GREEK · GRADES 3–8 · QUICK REFERENCE

Greek Grammar (Alphabet · Nouns · Verbs)

Grades 3–8 | 4 pages

The twenty-four letters with sounds and anchors, diphthongs, breathings and accents, the article square, first, second and third declension charts, adjectives, pronouns and prepositions, λύω in four tenses with εἰμί, infinitives, participles and the lines of real Greek the course reads.

1 Alphabet 2 Reading marks 3 Article & cases 4 Noun charts 5 Adjectives & pronouns 6 Verbs 7 Real Greek

1 THE ALPHABET: FOUR AND TWENTY LETTERS

grades 3–4 · chant name and sound daily

α to μ

Letter	Name	Sound	Anchor
Α α	alpha	a as in f**a**ther	ἀλφάβητος
Β β	beta	b	βίβλος → Bible
Γ γ	gamma	g as in **g**o; γγ = ng	γάλα → galaxy
Δ δ	delta	d	river delta
Ε ε	epsilon	e as in b**e**d (short)	ἔργον → energy
Ζ ζ	zeta	dz	ζωή → zoology
Η η	eta	ay as in th**ey** (long)	looks like n, says AY
Θ θ	theta	th as in **th**ink	θεός → theology
Ι ι	iota	i as in b**i**t or mach**i**ne	a jot
Κ κ	kappa	k	καρδία → cardiac
Λ λ	lambda	l	λόγος → logic
Μ μ	mu	m	μικρός → micro

ν to ω

Letter	Name	Sound	Anchor
Ν ν	nu	n	looks like v, says n
Ξ ξ	xi	x as in bo**x**	ξένος
Ο ο	omicron	o as in p**o**t (short)	“little o”
Π π	pi	p	πέτρα → Peter
Ρ ρ	rho	rolled r	looks like p, says r
Σ σ ς	sigma	s; ς only at the end of a word	σοφία → philosophy
Τ τ	tau	t	τέλος
Υ υ	upsilon	oo with round lips (French u)	ὕδωρ → hydro
Φ φ	phi	f	φωνή → telephone
Χ χ	chi	scraped h of Scottish lo**ch**	Χριστός → Christ
Ψ ψ	psi	ps as in li**ps**	ψυχή → psychology
Ω ω	omega	long o as in t**o**ne	“big o”

MEMORY TRICK

Five traps for 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 · **ω** is not w but long o.

Vowels and consonants

Seven vowels: α ε η ι ο υ ω (ε and ο short; η and ω long). The Greeks took Phoenician consonants and added the vowels, making the first full alphabet; the Romans borrowed it, and our A is alpha’s grandchild.

Capitals in stone

Old inscriptions use capitals only, no spaces, no accents: ΙΧΘΥΣ, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ. Early lines sometimes ran *boustrophedon*, “as the ox plows,” turning at each end. Small letters came centuries later from quick handwriting.

2 READING MARKS: DIPHTHONGS, BREATHINGS, ACCENTS

grade 4 · the tricky bits

Six diphthongs (two letters, one sound)

Team	Says	Keyword	Seen in
αι	i of **ai**sle	aisle	ΑΙΑΣ, Ajax; καί and
ει	ei of **ei**ght	eight	εἷς one, τρεῖς three
οι	oi of **oi**l	oil	οἱ λόγοι the words
αυ	ow of n**ow**	now	σαῦρος lizard; αὐτός
ευ	eh-oo, said fast	eureka	εὕρηκα I have found it
ου	oo of f**oo**d	food	Ἰησοῦς Jesus; οὐ not

A diphthong is **one syllable**: εὕ-ρη-κα has three beats. On a word that begins with a diphthong the breathing and accent sit on the **second** vowel (εὕρηκα).

Breathing marks: the hidden H

- Greek has no letter h. Every word beginning with a vowel (or υ, ρ) wears a mark on that vowel.
- **Rough** (῾) = add h: ὁ (ho) the, Ἁγία Σοφία (ha-GEE-a), ἡμεῖς (hay-MACE) we, ὕδωρ (HU-dor) water.
- **Smooth** (᾽) = no h: ἐγώ (eh-GO) I, ἀγάπη (a-GA-pay) love, Ἰησοῦς.

Accents: three shapes, one instruction

Acute (´), grave (`) and circumflex (~) all mean the same to a reader: **stress this syllable**. The grave appears only on a word’s last syllable when another word follows; the circumflex likes long vowels and diphthongs (τρεῖς, Ἰησοῦς). Copy accents when you write; obey them when you read.

Other marks

- **Iota subscript**: a tiny ι under α, η, ω (ᾳ ῃ ῳ) is silent but marks the dative: τῇ φωνῇ, ἐν ἀρχῇ.
- **Final sigma**: σ inside a word, ς at its end: σοφός.
- **γγ** says ng: ἄγγελος (ANG-el-os), angel.
- **Apostrophe** (᾽) shows a dropped vowel before a vowel: δι᾽ αὐτοῦ, Ὦ ξεῖν᾽.

Punctuation

Period and comma as in English. The Greek **question mark is ;** (our semicolon): τίς λέγει; who is speaking? A raised dot (·) works as our colon or semicolon.

Letters that count

α′	β′	γ′	δ′	ε′	ς′	ζ′	η′	θ′	ι′	κ′	ρ′
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	100

A keraia (′) turns a letter into a numeral; ι′ + β′ = ιβ′ 12. The Olympiad count and the Psalm numbers were written this way.

3 THE ARTICLE SQUARE & THE FOUR CASES

grades 5–6 · every noun wears its badge

The article: the badge every noun wears

Case	Masc. sg.	Fem. sg.	Neut. sg.	Masc. pl.	Fem. pl.	Neut. pl.
Nominative	ὁ	ἡ	τό	οἱ	αἱ	τά
Genitive	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
Dative	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
Accusative	τόν	τήν	τό	τούς	τάς	τά

Chant it down each column: ὁ, τοῦ, τῷ, τόν; ἡ, τῆς, τῇ, τήν; τό, τοῦ, τῷ, τό; then the plurals. ὁ, ἡ, οἱ, αἱ have no accent; they lean on their noun.

The four stations (course order)

Case	Job	Example
Nominative	the namer: subject; after εἰμί	**ὁ λόγος** λέγει
Genitive	of, 's (owner)	ὁ λόγος **τοῦ θεοῦ**
Dative	to, for (receiver); in, with	**τῷ φίλῳ** γράφω
Accusative	the object; into, toward	βλέπω **τὸν ποταμόν**

MEMORY TRICK **Badge beats ending**

Gender is grammar, not biology: ἡ θάλασσα is no lady. Learn every noun **with its article**; a card without its badge is half a card. ἡ ὁδός ends in -ος but is feminine: trust the badge.

4 NOUN CHARTS: FIRST, SECOND & THIRD DECLENSIONS

grades 5–7 · the genitive reveals the stem

First and second declensions

Case	ὁ λόγος word	τὸ δῶρον gift	ἡ καρδία heart	ἡ φωνή voice
Nom. sg.	λόγος	δῶρον	καρδία	φωνή
Gen. sg.	λόγου	δώρου	καρδίας	φωνῆς
Dat. sg.	λόγῳ	δώρῳ	καρδίᾳ	φωνῇ
Acc. sg.	λόγον	δῶρον	καρδίαν	φωνήν
Nom. pl.	λόγοι	δῶρα	καρδίαι	φωναί
Gen. pl.	λόγων	δώρων	καρδιῶν	φωνῶν
Dat. pl.	λόγοις	δώροις	καρδίαις	φωναῖς
Acc. pl.	λόγους	δῶρα	καρδίας	φωνάς

Neuter rule: nominative and accusative are always alike, and the plural ends in -α. Nouns in -α follow καρδία; nouns in -η follow φωνή. ὁ ποιητής, ὁ μαθητής, ὁ στρατιώτης are masculine nouns in first-declension dress (read with ὁ).

Third declension: find the stem from the genitive

Case	ὁ φύλαξ guard	ἡ νύξ night	τὸ σῶμα body	ὁ πατήρ father
Nom. sg.	φύλαξ	νύξ	σῶμα	πατήρ
Gen. sg.	φύλακος	νυκτός	σώματος	πατρός
Dat. sg.	φύλακι	νυκτί	σώματι	πατρί
Acc. sg.	φύλακα	νύκτα	σῶμα	πατέρα
Nom. pl.	φύλακες	νύκτες	σώματα	πατέρες
Gen. pl.	φυλάκων	νυκτῶν	σωμάτων	πατέρων
Dat. pl.	φύλαξι(ν)	νυξί(ν)	σώμασι(ν)	πατράσι(ν)
Acc. pl.	φύλακας	νύκτας	σώματα	πατέρας

Learn each as a dictionary pair: νύξ, νυκτός → stem νυκτ-. ἡ μήτηρ, mother, declines like πατήρ. Sight nouns read whole with their article: ὁ παῖς child, τὸ ὄνομα name, τὸ ὕδωρ water, τὸ ὄρος mountain.

Letter chemistry

κ, γ, χ + σ → **ξ** (φυλακ + ς = φύλαξ) · π, β, φ + σ → **ψ** · τ, δ, θ drop before σ. The same rule builds futures and aorists: γράφω → γράψω.

Genitive of belonging

ὁ ἵππος τοῦ τέκνου, the child's horse; ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ or ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, the word of God, both good Greek. ΗΓΗΣΩ ΠΡΟΞΕΝΟ on a gravestone: Hegeso, (daughter) of Proxenos.

MEMORY TRICK **The caryatid porch**

Third-declension nominatives look wildly different (νύξ, σῶμα, πατήρ), but all bear the same endings underneath. Watch the load, not the drapery.

5 ADJECTIVES, PRONOUNS & PREPOSITIONS

grades 5–8 · agree, point, place

ἀγαθός, -ή, -όν good: agrees in gender, number, case

Case	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Nom. sg.	ἀγαθός	ἀγαθή	ἀγαθόν
Gen. sg.	ἀγαθοῦ	ἀγαθῆς	ἀγαθοῦ
Dat. sg.	ἀγαθῷ	ἀγαθῇ	ἀγαθῷ
Acc. sg.	ἀγαθόν	ἀγαθήν	ἀγαθόν
Nom. pl.	ἀγαθοί	ἀγαθαί	ἀγαθά
Acc. pl.	ἀγαθούς	ἀγαθάς	ἀγαθά

Masculine like λόγος, feminine like φωνή, neuter like δῶρον. μικρός takes feminine -α (μικρά) after ρ. ὁ ἀγαθὸς φίλος · ἡ καλὴ φωνή · τὸ μικρὸν δῶρον.

The course's adjectives

ἀγαθός good · καλός beautiful, fine · μικρός small · σοφός wise · πιστός faithful · πρῶτος first · ξύλινος wooden. With εἰμί they link: ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθός ἐστιν, God is good; οἱ φίλοι πιστοί εἰσιν.

Personal pronouns

Case	I	we	you	you all
Nom.	ἐγώ	ἡμεῖς	σύ	ὑμεῖς
Gen.	μου	ἡμῶν	σου	ὑμῶν
Dat.	μοι	ἡμῖν	σοι	ὑμῖν
Acc.	με	ἡμᾶς	σε	ὑμᾶς

μου, μοι, με, σου, σοι, σε are enclitics: they lean on the word before and lose their accent: ἡ φωνή μου, my voice; λέγω σοι, I say to you. ἐγὼ λέγω adds emphasis. Sight: αὐτός he (αὐτὸς λέγει), οὗτος this one.

Asking

τίς; who? · **τί;** what? why? · τίς λέγει; ὁ διδάσκαλος λέγει. τί βλέπεις; τὸν ποταμὸν βλέπω. τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια; (John 18:38). The question words never soften to a grave.

Prepositions pick a case

Word	Case	Meaning	Example
ἐν	dative	in, at	ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ · ἐν ἀρχῇ
εἰς	accusative	into, to	εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν
ἐκ / ἐξ	genitive	out of	ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου
ἀπό	genitive	away from	ἀπὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ
σύν	dative	with	σὺν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς
πρός	accusative	toward, with	πρὸς τὸν θεόν

Standing still: ἐν + dative. Moving in: εἰς + accusative. Moving out or away: ἐκ, ἀπό + genitive.

Little words

καί and, also · **οὐ / οὐκ / οὐχ** not (οὐκ before a vowel, οὐχ before a rough breathing) · **δέ** but, and · **αὔριον** tomorrow · **Ὦ** O (calling someone).

6 VERBS: Λ'ΥΩ IN FOUR TENSES

grades 5–7 · the ending is the pronoun

λύω, I loose: present, imperfect, future, aorist

Person	Present	Imperfect (movie)	Future	Aorist (snapshot)
I	λύω	ἔλυον	λύσω	ἔλυσα
you	λύεις	ἔλυες	λύσεις	ἔλυσας
he, she, it	λύει	ἔλυε(ν)	λύσει	ἔλυσε(ν)
we	λύομεν	ἐλύομεν	λύσομεν	ἐλύσαμεν
you all	λύετε	ἐλύετε	λύσετε	ἐλύσατε
they	λύουσι(ν)	ἔλυον	λύσουσι(ν)	ἔλυσαν

Imperfect = augment ἐ- + stem + -ον: action rolling in the past (ἔλυον, I was loosing); I and they match. **Future** = stem + σ + present endings: λύσω. **Aorist** = augment + stem + σα: ἔλυσα, I loosed, once and done. The augment on a vowel stem lengthens it: ἀκούω → ἤκουον, ἤκουσα. Movable ν before a vowel or a pause.

σ-chemistry in the future and aorist

Verb	Future	Aorist	Meaning
γράφω	γράψω	ἔγραψα	write
πέμπω	πέμψω	ἔπεμψα	send
βλέπω	βλέψω	ἔβλεψα	see, look
ἄγω	ἄξω	(grade 7 sight)	lead
ἀκούω	ἀκούσω	ἤκουσα	hear
παύω	παύσω	ἔπαυσα	stop

π β φ + σ = ψ · κ γ χ + σ = ξ. λέγω changes words for its future (like go → went).

Working verbs

λύω loose · γράφω write · λέγω say · ἀκούω hear · βλέπω see · πέμπω send · παύω stop · ἔχω have (εἶχον, sight) · ἄγω lead · διδάσκω teach · φέρω carry · θέλω want · πιστεύω believe.

εἰμί, I am

Person	Present	Imperfect
I	εἰμί	ἤμην
you	εἶ	ἦς
he, she, it	ἐστί(ν)	ἦν
we	ἐσμέν	ἦμεν
you all	ἐστέ	ἦτε
they	εἰσί(ν)	ἦσαν

εἰμί links like an equals sign: a noun after it stays nominative (φίλος εἶναι θέλω). Sight: ἔσται, he/she/it will be. ἐγώ εἰμι, I AM (Exodus 3:14 LXX; John 8:58).

Second aorists by sight

εἶπεν he said · **ἦλθεν** he came · **εἶδεν** he saw · **ἐγένετο** it came to be. Know them by face; the stepping-stones of every Gospel page. (**ἐποίησεν**, he made, is a first aorist of ποιέω: learn it by sight too.)

Infinitive, participle, contract verbs

- **Infinitive** -ειν: λύειν to loose, γράφειν, λέγειν; the rebel is **εἶναι**, to be. θέλω + infinitive: γράφειν θέλω, I want to write.
- **Participle** (sight): badge + stem + -ων = "the one ___ing": ὁ λέγων the one saying, ὁ πιστεύων the one believing, ὁ ἀκούων.
- **Contract verbs** squeeze their vowel: ἀγαπάω → ἀγαπῶ I love, ἀγαπᾷς, ἀγαπᾷ; ποιέω → ποιῶ.

MEMORY TRICK **Flags front and back**

Past time flies a flag in **front** (the augment ἐ-); future and aorist carry **σ** after the stem. Movie past -ον; snapshot past -σα.

Read it WORKED

οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἔβλεπον τὴν θάλασσαν.
The brothers were watching the sea.

αὔριον τῷ φίλῳ γράψω.
Tomorrow I will write to my friend.

ἤκουσα τὴν φωνήν. *I heard the voice.*

7 REAL GREEK: LINES TO KNOW BY HEART

grades 3–8 · from the stones to the Gospel

Lines read in the course

Greek	Meaning	Where
τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὦ	the Alpha and the Omega	Revelation 1:8; 22:13
ΙΧΘΥΣ	Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior	the sign of the fish
Κύριε, ἐλέησον	Lord, have mercy	the oldest prayer of the Church
εὕρηκα	I have found it!	Archimedes
γνῶθι σεαυτόν	know thyself	the temple at Delphi
νενικήκαμεν	we have won	the runner from Marathon
θάλαττα θάλαττα	the sea! the sea!	Xenophon, Anabasis
Κύριος ποιμαίνει με	the LORD is my shepherd	Psalm 23:1 (LXX 22:1)
Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν	In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth	Genesis 1:1 LXX
τῷ θεῷ ἡ δόξα	to God the glory	the doxology

John 1:1 parsed WORKED

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος
In the beginning (ἐν + dative) was (imperfect of εἰμί) the Word (subject)

καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν
and the Word was with (πρός + accusative) God

καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
and the Word was God: the noun with the article is the subject

Three-pass reading

1. Read the whole line aloud for sound, stress on the accents.
2. Mark the badges and endings: who is the namer, what is the object, which verb, which tense.
3. Translate, then read it aloud again as a sentence.

Greek inside English

tele far + phone voice · micro small · bio life · geo earth · logos word, study · photo light · graph write · philos love + sophia wisdom · ekklesia church · angelos messenger · biblia books · baptizo dip · doxa glory · Christos anointed. Koine (“common”) Greek is the Greek of the Septuagint and the New Testament; Attic is the dialect of Athens.

MEMORY TRICK **The grand chant**

Open every session with it: the article square → λόγος, φωνή, νύξ, πατήρ → λύω present and ἔλυσα → ἐγώ and σύ → εἰμί both tenses. Three minutes, out loud, every day.