown? Tested against pure gold, it pushed aside too much water. The goldsmith had cheated.)

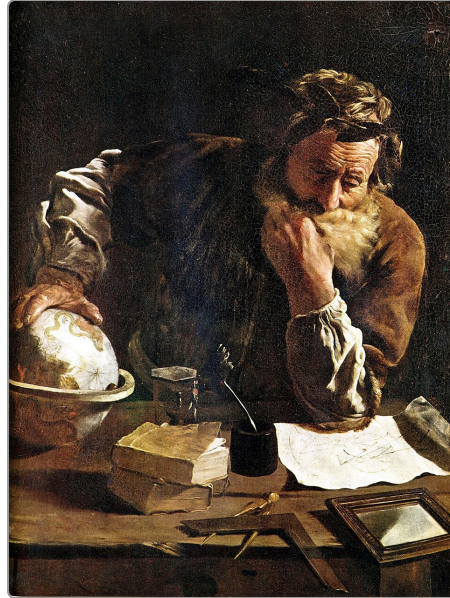
Two letters, one glide. Look closely at the famous shout: εὕρηκα (HEW-ray-ka). Its first two letters, ε and υ, are not taking turns; they are gliding together into a single sound, eh-oo said so quickly it becomes one smooth syllable. A two-vowel team like that is called a diphthong, Greek for 'two sounds,' and Greek uses six of them constantly. English does exactly the same thing, by the way: say 'now' and feel your mouth slide from ah toward oo. You have been a diphthong-speaker all your life; today you just learn to see them in Greek letters.

How Greek works: the six teams. Here they are, each with its keyword. **αι** says the i of aisle (you will read it in ΑΙΑΣ, the hero Ajax, in Unit 5). **ει** says the ei of eight (it is in **εἶς** and **τρῆς**, the Greek one and three, coming in Unit 3). **οι** says the oi of oil. **αυ** says the ow of now (listen for it in **σαῦρος**, lizard, when the dinosaurs arrive in Unit 4). **ευ** is eh-oo said quickly, the glide that opens **εὔρηκα**. **ου** says the oo of food (you will read it in **μουσική**, music, and in **Ἰησοῦς**, Jesus). Two rules make you expert: first, a diphthong is ONE syllable, so **εὔ-ρη-κα** is three beats; second, when a word begins with a diphthong, its breathing mark and accent sit on the SECOND vowel (**εὔρηκα**), which is how you can tell a true team from two vowels that merely stand side by side.

Say it out loud. Chant the six with keywords, in order, three times: **αι** aisle, **ει** eight, **οι** oil, **αυ** now, **ευ** eh-oo, **ου** food. Then sound out the shout itself, slowly, then at a run: **εὔ** (HEW, rough breathing, more about that next week!), **ρη** (ray, rolled r, eta says AY), **κα** (ka): HEW-ray-ka, I have found it! Finish with the sliding game: say each diphthong in slow motion, stretching the glide (ah...ee for **αι**), then snap it shut to full speed. Your mouth is learning a small gymnastic routine, and it should be done grinning.

Try it. This week you build the Diphthong Sliders, six cards where two vowel letters meet in a window and become one sound, and then you re-run Archimedes' discovery in your own kitchen: a measuring cup, water, and a sunken toy, with the water level telling you exactly how much toy went under. Science and Greek, one bath.

PICTURE STUDY



Archimedes, Domenico Fetti, 1620 · Oil on canvas · Old Masters Picture Gallery (Gemäldegalerie Alter Meister), Dresden

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

No portrait of the real Archimedes survives, so the painter Domenico Fetti imagined him: an old engineer caught in the middle of his work, one hand keeping his place, his eyes lifting as if someone has just asked him a question, or as if an idea has just walked into the room. The painting hangs in Dresden, in Germany, and it is how many people have pictured the man of the bath ever since.

Look closely

- Find his hands: one rests on his work. Fetti paints a thinker who is also a maker.
- Look at the light: it falls on the forehead and the book, the two places where the work is happening.
- Study the face: not handsome, not tidy, but completely awake. This is what εὔρηκα looks like one minute before the shout.
- Notice the plain dark background. Nothing in the room competes with the thinking.

Talk about it

1. The painter shows Archimedes interrupted mid-thought. Why is that a better portrait of a scientist than a man posing in his best robe?

2. Archimedes solved the crown problem in a bathtub, not a workshop. What does that tell you about when good ideas arrive, and what they need from us?
3. The king's question was really about honesty: had the goldsmith cheated? Why is it fitting that careful measurement, telling the exact truth about things, was what caught the cheat?

ACTIVITY

The Diphthong Sliders and the bathtub test

Six slider cards to teach your eyes that two vowels can hold hands, and one kitchen experiment to let you shout εῶρηκα with your own wet hands. Do the cards first; the shout must be earned.

You will need

- 6 index cards and a fine-tip marker
- Scissors and a pencil
- A clear measuring cup (or any clear jar with a rubber-band water line), water, and a small waterproof toy that sinks or can be pushed under

Steps

1. Make the sliders: on each card, draw a wide window frame in the middle. Write the two vowels so they meet inside the window (α and ι meeting as αι), with the keyword beneath: aisle.
2. Make all six: αι (aisle), ει (eight), οι (oil), αυ (now), ευ (eh-oo, quickly), ου (food). Decorate the ευ card with a tiny bathtub; it earned it.
3. Drill the deck: flip through, saying glide and keyword. Then have a parent call keywords ('oil!') while you hold up the right card.
4. Now the bathtub test: fill the measuring cup to a marked line and write down the level.
5. Push the toy underwater and read the new level. The rise IS the toy: the water can't lie about how much space went under.
6. Say what Archimedes realized, in your own words: same weight but bulkier pushes up more water, so a silver-cheat crown gives itself away.
7. Shout εῶρηκα properly (HEW-ray-ka!) and add the six sliders to your daily chant pile.

Tips

- Say the glide in slow motion first (ah...ee), then snap it to speed. The slow version teaches; the fast version is Greek.
- The breathing-and-accent-on-the-second-vowel clue (εῶ) is your friend: it marks a real team.

- For the test, any sinkable toy works; a floater can be held under with a fork, which Archimedes would have approved.

Check your work

- ☐ All six slider cards are made, with keywords, and drilled both directions.
- ☐ I measured the water level before and after, and can say what the rise means.
- ☐ I can tell the crown story and say exactly what Archimedes found.
- ☐ I shouted εὔρηκα correctly and meant it.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the six diphthongs with keywords, in your best lettering: αἱ aisle, εἶ eight, οἱ oil, αὖ now, εὖ eh-oo, οὖ food.
2. Copy εὔρηκα three times, saying HEW-ray-ka as you write, and note beneath it: a diphthong is one syllable.
3. Write the two water levels from the bathtub test and one sentence: the rise in the water equals the space the toy takes up.
4. Run the letter deck once and the slider deck twice, and record your scores.

From history. Archimedes did far more than bathe brilliantly: he worked out the lever's law (give me a place to stand, he said, and I will move the earth), built a screw that raises water uphill, still used on farms today, and defended Syracuse with machines that lifted Roman ships from the sea. When a Roman soldier finally broke into the city, Archimedes, now an old man, was drawing circles in the sand and asked only that his diagrams not be disturbed. Every schoolchild who shouts eureka is quoting him in Greek.

Practice habit. From today, open every Greek session with the two-minute double chant: the alphabet in two breaths, then the six diphthongs with keywords. Out loud, every time, to the end of the course. These eight breaths are the engine of the whole reading year.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. How many syllables in εὔρηκα, and where is the stress?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Find the teams: εῦ is a diphthong, one beat.
2. Split the rest: εῦ-ρη-κα.
3. The accent sits on εῦ, so the first beat is stressed.

Answer: Three syllables, HEW-ray-ka, stressed on the first: εῦ-ρη-κα.

Example 2. Which diphthong hides in σαῦρος (lizard), and what English keyword unlocks it?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Scan the vowels: α and υ stand together: αυ.
2. Keyword: now.
3. Sound it: SOW-ross (sow rhyming with now).

Answer: αυ as in now: σαῦρος is SOW-ross, the lizard half of dinosaur, coming in Unit 4.

Example 3. Two vowels meet in μουσική (music). Are they a team, and how does the word sound?

▼ **Show solution**

1. o and υ together make ου, a true diphthong: oo as in food.
2. Split the beats: μου-σι-κή, three syllables.
3. The accent sits on the last: stress it.

Answer: Yes, ου says oo: moo-si-KAY. English borrowed the whole word as music.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Say the six diphthongs with their keywords.

▼ **Show answer**

αι aisle, ει eight, οι oil, αυ now, ευ eh-oo said quickly, ου food.

2. **Easy** What does εὔρηκα mean, who shouted it, and why?

▼ **Show answer**

'I have found it!' Archimedes, when the rising bathwater showed him how to test the king's crown for cheating without melting it.

3. **Easy** Which diphthong do you hear in each English keyword: oil, eight, now?

▼ **Show answer**

oi; ei; au.

4. **Medium** Circle (or name) the diphthong in each word, then sound the word out: εὔρηκα, μουσική, τρεῖς.

▼ **Show answer**

εὔρηκα has ευ: HEW-ray-ka; μουσική has ου: moo-si-KAY; τρεῖς has ει: TREIS (rhymes with ace), the Greek three.

5. **Medium** How many syllables? εὔρηκα, μουσική, ἀλφάβητος. (Remember what a diphthong counts as.)

▼ **Show answer**

Three (εὔ-ρη-κα), three (μου-σι-κή), four (ἀλ-φά-βη-τος). A diphthong is one beat.

6. **Medium** Explain the goldsmith's trick and how water caught him.

▼ **Show answer**

He kept some gold and mixed in silver to match the weight. Silver is lighter, so the cheat crown had to be bulkier, and a bulkier crown pushes aside more water than a pure gold one of the same weight. The water level told the truth.

7. **Hard** In εὔρηκα, the little marks sit on the υ, the second vowel, not the ε. What is that position telling a careful reader?

▼ **Show answer**

That ε and υ are a genuine diphthong team: when a word starts with a diphthong, the breathing and accent sit on the second vowel. Marks on the first vowel would mean the vowels sound separately.

8. **Challenge** English kept Archimedes' shout as eureka, but dropped its first sound. Say the Greek carefully, compare it with the English, and explain what got lost. (Peek at next week's lesson title if you need a hint.)

▼ **Show answer**

Greek εὕρηκα begins with an h-breath, HEW-ray-ka, marked by the rough breathing over the υ. English eureka says yoo-REE-ka, no h and the stress moved. The lost h is the rough breathing mark's doing, the very mark next week's lesson teaches.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading a diphthong as two beats: εὕρηκα has three syllables, never four. One team, one beat.
- Sounding ou as two sounds, o-u. It is the single oo of food, the easiest and most common diphthong in Greek.
- Confusing αυ (now) with ευ (eh-oo). Keywords out loud fix this in a week.
- Thinking any two vowels side by side must be a team. Only the six count, and the marks-on-the-second-vowel clue confirms a true diphthong at the start of a word.

Make it a game • Eureka Hunt. A parent hides a small 'crown' (any shiny object) somewhere in the room and holds the six slider cards. The student asks for clues; each clue costs one perfect diphthong (card shown, student gives glide + keyword, fast and clean). Found the crown? Leap up and shout εὕρηκα, pronounced properly, HEW-ray-ka, or the find doesn't count and the hunt goes to the next player.

Scripture. “He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.” (Daniel 2:22, KJV)

Archimedes' flash in the bath felt like magic, but it was a gift: the world is built so honestly that water cannot lie, and minds are built able to notice. Every eureka is a small unveiling of order God laid down first, and He reveals deeper things still to those who ask Him.

UNIT 2 • THE TRICKY BITS • LESSON 2.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 30-40 MINUTES

2.2 THE BREATHING MARKS

OBJECTIVES

- Explain why Greek has no letter H, and what the two breathing marks do instead.
- Read a rough breathing (') as h and a smooth breathing (') as silence, every time.
- Read ἅγιος, Ἀγία Σοφία, ὥρα and ἵππος (the H team) and ἄγγελος and ἀλφάβητος (the silent team) aloud.
- Say where English gets the H in Hagia Sophia, and the ng in angel (γγ = ng).
- Sort word cards into breathing teams and build the labeled dome.

Warm-up. Hold your palm an inch from your lips and say HAT, then AT. Feel the difference? HAT throws a little puff of breath at your hand; AT doesn't. Now the surprise: Greek has no letter for that puff. No H anywhere in the alphabet you chanted, go check! Yet Greek words are full of h-sounds. Where are they hiding? Over the vowels, in the smallest marks you will ever learn to love.

WATCH

The Story of Hagia Sophia | Istanbul, Turkey | Simple History

Bedtime History · 6:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rw3RrtNKeY>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the second story paragraph: see the great dome Justinian built, the church this lesson's Greek names.

Note: Told simply and previewed. The building's long history, church for a thousand years, then mosque, then museum and mosque again, is told plainly; the lesson does the same.

BACKUP VIDEO

Biblical Greek - Lesson 16 - Alphabet Part 2 - Free Greek.

Alpha with Angela · 21:11

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

For Session 2 or 3: her second alphabet lesson covers breathing marks and more, with chanting practice.

KEY TERMS

rough breathing

The mark (**ˈ**) over a word's first vowel (or over ρ), telling you to add an h: ἅγιος is HA-gee-os. It curls like a tiny open c.

aspiration

The grown-up word for the h-puff of breath. Rough breathing adds it; smooth breathing withholds it.

double gamma

γγ says ng, not gg: ἄγγελος is ANG-el-os. (γκ says nk the same way.)

smooth breathing

The mark (**˘**) that says: no h, just the vowel. ἄγγελος is ANG-el-os. It curls the other way.

Hagia Sophia

English's spelling of Ἁγία Σοφία, 'Holy Wisdom,' Justinian's great domed church. Its English H comes from a Greek breathing mark.

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.

ἅγιος

hagios

HAH-gee-os

adjective

holy

ὥρα

hora

HOH-rah

noun

an hour

ENGLISH hour

ἵππος

hippos

HIP-pos

noun

a horse

ENGLISH hippopotamus

ἥλιος

helios

HAY-lee-os

noun

the sun

ENGLISH helium

ἱερόν

hieron

hee-eh-RON

noun

a temple, a holy place

ὕμνος

humnos

HOOM-nos

noun

a hymn

ENGLISH hymn

Ἑλλάς

Hellas

hehl-LAS

noun

Greece

ENGLISH Hellene

ῥόδον

hrodon

HRO-don

noun

a rose

ἕξ

hex

HEHKS

number

six

ἑπτὰ

hepta

hehp-TAH

number

seven

ἐορτή

heorte

heh-or-TAY

noun

a feast

CORE IDEAS

The story. In A.D. 532, the emperor Justinian decided to build a church grander than any building standing on earth, and he was not a patient man: ten thousand workers raised it in less than six years, a feat builders still shake their heads over. He named it Ἀγία Σοφία (ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a), Holy Wisdom, and its dome was like nothing anyone had seen: a circle of stone a hundred and eighty feet above the floor, ringed with forty windows, so that the dome seemed to float on a crown of light. Visitors wrote that it looked hung from heaven by a golden chain. When Justinian first walked in, the old story says, he thought of the temple in Jerusalem and whispered, 'Solomon, I have outdone thee.' For nearly a thousand years it was the largest church in the world. It still stands in Istanbul after fifteen centuries of earthquakes, and its story has turns this course tells plainly: a church for a thousand years, then a mosque for five hundred (the great round medallions you will see in the picture study carry Arabic calligraphy from those years), then a museum, now a mosque again. The Greek name has never changed, and now you can read it.

The hidden H. Say the name in English: HAGIA SOPHIA. Now look at the Greek: Ἀγία Σοφία. Hunt for an H... there is none, because the Greek alphabet has no letter H at all. The h-sound is real, Greek mouths made it constantly, but Greek writes it as a mark, not a letter: a tiny curl perched on the word's first vowel. That curl is called a

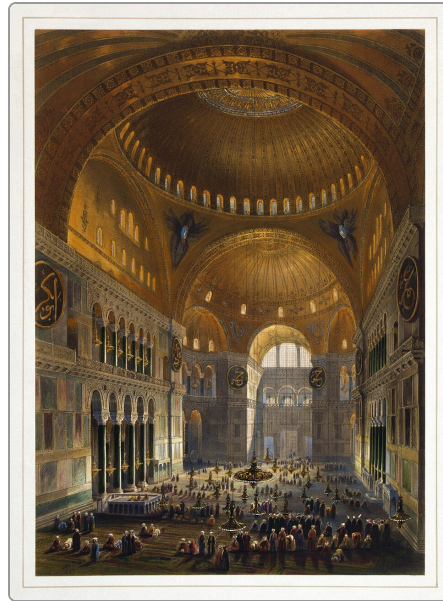
breathing mark, and it comes in exactly two kinds. The rough breathing (*ˆ*) means breathe: add an h before the vowel. The smooth breathing (*ˊ*) means don't: the vowel starts clean. Every Greek word that begins with a vowel (or with *υ* or *ρ*) must wear one or the other, so your eye will meet these marks on practically every line of Greek you ever read. English, having an H of its own, translates the rough breathing into a real letter: that is exactly where the H of Hagia comes from, and the h in eureka's Greek original εὐρηκα too.

How Greek works: the two teams. Learn the marks by sorting words into teams. The H team, rough breathing, breathe the h: ἅγιος (HA-gee-os), holy; Ἀγία Σοφία (ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a), Holy Wisdom; ὥρα (HO-ra), hour, and yes, English hour is this very word with its h gone quiet; ἵππος (HIP-poss), horse; and last week's εὐρηκα (HEW-ray-ka). The silent team, smooth breathing, no h: ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os), messenger, the word English turned into angel; and your old friend ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss). Two small bonuses while we are looking closely at ἄγγελος: double gamma γγ says ng (never gg), so ἄγγελος is ANG-el-os, and the same trick makes γκ say nk. And notice the capitals rule from Unit 1 bending slightly: when a word starts with a capital, the breathing mark steps politely to the front of the letter (Ἀγία), and on ALL-CAPITAL inscriptions it disappears entirely (ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ).

Say it out loud. Drill with the palm test from the warm-up: hand an inch from your lips, and make the rough breathings actually puff. Read the H team down: HA-gee-os, ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a, HO-ra, HIP-poss, HEW-ray-ka. Then the silent team, clean as glass: ANG-el-os, al-FA-bay-toss. Then mix: a parent points at cards in random order and your hand tells the truth about every h. Finish with the week's sentence-length treasure, read slowly: Ἀγία Σοφία, Holy Wisdom, the church whose English name you have now caught red-handed borrowing a Greek breathing mark.

Try it. This week you build the Breathing Sorter, two labeled team pockets and a growing pile of word cards to sort at speed, and then you draw the great dome itself, label it ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ in stone-style capitals and Ἀγία Σοφία in book-style small letters, and hang it beside your Unit 1 inscription. The wall of your schoolroom is quietly becoming a museum.

PICTURE STUDY



The Nave of Hagia Sophia, Gaspare Fossati (lithograph by Louis Haghe), 1852 · Tinted lithograph, from the album *Aya Sofia, Constantinople* · The building stands in Istanbul (ancient Constantinople); the album was published in London

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

The architect Gaspare Fossati spent years restoring Hagia Sophia for the sultan in the 1840s, and afterward published this view of the great nave so the world could see what he had seen. Find the people on the floor and feel the size of the place: the dome floats a hundred and eighty feet above them on its ring of windows. The huge round medallions bear Arabic calligraphy; by Fossati's day the thousand-year-old church had been a mosque for four centuries, and the lithograph shows its history honestly, layer on layer, with Justinian's architecture still carrying everything.

Look closely

- Start at the dome: count the windows around its rim. That crown of light is why visitors said the dome seemed to hang from heaven.
- Find the people below and measure the building in people: how many would it take, standing on shoulders, to reach the dome?
- Study the round medallions with their gold calligraphy: the marks of the building's centuries as a mosque, hung within Justinian's arches.
- Follow the levels: floor, columns, gallery, half-domes, dome. The building climbs in rings, like a mountain made by masons.

Talk about it

1. Justinian named the church Holy Wisdom, Ἁγία Σοφία, not after a person but after something God is. What do you think he wanted a visitor to feel on walking in?
2. This one building has been church, mosque and museum across fifteen centuries. What can a building remember that a book cannot, and what can it not?
3. The dome's forty windows make its weight look like light. When does showing something plainly, as this print shows the medallions, honor the truth better than pretending?

ACTIVITY

The Breathing Sorter and the dome

Two pockets, one puff of breath, and the fastest sorting game in Greek. Then out comes the crayon box, because the week that taught you Ἀγία Σοφία should end with the dome on your wall.

You will need

- 2 envelopes or paper pockets, taped to a sheet of card, and 8–10 index cards
- Pencil, crayons and a fine-tip marker
- A sheet of paper for the dome drawing

Steps

1. Label the pockets: H TEAM (') breathe!, and SILENT TEAM (') don't. Draw the mark big on each pocket; they curl opposite ways.
2. Make the word cards, Greek on the front, meaning and pronunciation on the back: ἅγιος (holy), Ἀγία Σοφία (Holy Wisdom), ὥρα (hour), ἵππος (horse), εὑρηκα (I have found it!), ἄγγελος (messenger), ἀλφάβητος (alphabet).
3. Sort slowly once: read each card aloud with the palm test, then pocket it. Check the backs.
4. Sort fast three times: shuffle, sort against the clock, reading every word aloud. Record your best clean time in the notebook.
5. Draw the dome: a wide shallow dome on its block of building, the ring of little windows along the rim, light pouring down inside if you like a cutaway.
6. Label it twice: ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ in capitals across the top (no marks on capitals-only inscriptions!), and Ἀγία Σοφία with its breathing marks beneath, with the meaning: Holy Wisdom.
7. Add the new word cards to the sight-word deck, and hang the dome beside the Unit 1 inscription.

Tips

- The two marks curl opposite ways. Memory trick: the ROUGH breathing (') opens toward the word like a tiny c for 'cough', out comes the h.

- Keep the palm an inch from your lips for every sort; your own breath is the referee.
- Forty windows is a lot to draw; a dozen that look like a ring of light is plenty.

Check your work

- ☐ Both pockets are labeled with the right mark and rule.
- ☐ I sorted all the cards correctly at speed, reading each aloud, and recorded my best time.
- ☐ My dome is labeled in capitals and small letters, breathing marks in the right place.
- ☐ The new cards joined the sight-word deck.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the two breathing marks large, with their rules: (') rough = add h; (') smooth = silent.
2. Copy the H team with pronunciations: ἅγιος, Ἀγία Σοφία, ὥρα, ἵππος, εὐρηκα. Then the silent team: ἄγγελος, ἀλφάβητος.
3. Write the double-gamma rule with its example: γγ = ng, ἄγγελος = ANG-el-os, and note that γκ = nk.
4. Write one sentence: English hour is Greek ὥρα with its h fallen silent, and the H in Hagia Sophia is a Greek breathing mark in English dress.

From history. Justinian's dome was too daring: it fell in an earthquake twenty years after it was built. The rebuilders, one of them the nephew of the original architect, raised it twenty feet higher and steeper, and that second dome, patched and ribbed, is essentially the one standing today, fourteen centuries later. Builders still study how a circle of brick that heavy can rest on a square of piers that gracefully; the answer, then and now, is wisdom, which is what the building is named for.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read ὥρα aloud and explain every mark you used.

▼ **Show solution**

1. The first letter is ω, long o; over it sits the rough breathing: add h.
2. The accent on ὦ says: stress this syllable.
3. Finish the word: ρα, rolled r plus a.

Answer: HO-ra, hour. Rough breathing gives the H, the accent puts the stress on it, and English hour is the same word wearing a silent h.

Example 2. Why is ἄγγελος pronounced ANG-el-os and not AG-gel-os?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Spot the double gamma: γγ.
2. Apply the rule: γγ says ng.
3. Check the breathing: smooth ('), so no h at the start.

Answer: Double gamma always says ng: ANG-el-os, messenger, the word behind English angel. The smooth breathing keeps the start clean.

Example 3. ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ appears on an old inscription with no marks at all. How do you know the first word still starts with an h?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Recall the capitals rule: ALL-CAPITAL writing drops breathings and accents.
2. Recall the word itself: in small letters it is Αγία, rough breathing.
3. The sound belongs to the WORD, not the costume.

Answer: Because the word is αγία, holy, which always wears the rough breathing in book writing: capitals hide the mark but the reader supplies the h, ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** What does each breathing mark tell you to do: (') and (`)?

▼ **Show answer**

Rough (`): add an h before the vowel. Smooth ('): no h, start the vowel clean.

2. **Easy** Read aloud: ἅγιος, ἵππος, ἄγγελος.

▼ **Show answer**

HA-gee-os (holy), HIP-poss (horse), ANG-el-os (messenger): h, h, no h, and γγ says ng.

3. **Easy** Why does the Greek alphabet have no letter H, and where does the h-sound live instead?

▼ **Show answer**

Greek writes the h-puff as a mark, not a letter: the rough breathing over a word's first vowel (or ρ). Every vowel-starting word wears a breathing, rough or smooth.

4. **Medium** Sort into the H team and the silent team, reading each aloud: ὥρα, ἀλφάβητος, εὕρηκα, ἄγγελος, Ἀγία Σοφία.

▼ **Show answer**

H team: ὥρα (HO-ra), εὕρηκα (HEW-ray-ka), Ἀγία Σοφία (ha-GEE-a so-FEE-a).
Silent team: ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss), ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os).

5. **Medium** English angel comes from ἄγγελος, and in the Bible angels are exactly what the Greek word says they are. What does ἄγγελος mean, and why is it the right name for them?

▼ **Show answer**

Messenger. Angels in Scripture are God's messengers, sent to carry His word, so Greek simply calls them what they do.

6. **Medium** Who built Ἀγία Σοφία, what does the name mean, and what was astonishing about the dome?

▼ **Show answer**

The emperor Justinian, finished A.D. 537 after less than six years of building. The name means Holy Wisdom. The dome, ringed with forty windows, floated a hundred and eighty feet up and seemed to hang on light; it was the largest church in the world for nearly a thousand years.

7. **Hard** English hour has a silent h, and Greek ὥρα has a rough breathing. Explain the family connection, then find the same Greek word hiding inside the English word horoscope. What does that English word literally mean?

▼ **Show answer**

English hour descends from Greek ὥρα, hour, through Latin and French, keeping the written h the rough breathing put there, though English stopped saying it. Horoscope is ὥρα + a looker word: an hour-watcher, literally a looking at the hour (of someone's birth). We can enjoy the word's bones while leaving stargazing fortune-telling alone.

8. **Challenge** A friend writes ΙΙΙΠΙΟΣ on a card and asks: 'Where did your h go? You said this word is HIP-poss!' Give the full answer like a scholar: what capitals do to breathings, and how a reader still knows.

▼ **Show answer**

ALL-CAPITAL writing drops the breathing marks (and accents), as stone inscriptions always did. The word itself is ἵππος, which wears a rough breathing in book writing, so a reader who knows the word supplies the h: HIP-poss. The mark is hidden, not lost; it belongs to the word, not the costume.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading every starting vowel with an h 'to be safe.' The smooth breathing means NO h: ἄγγελος is ANG-el-os, never HANG-el-os.
- Confusing the two curls. They open opposite ways: rough (') breathes, smooth (') doesn't; the palm test settles every argument.
- Saying γγ as g-g. Double gamma is ng: ANG-el-os. (And γκ is nk.)
- Hunting for a letter H in Greek words. There isn't one; the h lives in the mark above the vowel, and in capitals it hides entirely.

Make it a game · The Breath Referee. The student stands palm-up like a referee. A parent reads this unit's words aloud, sometimes CORRECTLY, sometimes with the h wrongly added or wrongly dropped (HANG-el-os! IP-poss!). The student calls 'Clean!' or 'Foul!' and, for every foul, must say the word correctly with the palm test as proof. Six right verdicts in a row and the referee is promoted to reader: the parent shows the cards silently, and the student reads them all, breathings perfect.

Scripture. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10, KJV)

Justinian named his church not for a saint or an emperor but for Holy Wisdom itself, and this verse is where wisdom begins: the fear of the LORD. The same verse holds this week's word ἅγιος, holy; knowledge of the holy is understanding, and now you can read 'holy' in Greek.

UNIT 3

COUNTING AND SINGING

The Greeks never invented separate number symbols, and they never missed them: their letters did double duty. With a little tick mark beside it, α´ means 1, β´ means 2, and so on up the alphabet: ι´ is 10, κ´ is 20, ρ´ is 100. A Greek shopping list, a Greek page number and a Greek scoreboard were all written with the same twenty-four friends you race on cards. And the grandest thing the Greeks counted was time itself: every four years the whole Greek world kept the games at Olympia, and years were reckoned in Olympiads, the steady four-year heartbeat of the festival. The single footrace that started it all, one length of the track, was called the stadion, and that word is still standing at every stadium on earth. In this unit you learn to count 1 through 10 in Greek letters, read the number words one to five by sight, and hold a stadion race of your own.

Then the letters learn to sing. Near the town of Aidin, a carved marble column was found bearing a short song by a man named Seikilos, with tiny marks above the letters telling the tune: it is the oldest complete song in the world, music and words together, about two thousand years old. Those little signs floating over Greek words are cousins of an idea you have been reading past all quarter: the accents. Acute, grave, circumflex, they look like three mysteries, and this unit melts them into one simple instruction: stress this syllable. You will clap them, drum them and letter a paper stele of your own, and from then on no mark above a Greek word will ever puzzle you again.

PREREQUISITES

- Can chant the alphabet and the six diphthongs with keywords (the daily double chant)
- Can read the breathing marks rightly: ἅγιος with its h, ἄγγελος without (Unit 2)
- Can sound out a new Greek word slowly but surely, syllable by syllable

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can count 1 to 10 in Greek letters: α' β' γ' δ' ε' ζ' η' θ' ι', and I know κ' is 20 and ρ' is 100.
- ☐ I can explain the odd one out: ζ' (6) is an old letter kept on as a number.
- ☐ I can read the number words one to five by sight: εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε.
- ☐ I can tell what an Olympiad is and read Ὀλυμπιάς by sight.
- ☐ I can point to the accent in any word, name its kind (acute, grave or circumflex), and stress that syllable.
- ☐ I can clap or drum the stress pattern of every sight word in my deck.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Song School Greek, by Classical Academic Press:** Songs that plant letters and first words in younger singers; its cheerful Greek-town songs suit this unit's counting-and-singing spirit, and siblings can join in.
- **Famous Men of Greece (free online):** Free at Project Gutenberg, also in print from Memoria Press. Hero stories to read aloud; the early chapters breathe the same air as Olympia's games.
- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel):** Free. Gentle review for any week; her early lessons keep the letters and marks fresh while this unit adds numbers and accents.

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 Letters That Count

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

UNIT 3 REVIEW

Answer aloud or on paper. Cards and notebook may be used for checking after each answer, not during. The goal is numbers counted and accents obeyed. 30 points.

1. (5 pts)

Count 1 to 10 in Greek numerals, naming the letters, and explain the stranger at 6.

2. (5 pts)

Read by sight, with meanings: εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε, and give the numbers κ' and ρ' stand for.

3. (5 pts)

What was an Olympiad, read Ὀλυμπιάς aloud, and tell what race gave the stadium its name.

4. (5 pts)

Name the three accent marks, point to one of each on your cards (or draw them), and give the single rule for reading all three.

5. (5 pts)

Drum and read five cards the parent picks from the deck, thump on the accented syllable, no peeking at the backs.

6. (5 pts)

Tell the story of the Seikilos stele in three sentences: what it is, what makes it the oldest of its kind, and how its little signs are cousins of your accent marks.

ANSWER KEY

1. α´ β´ γ´ δ´ ε´ ζ´ ζ´ η´ θ´ ι´. The stranger is stigma, ζ´ (also written στ), an old letter retired from spelling that kept its counting job, pushing zeta to 7.
2. HEIS one, DU-o two, TREIS three, TESS-a-res four, PEN-te five; κ´ is 20 and ρ´ is 100.
3. The four-year span from games to games at Olympia, by which Greeks counted years: o-lum-pi-AS. The stadion, the one-length footrace, named the track and our stadiums.
4. Acute (´ , as in ἀλφάβητος), grave (` , an acute relaxed on a last syllable mid-sentence), circumflex (~ , as in τρεῖς): all mean stress this syllable.
5. Five for five with the stress landing where the accent sits, e.g. HA-gee-os, HEW-ray-ka, moo-si-KAY, o-lum-pi-AS, TREIS.
6. A small marble column carved about 2,000 years ago by a man named Seikilos with a four-line song on it. Above the letters sit signs giving the melody note by note, making it the oldest COMPLETE song in the world. Like accent marks, the signs ride above the letters and tell the voice what to do, music written over words.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE NUMERAL POSTER AND THE HOUSEHOLD GAMES

Present the Greek-numeral family poster, ages, house number and date all in ticked letters, reading every entry aloud in Greek, and then hold the household games: the stadion run with the paper olive wreath awarded in a proper herald's ceremony, and one round of Accent Drums performed for the family with five deck words thumped true.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The numeral poster	Every number on the poster is correctly converted, tick marks in place and the stigma-6 trap avoided.
The number words	The number words one to five were read by sight, with εἶς keeping its h.
The stadion ceremony	The stadion was run and the victor crowned and announced with the Olympiad counted ('the first Olympiad of this household').
The drum round	The drum round was clean: five words, five thumps, every stress where its accent sits.

3.1 LETTERS THAT COUNT

OBJECTIVES

- Count 1 to 10 in Greek letters, with the tick mark: α´ through ι´, and tell what κ´ and ρ´ stand for.
- Explain the stranger in the line-up: ζ´, the old letter that means 6.
- Read the number words one to five by sight: εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε.
- Tell what the games at Olympia were, what a stadion was, and what an Olympiad counts.
- Write the family's ages and the house number in Greek numerals.

Warm-up. Write the number 8 on paper. Now write the letter that starts your name. You just used two completely different symbol kits, numbers and letters, and you switch between them without thinking. The Greeks carried only ONE kit. Their letters counted. What would that even look like? Open your hand and start counting on the alphabet: alpha one, beta two, gamma three... by the end of today you will do it to ten without blinking, with one strange old guest at number six.

WATCH

Greek Numerals are WAY BETTER than Roman Numerals

polyMATHY · 16:59

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rA0gAzaBXw>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph. Watch him count the way you just learned, and enjoy the argument of the title.

Note: Made for older viewers and cheerfully nerdy; watch what fits and stop when the deep end arrives. This lesson only needs 1 to 10, plus the idea of κ´ and ρ´.

BACKUP VIDEO

History of the Olympics for kids | Ancient Greece to modern day

Kids Sports Network · 5:44

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rykln3mGG9w>

After The story paragraph: the games at Olympia and their modern revival, told for children in six minutes.

KEY TERMS

numeral

A symbol that stands for a number.
Greek numerals are letters wearing a little tick: α´ is 1, ι´ is 10, ρ´ is 100.

stadion

The original footrace at Olympia, one length of the track (about 200 yards), and the name of the track itself: the great-grandfather of the word stadium.

keraia

The tick mark (´) that tells you a letter is counting, not spelling: β is beta, but β´ is 2.

Olympiad

The four-year stretch from one celebration of the games to the next. Greeks dated years by Olympiads; Ὀλυμπιάς (o-lum-pi-AS) is your sight word for it.

olive wreath

The whole prize at Olympia: a crown of olive leaves. No medals, no money, just the branch and the glory.

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.

εἷς

heis

HAYS

number

one

δύο

duo

DOO-o

number

two

τρεις

treis

TRAYS

number

three

τέσσαρες

tessares

TEHS-sah-rehs

number

four

πέντε

pente

PEHN-teh

number

five

στάδιον

stadion

STAH-dee-on

noun

a stadion, a race length

ENGLISH stadium

Ὀλυμπιάς

Olympias

o-loom-pee-AS

noun

an Olympiad, the four years between Games

ENGLISH Olympiad

στέφανος

stephanos

STEH-fah-nos

noun

a wreath

ENGLISH Stephen

ἔλαιον

elaion

EH-lye-on

noun

olive oil

ἄγών

agon

ah-GOHN

noun

a contest

ENGLISH agony

δρόμος

dromos

DRO-mos

noun

a race, a course

νικητής

niketes

nee-kay-TAYS

noun

a victor

CORE IDEAS

The story. In a green valley in southern Greece, at a sanctuary called Olympia, the Greeks held games every four years for roughly a thousand years, and for the first games the whole program was one event: the stadion, a flat-out sprint of one track length. The winner's name was remembered forever; the first on the list is Koroibos, a cook from the town next door, who won in 776 B.C. The games grew, wrestling, boxing, chariot races, the long jump, but the stadion stayed the race of honor, and the track's name became our word stadium. Wars were paused so athletes and pilgrims could travel safely. The prize was never money: it was a wreath cut from Olympia's sacred olive tree, and that was enough, because the real prize was glory. Grandest of all, the games became Greece's clock: the four years from one festival to the next was called an Olympiad (Ὀλυμπιάς, o-lum-pi-AS), and Greek historians dated events by it, 'in the third year of the such-and-such Olympiad.' A footrace, counting the years of the world.

Counting with the clock of Olympia. To count years, wins and everything else, the Greeks reached for the kit they already carried: the alphabet. Put a small tick called a keraia after a letter and it stops spelling and starts counting: α' is 1, β' is 2, γ' is 3, δ' is 4, ε' is 5, then comes a stranger, ζ' for 6 (more about him in a moment), then ζ' is 7, η' is 8, θ' is 9 and ι' is 10. Higher letters count by tens and hundreds: κ' is 20, and ρ' is 100; that is the whole idea, and this year 1 to 10 plus the idea is plenty. The stranger at six, ζ', called stigma, is a genuine antique: an old letter (you may also see it written στ) that fell out of the spelling alphabet before Homer's poems were written down, but kept its old job as a number, the way a retired postman might still be called in to deliver one special letter. That is why ζ, which you might expect at six, counts 7.

How Greek works: the number words. Letters count on paper; mouths count out loud. Here are the first five Greek number words, sight words, read whole: εἶς (HEIS, say it like 'hace'), one; δύο (DU-o), two, hiding in English duo and duet; τρεῖς (TREIS), three, cousin of trio and triple; τέσσαρες (TESS-a-res), four; πέντε (PEN-te), five, the engine inside pentagon, a five-cornered shape. Notice your Unit 2 training paying off:

εἷς and τρεῖς both ride the diphthong ει, and εἷς wears a rough breathing, HEIS. Add the festival's own name, Ὀλυμπιάς (o-lum-pi-AS), Olympiad, and your sight-word deck now counts and keeps time.

Say it out loud. Count on your fingers in letters, with the tick: AL-pha one, BAY-ta two, GAM-ma three, DEL-ta four, EP-si-lon five, STIG-ma six (the antique!), ZAY-ta seven, AY-ta eight, THAY-ta nine, YO-ta ten. Then chant the number words down the line: HEIS, DU-o, TREIS, TESS-a-res, PEN-te. Then play referee: a parent holds up fingers, you answer twice, letter first, word second ('four fingers: δ'! τέσσαρες!'). Finish with the week's long word, read in pieces then whole: Ὀ-λυμ-πι-άς, o-lum-pi-AS, the four-year heartbeat of the Greek world.

Try it. This week you take Greek numerals home: a poster with the family's ages, the house number and today's date all written in Greek letters, every tick in place, and then you pace out a backyard stadion and run it, with an olive wreath (paper is traditional in this house) for the victor. One warning from history: the wreath goes to the finisher, and a cook won the first one ever given, so anyone in the family may win.

PICTURE STUDY



The Ruins of Ancient Olympia, Photograph by Erik Drost, Sanctuary flourished from before 776 B.C.; photographed in modern times · Photograph of the archaeological site · Olympia, Greece

Photo: Erik Drost, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY 2.0

This quiet field of broken columns was once the busiest place in Greece, one week every four years: Olympia, where the games were held for about a thousand years. Earthquakes and floods laid the sanctuary down, and the column drums rest where they rolled, like giant stone coins. Pilgrims once walked these paths past temples and statues of victors; today's visitors walk them past olive trees and wildflowers, and the old stadion track is still there to run.

Look closely

- Find the fallen column drums: they stack like checkers. Builders cut them as cylinders, stacked them, then fluted them standing.
- Pick out the few re-erected columns and rebuild the rest in your mind's eye: rows of them, roofed, painted and bright.
- Notice the trees among the ruins. Olympia's prize wreaths were cut from an olive tree that grew inside the sanctuary.
- Look for the worn thresholds and foundations: a thousand years of sandals polished these stones.

Talk about it

1. The greatest athletic festival on earth left no scoreboard, only names remembered in lists. What lasts longer, a record or a name, and why?

2. Wars were paused so everyone could travel to Olympia safely. What does that say about what the Greeks thought the games were for?
3. The apostle Paul told Greek readers that runners train hard for 'a corruptible crown', a leaf wreath that withers. What crown was he comparing it to, and which is worth more training?

ACTIVITY

The Greek-number scavenger hunt and the stadion race

Numbers are everywhere in your house: ages, doors, clocks, dates. Today they all go Greek on one poster, and then the family goes to the games.

You will need

- A sheet of poster board or printer paper, pencil and markers
- Index cards for five new sight-word cards (the number words) and one for Ὀλυμπιάς
- Green paper, scissors and tape for the olive wreath, and a stretch of yard, sidewalk or hallway for the stadion

Steps

1. Rule the poster into a hunt list: AGES, HOUSE NUMBER, TODAY'S DATE, and one free choice (a birthday, a pet's age).
2. Convert each number to Greek numerals with the tick: a 7-year-old sister is ζ', a 10 is ι', a 6 brings out the antique ς'. For numbers above ten, use the idea lightly: 12 is ι' + β' written ιβ', and 20 is κ'; bigger than that, write the digits' letters side by side and call it good, this year is 1 to 10 plus the idea.
3. Letter the poster boldly and read every entry aloud: 'My brother is θ', nine!' And for ones through fives, add the sight word too: 'My sister is ε', PEN-te, five!' (Letters for everything, words for one to five.)
4. Make the six new cards: εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε, Ὀλυμπιάς, Greek front, meaning and sound on the back, into the deck.
5. Cut and tape a paper olive wreath: a dozen leaves on a band.
6. Pace out the stadion: any straight dash, a sidewalk, a hallway, the yard. Line up the family. One length, flat out.
7. Crown the victor with the wreath and announce, in your best herald voice: 'Victor in the stadion, in the first Olympiad of this household!' Then write the result on the poster, in Greek numerals of course.

Tips

- The tick mark is what separates spelling from counting: β is beta, β' is 2. Never skip it on the poster.

- Check your sixes and sevens twice: ζ' is 6, ζ' is 7. The antique took six and bumped zeta up one.
- A herald's announcement in a cardboard-tube trumpet improves any family race by forty percent.

Check your work

- ☐ Every number on the poster is in Greek numerals with its tick, sixes and sevens correct.
- ☐ The six new sight-word cards are made and in the deck.
- ☐ The stadion was run and the victor crowned and recorded.
- ☐ I can count 1 to 10 in letters aloud without the poster.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, in English and then in Greek numerals (day and month numbers with their ticks).
2. Write the counting line 1 to 10 with the antique in place: α' β' γ' δ' ε' ζ' ζ' η' θ' ι', then κ' = 20, ρ' = 100.
3. Copy the number words with sounds: εἷς HEIS, δύο DU-o, τρεῖς TREIS, τέσσαρες TESS-a-res, πέντε PEN-te.
4. Write one sentence: the Greeks counted years by Olympiads, four years from games to games, and Ὀλυμπιάς is my newest sight word.

From history. Olympia's victor lists ran so long and so reliably that ancient historians used them as the backbone of Greek dating, and modern scholars still do: when you read that the first stadion was won in 776 B.C., that date comes from counting Olympiads backward, games by games, name by name. A footrace kept better time than most kingdoms' chronicles. The modern games, revived in 1896, still run on the same four-year heartbeat, so the clock a Greek cook started by winning a sprint has never actually stopped.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Write 8 in Greek numerals, and explain each part.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Count up the line: α'1, β'2, γ'3, δ'4, ε'5, ζ'6, ζ'7, η'8.
2. The letter is η (eta), and the tick makes it count.

Answer: η'. The eta spells AY in words, but with the keraia it is the number 8.

Example 2. A Greek page is numbered ζ'. A friend says 'that's page 7, zeta!' Untangle the mix-up.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Look closely: ζ is not Ζ. It is stigma, the retired letter.
2. Stigma holds place 6; zeta was bumped to 7.
3. So ζ' = 6, and Ζ' = 7.

Answer: It is page 6. The antique ζ' (stigma, also written στ) kept the number 6 when it retired from spelling, so Ζ' counts 7.

Example 3. Read τρεῖς aloud and name everything your Unit 2 training spots in it.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Spot the diphthong: εῖ, the eight-keyword glide, one beat.
2. Spot the circumflex accent riding the diphthong: stress that syllable (easy, the word has only one!).
3. Finish: final σ, sigma's end-of-word shape.

Answer: TREIS, three: a one-syllable word built on the εῖ diphthong, cousin of English trio and triple.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Count 1 to 10 in Greek numerals, out loud, naming each letter.

▼ **Show answer**

α' alpha 1, β' beta 2, γ' gamma 3, δ' delta 4, ε' epsilon 5, ζ' stigma 6, Ζ' zeta 7, η' eta 8, θ' theta 9, ι' iota 10.

2. **Easy** Read the number words aloud with meanings: εἷς, δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε.

▼ **Show answer**

HEIS one, DU-o two, TREIS three, TESS-a-res four, PEN-te five.

3. **Easy** What was the stadion, and what English word still carries it?

▼ **Show answer**

The original one-length footrace at Olympia (and the track it was run on, about 200 yards): our word stadium.

4. **Medium** Write in Greek numerals: your age, 6, 10, 20.

▼ **Show answer**

Age varies (a 9-year-old writes θ´, a 10-year-old ι´); 6 is ϛ´ (the antique), 10 is ι´, 20 is κ´.

5. **Medium** What is an Olympiad, read its Greek sight word aloud, and explain how a historian would use it.

▼ **Show answer**

The four-year stretch from one celebration of the games to the next: Ὀλυμπιάς, o-lum-pi-AS. Historians dated events by the count of the games: 'in the second year of such-and-such Olympiad.'

6. **Medium** English duet, triple and pentagon each hide one of this lesson's number words. Match them and give the meanings.

▼ **Show answer**

Duet hides δύο, two; triple hides τρεῖς, three; pentagon hides πέντε, five (a five-cornered shape).

7. **Hard** Why does ζ´ mean 7 and not 6, when zeta is the sixth letter you chant? Tell the whole story.

▼ **Show answer**

The number line was fixed when the alphabet still contained an extra letter in sixth place: stigma, ϛ (an old letter also written στ). It dropped out of spelling but kept its counting job, so ϛ´ holds 6 and pushes ζ´ to 7, η´ to 8, θ´ to 9 and ι´ to 10.

8. **Challenge** The prize at Olympia was a wreath of leaves that withers in a week, and men trained four years for it. Find what 1 Corinthians 9:25 calls that wreath and what it sets against it, and say what the comparison asks of you.

▼ **Show answer**

Paul calls it a corruptible crown, and sets against it the incorruptible one: athletes go into strict training for a prize that wilts, so those running for an everlasting crown should train at least as hard, in faithfulness, self-control and love. (Four years of drills for leaves; what is a daily Greek chant for the Word of God?)

COMMON MISTAKES

- Forgetting the tick: β alone is just beta. The keraia (β´) is what flips a letter from spelling to counting.
- Putting zeta at 6. The antique ζ´ (stigma) holds 6; zeta counts 7. Sixes and sevens are this lesson's trap.
- Reading εἷς without its h. It wears a rough breathing: HEIS.
- Thinking κ´ is 11 because kappa comes eleventh in the chant. After ι´ = 10, the letters count by tens: κ´ is 20 (and ρ´ is 100).

Make it a game · The Herald's Count. The family herald (a parent) calls out numbers from 1 to 10 in any order. The student answers with the Greek numeral, drawn large in the air with a finger, letter plus tick, and for 1 through 5 adds the number word out loud (HEIS! PEN-te!). A perfect answer scores a laurel leaf (tally mark); a mix-up at 6 or 7 costs one, with a cry of 'Stigma strikes!' Ten leaves earn the wreath, and the right to be herald next round.

Scripture. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12, KJV)

The Greeks numbered their years by games; Moses prays for something deeper: number the DAYS, and let the counting teach wisdom. Letters that count are a clever tool; a heart that counts its days rightly is a wise one. Both are learned the same way, by steady practice.

UNIT 3 · COUNTING AND SINGING · LESSON 3.2 OF 10 · 3 SESSIONS OF 30-40 MINUTES

3.2 THE MUSIC OF GREEK

OBJECTIVES

- Tell what the Seikilos stele is and why it matters: the oldest complete song in the world.
- Name the three accents, acute (´), grave (`) and circumflex (~), and read every one the same way: stress this syllable.
- Clap or drum the stressed syllable in every sight word in the deck.
- Explain why this course prints accents but never grades writing them.
- Letter a paper stele with a line worth keeping.

Warm-up. Say your own name flat, like a robot, every syllable even. Now say it the real way. Hear the difference? One syllable in every word stands up taller than the rest; English just doesn't write it down. Say CARpenter, comPUter, kangaROO... now imagine English printed a little mark over the tall syllable, so you could SEE the stress. Greek does exactly that, on nearly every word, and today the mysterious little marks you have been politely stepping around all quarter finally introduce themselves.

WATCH

Oldest Song from Ancient Greece: The Seikilos Song

World History Encyclopedia · 3:35

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d31jgilfzgQ>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph: see the column itself and hear the little marks above the letters turned back into melody.

Note: Short and previewed. The song is sung in Greek; you are listening for the idea, marks above letters telling the voice what to do, not the vocabulary.

BACKUP VIDEO

Why the World's Oldest Song Still Speaks to Us

Matthew Chalmers · 5:46

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhZ47wP7tik>

For Session 2 or 3, if the family wants the fuller story of the stone, its discovery and its message.

KEY TERMS

accent

A small mark over a vowel showing which syllable stands tallest. This course reads every accent the same way: stress this syllable.

grave

The accent that leans backward (`). It appears only on a word's last syllable inside a sentence, an acute that relaxed because another word follows. Read it exactly like an acute: stress.

stele

An upright carved stone slab or column, set up to remember something or someone. Seikilos' song is carved on a small marble stele.

acute

The accent that leans forward (´), as in ἀλφάβητος. The most common of the three.

circumflex

The accent that bends like a little wave (~), as in τρεῖς. It sits on long vowels and diphthongs. Read it like the others: stress.

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.

μουσική

mousike

moo-see-KAY

noun

music

ENGLISH music

λύρα

lura

LOO-rah

noun

a lyre

ENGLISH lyre

κιθάρα

kithara

kee-THAH-rah

noun

a cithara, a lyre

ENGLISH guitar

ῥυθμός

hruthmos

hrooth-MOS

noun

rhythm

ENGLISH rhythm

μέλος

melos

MEH-los

noun

a tune; a limb

ENGLISH melody

ᾶδω

ado

AH-doh

verb

I sing

χορδή

chorde

khor-DAY

noun

a string

ENGLISH cord

τόνος

tonos

TO-nos

noun

a pitch; a stretching

ENGLISH tone

ὠδός

odos

oh-DOS

noun

a singer

ψάλλω

psallo

PSAL-loh

verb

I pluck; I sing a psalm

ENGLISH psalm

ἦχος

echos

AY-khos

noun

a sound

ENGLISH echo

CORE IDEAS

The story. In the 1880s, railway builders working near the town of Aidin, in what is now western Turkey, turned up a small marble column about two feet tall, carved with Greek letters, and above some of the letters, odd little extra signs. Scholars read the Greek and caught their breath. The column was a stele, a memorial stone, set up by a man named Seikilos about two thousand years ago, and after a short introduction naming him, it carries a four-line song, with those little signs above the letters spelling out the TUNE, note by note, in the Greeks' musical notation. Older scraps of music exist, but they are broken; the Seikilos song is complete from first note to last, the oldest whole song in the world. And it is a gentle, serious song: while you live, it says, shine like the sun, for life is short and time asks back what it lends. A man we

know almost nothing about wrote music on stone so it could not be lost, and twenty centuries later, choirs still sing his four lines. You will hear them today.

Marks that tell the voice what to do. Look at what Seikilos did: letters carry the words, and small marks above the letters carry what the voice should DO with the words, rise here, hold there. Now look at any line of Greek in your deck: ἀλφάβητος, εὔρηκα, μουσική (moo-si-KAY, music, this week's new sight word, and yes, it is Greek too). Small marks, above letters, telling the voice what to do. The Greeks heard their language as a kind of music, syllables rising and falling, and the accent marks were invented, by a librarian in Alexandria, the story goes, to keep readers singing the words rightly even far from home. The marks above Greek words and the notes above Seikilos' words are cousins: both are the written music of the voice.

How Greek works: three shapes, one instruction. Greek accents come in three shapes, and here is the secret this whole lesson protects: for us readers, all three mean exactly the same thing. The **acute** (´) leans forward: ἀλφάβητος, stress the φά. The **grave** (`) leans backward, and only ever appears on a word's LAST syllable when another word follows in the sentence, it is just an acute that relaxed its posture mid-sentence. The **circumflex** (~) bends like a little wave and likes to sit on long vowels and diphthongs: τρεῖς, εἷς, and (coming soon) Ἰησοῦς. Long ago these three sang three different melodies, a rise, a dip, a rise-and-fall, and scholars enjoy reconstructing them; but readers for many centuries, and this course with them, read all three the same simple way: **stress this syllable**. One more comfort, printed here once and good for life: you will never be graded on WRITING accents. You copy them when you write, like a careful artist, and you obey them when you read; that is the whole duty of a fourth-grade reader toward the little marks.

Say it out loud. This is a drumming week. Lay out the sight-word deck and drum the stress on the table as you read each word, one tap per syllable, a THUMP on the accented one: al-FA(thump)-bay-toss; HEW(thump)-ray-ka; HA(thump)-gee-os; HO(thump)-ra; ANG(thump)-el-os; moo-si-KAY(thump); o-lum-pi-AS(thump). Hear how μουσική and Ὀλυμπιάς thump on the END, while ἅγιος thumps at the START? The accent decides, not habit. Then clap-chant the number words: HEIS, DU-o, TREIS, TESS-a-res, PEN-te. Your hands are learning what your eyes read and your voice must do: Greek is a said language, and now it has a drumbeat.

Try it. This week you drum through the whole deck until every thump lands true, and then you do what Seikilos did: letter a short line worth keeping on a paper stele, a

family song title, a line of a hymn you love, in your best hand, and set it up on the museum wall beside the inscription and the dome. He wanted his song remembered; yours will be.

PICTURE STUDY



The Seikilos Stele, Unknown Greek stonecutter, for Seikilos, About the 1st century A.D. · Carved marble column (stele) · National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen

Photo: Artem.G, via [Wikimedia Commons](#), CC BY-SA 4.0

This modest marble column, small enough to stand on a table, carries the oldest complete song in the world: words below, and above them, in the gaps between the lines, the small signs that are the notes. Seikilos had it carved about two thousand years ago so that his song would outlast him, and it has: the stone was found by railway workers in the 1880s, traveled through collections, and stands today in the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, still perfectly legible to anyone who knows the letters, which now includes you.

Look closely

- Find the two layers of writing: full-size letters (the words) and the smaller signs floating above certain letters (the notes).
- The letters are plain capitals, no spaces, Unit 1 training at work. Pick out an A, an O, a Σ.
- Notice how evenly the lines are ruled on such a small stone: this was careful, paid work, a memorial done properly.
- Look at the stone's worn top and chipped edges: it stood outdoors for centuries, and the song survived anyway.

Talk about it

1. Seikilos could have carved only words; he paid for the notes too. What does music add to words that he wanted kept?
2. The song says life is short and urges the living to shine while they live. What would a Christian add to that counsel, and what would stay the same?
3. A railway crew nearly lost this stone to rubble. How many small faithful things, songs, letters, lessons, reach the future by what looks like accident but isn't?

ACTIVITY

Accent Drums and the paper stele

First the drums: every word in the deck gets its thump in the right place. Then the chisel, well, the marker: a line worth keeping, lettered on a stele of your own.

You will need

- The full sight-word deck, and a table to drum on (or an upturned pot for a proper drum)
- A sheet of paper or light card cut in a tall column shape, pencil and markers
- A ruler for guide lines, and crayons for stone-coloring the stele

Steps

1. Drum drill one, slow: flip each sight-word card, find the accent with your finger, then read the word with one tap per syllable and a THUMP on the accented one.
2. Drum drill two, sorted: deal the cards into three piles by where the thump lands, start, middle, or end. (ἅγιος starts; ἀλφάβητος thumps in the middle; μουσική and Ὀλυμπιάς thump the end.)
3. Drum drill three, performance: a parent calls any card; you drum and say it from memory, no peeking at the front. Three clean rounds and the drums have done their work.
4. Name the three accent shapes on one notebook line, with specimens: acute ἀλφάβητος, circumflex τρεῖς, grave (an acute relaxing mid-sentence), all read: stress.
5. Now the stele: rule guide lines on your column of paper, and choose a short line worth keeping, a favorite hymn line, a family saying, or simply this week's sight words μουσική and Ὀλυμπιάς lettered beautifully.
6. Letter it in your best hand, English or Greek capitals as fits, stone-color the edges, and 'weather' one corner honestly.
7. Set the stele on the museum wall beside the Unit 1 inscription and the Unit 2 dome, and read it aloud to the family, with feeling, the way a song deserves.

Tips

- The thump must be heard across the room. Shy stress is no stress; Greek words stand up straight.
- If a word fights you, drum it on your knee five times fast. The body remembers what the eye forgets.
- Steles are tall and narrow, so plan the lettering before the marker comes out: pencil first, always.

Check your work

- ☐ I drummed the whole deck with every thump on the accented syllable.
- ☐ My three piles (start, middle, end) were sorted correctly.
- ☐ I can name acute, grave and circumflex and give the one instruction all three share.
- ☐ My stele is lettered, weathered, displayed and was read aloud.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the three accents large with their names and the one rule: acute (´), grave (`), circumflex (~), all = stress this syllable.
2. Copy μουσική (moo-si-KAY, music) three times, thumping the last syllable as you say it, and add it to the deck.
3. List five sight words in two columns: word, and which syllable gets the thump (ἅγιος first, ἀλφάβητος second, μουσική last...).
4. Write one sentence: the Seikilos stele is the oldest complete song in the world, and its little signs above the letters are cousins of my accent marks.

From history. The accent marks were invented around 200 B.C. by Aristophanes of Byzantium, head librarian of the great library of Alexandria, and his first customers were students like you: Greek was spreading across Alexander's old empire, and learners far from Greece needed the music of the words written down. The marks began as a kindness from a librarian to foreigners and children, and every printed Greek Bible still carries them.

Example 1. Find the accent in μουσική, name its kind, and read the word.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Scan the vowels: the mark sits on the final ή.
2. Shape check: it leans forward, an acute.
3. Obey it: stress the last syllable, and remember ou says oo.

Answer: Acute on the last syllable: moo-si-KAY, music. English borrowed the whole word.

Example 2. τρεῖς wears a different-shaped mark than ἀλφάβητος. Name both shapes and say what each asks of your voice.

▼ **Show solution**

1. ἀλφάβητος: forward-leaning mark on φά, an acute.
2. τρεῖς: a little wave over the diphthong, a circumflex.
3. Recall the reader's rule: all accents ask the same thing.

Answer: Acute and circumflex, and both ask one thing: stress this syllable. al-FA-bay-toss; TREIS.

Example 3. In a printed Greek sentence you meet a word whose last syllable wears a backward-leaning mark (`). What is it, and what do you do?

▼ **Show solution**

1. Backward lean = grave accent.
2. Remember where graves live: only on last syllables, mid-sentence, an acute that relaxed because another word follows.
3. Obey it like any accent.

Answer: A grave accent: stress that syllable, exactly as if it were acute, and read on. The shape-change is the sentence's business, not yours.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Name the three accent marks and give the one instruction a reader takes from all three.

▼ **Show answer**

Acute (´), grave (`), circumflex (~): stress this syllable.

2. **Easy** What is the Seikilos stele, and why is it famous?

▼ **Show answer**

A small marble column from about the 1st century A.D., carved with a four-line song and its musical notes above the letters: the oldest complete song in the world, now in the National Museum of Denmark.

3. **Easy** Drum and read: ἅγιος, εὐρηκα, μουσική. Say where the thump landed in each.

▼ **Show answer**

HA-gee-os, thump at the start; HEW-ray-ka, thump at the start; moo-si-KAY, thump at the end.

4. **Medium** Are you ever graded on writing accents in this course? What ARE your two duties toward them?

▼ **Show answer**

Never. The duties are: copy them faithfully when writing Greek (like a careful artist), and obey them when reading: stress the marked syllable.

5. **Medium** Which accent appears only on a word's last syllable in mid-sentence, and what is it, really?

▼ **Show answer**

The grave (`): an acute that relaxed its lean because another word follows. Read it as ordinary stress.

6. **Medium** Sort by thump position (start, middle or end): ἀλφάβητος, ὥρα, Ὀλυμπιάς, ἄγγελος, μουσική.

▼ **Show answer**

Start: ὥρα (HO-ra), ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os). Middle: ἀλφάβητος (al-FA-bay-toss). End: Ὀλυμπιάς (o-lum-pi-AS), μουσική (moo-si-KAY).

7. **Hard** The circumflex likes long vowels and diphthongs. Check the claim against your deck: find two words where a circumflex rides a diphthong, and say what the mark asks of you in each.

▼ **Show answer**

τρῆϊς (circumflex on εῖ) and εἶς (circumflex on εῖ; it also wears a rough breathing: HEIS). In both, the mark asks the same as every accent: stress that syllable. (Soon Ἰησοῦς will give a third: the circumflex on οῦ.)

8. **Challenge** Seikilos' song tells the living to shine, because life is short. Psalm 96:1 commands a new song to the LORD. Write (in English) one line you would carve on your own stele that does what both ask, honest about short life, aimed at the right audience, and explain your choice.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary. Full credit for a line that faces life's shortness without despair and directs the song Godward, e.g. 'Let every morning sing to the LORD'; the explanation should notice that Seikilos knew time was short but the psalmist knew whom the song is for.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Treating the three accent shapes as three different jobs. For a reader they are one job: stress this syllable. The shapes' old melodies are a story, not an assignment.
- Stressing by English habit instead of by the mark. μουσική thumps the END, however much English 'music' pulls the other way.
- Confusing accents with breathings. Breathings (Unit 2) decide h or no h at the START of a word; accents decide the stress. ὥρα wears both: rough breathing (h) plus accent (stress): HO-ra.
- Copying Greek words and dropping the marks to save time. Copying the marks is how your eye learns the real look of Greek, and it costs four seconds.

Make it a game · Thump Court. The judge (a parent) holds the deck and reads each word aloud DELIBERATELY WRONG-STRESSED half the time (al-fa-BAY-toss! MOO-si-kay!). The student bangs the table once, cries 'Objection!', and delivers the true reading with the thump in the right place. A missed false reading costs a point; a false objection to a correct reading costs two, order in the court. Eight points and the student becomes judge, and parents, be warned: fourth graders are merciless on the bench.

Scripture. “O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.” (Psalm 96:1, KJV)

Seikilos carved his song in stone so it would not die; the psalm calls for a song that cannot: all the earth, singing new to its Maker. Language itself is musical because the One who gave tongues their rising and falling made them for praise. Drum your Greek words gladly; they are practice scales.

UNIT 4

REAL WORDS EVERYWHERE

When scientists dug giant bones out of English hillsides and needed names for creatures no living language had ever met, they did not invent sounds from nothing: they reached for Greek. δεινός (day-NOSS), terrible, plus σαῦρος (SOW-ross), lizard, gave them dinosaur, the terrible lizard. The horse of the river, ἵππος + ποταμός, had been named long before: hippopotamus. The nose-horn, ῥινόκερος, is the rhinoceros. In this unit your new reading power is let loose on the big words of science, and you will find they are not big at all, just Greek pieces holding hands, pieces a fourth grader can now sound out, take apart and even build with: name your own creature properly and you have joined a working tradition four centuries old and still hiring.

Then comes the discovery closest to home: the church has been speaking Greek all along. Bible is βιβλία, 'the books.' Angel is ἄγγελος, 'messenger', you have known that since Unit 2. Christ is Χριστός, 'the Anointed One', a title, not a last name. Baptize is βαπτίζω, 'I dip.' These are not borrowed decorations; they are the very words of the Greek New Testament, and the church's oldest treasures carry them in splendor: the Rossano Gospels, a sixth-century Gospel book, was written in silver ink on parchment dyed royal purple, pages fit for the King it tells of. You will read the church's four great Greek words, letter a purple page of your own, and sound out the name above every name: Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

PREREQUISITES

- Can run the daily double chant (alphabet, diphthongs) and read every sight word in the deck
- Reads breathings and accents rightly: h where the rough breathing stands, thump where the accent sits (Units 2–3)
- Can sound out an unfamiliar Greek word slowly, syllable by syllable, without panic

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can read δεινός and σαῦρος and explain how they make dinosaur.
- ☐ I can read ἵππος and ποταμός and explain hippopotamus, the river-horse.
- ☐ I can sight-read ῥινόκερως for fun and tell what it means: nose-horn.
- ☐ I can read the church's four Greek words aloud: βιβλία, ἄγγελος, Χριστός, βαπτίζω, and give their plain meanings.
- ☐ I can sound out Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and tell what each name means.
- ☐ I built and named a creature from real Greek pieces and presented it.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Elementary Greek: Koine for Beginners, Year One, by Christine Gatchell (Open Texture):** A gentle, scripted first Koine course: the natural next step for a family that wants daily Greek after this reading year. Its early lessons overlap kindly with this unit's church words.
- **Famous Men of Greece (free online):** Free at Project Gutenberg, also in print from Memoria Press. Keep the read-alouds going; the scientists of this unit stand on the shoulders of its heroes.
- **Alpha with Angela (YouTube channel):** Free. A missionary teacher's gentle Biblical Greek series: the right companion for the week the church's Greek words come home.

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

4.1 Science Speaks Greek

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

UNIT 4 REVIEW

Answer aloud or on paper. The card decks may be used for checking after each answer, not during. The goal is real words read rightly and their stories told. 30 points.

1. (5 pts)

Take apart dinosaur and hippopotamus into their Greek pieces, reading each piece aloud with its meaning.

2. (5 pts)

Sight-read ῥινόκερως, give its meaning, and explain the rh in English rhinoceros.

3. (5 pts)

Present your Build-a-Beast name: say the Greek pieces with meanings and defend why they fit your creature.

4. (5 pts)

Read the church's four Greek words aloud with meanings: βιβλία, ἄγγελος, Χριστός, βαπτίζω.

5. (5 pts)

Sound out Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, and explain in one sentence why Christ is not a last name.

6. (5 pts)

Tell the story of the Rossano Gospels in three sentences: what, when, and why silver on purple.

ANSWER KEY

1. δεινός (day-NOSS, terrible) + σαῦρος (SOW-ross, lizard): terrible lizard. ἵππος (HIP-poss, horse) + ποταμός (po-ta-MOSS, river): river-horse.
2. rhi-NO-ke-roce, nose-horn; the rough breathing on ῥ is what English spells as rh.
3. Answers vary; full points for two real Greek pieces, spelled and sounded rightly, honestly matching the creature (e.g. Mikrosaurus: μικρο- small + σαῦρος lizard, 'because he is the size of a cat').
4. bib-LEE-a, the books; ANG-el-os, messenger; chris-TOSS, the Anointed One; bap-TID-zo, I dip.
5. ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS. Christ is the Greek title 'the Anointed One' (Hebrew: Messiah), so Jesus Christ means Jesus the Anointed King.
6. A Greek Gospel book written in the 500s and kept at Rossano in Italy. Its parchment was dyed royal purple and its Greek capitals written in silver ink, with paintings of the Gospel stories. The costly materials were a sermon: what this book carries, the words of the Gospels, is royal treasure.

UNIT CHALLENGE: BUILD-A-BEAST, PRESENTED

The student presents the invented creature to the family like a scientist announcing a discovery: the portrait displayed, the name card read (Greek pieces, sounds, meanings), the name defended in one breath, and one question from the floor answered ('why not call it something prettier?' is traditional). The purple page is unveiled alongside as the week-8 companion piece, with its one rehearsed sentence about the Rossano scribes.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The beast's name	The beast's name is built from two real Greek pieces, spelled exactly as the lessons print them, and honestly fits the creature.
The presentation	The presentation gave pieces, sounds and meanings without notes, and survived one floor question.
The purple page	The purple page shows a correctly spelled Greek word, legible across a room, with pronunciation and meaning beneath.
The explanation	The student explained what the silver and purple were saying, in his or her own words.

4.1 SCIENCE SPEAKS GREEK

OBJECTIVES

- Read δεινός and σαῦρος and explain the name dinosaur: terrible lizard.
- Read ἵππος and ποταμός and explain hippopotamus: river-horse.
- Sight-read ῥινόκερως and tell its meaning: nose-horn.
- Take apart big English science words by spotting the Greek pieces inside.
- Build and name an invented creature from real Greek pieces.

Warm-up. Say the longest animal name you know. Hippopotamus? Rhinoceros? Tyrannosaurus? Here is the secret the zoo never tells you: those aren't hard words. They are two EASY words each, holding hands, and the easy words are Greek. You have spent three units learning to read Greek pieces; today the pieces start paying your way through the biggest words in the museum.

WATCH

Greek Vocabulary Builder I: Ancient Greek Words from Dinosaur Names | Vocabulary building

Jeffrey the Scribe · 5:27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUQuxjZA5Eo>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the How Greek works paragraph. Keep a tally: every Greek word he shows that you can already sound out is a point for you.

Note: Short and previewed. He writes the Greek on screen, perfect sounding-out practice; small pronunciation differences between channels are normal.

BACKUP VIDEO

What dinosaur names literally mean

RobWords · 17:52

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FOamIJf-28>

For Session 2 or 3, when the Build-a-Beast workshop wants more parts: a tour of what the famous names actually say.

KEY TERMS

compound word

A word built from two or more pieces, each with its own meaning: river + horse, terrible + lizard. Greek loves compounds, and so does science.

paleontologist

A scientist who studies ancient life from fossils. The name is Greek pieces too: ancient + beings + study.

word piece (root)

A meaning-carrying part you can spot inside many words: ἵππος (horse) rides inside hippopotamus and hippodrome.

fossil

The remains or print of an ancient creature kept in stone. The bones that sent scientists running to their Greek dictionaries.

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.

δεινός

deinos

day-NOS

adjective

fearful; mighty

ENGLISH dinosaur

σαῦρος

sauros

SOW-ros

noun

a lizard

ENGLISH dinosaur

ῥινόκερως

hrinokeros

hree-NO-keh-rohs

noun

a nose-horn beast

ENGLISH rhinoceros

παλαιός

palaaios

pah-lye-OS

adjective

old

ENGLISH paleontology

ὀστέον

osteon

os-TEH-on

noun

a bone

ζῶον

zoon

ZOH-on

noun

a living creature

ENGLISH zoo

φύσις

phusis

FOO-sis

noun

nature

ENGLISH physics

γένος

genos

GEH-nos

noun

a family, a kind

ENGLISH genus

εἶδος

eidos

AY-dos

noun

a form, a kind

κεφαλή

kephale

keh-fah-LAY

noun

a head

στόμα

stoma

STO-mah

noun

a mouth

ENGLISH stomach

CORE IDEAS

The story. In the early 1800s, diggers and quarrymen in England kept striking bones that made no sense: thigh bones taller than a man, jaws full of blade teeth, backbones like ship timbers. The great anatomist Richard Owen studied the strange skeletons and saw that they belonged together, a vanished tribe of giant reptiles, and in 1842 he gave the tribe a name. He did what scientists had always done: he reached for Greek. δεινός (day-NOSS), terrible, fearfully great, plus σαῦρος (SOW-ross), lizard: Dinosauria, the terribly great lizards. The name fit so well that every child on earth now says a Greek compound before breakfast. And Owen was only following the pattern: the Greeks themselves, meeting a huge beast wallowing in the Nile, had called it the river-horse, ἵππος (HIP-poss) + ποταμός (po-ta-MOSS) = hippopotamus; and the armored beast with the horn on its snout they called nose-horn, ῥινόκερος (rhi-NO-ke-roce). Science has never stopped: new species, new medicines and new machines still get Greek names today, because Greek pieces snap together like good bricks and mean the same thing in every country.

The pieces are the key. Here is what this means for you: the longest words in the museum are the EASIEST words in the museum, if you hold the pieces.

Tyrannosaurus? You already own half: σαῦρος again (the front half means tyrant). Hippodrome? ἵππος plus a race-course word: the horse-track. Potamology? ποταμός plus study: the science of rivers, a real science with a Greek name. One small Greek word is a master key that opens a drawer of English ones, and your sight-word deck is quietly becoming a key ring. This is why School Launch teaches Greek to readers

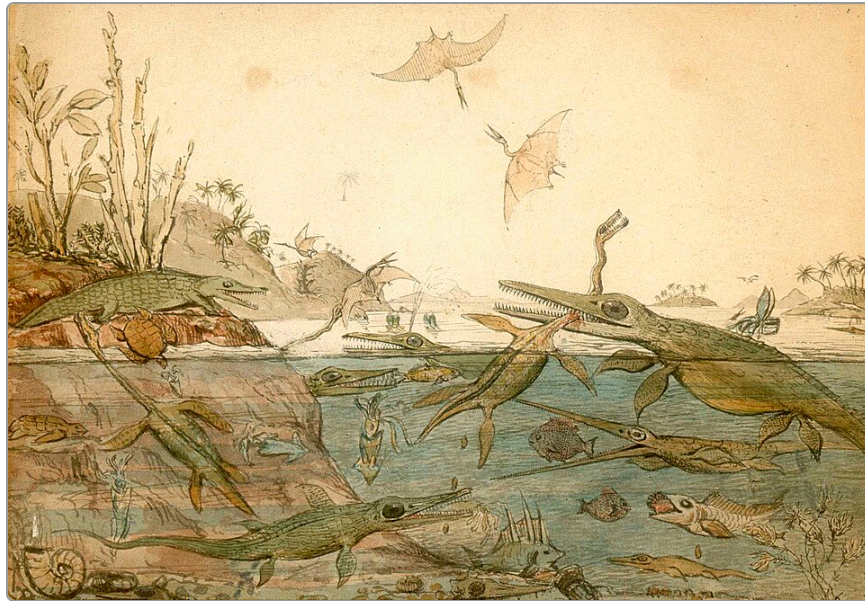
your age: fifty Greek pieces, learned once, unlock five hundred English words at wholesale prices.

How Greek works: reading the beast words. Read the pieces slowly, marks and all. δεινός: δ, ει (the eight-glide!), ν, ό with the thump, ς at the end: day-NOSS, terrible. σαῦρος: σ, αυ (the now-glide), circumflex thump up front, ρος: SOW-ross, lizard. ἵππος: rough breathing, HIP-poss, horse. ποταμός: po-ta-MOSS, thump on the end, river. And the fun one, sight-read it like a champion: ρινόκερος (rhi-NO-ke-roce), nose-horn, notice the rough breathing sitting on the ρ itself, which is why English spells rhinoceros with rh. Every skill from Units 1 to 3 just clocked in for work: letters, diphthongs, breathings, thumps.

Say it out loud. Chant the pieces as pairs, meaning after sound: day-NOSS, terrible! SOW-ross, lizard! HIP-poss, horse! po-ta-MOSS, river! Then build aloud, slowly jamming the pieces together the way Owen did: DEINO-SAUR, terrible lizard; HIPPO-POTAMUS, horse of the river; RHINO-CEROS, nose-horn. Then reverse the game: a parent says an English monster-word and you call out its Greek pieces with meanings before the echo dies. Your mouth now does what Richard Owen's did, and you are nine.

Try it. This week you open the naming workshop: Build-a-Beast. You will invent a creature, draw it proudly, and name it PROPERLY from real Greek pieces, μικρο + σαῦρος gives mikrosaurus, the small lizard, and that is only the first shelf of the parts bin. The beast, its name card and your defense of the name ('why is it called that?') are this unit's challenge piece.

PICTURE STUDY



Duria Antiquior (A More Ancient Dorset), Henry De la Beche, 1830 · Watercolor · National Museum Cardiff, Wales

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

This busy little watercolor is a landmark: the first serious painting of the deep past, made in 1830 by the geologist Henry De la Beche, who crowded into one scene the sea-creatures whose fossil bones were coming out of the cliffs of Dorset, in England. Nearly every beast in it was known from skeletons dug by Mary Anning, the great fossil hunter of Lyme Regis, and De la Beche sold prints of the picture to raise money for her. The creatures' names, then and now, are Greek: fish-lizard, near-lizard, winged finger.

Look closely

- Find the big-eyed sea creature biting the long-necked one: the ichthyosaur ('fish-lizard') and the plesiosaur ('near-lizard'), the two stars of Mary Anning's cliffs.
- Look up: the flying creatures are pterosaurs, 'winged lizards.' Greek pieces, every one.
- Notice the coiled shells on the sea floor: ammonites, drawn from fossils the artist could hold in his hand.
- See how crowded and busy the artist made the scene: he was defending an idea, that these bones were once a living, hungry world.

Talk about it

1. De la Beche painted animals no human eye ever saw, working only from bones. How is that like and unlike sounding out a word you have never met?
2. The painting was sold to support Mary Anning, who found the fossils but was often left out of the honors. What does the painter's kindness tell you about how science ought to treat its helpers?
3. Job was shown behemoth and asked to consider who made it. What question do these old sea-dragons put to the person studying them?

ACTIVITY

Build-a-Beast

Richard Owen needed a name for a tribe of giants, and built it from Greek. Today the workshop is yours: invent a creature, build its true Greek name, draw it, and be ready to defend the name like a scientist.

You will need

- Paper or card for the creature portrait, pencil, crayons or markers
- An index card for the official name card
- The parts bin list from this lesson (and your sight-word deck for extra pieces)

Steps

1. Open the parts bin and read every piece aloud: δεινός terrible, σαῦρος lizard, ἵππος horse, ποταμός river, μικρο- small (as in microscope), and for the brave, the nose from ῥινόκερως (rhino-, nose).
2. Invent your creature: small or terrible? River-dwelling or horn-nosed? Decide what it IS first; the name must tell the truth about it.
3. Build the name: pick two pieces and join them the scientist's way, usually with an o between them: mikro + sauros = Mikrosaurus, the small lizard; hippo + potamos is already taken, so perhaps a Deinohippus, the terrible horse. Say it aloud until it rolls.
4. Draw the beast in its habitat, big and bold, and make the picture AGREE with the name: a Mikrosaurus had better be small next to something.
5. Letter the name card: the English-style name on top (Mikrosaurus), the Greek pieces below in Greek letters with meanings (μικρο- small + σαῦρος lizard), and one sentence: 'Named for its...'
6. Rehearse the defense: a scientist must answer 'why is it called that?' in one breath, pieces and meanings included.
7. Save beast, card and defense for the unit challenge presentation.

Tips

- The name must be honest: a terrible name on a cuddly beast will be challenged from the floor at the presentation.

- Keep the Greek pieces spelled exactly as the lesson prints them; scientists are fussy spellers.
- The connecting o is the traditional glue (micr-O-scope, hipp-O-potamus); your name will sound real with it and homemade without it.

Check your work

- ☐ My creature's name is built from two real Greek pieces, spelled rightly, joined properly.
- ☐ The name card shows the Greek pieces in Greek letters with their meanings.
- ☐ The portrait agrees with the name.
- ☐ I can defend the name in one breath: pieces, meanings, and why they fit.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the beast pieces with sounds and meanings: δεινός day-NOSS terrible, σαῦρος SOW-ross lizard, ἵππος HIP-poss horse, ποταμός po-ta-MOSS river.
2. Take apart on paper: dinosaur, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, each into pieces with meanings.
3. Copy ῥινόκερως once, carefully, marks and all, and note: the rough breathing on ῥ is why English writes rh.
4. Write your invented beast's name with its Greek pieces and one sentence of defense.

From history. Mary Anning of Lyme Regis, who found many of the creatures swimming through Duria Antiquior, began collecting fossils as a girl to help feed her family, selling 'curiosities' from a seaside table. She taught herself anatomy by dissection and reading until the learned men of London quietly depended on her finds and her judgment, though the societies of her day would not admit her. De la Beche's painting was sold as prints for her benefit: one scientist using a picture, and a little Greek, to do a friend justice.

Example 1. Take apart hippopotamus, with sounds and meanings.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Chop at the o-glue: hippo + potamus.
2. First piece: ἵππος (HIP-poss), horse, rough breathing, hence English hippo.
3. Second piece: ποταμός (po-ta-MOSS), river, Latin respelled the -ος to -us.

Answer: ἵππος + ποταμός: the river-horse. Two sight words you can read, wearing one zoo-length disguise.

Example 2. Read δεινός aloud, then explain what it contributes to dinosaur and to one other English word: dinophobia (fear of dinosaurs... or is it?).

▼ **Show solution**

1. Sound it: δ, the ει glide, ν, thumped ό, final ς: day-NOSS.
2. Meaning: terrible, fearfully great.
3. In dinosaur it supplies the 'terrible'; in dinophobia it supplies the same, a fear of terrible things.

Answer: day-NOSS, terrible. Dinosaur is 'terrible lizard'; a dinophobia would literally be a fear of the terrible, which is why the pieces, not the vibes, must be checked when reading big words.

Example 3. A scientist finds a tiny fossil horse and asks you (the resident Greek expert) for a proper name meaning 'small horse.'

▼ **Show solution**

1. Small: the μικρο- piece (as in microscope).
2. Horse: ἵππος.
3. Join with the traditional glue and Latin dress: Mikro + hippos.

Answer: Mikrohippus (μικρο- small + ἵππος horse), the small horse. Any honest join of the two pieces earns the fee.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** What two Greek words build dinosaur, and what does each mean?

▼ **Show answer**

δεινός (day-NOSS), terrible, and σαῦρος (SOW-ross), lizard: the terrible lizard.

2. **Easy** Read aloud and translate the pieces: ἵππος, ποταμός. What animal do they name together?

▼ **Show answer**

HIP-poss, horse; po-ta-MOSS, river: together hippopotamus, the river-horse.

3. **Easy** Who gave the dinosaurs their name, roughly when, and where did he get the pieces?

▼ **Show answer**

Richard Owen, in 1842, built Dinosauria from the Greek words δεινός and σαῦρος, following the old custom of naming science's discoveries in Greek.

4. **Medium** Sight-read ῥινόκερος, give its meaning, and explain the rh in English rhinoceros.

▼ **Show answer**

rhi-NO-ke-roce, nose-horn. The ῥ wears a rough breathing, and English spells that breathed r as rh.

5. **Medium** Spot the Greek piece and guess the meaning like a scientist: hippodrome, potamology.

▼ **Show answer**

Hippodrome holds ἵππος: a horse-racing track. Potamology holds ποταμός: the study of rivers (a real science).

6. **Medium** Which Unit 2 skills did you use to read σαῦρος and δεινός rightly? Name two per word.

▼ **Show answer**

σαῦρος: the αυ diphthong (now-glide) and the circumflex read as stress: SOW-ross. δεινός: the ει diphthong (eight-glide) and the end-thump acute, plus final ς: day-NOSS.

7. **Hard** Tyrannosaurus and Mikrosaurus share a piece. Name it, then explain why scientists worldwide, in every language, agree to build names from Greek pieces rather than each using their own language.

▼ **Show answer**

σαῦρος, lizard. Greek (with Latin) is every scientist's shared parts bin: a name built from it means the same in Tokyo, Berlin and Texas, and describes the creature honestly, so one beast doesn't end up with forty names.

8. **Challenge** Behemoth in Job 40 is described, not named in Greek. Build an honest Greek-piece name for a huge river-dwelling grass-eater, defend it, and then say why Job's un-Greek point still stands whatever we name the beast.

▼ **Show answer**

Example: Deinopotamus, the terrible river-beast (δεινός + ποταμός), or a river-horse name on the hippopotamus pattern; any honest join earns credit. Job's point survives every naming: whatever men call the creature, God made it, and the naming committee did not.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading the pieces with English eyes: σαῦρος is SOW-ross (αυ as in now), never 'saurus' with an English ow-less au. Greek first, Latin dress second.
- Thinking big words are hard words. Long science words are short Greek words glued together; chop at the o-glue and read the pieces.
- Building a beast name that lies: the name must describe the creature. Scientists reject pretty-but-false names, and so does this course.
- Forgetting ρ's rough breathing. It is why rhinoceros and rhododendron wear their silent-looking h: the Greeks breathed it.

Make it a game • Monster Auction. The auctioneer (a parent) calls out English monster-words one at a time: dinosaur! hippopotamus! rhinoceros! hippodrome! The student 'buys' each word by paying its full price in Greek: the pieces, their sounds and their meanings, inside ten seconds (SOLD to the reader who knows day-NOSS plus SOW-ross, terrible lizard!). Hesitate and the word goes once, twice, to another bidder. Five words bought and the student becomes auctioneer, inventing new lots from the parts bin.

Scripture. “Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.” (Job 40:15, KJV)

When God answers Job, He gives him a tour of creatures, behold behemoth, which I MADE. Scientists name the beasts, and naming is good work (Adam did it first); but the Maker's name is on the work itself. Every Greek-pieced label in the museum hangs on something God thought of.

UNIT 4 • REAL WORDS EVERYWHERE • LESSON 4.2 OF 10 • 3 SESSIONS OF 30-40 MINUTES

4.2 CHURCH WORDS ARE GREEK

OBJECTIVES

- Read the church's four great Greek words aloud with meanings: βιβλία, ἄγγελος, Χριστός, βαπτίζω.
- Explain that Christ is a title, the Anointed One, not a last name.
- Sound out Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and tell what each name means.
- Tell what the Rossano Gospels are and why a Gospel book was written in silver on purple.
- Letter the purple page: one church word in silver, with its meaning.

Warm-up. How many Greek words did you say last Sunday? Count with me: Bible... angel... Christ... baptize... If your family says 'church' itself, that one came through Greek too. You have been speaking the New Testament's language in little pieces all your life. Today you catch four of those pieces, read them in their own letters, and find out what they plainly mean.

WATCH

How did we get the Bible?

Southern Seminary · 12:45

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEAPWac19a4>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the second story paragraph: how the books became the Book, told by a seminary teacher.

Note: A seminary talk made for adults, clear but grown-up; watch together and pause to explain, or watch the backup first. Small pronunciation differences from our classroom sounds are normal.

BACKUP VIDEO

The History of the Bible, Animated | National Geographic

National Geographic · 3:46

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AuDhWiO2D4>

After The story paragraph, if a quick animated overview suits the family better than the lecture.

KEY TERMS

βιβλία

(bib-LEE-a) 'The books.' English turned it into Bible: the Book that is a library of books.

βαπτίζω

(bap-TID-zo) 'I dip, I plunge': the plain Greek word behind baptize.

manuscript

A book written by hand, the only kind of book there was before printing. Every old Greek Bible is one.

Χριστός

(chris-TOSS) 'The Anointed One': a title, Greek for the Hebrew Messiah, not a surname.

parchment

Writing material made from prepared animal skin, tougher than papyrus. The Rossano Gospels' purple pages are parchment.

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.

βαπτίζω

baptizo

bap-TEE-zoh

verb

I dip, I baptize

ENGLISH baptize

εὐχαριστία

eucharistia

ew-khah-ris-TEE-ah

noun

thanksgiving

ENGLISH Eucharist

ἀπόστολος

apostolos

ah-POS-to-los

noun

one who is sent; an apostle

ENGLISH apostle

διάκονος

diakonos

dee-AH-ko-nos

noun

a servant

ENGLISH deacon

ἐπίσκοπος

episkopos

eh-PIS-ko-pos

noun

an overseer

ENGLISH bishop

πρεσβύτερος

presbuteros

prehs-BOO-teh-ros

noun

an elder

ENGLISH priest

βάπτισμα

baptisma

BAP-tis-mah

noun

baptism

ENGLISH baptism

προσευχή

proseuche

pro-sew-KHAY

noun

a prayer

λειτουργία

leitourgia

lay-toor-GEE-ah

noun

a public service

ENGLISH liturgy

ψαλμός

psalmos

psal-MOS

noun

a psalm

ENGLISH psalm

παράκλητος

parakletos

pah-RAH-klay-tos

noun

a helper, an advocate

The story. In the cathedral town of Rossano, in the toe of Italy, a book is kept that has been treasured for about fourteen hundred years: a Greek Gospel book, written in the 500s, that scholars call the Rossano Gospels. Its pages were dyed royal purple, the color of emperors, and its Greek letters were written in INK OF SILVER, with gold for the headings, and small bright paintings of the Gospel stories along the way. Purple dye was wildly costly, pressed drop by drop from sea snails; silver ink tarnishes unless the scribe knows his craft; this was a book made the way a crown is made, because of what it carries: the words of the Gospels in the language they were first written in, Greek. Whoever ordered it, likely for a king's chapel or a great church, was saying something every reader could see before reading a word: what is written here is royal.

The words you already own. Now look at four words that book is full of, four words YOU say in English every week. *βιβλία* (bib-LEE-a) means simply 'the books': the Bible is a library bound as one, law and history and psalms and letters, sixty-six books, and its very name quietly tells you so. *ἄγγελος* (ANG-el-os) you met in Unit 2: messenger; the angels are God's messengers, named for their errand. *Χριστός* (chris-TOSS) means 'the Anointed One': kings and priests in Israel were anointed with oil when God set them apart, and Christ is the Greek title for the promised Anointed King, Hebrew's Messiah. It is a title, not a last name: when you say Jesus Christ you are saying 'Jesus the Anointed King.' And *βαπτίζω* (bap-TID-zo) means 'I dip, I plunge': plain washing-language, the word fishermen used for dipping a cup or a net, chosen by the Gospels for the washing that marks a Christian.

How Greek works: reading the royal words. Sound them out with everything you own. *βιβλία*: bib-LEE-a, thump in the middle. *ἄγγελος*: smooth breathing, γγ says ng: ANG-el-os. *Χριστός*: χ is the loch-scrape, ι the ee, στ, thumped ός: chris-TOSS, and notice it ends in -ος like so many Greek words you know (ἀλφάβητος, ἵππος, σαῦρος): that -ος is the most Greek of endings, and hearing it should feel like home by now. Last, the name above every name, two words: *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*. *Ἰησοῦς*: smooth breathing on the 'I, the ου glide wearing its circumflex: ee-ay-SOOS, Jesus, which is Greek's way of writing the Hebrew name Yeshua, 'The LORD saves.' Together: ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS, Jesus the Anointed One: a name and a title, a person and a promise, and you just read both in the Gospels' own letters.

Say it out loud. Read the four down the line, meaning after sound: bib-LEE-a, the books! ANG-el-os, messenger! chris-TOSS, the Anointed One! bap-TID-zo, I dip! Then

the full name, slowly and not carelessly, it is a name to be read the way the silver scribe wrote it, with care: ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS. Then play unmasking in English: Bible, angel, christen, baptistry, each English word called out, each answered with its Greek parent and meaning. Your church vocabulary is turning transparent: you can see straight through the English to the Greek underneath.

Try it. This week you make a purple page of your own: one church word, lettered LARGE in silver on purple, Greek up top, meaning beneath, with a border worthy of the word. It joins the museum wall, and at the Reading Evening in Unit 5 you will read it to the family and tell them what the Rossano scribes were saying with all that silver.

PICTURE STUDY



A Page of the Rossano Gospels (the Good Samaritan), Unknown Byzantine scribes and illuminators, 6th century · Silver and gold ink and paintings on purple-dyed parchment · Diocesan Museum, Rossano, Italy
Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#), public domain

This is a single page of the Rossano Gospels, made in the 500s: parchment dyed royal purple, Greek text in silver ink, and a painting of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the traveler rescued by the one neighbor nobody expected. The silver has darkened with fourteen centuries, but every letter still stands, written in the same plain capitals you learned to read in Unit 1, no spaces and all.

Look closely

- Look at the text block: capitals, evenly ruled, no spaces, Unit 1 reading, in silver.
- Find the wounded traveler and the one helping him; the painter tells the whole parable in a strip, like panels.
- Notice the halos and the purple ground: the painter spends gold and purple to say: what happens on this page matters.
- Compare the paint colors that survived with the tarnished silver: fourteen hundred years are visible on one page.

Talk about it

1. Why would a church spend a fortune of purple and silver on a book, when a cheap copy says the same words? What were they saying, and where should the line be drawn?

2. The painting shows mercy to a stranger. Why is that a fitting scene to decorate a book made for kings?
3. The scribes wrote Greek they expected readers to read for a thousand years. Who copied, kept and taught so that YOU can read this page's letters today?

ACTIVITY

The purple page

The Rossano scribes preached with their materials: purple for royalty, silver for treasure. Today you letter one royal word their way, and it will hang where your family can read it.

You will need

- A sheet of purple paper (or white paper colored deep purple with crayon, which polishes to a fine sheen)
- A silver or gold crayon, metallic gel pen or white pencil
- Pencil and ruler for guide lines, and scraps for practicing the lettering

Steps

1. Choose your word: βιβλία, ἄγγελος, Χριστός or βαπτίζω, or, for the full Rossano spirit, the name Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
2. Practice the letters on scrap first, large and slow: silver ink forgives nothing, as the scribes knew.
3. Rule faint guide lines on the purple, like the Rossano page.
4. Letter the Greek LARGE in silver across the middle, marks included (or in bare capitals, Unit 1 style, your choice, but be able to say which style you chose and why).
5. Beneath, smaller: the pronunciation and the plain meaning (chris-TOSS, the Anointed One).
6. Add a border worthy of the word: vines, crosses, stars, silver dots in the Rossano manner.
7. Hang it on the museum wall, and practice the sentence you will say at the Reading Evening: what the word means, and why the old scribes wrote words like it in silver.

Tips

- Silver on purple needs pressure: color boldly, then burnish (rub with the crayon's side) until it gleams.
- If you letter in small letters, copy the marks exactly; if in capitals, drop them, both are historically right, and you know why.

- Keep the meaning line humble and clear: the page preaches best when a visitor can read it in five seconds.

Check your work

- ☐ My Greek word is spelled exactly right, in silver, large enough to read across a room.
- ☐ The pronunciation and meaning stand beneath it.
- ☐ My style choice (marks or bare capitals) was deliberate, and I can defend it.
- ☐ The page is on the wall, and my Reading Evening sentence is rehearsed.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the four church words with sounds and meanings: βιβλία bib-LEE-a the books; ἄγγελος ANG-el-os messenger; Χριστός chris-TOSS the Anointed One; βαπτίζω bap-TID-zo I dip.
2. Copy Ἰησοῦς Χριστός once, carefully, marks and all, with its meaning: Jesus the Anointed One, and the note: Jesus = 'The LORD saves.'
3. Write one sentence: Christ is a title, not a last name.
4. Add the four new cards (and Ἰησοῦς Χριστός) to the sight-word deck and run the whole deck, recording your score.

From history. Purple-and-silver Bibles form a tiny royal family of manuscripts, and scholars know them by name: the Rossano Gospels, the Vienna Genesis, the Codex Argenteus ('the silver book') of the Goths. The purple came from murex sea snails, thousands of shells for a few grams of dye, by law in some centuries reserved for emperors. That a book got the emperor's color was itself a sermon: here, said the purple, is the King's word.

Example 1. Read Χριστός aloud and explain, in two sentences, what the word means and what kind of word it is.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Sound it: χ (loch-scrape), ρι, στ, thumped ός: chris-TOSS.
2. Meaning: the Anointed One, Greek for Hebrew's Messiah.
3. Kind: a title, like King, not a surname.

Answer: chris-TOSS: 'the Anointed One,' the Greek title for God's promised King. Saying Jesus Christ is saying 'Jesus the Anointed King.'

Example 2. Sound out Ἰησοῦς piece by piece, and say where English Jesus comes from.

▼ **Show solution**

1. 'I with smooth breathing: ee (no h).
2. η: ay. σ: s. οῦ: the food-glide oo, wearing the circumflex thump.
3. Final ς. Assemble: ee-ay-SOOS.

Answer: ee-ay-SOOS: Greek's spelling of the Hebrew name Yeshua, 'The LORD saves.' English Jesus is this Greek form worn smooth by Latin and centuries.

Example 3. Why is the Bible called the Bible? Argue it from the Greek.

▼ **Show solution**

1. The Greek word: βιβλία, bib-LEE-a.
2. Its meaning: 'the books,' plural.
3. Count what is bound inside one cover: sixty-six books.

Answer: Because βιβλία means THE BOOKS: the Bible's own name remembers that it is a whole library, written across centuries, bound as one Book.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Read aloud with meanings: βιβλία, ἄγγελος, Χριστός, βαπτίζω.

▼ **Show answer**

bib-LEE-a, the books; ANG-el-os, messenger; chris-TOSS, the Anointed One; bap-TID-zo, I dip.

2. **Easy** Is Christ a last name? Say what it is and what it means.

▼ **Show answer**

No: it is a title, Greek Χριστός, the Anointed One, the promised King; Hebrew says Messiah for the same.

3. **Easy** What are the Rossano Gospels, and what two costly materials make them famous?

▼ **Show answer**

A Greek Gospel book from the 500s, kept at Rossano in Italy: written in silver ink on parchment dyed royal purple (with gold for headings and paintings of the Gospel stories).

4. **Medium** Sound out Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and give the meaning of each word.

▼ **Show answer**

ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS: Jesus ('The LORD saves') the Anointed One. A name and a title.

5. **Medium** Which Greek letter-skills did you need for ἄγγελος and Ἰησοῦς? Name two apiece.

▼ **Show answer**

ἄγγελος: the smooth breathing (no h) and γγ = ng: ANG-el-os. Ἰησοῦς: the ou diphthong (oo) with its circumflex thump, and the smooth breathing on 'I: ee-ay-SOOS.

6. **Medium** Unmask the Greek inside: christen, baptistry, angelic. Give the parent word and its meaning.

▼ **Show answer**

Christen: Χριστός, the Anointed One (to christen is to name 'into Christ').

Baptistry: βαπτίζω, I dip (the place for baptizing). Angelic: ἄγγελος, messenger.

7. **Hard** The word βιβλία is plural ('books'), yet we rightly speak of the Bible as one Book. Explain how both are true, and what that teaches about reading it.

▼ **Show answer**

Inside one cover stand sixty-six books by many human writers across many centuries, βιβλία, the books; yet one Author speaks through all with one story, the Book. So read each book as what it is (a letter, a psalm, a history), and read the whole as one Word that holds together.

8. **Challenge** The Rossano scribes spent purple and silver on Greek words; 2 Timothy 3:15 says a child who knows the holy scriptures has something able to make him 'wise unto salvation.' Which is the real treasure, and what would you now letter in silver to say so? Defend your choice.

▼ **Show answer**

The words, not the silver: the scribes' point was that the contents outrank the materials. Answers vary on what to letter; full credit for any of this lesson's words with an honest defense, e.g. Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, 'because the whole silver book was made to carry that name.'

COMMON MISTAKES

- Treating Christ as Jesus' surname. It is a royal title, the Anointed One; the lesson's one-sentence summary is worth memorizing.
- Reading χ as English ch (as in chair). It is the loch-scrape: chris-TOSS begins with a breathy k-sound, not a ch-sound.
- Forgetting ἄγγελος' two rules at once: smooth breathing means no h, γγ means ng. ANG-el-os, never HANG-gel-os.
- Rushing Ἰησοῦς. The smooth breathing, the ay of η and the circumflexed οῦ each want their moment: ee-ay-SOOS, read with care.

Make it a game · Silver Scribe. The student is the scribe; the family brings words to the scriptorium. A caller says an English church word (Bible! angel! baptize! Christ!), and the scribe must 'write it in silver': say the Greek parent word aloud, spell it letter by letter from the card, and give its meaning, all in one steady breath, as befits a professional. Four clean commissions and the scribe earns the purple: he or she chooses the word for tonight's family prayer-time reading.

Scripture. “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15, KJV)

Paul wrote this, in Greek, about Timothy, a boy raised on the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother. 'Christ Jesus' in this verse is Χριστός and Ἰησοῦς, the very words you read this week, and the verse's promise is for children: known from childhood, the holy writings make wise unto salvation.

UNIT 5

FIRST READING

Twenty-five centuries ago, in a pottery workshop in Athens, a master named Exekias painted two armored heroes bent over a game board, snatching a quiet hour between battles, and then he did something wonderful for you personally: he wrote their names beside them. ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ by one helmet, ΑΙΑΣ by the other, and even the numbers they are calling out over the dice. For twenty-five centuries those capitals have waited on the side of the vase for readers, and this week you walk up and read them. This is the unit where everything you built, letters, capitals, diphthongs, breathings, thumps, goes to work on the real thing: actual Greek, written by actual Greek hands, on things you can still see.

And then the course ends where the church's own Greek never stopped: with a prayer. In every land and every century, Christians who never spoke a word of Greek have prayed two words of it straight out of the Gospels: Κύριε ἐλέησον (KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son), Lord, have mercy, the cry of the blind men by the Jericho road, kept in Greek like a family heirloom kept in its original box. You can read it now. The quarter closes with the Greek Reading Evening: the family gathers, the alphabet is sung, every sight word is read from its card, the vase and the purple page are shown, and a fourth grader reads the church's oldest prayer aloud and explains it. That is not a quiz. That is a graduation.

PREREQUISITES

- Can run the daily double chant and read the whole sight-word deck (now about fifteen cards)
- Can read ALL-CAPITAL words without marks, supplying breathings from knowledge (Units 1–2)
- Can thump the stress wherever the accent sits, including on diphthongs (Unit 3)

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can read ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ off the vase and say who they were, and that their stories are the stories the Greeks told.
- ☐ I can connect the numbers on the vase to my Greek number words (τέσσαρες and τρεῖς have cousins painted there).
- ☐ I can read Κύριε ἐλέησον aloud and tell exactly what it means and where it comes from in the Gospels.
- ☐ I can read Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and explain the name and the title.
- ☐ I can read every card in my sight-word deck, from ἀλφάβητος to Κύριε ἐλέησον.
- ☐ I hosted the Greek Reading Evening, start to finish.

OPTIONAL BOOKS AND RESOURCES FOR THIS UNIT

- **Elementary Greek: Koine for Beginners, Year One**, by Christine Gatchell (**Open Texture**): The gentle next step for a family that wants to keep going after the Reading Evening: daily, scripted, Koine from the very start.
- **The Children's Homer**, by Padraic Colum (**free online**): Free at Project Gutenberg (look for The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy). Achilles and Ajax at full length, retold for children: the right read-aloud for the week you read their names.
- **D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths**: The famous picture book of the stories the Greeks told; read with discernment, they are stories, not truth. Useful for recognizing the names and scenes painted on Greek pots.

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 on the Vase

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

5.2 Kyrie Eleison

3 sessions of 30–40 minutes

UNIT 5 REVIEW

Answer aloud or on paper. This final review may be folded into the Reading Evening rehearsal. Cards may be used for checking after each answer, not during. 30 points.

1. 5 pts

Read the vase's labels aloud and tell who made the vase, roughly when, and what the two heroes are doing.

2. 5 pts

How does this course hold the stories of Achilles and Ajax, and what on and about the vase is solid history?

3. 5 pts

Read Κύριε ἐλέησον aloud, translate it, and tell its Gospel source in one sentence.

4. 5 pts

Why have churches in every land kept this prayer in Greek, and what two Hebrew words does your own church keep the same way?

5. 5 pts

Read Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, explain the name and the title, and decode the mosaic monogram IC XC.

6. 5 pts

The grand finale: read the entire sight-word deck aloud, every card, breathings and thumps in place. (Parent tallies; two slow sound-outs are allowed and count as reading.)

ANSWER KEY

1. AXIAΛEYΣ (a-chil-LEWS) and AΙΑΣ (AI-as); Exekias of Athens made and signed it about 540 B.C.; the heroes sit playing a dice game between battles, calling four and three.
2. They are the stories the Greeks told, enjoyed as stories, not true as the Gospel is true. Solid: the vase itself, Exekias and his signature, the painted letters, and that we can read them.
3. KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son, Lord, have mercy: the cry of the two blind men by the Jericho road, whom Jesus stood still for and healed (Matthew 20:30–31).
4. The words were treasured in the Gospel's original language, prayed as first written while the meaning is prayed in every tongue; amen and hallelujah are kept in Hebrew the same way.
5. ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS: Jesus ('The LORD saves') the Christ ('the Anointed One', a title, not a surname). IC XC is the monogram: first and last letters of each word.
6. The full deck read aloud, from ἀλφάβητος to Κύριε ἐλέησον. Sounding out slowly is reading; only a true misread costs the card.

UNIT CHALLENGE: THE GREEK READING EVENING

The course's graduation, hosted by the student for the family: the alphabet chanted or sung, a live Grand Prix record lap, the museum tour (inscription, dome, stele, numeral poster, beast, purple page, labeled vase), the full sight-word deck read aloud, the vase labels read with the score reported, and the finale: Κύριε ἐλέησον read slowly and explained in the student's own words, followed by the feast of bread, olives, honey and grapes, served by the host.

LOOK FOR	WHAT IT MEANS
The program	The program ran complete: chant, record lap, tour, deck, vase, purple page, prayer, feast.
The deck	Every sight-word card was read aloud, breathings and stresses in place, with sound-outs counted as reading.
The finale	The finale was given rightly and reverently: the prayer read, translated, and traced to the blind men of Matthew 20.
The hosting	The student hosted: welcomed, presented, answered one question from the floor, and served the feast.

5.1 NAMES ON THE VASE

OBJECTIVES

- Tell who Exekias was and what he painted on the great amphora: Achilles and Ajax at a game.
- Read the heroes' names off the vase: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ.
- Connect the painted numbers to the Greek number words from Unit 3.
- Explain, in the course's own words, how we hold the heroes' stories: the stories the Greeks told.
- Draw and label a vase of your own, Greek-style, in capitals.

Warm-up. Look at any cereal box: pictures AND words, labels on everything. Now travel back twenty-five centuries: no cereal boxes, no printed books, but an Athenian potter labeling the figures on his vase so every buyer would know exactly who they were. Labels are one of writing's oldest jobs. Today you read a 2,500-year-old label, and it will feel like shaking hands across the centuries.

WATCH

Attic Black-Figure: Exekias, amphora with Ajax and Achilles playing a game

Smarthistory · 6:43

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2fdtepbkz8>

WHEN TO WATCH

After The story paragraph. Watch for the moment the camera comes close enough to read the names, and read them aloud before the narrators do.

Note: An art-history talk made for older students; watch what fits. The two scholars admire the vase as adults do, slowly; your job is simpler: find and read the letters.

BACKUP VIDEO

Making Greek Vases

Getty Museum · 4:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhPW50r07L8>

For Session 2, before you draw your own vase: how the potters actually threw, painted and fired the real ones, black figures and all.

KEY TERMS

amphora

A two-handled storage jar, the workhorse pot of the Greek world, and the shape Exekias painted his masterpiece on.

Exekias

The Athenian master, about 540 B.C., who signed the amphora as both potter and painter, and labeled his heroes so we could read them.

black-figure

The vase-painting style where figures are painted in black glossy slip against the clay's red-orange, with details scratched through to the light below.

Achilles and Ajax

The two greatest Greek warriors in the stories the Greeks told about the war at Troy: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ on the vase.

inscription label

A name written beside a painted figure, telling the viewer who it is: the ancient world's caption.

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.

Ἀχιλλεύς

Achilleus

ah-khil-LEWS

noun

Achilles

Πάτροκλος

Patroklos

PAH-tro-klos

noun

Patroclus

Ἕκτωρ

Hektor

HEHK-tohr

noun

Hector

Τροία

Troia

TROY-ah

noun

Troy

ἥρως

heros

HAY-rohs

noun

a hero

ENGLISH hero

ἀμφορεύς

amphoreus

am-fo-REWS

noun

a two-handled jar

ENGLISH amphora

δόρυ

doru

DO-roo

noun

a spear

ἀσπίς

aspis

as-PIS

noun

a shield

μάχη

mache

MAH-khay

noun

a battle

κλέος

kleos

KLEH-os

noun

glory, fame

ὀπλίτης

hoplites

ho-PLEE-tays

noun

a heavy-armed soldier

ENGLISH hoplite

CORE IDEAS

The story. Around 540 B.C., in Athens, the master potter-painter Exekias made an amphora and painted on it the quietest war scene in Greek art: Achilles and Ajax, the two mightiest Greek heroes of the stories about the war at Troy, sitting on camp stools in full armor, spears in hand, bent over a little table, playing a dice game between battles. No fighting, no monsters: two soldiers at a board game, utterly absorbed, their shields parked behind them. And Exekias, proud of his work and thoughtful of his viewers, wrote on the vase. Beside one helmet: AXIΛΛEYΣ. Beside the other: AIAΣ. And floating by their mouths, the words they are calling as the dice fall: four! three! Achilles, the story in the picture says, is winning. Exekias even signed it: made by Exekias. The vase stands today in the Vatican Museums in Rome, and every reader of Greek capitals, a club you joined in Unit 1, can walk up and read the oldest kind of caption in the world.

The stories the Greeks told. Who were these two? In the poems and legends the Greeks told, and told, and retold, Achilles was the swiftest and deadliest of the Greeks at Troy, and Ajax the strongest, the great wall of a man who once held off the Trojans almost alone. Their stories are stirring and sad, and this course holds them the honest way: they are the stories the Greeks told, tales a whole people loved and learned from, not true the way the Gospel is true. The Greeks themselves knew the difference between their poets and their historians. You can enjoy Achilles' speed and Ajax's shoulders the way you enjoy any great story, and still know exactly where the solid ground is: the vase is real, the painter was real, the letters are real, and you are really reading them.

How Greek works: reading the real thing. The labels are pure Unit 1: capitals, no spaces, no little marks. Read the first: A-X-I-Λ-Λ-E-Y-Σ. Alpha, chi (the loch-scape), iota, double lambda, then look: E and Y standing together, the eh-oo glide εϋ in its capital costume, and final sigma in its capital shape, Σ. Assemble: a-chil-LEWS. Now the second, shorter name: A-I-A-Σ: the αι glide (aisle!) then AΣ: AI-as, the hero English calls Ajax (the j is Latin's doing). And the numbers they call: the vase paints their words, and they are cousins of YOUR number words from Unit 3: Achilles calls four, kin to τέσσαρες; Ajax calls three, kin to τρεῖς. A fourth grader with a Unit 3 notebook can out-read most museum visitors at this vase, and that is simply a fact.

Say it out loud. Read the two names slowly, then at caption speed: a-chil-LEWS... AI-as. AXIΛΛEYΣ, AIAΣ. Then rehearse the museum moment, standing tall, as if before the glass case: 'That says Achilles. That says Ajax. He is calling four; he is calling

three. Exekias made it, about 540 B.C.' Then run the whole sight-word deck once, capitals rule in force: any card the parent flips to its bare-capitals side (write a few!) must still be read rightly, breathings supplied from knowledge, ΙΙΙΠΙΟΣ is still HIP-poss.

Try it. This week you make your own labeled amphora: a big drawn vase, a family scene painted black-figure style (silhouettes, scratched details), and every person labeled Greek-style in capitals, names built by sound the way you learned in Unit 1. At the Reading Evening, the family will read their own names off your vase, which is exactly the delight Exekias was selling.

PICTURE STUDY



Achilles and Ajax Playing a Game (amphora by Exekias), Exekias, who signed it as both potter and painter, About 540–530 B.C. · Attic black-figure amphora (painted terracotta) · Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican Museums, Rome

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

This is the scene itself: Achilles on the left in his helmet, Ajax bareheaded, both leaning over the little table where the dice are falling. Look at the cloaks: Exekias scratched every curl and star of the patterns through the black glaze with a needle, work so fine you can lose a minute in one shoulder. And there in the field stand the painted letters, the heroes' names and their calls, waiting for a reader. The spears all lean toward the board: even the weapons are watching the game.

Look closely

- Find the letters in the open field around the figures and pick out shapes you know: A, I, Σ.
- Follow the incised patterns on the cloaks: every line was scratched by hand through the black to the clay beneath.
- Achilles wears his helmet at a game; Ajax has set his aside. Painters tell character in such choices: who stays armored?
- See how the composition leans: both backs curve inward, both heads bow to the board, and the vase's whole shape frames the little table at the center.

Talk about it

1. Why might Exekias have chosen the quiet moment between battles instead of a battle? What can a quiet picture say that a loud one cannot?

2. In the stories, both heroes' lives end in sorrow, and Greek viewers knew it as they watched this peaceful game. How does knowing a story's ending change a picture of its middle?
3. The LORD looketh on the heart, says this week's verse. A painter can only show faces and postures. What do these postures let you guess, and what stays hidden from every painter?

ACTIVITY

My labeled vase

Exekias painted heroes at a table and labeled them for the ages. You will paint your own household at its favorite table-moment, and label everyone the Greek way. In 2,500 years, archaeologists should have no questions.

You will need

- A large sheet of paper, pencil, and black crayon or marker (plus orange/terracotta crayon if your paper is white)
- A toothpick, paperclip point or white gel pen for 'incised' details (or simply leave gaps)
- Your letter cards as a spelling parts bin

Steps

1. Draw the amphora big: a tall two-handled jar shape filling the page. Color the background bands terracotta if you like the full effect.
2. Choose the scene: your family at a quiet, true moment, the board game, the read-aloud, the supper table. Black-figure loves a table in the middle.
3. Paint the figures as black silhouettes, postures doing the talking: who leans in, who sits straight, who is winning.
4. Scratch (or leave) the details light-on-black: hair, patterns on clothing, the game pieces, Exekias-style.
5. Label every person in Greek capitals, names built by sound (Unit 1 skills): MAMA works beautifully; a Jack becomes IAK; a Seth will need ΣΕΘ.
6. Add one caption word near a mouth, Exekias-style, if someone in the scene is calling something ('three!' may be written as a numeral: γ´).
7. Sign it as the master did: your name, Greek capitals, along the base, and park the vase with the museum wall for the Reading Evening.

Tips

- Silhouettes first, details second: black-figure is patient work in exactly that order, and shortcuts show.
- Say every name aloud while lettering it; label-spelling is sound-spelling.

- A calm scene reads better than a busy one, ask Exekias. One table, a few figures, good postures.

Check your work

- ☐ The vase shape, black figures and scratched details follow the black-figure manner.
- ☐ Every figure is labeled in Greek capitals, spelled by sound.
- ☐ One caption or numeral floats by a mouth, vase-style.
- ☐ The vase is signed in Greek capitals and displayed for the Evening.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the two hero names in capitals with their readings: AXIΛΛEYΣ a-chil-LEWS; AIAΣ AI-as, and one sentence: these are the stories the Greeks told.
2. Write the vase's facts like a museum label: Exekias, Athens, about 540 B.C., amphora, Vatican Museums.
3. Connect the numbers: the calls painted on the vase are cousins of τέσσαρες (four) and τρεῖς (three) from Unit 3.
4. Make the two hero-name cards for the deck (capitals on the front, reading and 'hero of the stories the Greeks told' on the back), and run the deck.

From history. Exekias' amphora was found at Vulci, in Italy, in an Etruscan tomb: the Etruscans, who were not Greeks at all, imported Athenian vases by the shipload because they too thought them the finest things made in their world. The best Greek pots traveled like treasure and were buried like it, which is why so many survived whole, and why a vase painted in Athens waits for you today in a museum in Rome.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Read AXIΛΛEYΣ letter by letter and assemble the name.

▼ Show solution

1. A alpha, X chi (loch-scrape), I iota, Λ Λ double lambda, hold the l.
2. E + Y together: the capital ευ glide, eh-oo.
3. Σ: capital sigma, final s. Assemble with the stress late: a-chil-LEWS.

Answer: a-chil-LEWS: Achilles, exactly as Exekias lettered him, capitals, no marks, glide and all.

Example 2. Read ΑΙΑΣ, then explain where English got Ajax from it.

▼ **Show solution**

1. A + I: the αι glide, as in aisle.
2. A Σ: as. Assemble: AI-as.
3. Latin respelled the name (Aiax), and English kept Latin's j: Ajax.

Answer: AI-as. English Ajax is the same name after a trip through Latin, where i-between-vowels became j.

Example 3. A museum label says the heroes are 'calling their throws: four and three.' Connect those calls to your Unit 3 number words.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Your four: τέσσαρες (TESS-a-res). Your three: τρεῖς (TREIS).
2. The words painted on the vase are older cousins of these, same family, slightly different dress.
3. Achilles calls the higher number: the painter lets you see who is winning.

Answer: The vase's four and three are kin to τέσσαρες and τρεῖς; Achilles' four beats Ajax's three, and a reader of Greek numbers catches the score.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Who made the amphora, roughly when, and who are the two figures?

▼ **Show answer**

Exekias of Athens, about 540 B.C.; the figures are Achilles and Ajax, labeled ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ, playing a dice game between battles.

2. **Easy** Read aloud: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ, ΑΙΑΣ.

▼ **Show answer**

a-chil-LEWS; AI-as, capital-letter reading, glides included (ευ and αι).

3. **Easy** Why are there no breathing marks or accents on the vase's names?

▼ **Show answer**

They are capitals, and ALL-CAPITAL Greek drops the little marks; the reader supplies the sounds from knowing the words.

4. **Medium** What does this course mean by calling Achilles and Ajax 'the stories the Greeks told'? Say it in your own words.

▼ **Show answer**

Their adventures are legends a whole people loved, learned and retold, worth knowing and enjoying as stories, but not true the way the Gospel is true. The vase, the painter and the letters are real; the heroes live in the tales.

5. **Medium** Which two diphthongs do the hero names ride, and what are their keywords?

▼ **Show answer**

ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ rides ευ (eh-oo said quickly); ΑΙΑΣ rides αι (aisle).

6. **Medium** The painted calls on the vase are kin to which of your number words? Who is winning, and how do you know?

▼ **Show answer**

τέσσαρες (four) and τρεῖς (three). Achilles calls four against Ajax's three, so Achilles leads, and only a reader of the letters knows the score.

7. **Hard** Exekias labeled his figures and signed his work. Give two different things a label does for a picture, and one thing a signature does for a maker, with this vase as your evidence.

▼ **Show answer**

A label fixes WHO is shown (without ΑΙΑΣ we might guess any warrior) and lets the picture tell a specific story (these particular doomed friends at peace). The signature stands behind the work: Exekias put his name where every buyer could judge his craft, honest workmanship owning its work, 2,500 years and counting.

8. **Challenge** Plan your Reading Evening museum speech for the vase picture (four sentences, out loud): name the painter and date, read both labels, report the score, and end with one sentence about where stories like these belong next to the true Story.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary. Full credit for: Exekias, about 540 B.C.; AXIΛΛEYΣ and AIAΣ read correctly; Achilles' four beating Ajax's three; and a closing sentence in the spirit of 'the Greeks told great stories, and we keep them as stories, the Gospel we keep as truth.'

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading AIAΣ as 'ay-ass' letter by letter. A + I is the αι glide: AI-as, one smooth first syllable.
- Expecting the English name on the vase. Greek wrote Aias; Ajax is Latin's respelling. The vase is right and English is the visitor.
- Treating the heroes as history. The vase is history; the heroes are the stories the Greeks told. Keep the solid ground under your feet.
- Labeling your own vase with English letter shapes. Greek capitals, built by sound: ΣΕΘ, not SETH with a backwards Σ for an E.

Make it a game • Museum Guard. The student is the museum's expert guard; the family are visitors who keep getting the vase WRONG ('Is that Hercules?' 'Does that say Ajax in English?' 'Are those decorations or letters?'). The guard must courteously correct each error with evidence, reading the labels aloud, reporting the score, naming Exekias and the date. Five visitors satisfied and the guard is promoted to curator, who may then quiz the family on THEIR labeled vase.

Scripture. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7, KJV)

Exekias could paint armor, posture, even a game's score, everything the eye can reach, and the stories the Greeks told prized exactly such outward splendor: the swiftest, the strongest. This verse quietly outranks every hero label ever painted: God reads what no painter and no poet can letter, the heart.

5.2 KYRIE ELEISON

OBJECTIVES

- Read Κύριε ἐλέησον aloud and tell what it means: Lord, have mercy.
- Tell where the prayer comes from: the blind men's cry in the Gospels (Matthew 20:30–31).
- Explain why churches that never spoke Greek kept these two words in Greek.
- Read Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and recognize its abbreviation IC XC beside Christ's head in old mosaics.
- Host the Greek Reading Evening: alphabet, full deck, vase, purple page, and the prayer read and explained.

Warm-up. Some words your family keeps in their original wrapping. Amen is Hebrew; hallelujah is Hebrew; nobody translates them, because they came to us straight from the Bible's own mouth and we like holding the original. Today you meet the Greek words the whole church kept that same way, two words prayed for two thousand years in the language the blind men first cried them in. By tonight you will read them off the card. By the end of the week you will have read them to your family.

WATCH

Lord Have Mercy

Patristix · 4:23

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6ALlO61CbE>

WHEN TO WATCH

After the second story paragraph: the prayer's long history, from the Gospels through the centuries of the church.

Note: Made for a general audience and previewed. You will hear the prayer sung in traditions where it never left Greek; small pronunciation differences from our classroom sounds are normal.

BACKUP VIDEO

The Meaning of Kyrie Eleison

The Religion Teacher · 2:27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2gmC1uMRDA>

For Session 2: a two-minute walk through what the words mean and why churches still say them.

KEY TERMS

Κύριε

(KU-ri-e) 'Lord!', the calling-out form of Lord, the word the blind men used to hail Jesus.

ἐλέησον

(e-LE-ay-son) 'Have mercy!', a one-word plea for compassion and help.

mercy

Kindness to someone who cannot earn it: help for the helpless. What the blind men asked for, and got.

IC XC

The old Greek abbreviation of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός: first and last letters of each word, written beside Christ's head in mosaics and icons.

mosaic

A picture built from thousands of small colored stone or glass cubes. The great churches wrote their Greek in gold mosaic.

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.

κύριος

kurios

KOO-ree-os

noun

lord, master

ἐλεέω

eleeo

eh-leh-EH-oh

verb

I have mercy

ἔλεος

eleos

EH-leh-os

noun

mercy

ἁμαρτία

hamartia

hah-mar-TEE-ah

noun

a sin

σωτηρία

soteria

soh-tay-REE-ah

noun

salvation

δέσις

deesis

DEH-ay-sis

noun

a petition

ἰκεσία

hikesia

hee-keh-SEE-ah

noun

a supplication

οἰκτιρμός

oiktirmos

oyk-tir-MOS

noun

compassion

βοήθεια

boetheia

bo-AY-thay-ah

noun

help

λατρεία

latreia

lah-TRAY-ah

noun

worship, service

δέομαι

deomai

DEH-o-mye

verb

I ask, I pray

CORE IDEAS

The story. Two blind men sat by the road out of Jericho, and heard a crowd passing, and someone told them who it was. They could not see Jesus; they could only shout, and what they shouted has never been improved on as a prayer: Have mercy on us, O Lord. The crowd told them to be quiet, and they shouted the more. And Jesus stood still, the Gospel says, stood still for two beggars the crowd was shushing, touched their eyes, and they saw. Matthew wrote the story down in Greek, and the heart of the blind men's cry stands in his sentences in words you can now read: Κύριε (KU-ri-e),

Lord!, ἐλέησον (e-LE-ay-son), have mercy! The church heard itself in those two beggars, every one of us, unable to see, able only to call out, and took up their cry word for word. Κύριε ἐλέησον: Lord, have mercy.

Kept in Greek. Then something remarkable happened: the prayer traveled, and would not be translated. Churches in Italy and Gaul and Britain that prayed everything else in Latin kept these two words in Greek; churches in lands that never spoke a sentence of Greek in the market kept them too, sung over and over, generation after generation, nearly two thousand years, so that a child in a church far from Greece might know exactly two Greek words, and they would be these. Why keep them in Greek? For the reason your family keeps amen in Hebrew: they came straight from the Book's own language, the actual cry in its original wrapping, and the church liked holding the original. Here is what that means for you, standing at the end of your reading year: the two Greek words the whole church chose to keep are words YOU can now read off the page, marks, thumps, glides and all.

How Greek works: reading the prayer. Take it slowly, with everything you own. Κύριε: K kappa, ú upsilon with the thump (KU), ρι (ri), ε (e): KU-ri-e, three beats, thump up front: Lord! Then ἐλέησον: smooth breathing (no h), ἐ (e), λέ with the thump (LE), η (ay), σον (son): e-LE-ay-son, four beats: have mercy! Together, with the rhythm the centuries gave it: KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son. And one more reading before the Evening: in the picture study you will meet Christ's name written the mosaic way, IC XC, the first and last letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, a sacred abbreviation the old craftsmen used like a seal. You read the full name in Unit 4; now you can read its monogram on a wall eight centuries old.

Say it out loud. This week's recitation IS the course. Chant the alphabet in two breaths. Run the six glides with keywords. Then the whole sight-word deck, start to finish, out loud, from ἀλφάβητος through εὔρηκα, ἅγιος, Ἀγία Σοφία, ὥρα, ἵππος, ἄγγελος, the numbers, Ὀλυμπιάς, μουσική, δεινός and σαῦρος, ποταμός, ῥινόκερος, βιβλία, Χριστός, βαπτίζω, the vase names, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, and last, always last, Κύριε ἐλέησον, read slowly and like you mean it, because unlike every other card in the deck, this one is a prayer, and it is still being prayed.

Try it. This week you rehearse and host the Greek Reading Evening, the course's graduation: the program is in the activity, the food is bread, olives, honey and grapes, and the finale is a fourth grader reading the church's oldest prayer in its own language

and telling the family, in plain words, what it means and who first cried it by the Jericho road.

PICTURE STUDY



Christ from the Deesis Mosaic of Hagia Sophia, Unknown Byzantine mosaicists, 13th century · Mosaic of stone and gold glass tesserae · South gallery of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

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

High in the gallery of Hagia Sophia, the church from your Unit 2 dome, craftsmen of the 1200s set this Christ in gold: tens of thousands of tiny glass and stone cubes, tilted to catch the light. Centuries of plaster once covered it; restorers uncovered the face again within living memory. Beside the head, in two small roundels, stand Greek letters you can read: IC XC, the first and last letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, the mosaic world's way of writing the Name. Visitors who know no Greek walk past the label; you won't.

Look closely

- Find the letter roundels: IC on one side, XC on the other, the monogram of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
- Look closely at the face: the tiny tesserae shift color cube by cube, shadow built from green and violet stones.
- Find the cross inside the halo: the mosaicists' quiet statement of how this King won his kingdom.
- Study the eyes and the blessing hand together: grave, calm, attentive, the face of the One the blind men called to, as a craftsman eight centuries ago imagined it.

Talk about it

1. The craftsmen labeled Christ with an abbreviation every churchgoer knew. What do shared abbreviations tell you about how well a community knows a name?
2. This mosaic was plastered over for centuries and then uncovered. What else in this course survived by being covered, kept and found again?
3. The blind men could not see any face at all, and still called out and were heard. What does that say about what prayer needs, and doesn't need?

ACTIVITY

The Greek Reading Evening

Every course in this family ends with a feast, because finishing well is worth celebrating. Tonight the student does not take a test; the student GIVES a reading. Rehearse in Sessions 2 and 3, then host the Evening at week's end.

You will need

- The full sight-word deck, the letter cards, and the museum wall pieces: inscription, dome, stele, numeral poster, beast, purple page, labeled vase
- Bread, olives, honey and grapes, a cloth, and the family table
- A hand-lettered program (optional but splendid)

Steps

1. Plan the program in your notebook: 1. The alphabet, chanted or sung. 2. The Grand Prix record lap, live. 3. The museum tour: each wall piece shown with one sentence each. 4. The full deck, read aloud. 5. The vase reading: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ and ΑΙΑΣ, with the score. 6. The purple page. 7. The finale: Κύριε ἐλέησον, read and explained. 8. The feast.
2. Rehearse the finale most: read Κύριε ἐλέησον slowly (KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son), then say in your own words: it means Lord, have mercy; two blind men by the Jericho road first cried it to Jesus, and he stood still and healed them; the church has prayed it in Greek ever since.
3. Rehearse the deck until no card can surprise you, and choose your proudest three wall pieces for longer sentences.
4. Set the table: cloth, bread, olives, honey, grapes, the Greek market spread.
5. Host the Evening: welcome the family, run the program, keep it moving, and let the littlest sibling be quizmaster for one card if they demand a part.
6. Finish the finale, then serve the feast with both hands, as a good host does.
7. Afterward, write the date and one sentence in the notebook's last page: I read Greek to my family tonight, and sign it in Greek capitals.

Tips

- Shorter and confident beats longer and mumbled: one good sentence per wall piece is a tour, three is a lecture.

- If a card stalls mid-Evening, sound it out slowly in front of everyone, that IS the skill, shown live, and finish with a grin.
- Parents: applaud the sounding-out, not just the speed. The course taught a reader, not a parrot.

Check your work

- ☐ The program ran start to finish: alphabet, record lap, tour, deck, vase, purple page, prayer, feast.
- ☐ Κύριε ἐλέησον was read rightly and explained in the student's own words, Jericho road and all.
- ☐ Every sight-word card was read aloud over the course of the Evening.
- ☐ The notebook's last page is signed, in Greek capitals, under one honest sentence.

GREEK NOTEBOOK

1. Write the date, then the prayer large and carefully, marks and all: Κύριε ἐλέησον, with its reading (KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son) and meaning: Lord, have mercy.
2. Write where it comes from, in one sentence: the blind men by the Jericho road cried it to Jesus, and he stood still (Matthew 20:30–31).
3. Copy the monogram pair and its solution: IC XC = Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
4. Write the Reading Evening program, numbered 1 to 8, and after the Evening, the signed last-page sentence.

From history. Κύριε ἐλέησον is quite possibly the most-repeated sentence in the history of human speech: sung in the churches of the East continually since the earliest centuries, kept in Greek inside the Latin service of the West, set to music by Palestrina, Bach (the opening of the Mass in B minor) and Beethoven, and prayed this very week in languages the apostles never heard of. Composers call the movement simply 'the Kyrie.' When you read your card, you join the longest chorus on earth.

Example 1. Read Κύριε ἐλέησον syllable by syllable, then at praying speed.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Κύριε: KU (thump) - ri - e. Three beats, thump first.
2. ἐλέησον: smooth breathing, no h: e - LE (thump) - ay - son. Four beats.
3. Together, smoothly: KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son.

Answer: KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son: Lord, have mercy, seven beats the church has prayed for two thousand years.

Example 2. A visitor at Hagia Sophia asks what IC XC means beside the mosaic's head. Answer like the course taught you.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Recall the abbreviation rule: first and last letters of each word.
2. Unpack: IC from Ἰησοῦς, XC from Χριστός.
3. Give the full reading and meaning.

Answer: It abbreviates Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ee-ay-SOOS chris-TOSS: Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed One. The old craftsmen wrote the Name as a monogram, like a seal.

Example 3. Your little brother asks why the church didn't just say 'Lord, have mercy' in English (or Latin) and drop the Greek. Give the honest two-part answer.

▼ **Show solution**

1. Part one: churches DO pray it translated, constantly; the meaning was never locked up.
2. Part two: many also kept the Greek because it is the cry's original wrapping, the words as the Gospel first carried them, like amen kept in Hebrew.
3. Add the family example: we say amen and hallelujah untranslated every week.

Answer: The church prays the meaning in every language, and keeps the Greek original alongside, the way we keep amen in Hebrew: some words are treasured in the very language the Bible first gave them to us in.

PRACTICE

1. **Easy** Read aloud and translate: Κύριε ἐλέησον.

▼ **Show answer**

KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son: Lord, have mercy.

2. **Easy** Who first cried this prayer's words in Matthew's Gospel, and what did Jesus do?

▼ **Show answer**

Two blind men sitting by the wayside near Jericho cried, Have mercy on us, O Lord; the crowd shushed them, they cried the more, and Jesus stood still, touched their eyes, and they received sight.

3. **Easy** What do the mosaic letters IC XC stand for?

▼ **Show answer**

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Jesus Christ: the first and last letters of each word, the craftsmen's monogram of the Name.

4. **Medium** Which little-mark skills does Κύριε ἐλέησον exercise? Find a thump in each word and the breathing in the second.

▼ **Show answer**

Κύριε thumps its first syllable (acute on ú: KU-ri-e); ἐλέησον wears a smooth breathing (no h) and thumps its second syllable (e-LE-ay-son).

5. **Medium** Why did churches that never spoke Greek keep these two words in Greek? Use the amen comparison.

▼ **Show answer**

Like amen and hallelujah kept in Hebrew, the cry was treasured in its original Gospel language: the church held the actual words in their first wrapping while praying the meaning in every tongue.

6. **Medium** What does mercy mean, and why is it exactly the right word for what the blind men needed?

▼ **Show answer**

Kindness to one who cannot earn or repay it: help for the helpless. The blind men could not see, work a cure, or even push through the crowd; they could only ask, which is why their cry fits every one of us.

7. **Hard** The crowd told the blind men to be quiet, 'and they cried the more.' What does that detail teach about prayer, and how does Jesus standing still answer the crowd?

▼ **Show answer**

That real need does not take the crowd's hushing for an answer: persistence in asking is faith's grip. Jesus standing still, stopping the whole procession for two shushed beggars, overrules the crowd: no one who cries to him for mercy is an interruption.

8. **Challenge** You have read Greek off a stone wall, a marble column, a vase, a purple page, a mosaic and a prayer card. At your Reading Evening, someone asks: 'So what was this whole year FOR?' Give your answer in three sentences, and let the last one include Κύριε ἐλέησον.

▼ **Show answer**

Answers vary. Full credit for three honest sentences in the spirit of: I learned to read the alphabet the New Testament is written in, fluently, off real things from the real world. The words of science, the church and the museum opened up, because they were Greek all along. And the last card in my deck is Κύριε ἐλέησον, Lord, have mercy, which I can now read, and mean.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Reading ἐλέησον with an h. The breathing is smooth: e-LE-ay-son. (Κύριε has no breathing question at all: it starts with a consonant.)
- Rushing the prayer like a drill card. It is read slowly and plainly; the course's last reading lesson is reverence.
- Taking IC XC for English letters. They are Greek: iota-sigma and chi-sigma (in their old lunate shapes), the frame of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
- Making the Evening a test. It is a recital and a feast: the student gives a reading, the family receives it, and the honey comes out either way.

Make it a game · The Long Chorus. A gentle finale game for the Reading Evening table. Go around the family: each person names a time or place (a castle in the year 800, a ship in a storm, a composer at his desk, a church last Sunday), and the student answers each one the same way, by reading the card aloud, KU-ri-e e-LE-ay-son, because the point of the game is the point of the prayer: it fits every hand that has ever held it. After one full round, the student teaches the family to say it together, once, slowly, and the course is complete.

Scripture. “And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.” (Matthew 20:30, KJV)

The next verse says the multitude rebuked them, 'but they cried the more.' Matthew wrote their cry in Greek, and the church never let the words go: Κύριε ἐλέησον. The course ends here on purpose, with the student able to read, in the original, the prayer that every reader of every age still needs.