

CHAPTER 1: THE ALPHABET

alpha	A α	ἄλφα	ä as in father
beta	B β	βῆτα	b as in bit
gamma	Γ γ	γάμμα	g as in get
delta	Δ δ	δέλτα	d as in den
epsilon	E ε	ἒ ψιλόν	ě as in get
zeta	Z ζ	ζῆτα	dz as in gadzooks
eta	H η	ἦτα	ā as in lake
theta	Θ θ	θῆτα	th as in thought
iota	I ι	ἰῶτα	ĩ as in bit, or ē as in machine
kappa	K κ	κάππα	k as in kit
lambda	Λ λ	λάμβδα	l as in lit
mu	M μ	μῦ	m as in meet
nu	N ν	νῦ	n as in neat
xi	Ξ ξ	ξῖ	ks = x as in taxi
omicron	O ο	ὀ μικρόν	ô as in off
pi	Π π	πῖ	p as in pen
rho	Ρ ρ	ῥῶ	slightly rolled r
sigma	Σ σ ς	σίγμα	s as in set
tau	T τ	ταῦ	t as in ten
upsilon	Υ υ	ῦ ψιλόν	ū as in duty or û as in put
phi	Φ φ	φῖ	ph = f as in phone
chi	Χ χ	χῖ	ch = kh as in Loch Ness
psi	Ψ ψ	ψῖ	ps as in flaps
omega	Ω ω	ὦ μέγα	ō as in total

SAMPLE VOCABULARY

ἄθλητής	ä thlā tās	= athlete
βιβλίον	bī blē ôn	= book
γεωγραφία	gě ō grā fē ä	= geography
δημοκρατία	dā mō krā tē ä	= democracy
ἐγώ	ě gō	= I
ζῶον	dzō ôn	= living creature
ἤλεκτρον	ā lěk trôn	= amber (cf. electron)
θεός	thě ôs	= god
ἰδέα	ī dē ä	= form; appearance; notion
καλός	kā lôs	= beautiful
λόγος	lô gôs	= word
μελωδία	mě lō dē ä	= melody
νέον	ně ôn	= new thing
ξύλον	xū lôn	= piece of wood
Ὀλυμπία	ô lūm pē ä	= Olympia
ποιητής	poi ā tās	= poet
ῥυθμός	rhūth mōs	= rhythm
σύνταξις	sūn tā ksīs	= syntax
τέχνη	tě khnā	= technical skill
ῥυθμός	hū mnôs	= hymn, song
φωνή	fō nā	= voice, sound
χαρακτήρ	khā rā ktār	= character
ψυχή	psū khā	= soul
ὦ	ō	= oh... (calling someone)

VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Vowels are letters that represent sounds made with the unobstructed breath. There are seven vowels in the Greek alphabet: $\alpha, \varepsilon, \eta, \iota, \omicron, \upsilon, \omega$.

The consonants represent sounds made with the lips, teeth, nose, or throat. There are seventeen consonants in the Greek alphabet: $\beta, \gamma, \delta, \zeta, \theta, \kappa, \lambda, \mu, \nu, \xi, \pi, \rho, \sigma, \tau, \phi, \chi, \psi$. The labial sounds, those made with the lips, are represented by $\beta, \pi,$ and ϕ . The dental sounds, those made by the teeth, are represented by the letters $\delta, \theta, \sigma,$ and τ . The liquid sounds, made with the nose, are represented by $\lambda, \mu, \nu,$ and ρ . The glottal sounds, made in the throat, are represented by the letters $\gamma, \kappa,$ and χ . There are also three letters that represent combinations of consonant sounds: ζ, ξ and ψ . ζ represents the combination represented by d and z in English. ξ is the combination of κ and σ : ψ is the combination of π and σ .

SMOOTH AND ROUGH BREATHING MARKS

Any word beginning with a vowel must have a breathing mark over that vowel. (When the initial vowel is capitalized, the breathing mark is written just before it.) There are two types of breathing marks: smooth breathing marks and rough breathing marks. A smooth breathing mark, ´ , shows that the vowel sound is the first sound of the word. A rough breathing mark, ῀ , represents the sound of h before the vowel. A rough breathing mark appears also over the letter ρ at the beginning of a word.

SYLLABIFICATION AND ACCENTUATION

A syllable is a sound consisting of a vowel and the consonant or consonants pronounced together as one unit with the vowel. A word pronounced with one syllable is called monosyllabic. A word with more than one syllable is called polysyllabic. A word with two syllables is called bisyllabic, and a word with three syllables is called trisyllabic. Many words have more than three syllables, but there are no special names for them.

A consonant or group of consonants at the beginning of a word belongs with the first vowel of the word. If a word begins with a vowel, the first syllable begins with that vowel. A single consonant standing between two vowels belongs with the second vowel. A pair of consonants between two vowels are usually divided between the two syllables, unless the two consonants represent a consonant blend. Consonant blends include βλ, βρ; γλ, γν, γρ; δμ, δν; θλ, θν, θρ; κλ, κν, κρ, κτ; μν; πλ, πν, πρ, πτ; σθ, σκ, σμ, σπ, στ; τλ, τμ, τρ; φθ, φλ, φρ; χθ, χλ, χν, and χρ. A consonant at the end of a word belongs with the last syllable.

There are special names for the last three syllables of a word:

1. the last syllable of a word is called the ultima
2. the second to last syllable is called the penult
3. the third to last syllable is called the antepenult.

If a word has only one syllable, it is considered the ultima.

Almost every word has an accent mark on one of its syllables. There are three types of accent: acute, ´, grave, ` , and circumflex, ~ . An acute accent represents a rise in the vocal pitch; a grave accent represents a drop in vocal pitch, and a circumflex accent represents a waver in vocal pitch. The accent mark is written over the vowel of the syllable.

An acute accent can appear on the ultima, penult, or antepenult of a word. A grave accent can appear only on the ultima of a word. A circumflex accent can appear on the ultima or penult of a word.

There are five classifications of words, according to the type and position of their accents.

1. An oxytone word has an acute accent on the ultima.
2. A paroxytone word has an acute accent on the penult.
3. A proparoxytone word has an acute accent on the antepenult.
4. A perispomenon word has a circumflex accent on the ultima.
5. A properispomenon word has a circumflex accent on the penult.

There is no special name for a word with a grave accent. It is considered an oxytone word, but the acute accent on the ultima is turned to a grave accent when the word is followed by another word in a sentence (or letter name):

καλός beautiful

καλὸς ὕμνος beautiful hymn

CLASSIFICATION AND SYLLABIFICATION OF
THE NAMES OF THE LETTERS AND VOCABULARY

1. Oxytone	ἀ·θλη·τής	ῥυθ·μός
	ἐ·γώ	φω·νή
ἔ ψιλόν	θε·ός	χα·ρα·κτήρ
ὀ μικρόν	κα·λός	ψυ·χή
ὕ ψιλόν	ποι·η·τής	
2. Paroxytone	σί·γμα	ἰ·δέ·α
ἄλ·φα	ᾠ μέ·γα	με·λω·δί·α
γά·μμα		νέ·ον
δέλ·τα	βι·βλί·ον	Ὀ·λυμ·πί·α
κάπ·πα	γε·ω·γρα·φί·α	τέ·χνη
λάμ·βδα	δη·μο·κρα·τί·α	ῥ·μνος
3. Proparoxytone	ἦ·λεκ·τρον	σύν·τα·ξις
4. Perispomenon		
μῦ νῦ ξῖ πῖ ῥῶ ταῦ φῖ χῖ ψῖ ᾠ		
5. Properispomenon		
βῆ·τα	ζῶ·ον	
ζῆ·τα		
ῆ·τα		
θῆ·τα		
ἰῶ·τα		

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs represent the union of two vowels in one syllable. There are eight diphthongs in Ancient Greek. The first vowel can be α , ϵ , η , \omicron , or υ . The second vowel is always either ι or υ . When a word begins with a diphthong, the breathing mark goes over the second vowel.

$\alpha\iota$	$\bar{\iota}$ as in aisle	$\alpha\acute{\iota}\lambda\omicron\upsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$	$\bar{\iota} \bar{l}\bar{u} \bar{r}\bar{o}s$	= cat
$\alpha\upsilon$	ow as in cow	$\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$	ow $\bar{t}\bar{o}s$	= self
$\epsilon\iota$	\bar{a} as in freight	$\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$	$\bar{a} \bar{m}\bar{e}$	= I am
$\epsilon\upsilon$	$\check{e}\bar{u}$	$\epsilon\check{\upsilon}$	$\check{e}\bar{u}$	= well
$\eta\upsilon$	$\bar{a}\bar{u}$	$\eta\check{\upsilon}\rho\eta\kappa\alpha$	$h\bar{a}\bar{u} \bar{r}\bar{a} \bar{k}\bar{a}$	= Eureka
$\omicron\iota$	oi as in toil	$\omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\acute{\iota}\alpha$	oi $\bar{k}\bar{e} \bar{a}$	= house
$\omicron\upsilon$	\bar{u} as in group	$\omicron\upsilon\bar{\rho}\alpha\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$	$\bar{u} \bar{r}\bar{a} \bar{n}\bar{o}s$	= sky, heaven
$\upsilon\iota$	$\bar{w}\bar{e}$	$\upsilon\acute{\iota}\acute{o}\varsigma$	$hw\bar{e} \bar{o}s$	= son

1. Oxytone: $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$, $\omicron\upsilon\bar{\rho}\alpha\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\upsilon\acute{\iota}\acute{o}\varsigma$
2. Paroxytone: $\omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\acute{\iota}\alpha$
3. Proparoxytone: $\alpha\acute{\iota}\lambda\omicron\upsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$, $\eta\check{\upsilon}\rho\eta\kappa\alpha$
4. Perispomenon: $\epsilon\check{\upsilon}$

IMPROPER DIPHTHONGS AND IOTA SUBSCRIPTS

When long α , η , or ω combine with ι , the iota does not affect the sound of the first vowel. This is called an **improper diphthong**. If the first vowel is capitalized, the iota is written after it; otherwise, the iota appears in the form of an **iota subscript** beneath the vowel: α , η , ω .

NAMES OF THE GODS

Zeus	Ζεύς	dzěūs
Hera	Ἥρα	hā rä
Poseidon	Ποσειδῶν	Pô sā dōn
Hades	Ἅιδης	hī dās
Demeter	Δημήτηρ	dā mā tār
Hestia	Ἑστία	hě stē ä
Aphrodite	Ἀφροδίτη	ä frô dē tā
Athena	Ἀθήνη	ä thā nā
Hephaestos	Ἥφαιστος	hā fī stōs
Ares	Ἄρης	ä rās
Apollo	Ἀπόλλων	ä pōl lōn
Artemis	Ἄρτεμις	är tě mīs
Dionysos	Διόνυσος	dī ô nū sōs
Hermes	Ἑρμῆς	hěr mās

1. Oxytone: Ζεύς
2. Paroxytone: Ἥρα, Ἅιδης, Δημήτηρ, Ἑστία,
Ἀφροδίτη, Ἀθήνη, Ἄρης, Ἀπόλλων
3. Proparoxytone: Ἥφαιστος, Διόνυσος
4. Perispomenon: Ποσειδῶν, Ἑρμῆς