

Maria Pouloupoulou

Modern Greek: Grammar Notes for Absolute Beginners

A User-Friendly Grammar for Levels A1-A2



Ελληνικά Ακαδημαϊκά Ηλεκτρονικά
Συγγράμματα και Βοηθήματα
www.kallipos.gr

HEALLINK
Σύνδεσμος Ελληνικών Ακαδημαϊκών Βιβλιοθηκών



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗ
ανάπτυξη στην κοινωνία της γνώσης
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ
ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

ΕΣΠΑ
2007-2013
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ

Maria Pouloupoulou

**Special Research Faculty (Modern Greek as a Foreign Language)
Faculty of Letters, University of Crete**

**Modern Greek:
Grammar Notes
for Absolute Beginners**

A User-Friendly Grammar for Levels A1-A2



**Ελληνικά Ακαδημαϊκά Ηλεκτρονικά
Συγγράμματα και Βοηθήματα
www.kallipos.gr**

Modern Greek: Grammar Notes for Absolute Beginners

Συγγραφή

Μ. Πουλοπούλου

Κριτικός αναγνώστης

Σπ. Σταμούλη

Συντελεστές έκδοσης

Γλωσσική Επιμέλεια: Στ. Τσάλη

Τεχνική Επεξεργασία: Κ. Μοράκης, Ε. Αντωνοπούλου

ISBN: 978-960-603-129-8

Copyright © ΣΕΑΒ, 2015



Το παρόν έργο αδειοδοτείται υπό τους όρους της άδειας Creative Commons Αναφορά Δημιουργού - Μη Εμπορική Χρήση - Παρόμοια Διανομή 3.0. Για να δείτε ένα αντίγραφο της άδειας αυτής επισκεφτείτε τον ιστότοπο <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/gr/>

ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ ΑΚΑΔΗΜΑΪΚΩΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΩΝ

Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο

Ηρώων Πολυτεχνείου 9, 15780 Ζωγράφου

www.kallipos.gr

στη Ρεβέκκα και στους τελείως αργάριους του EILC 2012

Contents

PREFACE	VIII
The Symbols of the Book	IX
CHAPTER 1 The Basics	1
1.1 The Greek Alphabet	2
1.2 Stress	5
1.3 Time for Practice	6
1.4 More Sounds	7
1.4.1 Consonants	8
1.4.2 Vowels	8
1.5 Synopsis	10
1.5.1 Vowels	10
1.5.2 Consonants	11
1.5.3 Stress	12
1.6 Towards Perfection	12
1.6.1 Four Consonants	13
1.6.2 ...and a Vowel	13
1.7 Beyond Words	14
1.7.1 “Words” Larger than Words	14
1.7.2 Intonation	16
1.7.3 Focus	17
CHAPTER 2 Nouns and Verbs	21
2.1 The Grammar of Nouns	21
2.1.1 Gender	21
2.1.2 Case	25
2.2 The Grammar of Verbs	26
2.2.1 Person, Number, and an Optional Subject	26
2.2.2 Tense and Aspect	28
2.2.3 Modality and Mood	30
2.2.4 Voice	30
CHAPTER 3 More about Nouns: Nominative and Accusative Cases	35
3.1 Case as Form	35
3.2 Case in Use	37
3.2.1 Subject, Object, and Free Word Order	38
3.2.2 Predication	39
3.2.3 Apposition	40

3.2.4 Prepositional Phrases	41
3.2.5 Time	42
3.2.6 Synopsis	43
3.3 Back to Form: The Plural	44
3.4 Modern Greek Nouns in Three Steps	47
CHAPTER 4 More about Verbs: The Modern Greek Present Tense	51
4.1 The Form of the Present	52
4.1.1 Group A1: <i>κάνω</i>	54
4.1.2 Group A2: <i>τρώω</i>	55
4.1.3 Group B1: <i>μιλάω/-ώ</i>	56
4.1.4 Group B2: <i>μπορώ</i>	57
4.1.5 “Passive” Group 1: <i>έρχομαι</i>	58
4.1.6 “Passive” Group 2: <i>θυμάμαι</i>	59
4.1.7 Where is the Verb “to be”?	59
4.1.8 Modern Greek Verbs in Two Steps	60
4.2 The Use of the Present	60
CHAPTER 5 Before the Noun: Adjectives and More	66
5.1 The Grammar of Noun-Dependent Words	67
5.2 The Definite and the Indefinite Articles	68
5.3 Numerals and More	72
5.4 Adjectives	76
CHAPTER 6 Instead of Nouns: Pronouns	82
6.1 Personal Pronouns (<i>I, you</i>)	83
6.2 Demonstrative Pronouns (<i>this, that</i>)	85
6.3 Interrogative Pronouns (<i>who?, what?</i>)	87
6.4 Indefinite Pronouns (<i>someone, anyone</i>)	89
6.5 Relative Pronouns (<i>who, which, where</i>)	90
6.6 Where Are the Possessive Pronouns (<i>my, your</i>)?	92
CHAPTER 7 About the Verb: Adverbials	95
7.1 Prepositions	96
7.1.1 Simple Prepositions	96
7.1.2 Complex Prepositions	103
7.2 Adverbs	107
7.3 Adverbial Clauses	108
CHAPTER 8 A Tense from the Past: The Modern Greek <i>αόριστος</i>	113
8.1 The Form of <i>αόριστος</i>	113
8.1.1 Irregular Verbs (Group I)	114

8.1.2 More Irregular Verbs: A Stress Pattern for <i>αόριστος</i>	115
8.1.3 Regular Verbs	118
8.2 The Use of <i>αόριστος</i>	120
CHAPTER 9 To the Future: The Modern Greek <i>μέλλοντας</i> and More	125
9.1 A Tense for the Future: the Modern Greek <i>μέλλοντας</i>	125
9.1.1 The Form of <i>μέλλοντας</i>	126
9.1.2 The Use of <i>μέλλοντας</i>	129
9.2 The Modern Greek “Infinitive”	130
9.2.1 The Form of the “Infinitive”	131
9.2.2 The Use of the “Infinitive”	132
9.3 Back to Conditional Clauses	136
CHAPTER 10 Back to Nouns: Genitive Case	139
10.1 The Use of the Genitive	139
10.2 The Form of the Genitive	141
10.2.1 The Genitive of Nouns	141
10.2.2 The Genitive of Noun-Dependent Words	143
10.2.3 Possessive Pronouns: <i>μου</i> / <i>σου</i> / <i>του</i>	144
10.3 Back to Use: “Categorical” Genitive	145
CHAPTER 11 Beyond Grammar: Some Notes on Vocabulary	149
11.1 Lexical Asymmetries	149
11.2 “Natural” Greek	155
APPENDIX	162
Basic Modern Greek Verbs Revisited	162
KEY TO EXERCISES	168
GLOSSARY	170
1. Speaking and Writing	170
2. Putting Words Together	171
3. Putting the Right Words Together	172
4. Dealing with Meaning	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY	176
Suggested Links	176

PREFACE

This book is aimed at being a comprehensive grammar of Modern Greek for levels A1-A2. It is designed primarily for absolute beginners, but also for people who want to refresh their knowledge of levels A1-A2. It might, however, be suitable as a reference for teachers of Modern Greek or for people who just wish to have a general idea of Modern Greek starting from a basic grammar. The book can be used as a companion for any relevant coursebook, either for self-study or for learning in class.

Grammar points are presented in an everyday style, which echoes teaching in class, with the minimum of grammar terminology. They are supported by real-life examples (translated into English), which come together with their oral version. Considering that this material is basically addressed to non-natives, it includes much more than what is considered to be traditionally part of a grammar: morphology and syntax combine with comments on semantics-pragmatics, while phonetics/phonology are a necessary complement of the entire book. Regarding the phenomena under consideration, the book highlights those points that might be problematic for non-natives. Learners are not only introduced to the phenomena per se. They are also directed to the reasoning process they should develop in order to handle them in use and be communicatively effective. Regarding practice, learners are encouraged to take a realistic point of view: Errors are part of learning anyway, and sometimes the awareness of a phenomenon is in itself enough for levels A1-A2.

The book is structured in 11 Chapters. Chapter 1 introduces pronunciation and writing. Nouns and verbs are prominent regarding grammar and communication, so they are taken as general guidelines in Chapter 2. Nouns are further examined in Chapters 3 and 10, while Chapters 5 and 6 introduce modifiers of nouns and pronouns. Verbs in turn are further examined in Chapters 4, 8 and 9, with their modifiers being examined in Chapter 7. Chapter 11 is a grammar-free chapter, focusing on peculiarities of the Modern Greek vocabulary. Each chapter comes with exercises for elementary practice and cultural tips of linguistic relevance, as well as its translation in Modern Greek. The book also incorporates an Appendix with basic verbs for levels A1-A2, a glossary in the form of a continuous text with key words and examples, as well as basic links that learners of levels A1-A2 might wish to follow.

This book came out as a result of my teaching experience with incoming ERASMUS students of the University of Crete. Earlier drafts of this material were used in the EILC summer courses for the period 2009-2013. I would like to thank Y. Frangiadakis and Ei. Kanellopoulou, who spent their summer evenings reading these drafts.

October 2015
M. Pouloupoulou

The Symbols of the Book

ακριβός: The actual form of a word or any other unit.

[akrivos]: The phonetic representation of a word (stress is denoted by the bold letter) or any other unit.

“ακριβός”: The meaning of a word or any other unit.

Capital letters are used for grammar terms. Inside examples they indicate focus (emphatic) reading.



: A correct construction (as opposed to an incorrect one).



: An incorrect construction.

The (numbered) examples of the book, the contents of the Tables, vocabulary units inside the cultural tips and the exercises come together with their oral version by a female and a male speaker. Press on them to hear it.

CHAPTER 1 | The Basics

This book is a user-friendly grammar of Modern Greek. It aims to be a comprehensive navigator, which will help absolute beginners like you get inside the world of Modern Greek and explore it safely. I guess that this world is hardly known to most of you, so a brief introduction might help. (But if this is too much for you or you believe you can do without it, skip this page and go directly to Unit 1.1 on [page 2](#).)

Modern Greek is the official language of Greece and one of the official languages of Cyprus. It is spoken today as a first or second language by 12-15 million people, not only in Greece and Cyprus, but also in countries with minority or immigrant communities of Greek origin (such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Georgia, Ukraine etc.). Modern Greek is also one of the official languages of the European Union.

As a descendant of Ancient Greek, Modern Greek belongs to an independent branch of the Indo-European language family. Compared to its ancestor, Modern Greek has a relatively simpler phonological system, with only five vowels and numerous consonants. Stress in Modern Greek is dynamic and restricted to one of the three final syllables of the word. Typologically, Modern Greek is an inflectional language, which means that grammatical information (such as number, case, tense, aspect etc.) is indicated by the endings of inflected words (nouns, pronouns, articles, adjectives, verbs). One of the main syntactic features of Modern Greek is free word order: The major constituents of the sentence (such as the subject, the verb or the object) may occupy different positions within it. Sentences with identical major constituents in a different order share roughly the same meaning but not the same focus (emphasis). Compounding and derivation are two of the major mechanisms of word formation, which explains why many words, even very common ones, are rather lengthy. Compared to English, reading in Modern Greek is easy. All you have to do is learn what each letter (or combination of letters) of the Greek alphabet represents, and then put things together in practice. Spelling, though, is not that easy. Unlike consonants, vowels are represented in various ways, and this might be a problem in terms of writing correctly (but there are rules to help you).

Like with any language, learning Modern Greek means developing certain skills. For instance, one must be able to understand what other people say, communicate with them, read, write, spell etc. All of these skills are important, but some are more important than others. Understanding and speaking (skills related to oral communication) are more important than reading and writing (skills related to written communication). If I master Italian, for example, what I will say is *I speak Italian* rather than *I write Italian*. Besides, there are people who speak fluently and cannot read or write a word.

Although less important, reading and writing are absolutely necessary in the learning con-

text you have chosen here (and there are several such contexts around). This is an e-book, which is a book after all, and what you see is a grammar, typically a written text. In this learning context, reading and writing are necessary as a first step to oral communication. So let's start with them.

1.1 The Greek Alphabet

The Greek alphabet consists of 24 letters, all in a capital and a small version. Small letters may differ from capital ones. Writing goes from left to right. Calligraphy (a Greek word) is not widespread these days, and hand writing does not differ radically from typing. Some letters are similar to letters of the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabets, a fact that makes life easier, but still might cause confusion.

It's now time to go through the Greek alphabet. Each letter (both capital and small) is introduced as a typing font. If you press on it, you can hear its pronunciation, by a female and a male voice. (If you press [here](#) you can see the hand-written version of the alphabet on YouTube.) English words are used as examples of pronunciation whenever possible. Keep in mind, though, that there is always some difference between the two languages. The names of the letters are not crucial at the moment, so stay focused on phonetics.

GREEK LETTER	DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS
Α/α	The letter Α/α represents a short [a], like in <i>hat</i> . (There are no long vowels in Modern Greek.) From now on I will use [a] as a support sound in order to introduce consonants.
Β/β	This letter is not a [b], as you might expect. It's a [v], like in <i>vase</i> .
Γ/γ	The sound represented by Γ/γ has no equivalent in English. It is closer to the initial sound of the French word <i>rendez-vous</i> (and, please, check google.translate for the real French pronunciation). Note that the small-letter version of the typing font has no inner space at the bottom.
Δ/δ	This letter represents [ð] like in <i>than</i> .
Ε/ε	Ε/ε stands for [e], like in <i>pen</i> .
Ζ/ζ	I believe it is really easy to relate the capital letter to [z], like in <i>zoo</i> . In order to write the small letter, first draw a horizontal line and then go on with a final <i>s</i> .
Η/η	The letter Η/η represents a short [i], like in <i>tip</i> .
Θ/θ	This letter stands for [θ], like in <i>thin</i> .

Table 1.1: *The Greek Alphabet: Letters and Their Phonetic Representation.*

GREEK LETTER	DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS
I/ι	The letter again represents [i] like in <i>tip</i> (see <i>H/η</i>). So far two different letters, <i>H/η</i> and <i>I/ι</i> , represent exactly the same sound. Conversely, if you hear [i] you cannot tell which letter denotes it. At this point you might wonder why two different letters should be used for an identical sound, and here is the answer: The Modern Greek writing system preserves in some respects the Ancient Greek tradition, and in Ancient Greek the two letters stood for different sounds. Now the phonetic difference is gone, but the writing difference is still here.
K/κ	This letter stands for an unaspirated [k] sound which is close to <i>book</i> .
Λ/λ	Here we have an [l] that is closer to the light [l] of <i>like</i> and not the dark [l] of <i>little</i> .
M/μ	It is easy to relate the capital M to an [m] sound like in <i>make</i> . In order to write the small letter, first draw a vertical line, then something close to the Latin <i>u</i> .
Ξ/ξ	What we have here is a double consonant, namely [ks], like in <i>ox</i> . In order to write the small letter, first draw a horizontal line, then a semicircle, and then a final <i>s</i> .
N/ν	This letter stands for [n], like in <i>noise</i> .
O/o	The letter <i>O/o</i> represents a short [o], like in <i>top</i> .
Π/π	This letter represents an unaspirated [p] sound, like in <i>stop</i> .
P/ρ	The sound represented by <i>P/ρ</i> is significantly different from the pronunciation of the English [r] in <i>tropical</i> , and closer to the Italian or the Spanish [r] in <i>Roberto</i> or <i>Ramón</i> (if you don't speak Italian or Spanish, check google.translate for the correct pronunciation). In order to produce [r] the tip of the tongue must take a frontal position and loosely touch the area over the teeth of the upper jaw.
Σ/σ (-ς)	This letter represents an [s] sound, like in <i>see</i> . Notice that [s] has two small-letter versions. When [s] is word-final, it is written as -ς. In other positions it is written as σ.
T/τ	The letter <i>T/τ</i> stands for an unaspirated [t] sound, like in <i>spot</i> .
Y/υ	This letter is the third representation of the sound [i] like in <i>tip</i> . Now you have three letters to worry about.
Φ/φ	The letter <i>Φ/φ</i> stands for [f], like in <i>fish</i> .
X/χ	The sound represented by <i>X/χ</i> is close to <i>ham</i> or the Scottish <i>loch</i> , but really closer to the Spanish <i>jamón</i> (check again google.translate).

Table 1.1: *The Greek Alphabet: Letters and Their Phonetic Representation.*

GREEK LETTER	DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS
Ψ/ψ	The letter Ψ/ψ represents a double consonant, namely [ps]. The sound is close to <i>stops</i> .
Ω/ω	This is the last (but not least) letter of the Greek alphabet. Ω/ω again represents [o] like in <i>top</i> . Note that the capital version of the typing font is different from the hand-written version.

Table 1.1: *The Greek Alphabet: Letters and Their Phonetic Representation.*

In order to get Greek typing fonts start from here: <http://www.greek-language.com/Fonts.html>.

Confusing Letters

When reading or writing Modern Greek, remember: *B/β* is not *B/b*, it represents [v]. *H/η* is not *H* or *n*, it represents [i]. The small-letter version of *N/ν* is not *ν*, since this letter represents [n]. *P/ρ* is clearly not *P/p*, it is [r]. Finally *Y/υ* stand for [i] and *X/χ* stand for [h].

Common Mistakes in Absolute-Beginner Writing

- In the small-letter version of *T/τ* the vertical line does not exceed the horizontal line like in the Latin *t*.
- The small-letter version of *Y/υ* has no additional line like the Latin *u*. And its bottom is circular, not angular. If you make it angular what you will have is *ν*, that is [n].
- Unlike the Latin *I/i*, the small-letter version of *I* has no dot on top (*ι*).

Small and Capital Letters

- Small-letter words are spelled with an initial capital letter when they start a sentence.
- All proper nouns are also spelled with an initial capital: Names of persons, months, days of the week (unlike French). Abstract nouns (such as *justice*) and concrete nouns (such as *table*) are spelled with an initial small letter.
- The full stop (.), the comma (,), the exclamation mark (!) and the ellipsis (...) are identical to the ones used in the Latin alphabet. The Greek interrogation mark (;) as well as quotation marks («__») are different.

It is now time to practice. First try to read and then press on the word to check pronunciation.

Meaning is irrelevant at the moment so again focus on phonetics. Here are some really short words to start with.

(1a) με, μα, μη, σε, ας, πας, φας, πες, δες, λες

(1b) ΝΑ, ΑΝ, ΘΑ, ΤΑ, ΖΩ, ΔΕΝ, ΠΩΣ

In order to work with longer words, we need something more. Let me then introduce stress, a necessary complement of the Modern Greek phonetic system.

1.2 Stress

I will try to explain stress using a pair of words. These words consist of exactly the same sounds, in the same order (phonetically [pote]). Listen to them:

(2) ΠΟΤΕ / ΠΟΤΕ

Can you hear a difference? I hope your answer is “yes” (if it’s “no”, listen again). Why this difference? Because the vowels inside them seem to carry different weights. In the first word [o] is pronounced somewhat more loudly and a bit longer than [e]. In the second word this sort of emphasis is put on [e], which is now pronounced more loudly and longer than [o]. This is stress.

Let’s turn to more examples. What you have to do now is listen to the following words and decide which vowel sounds stronger (and then go to example 5 on [page 6](#) to see the marked vowel):

(3) ΦΟΡΑ ΦΟΡΑ
 ΑΘΗΝΑ ΑΘΗΝΑ
 ΩΜΟΣ ΩΜΟΣ

Words with identical phonetic structure like the previous ones are real words. And these words differ in meaning because of the stress. ΠΟΤΕ and ΠΟΤΕ, for instance, mean “when” and “ever” (or “never”) respectively. Stress then affects meaning and therefore communication, a fact that goes significantly beyond these pairs of words (and several like them) and holds for every Modern Greek word. Stress actually works together with sounds to form the “profile” of each word. Errors of stress might then damage a word’s “profile” and cause confusion, or even destroy communication. At this moment you should stop worrying too much about your accent (I know you do) and start worrying about stress: No matter how “badly” you pronounce the Modern Greek γ (within certain limits, of course), people will certainly assume you are not a native (so what?), but they will understand what you are trying to say. If you mis-stress a word,

people will simply not get what you mean.

A few remarks about stress now:

- Stress is not fixed (like in French), but at least it is restricted to one of the last three syllables of the word. No matter how long a Greek word is (and there are several lengthy ones), the stress will never move beyond the third syllable.

(4) τηλεφώνημα τηλεφωνία τηλεφωνικός
 3 2 1 3 21 3 2 1

- Each word may bear only one stress (but see Unit 10.2.3 on [page 145](#) for an exception).
- The stress is represented in small-letter writing (unfortunately not in capital letters) by an accent mark on the stressed vowel of the word. Let's see the small-letter version of examples 2 and 3:

(5) πότε/ποτέ, φόρα/φορά, Αθηνά/Αθήνα, ωμός/ώμος

The accent mark is there to indicate *which* vowel is stronger. Accordingly, it is not used in monosyllabic words (check example 1 on [page 5](#)).

- As absolute beginners, you should keep in mind that the accent mark is not decoration. It is an obligatory part of writing, which will help you develop your stress awareness.

Note that the accent mark is not a dot, but looks more like an index.

1.3 Time for Practice

Having introduced stress, let's practice now with some longer words:

(6) έλα, από, νερό, βάζω, μαμά, θέλω, δίνω, θύμα,
 φυτό, ξέρω, ψάρι, πάμε, χαρά, τώρα, όταν

The following words are phonetically the same, but their stress is different. Read first and then listen:

(7) νόμος/νομός, μόνος/μονός, θόλος/θολός, χάλι/χαλί,
 κάλος/καλός, φίλη/φιλί, πόλη/πολύ, ράφι/ραφή

Now, here are some longer words. Notice that the stress will always be on syllables 3-1:

(8) σήμερα, ποτήρι, απορώ, καλημέρα, τηλέφωνο, τηλεφωνώ, εφημερίδα

I kept some really long ones for the end. Take a long breath and start!

(9) εξωτερικός, καταναλώνω, αλατοπίπερο, ενημερωμένος, παρατηρητικός,
αποδοτικότητα, ανεβοκατεβάζω, παραληρηματικός, περιχαρακώθηκαμε

Combinations of two or even three consonants are very common in Modern Greek:

(10a) τρία, κράτος, κλίμα, χρώμα, πέφτω, πλένω, αφρός,
γλυκός, γνώμη, πράγμα, μνήμη, βρίσκω

(10b) άστρο, αστραπή, σπρώχνω, εχθρός, σκληρός, άνθρωπος, έμβρυο

Note that combinations of two identical consonants are pronounced exactly like the single consonant version.

(I) αλλά, Ελλάδα (this is the word for Greece!), γράμμα, άρρωστος, ιπποπόταμος

The letter Σ/σ (-ς) always stands for [s] among vowels, either inside the word or across word boundaries. It represents [z] when followed by [m] or [v] (for a full list and examples press here: <http://www.foundalis.com/lan/grphdetl.htm>). Listen and compare:

(II) άσε, όσα, πέρασα, θάλασσα, στόμα, σπόρος, σμήνος, σβήνω

Combinations of vowels are also possible:

(11) ζωή, ζώα, μία, τρώω, αέρας, εννέα, περίεργος, αηδόνι

Perhaps you have already noticed that the word-initial position may be kept by any sound. Final position, though, is usually kept by a vowel. The only consonants in word-final position are [s] and [n].

By now, you must have started to wonder whether there is a [b] or a [d] in Modern Greek. The answer lies in the following section.

1.4 More Sounds

There are some sounds which are represented not by one letter but by a combination of two letters. These sounds may be consonants or vowels.

1.4.1 Consonants

- The combination $\mu\pi$ represents a [b] sound, which is close to *book*.
- The combination $\nu\tau$ represents a [d] sound, which is close to *door*.
- The combinations $\gamma\kappa/\gamma\gamma$ represent a [g] sound, which is close to *gum*. (Notice that $\gamma\gamma$ is an exception to the rule about identical consonants. Remember? If not, check Unit 1.3 on [page 7](#)).

- In word-initial position $\mu\pi$, $\nu\tau$, $\gamma\kappa$ are pronounced like [b], [d] and [g]. Inside the word they may be pronounced like [b/mb], [d/nd], and [g/ng], and in this case you are free to use any one of them. What you cannot do is pronounce $\mu\pi$ like [mp], $\nu\tau$ like [nt] and $\gamma\kappa/\gamma\gamma$ like [nk].
- Like other consonants (see Unit 1.3 on [page 7](#)), [b], [d] and [g] can combine with consonants (usually [r]):

(III) $\mu\pi\rho\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}$, $\nu\tau\rho\sigma\pi\acute{\eta}$, $\gamma\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\omicron\varsigma$

Apart from single consonants like [b], [d], [g], there are two double consonants which are represented by two letters:

- The combination $\tau\sigma$ represents [ts].
- The combination $\tau\zeta$ represents [dz].

Like [ks] and [ps], these consonants are produced by already existing single sounds, so they bring nothing new to the sound palette of Modern Greek.

I believe you are ready now to read the following words and then check pronunciation:

(12) $\mu\pi\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}$, $\nu\tau\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$, $\gamma\kappa\acute{\alpha}\zeta\iota$, $\alpha\mu\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota$, $\text{Αντ\acute{o}\nu\eta\varsigma}$, $\phi\epsilon\gamma\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota$, $\omicron\mu\pi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha$,
 $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\alpha\varsigma$, $\gamma\kappa\rho\epsilon\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\tau\sigma\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, $\tau\sigma\iota\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron$, $\tau\zeta\acute{\alpha}\mu\iota$, $\tau\zeta\acute{\iota}\tau\zeta\iota\kappa\alpha\varsigma$

1.4.2 Vowels

There is only one new vowel here. This is [u], like in *foot*, which is represented by the combination $\omicron\upsilon$. There are, though, other combinations to represent vowels you already know:

- The sound [i] is also represented by the combinations $\epsilon\iota$ or $\omicron\iota$. Now you have five representations of [i] to worry about.
- The sound [e] is also represented by $\alpha\iota$.

Now read the following words and check pronunciation. Note that the accent mark (if necessary) falls on the second letter of the combination:

(13) κάνει, μπορεί, ώμοι, ωμοί, είμαι, αίμα, ουρά, ούλα

The Double Dot

Combinations that represent consonants equal a single sound (or sounds). In other words, *μπ* is always [b/mb], etc. Combinations of vowels don't. In other words, *αι* is most of the times [e], but could also be [ai]. How can you tell the difference while learning new words or while reading? These procedures involve writing, and a special mark is here to help.

(IV) παιδάκι / παιῖδάκι

The double dot on top of the second letter indicates that *αι* should be pronounced like [ai]. If the word is stressed on the first of the two vowels the accent mark by itself indicates separate pronunciation and the double dot is not necessary:

(V) Μάιος

When the combination has no accent mark or the accent mark is posited on the second letter, the letters represent a single sound (check the words of example 13).

- The double dot in writing is not decoration. In order to realize how important it is, go again to *παιδάκι* and *παιῖδάκι*. The first word means “little child”, the second “lamb chop”.

Two Tricky Combinations: *av/ev*

One of the most tricky parts of Greek spelling concerns the *av/ev* combinations. Here the letter *Y/v* does not stand for a vowel but for a consonant (a unique case in Modern Greek writing). And, as if to make things worse, this consonant may be [v] or [f] according to the following sound:

- [v] when the following sound is voiced (voiced sounds are vowels, and consonants such as [l] or [r]).
- [f] when the following sound is voiceless (voiceless sounds are consonants such as [t], [k], [x]).

(VIa) αυγό, αυλή, Παρασκευή, ευλογώ

(VIb) αυτός, ευκολία, ευχαριστώ

(For a full list of voiced and unvoiced consonants press here: http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Greek_pronunciation).

I kept the worst for the end: If the *av/ev* is stressed, the accent mark falls on *v*, a rather peculiar choice since the letter represents a consonant here:

(VII) αύριο, εύκολος, Εύα

Notice that if the accent mark falls on the first letter of the combination, then the two sounds are pronounced separately and now *Y/v* represents a vowel:

(VIII) άυπνος, άυλος

1.5 Synopsis

It is now time to summarize the basics of pronunciation (and writing). Sounds are followed by every possible writing representation (in small-letter writing), along with examples (meaning is not necessary at the moment, but I believe we need some fresh air after all these pages on pronunciation).

1.5.1 Vowels

The Modern Greek vowel system is a simple (elementary) system, consisting of 5 short vowels.

SOUND	LETTER	EXAMPLE
[a]	α	μαμά (“Mom”)
[e]	ε, αι	νερό (“water”) παίζω (“to play”)

Table 1.2: *Modern Greek Vowels and Their Representation in Writing.*

SOUND	LETTER	EXAMPLE
[i]	η, ι, υ, ει, οι	η μέρα (“day”) ί σως (“perhaps”) ύ ψος (“height”) εί μαι (“to be”) οι κονομία (“economy”)
[o]	ο, ω	φο ράω (“to wear”)
[u]	ου	ου ρανός (“sky”)

Table 1.2: Modern Greek Vowels and Their Representation in Writing.

For a technical representation of the vowel system press here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology.

Three of the above vowels have two or more writing representations. Considering that *αι* and *ε*, for example sound exactly the same, correct spelling seems quite tricky. There is no reason to panic: After all, you are not the first to deal with this problem. Generations of natives had to go through this at school. Besides, even if you write *ε* instead of *αι* people will get what you mean. Apart from this, you should keep in mind the following points:

- You can draw conclusions about spelling based on grammar. For instance nouns, adjectives and pronouns are related to an *ο* as part of their ending, while verbs are related to a final *-ω*.
- You can draw conclusions about spelling based on compounding and derivation. Words seem to keep their initial spelling in both cases (compare to *human*, *humanity*, *humane*, *humanitarian*), and this will also be a great help to you.

1.5.2 Consonants

The Modern Greek consonant system consists of 18 simple consonants and 4 double consonants. Some consonants (namely 5) are represented by two letters and the rest by a single letter. But all of them (with one exception, [g]) have a single writing representation (considering the vowel system, this is a relief).

SOUND	LETTER	EXAMPLE
[p]	π	π άω (“to go”)
[b]	μπ	μπα μπάς (“Dad”)
[f]	φ	φ ίλος (“friend”)

Table 1.3: Modern Greek Consonants and Their Representation in Writing.

SOUND	LETTER	EXAMPLE
[v]	β	βάζω (“to put”)
[k]	κ	καλός (“good”)
[g]	γκ/γγ	γκρεμός (“cliff”), φεγγάρι (“moon”)
[h]	χ	χαλί (“rug”)
[ɣ]	γ	γάλα (“milk”)
[t]	τ	τώρα (“now”)
[d]	ντ	ντύνω (“to dress”)
[θ]	θ	θέλω (“want”)
[ð]	δ	δίνω (“to give”)
[m]	μ	μέλι (“honey”)
[n]	ν	νερό (“water”)
[l]	λ	λέω (“to say”, “to tell”)
[r]	ρ	ρωτάω (“to ask”)
[s]	σ/-ς	σκληρός (“hard”, “tough”)
[z]	ζ	ζάχαρη (“sugar”)
[ks]	ξ	ξέρω (“to know”)
[ps]	ψ	ψάρι (“fish”)
[ts]	τσ	τσατσάρα (“hair comb”)
[dz]	τζ	τζάμι (“window glass”)

Table 1.3: *Modern Greek Consonants and Their Representation in Writing.*

For a technical representation of the consonant system press here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology .

1.5.3 Stress

In order to pronounce a word, stress is as necessary as sounds. Stress is single and restricted to one of the last three syllables of the word. Stress is a property of vowels. Consequently, only vowels can bear the accent mark in writing.

1.6 Towards Perfection

Some sounds may be affected by surrounding sounds, or even affect them. In the present unit we shall examine such sounds. This is putting the final touch to your new perfect Modern Greek accent. Keep in mind, though, that lack of perfection will not destroy communication. Even if you only stick to the information given so far, or even if your pronunciation is not ideal,

people will still understand what you are trying to say.

1.6.1 Four Consonants...

Listen to the following words:

(14) κρύος, καλός, ακόμα, ακούω

The sound [k] in these words is close to the [k] sound in the word *book*. Now check the following words:

(15) κερί, κεράσι, άκυρος, κοιμάμαι

Here [k] sounds different. Actually it sounds more like *cute* than like *book*. Now try to read these words. When you pronounce the words of the first group, your tongue seems to take a position in the back of the mouth. But when you pronounce the words of the second group, the tongue seems to take a frontal position.

This is an instance of a rule affecting four consonants, namely [k], [g], [h], [γ]. These consonants keep their initial pronunciation (as introduced in Tables 1.1 on [page 2](#) and 1.3 on [page 11](#)) when they are followed either by a consonant or by the vowels [a], [o], [u]. Their pronunciation becomes frontal when they are followed by the vowels [i] and [e].

Here are more examples to listen to and practice:

(16a) κλειστός, καλά, κόρη, κούραση / κενός, κύμα

(16b) χρώμα, χαρά, χόμα, αχούρι / χέρι, χύμα

(16c) γράφω, γάλα, γόνατο, γουρούνι / γέρος, γύρος

(16d) γκρεμός, φεγγάρι, αγκώνας, αγγούρι / άγγελος, άγκυρα

1.6.2 ...and a Vowel

Listen to the following word:

(17) παιδεία

Do you hear the [i] after the [δ] sound? Yes, you do. Now listen to the following word:

(18) παιδιά

Do you hear the [i] sound now? I know it is hard, because writing is misleading at this point, so forget about writing and focus on listening again (and again, if necessary). What you really hear instead of [i] is a [j], like in the word *γύρος* (phonetically, the word is represented as [peδja]).

Listen now to the following word:

(19) δουλεία

The [i] after the [l] sound is clear. What about the following word?

(20) δουλειά

The [i] seems to be totally gone, I mean there is nothing left in its position. Instead, something has happened to the previous sound. Listen again: It is not the ordinary [l] (see Tables 1.1 on [page 2](#) and 1.3 on [page 11](#)) but another kind of [l] sound.

This is just an instance of a general phonetic tendency of Modern Greek to eliminate vowel combinations: When followed by another vowel, unstressed [i] has two options:

- One is to transform into a consonant, like in the word *παιδιά*.
- The other one is to disappear, affecting the previous consonant, like in the word *δουλειά*.

I will not go into details at this point, partly to save you time and energy, and partly because I believe you can do it (but if you want to read more press here <http://www.foundalis.com/lan/grphdetl.htm>, Unit Palatalization). Try to read the letters in bold like one syllable, then check pronunciation.


(21a) χωριά, κάποιος, καμιά, πρωτιά, βαθιά, ήπια

(21b) γλυκιά, ήλιος, οχιά, μαγκιά

1.7 Beyond Words

Producing single words does not equate producing them together, as parts of a sentence. Inside a sentence words may undergo several changes not examined in the previous units. A sentence may also have additional properties that have not been discussed so far. This is what we are going to do here.

1.7.1 “Words” Larger than Words

I think it is now time for your first Modern Greek sentence. But let me first introduce Πέτρος (), one of the main characters in the examples of this book.

(22) Ο Πέτρος είναι από την Αθήνα.
“(-) Peter is from (-) Athens.”

Let me first explain the sentence. *Είναι* corresponds to the verb “is”, *από* is a preposition mean-

ing “from”, *Αθήνα* is Athens. The words *Ο/την* are articles, equivalent to the English *the*, and in Modern Greek they combine with every noun, including proper nouns (the hyphen signals the missing article in the English translation). Try to read it now and then press on the sentence. What do you hear? If I had to change writing to represent hearing, the sentence would be somewhat like this:

(23) ΟΠέτρος / είναι / αποτηνΑθήνα
[opetros ine apotinaθina]

Phonetically speaking, the boundary among some words seems to be lost. These words are now coming together, to form one larger phonetic unit. Considering that this unit bears only one stress (indicated by the vowel in bold), what we have here is a new “word”, larger than ordinary words.

- Keep in mind that the components of such units are not random. In other words, you cannot split sentence 22 like this:

(24) ☹ ΟΠετροξεΐναι / απότην / Αθήνα

- As a rule, “grammatical” words (like articles or prepositions) seem to lose their status as independent words and “stick” to “lexical” words (like nouns or verbs) on their side. Let’s take the preposition *από*. In a process like this, *από* turns into *απο-*. It becomes something like a prefix (compare to **un**-known) losing its stress.

Let’s go now to another sentence:

(25) Ο Πέτρος έκλεισε την πόρτα.
“(-) Peter closed the door.”

Έκλεισε is “closed”, *την πόρτα* is “the door” (the hyphen again signals the missing article in the English translation). I think it is easy to split the sentence into 3 phonetic units, namely *ΟΠέτρος / έκλεισε / τηνπόρτα*. I want you now to focus on the third unit and listen carefully.

(26) τηνπόρτα

What you have really heard is not [np]. What you heard is an [mb].

(27) [timborta]

I will spare the technical explanation, but if you want to know what happens press here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology. The point is that phonetic units may undergo changes similar to those inside real words (compare to *im-possible*, *ir-resistible*), and this is not a peculiarity of Modern Greek. If you go back to your native tongue I am sure you will find similar phenomena (a Greek word again).

1.7.2 Intonation

Let's start with a sentence about the weather:

- (28) (-) βρέχει.
“It is raining.”

This is an elementary sentence, consisting of only one verb (weather verbs have no subject, and the hyphen represents the missing subject in Modern Greek).

This sentence could be pronounced like this:

- (29) Βρέχει.
“It is raining.”

But also like this:

- (30) Βρέχει;
“Is it raining?”

The first sentence is clearly a statement, while the second sentence is a question. As you see intonation, the “melodic” structure that pervades a sentence, is enough to affect sentence interpretation in Modern Greek, and therefore meaning (compare to English, where questions have to undergo syntactic changes as well).

Intonation may also uncover the speaker's attitude towards what the sentence means. Listen to the following sentences:

- (31a) Βρέχει!
(31b) Βρέχει!
(31c) Βρέχει...
(31d) Βρέχει...
(31e) Βρέχει...

All of the above are statements about the rain. One of them expresses irony (my mother is

complaining about the rain and I believe she is exaggerating). One expresses surprise (I read the weather forecast and I was sure it would be a sunny day). One expresses a warning (my daughter is ready to go out wearing a t-shirt). One expresses disappointment (I was ready for a picnic). And another one expresses delight (now I am a farmer waiting for the rain to water the field). Can you find out which is which? (Here are the correct answers: Irony is 31d, surprise is 31a, warning is 31e, disappointment is 31c, and delight is 31b).

- Punctuation marks represent intonation in writing. The full stop represents simple statements, questions are marked by the interrogation mark, and surprise is expressed by the exclamation mark. Sarcasm/irony or disappointment are expressed by the ellipsis mark.
- Word stress is not affected by intonation. Phonetic units like the ones in 31a-31e will keep their original stress no matter what sort of intonation is imposed on the sentence.

1.7.3 Focus

Let's see the following sentence:

- (32) Ο Πέτρος έφαγε τα ψάρια.
 “(-) Peter ate the fish.”

Έφαγε is “ate”, *τα ψάρια* is “the fish”. The rest you already know. This is a statement bearing the information you read in the English translation.

Listen now to the following sentence:

- (33) Ο ΠΕΤΡΟΣ έφαγε τα ψάρια.
 “It is Peter who ate the fish.”

This is again a statement conveying the same information (“Peter ate the fish”). But the focus (emphasis, signaled in speech by louder voice) on the phrase *Ο Πέτρος* gives the second sentence an additional contrastive reading: It was Peter (*and not* the cat, for example) who ate the fish. Here again, like in intonation, the (phonetic) emphasis on a part of the sentence is enough to produce contrast (compare to English).

Focus may affect other parts of the sentence, which are not in initial position:

- (34) Ο Πέτρος έφαγε ΤΑ ΨΑΡΙΑ.
 “It was the fish Peter ate.”

Now the contrastive reading starts from the phrase *τα ψάρια*. It was the fish Peter ate, (*and not*, for example, the soup).

- There is no special punctuation mark to signal focus in writing. Sometimes italics or capital letters do the job.
- Like in intonation, stress is not affected by focus. But since everything must be louder, stress will be much louder, too.

At this point I must make something clear: Nobody expects you at this moment to handle sentence pronunciation, intonation or focus. This will come with time and practice. The point of Unit 1.7 was to help you develop some sort of sentence-pronunciation awareness, that's all. If by now you are able to read and pronounce single words, then you have achieved the basic aim of this chapter, and it is time to go on to the next one.

Yes and No

Modern Greek “yes” (*ναι*) sounds more like “no”. Many people get confused in the beginning when they hear *ναι*, but then they get used to it. You'll get used to it, too. Just remember that the Modern Greek “no” is *όχι*.

People may say “yes” or “no” using body language. For “no” people raise their head, and/or raise their eyebrows. They may also use a sound like “ts” inhaling air. In terms of “yes”, people usually nod. This type of motion may be close to the vertical axis, starting from just a bit to the left and ending just a bit to the right (from your perspective).

Shouting

Who said there are no long vowels in Modern Greek? Listen to this:

(IX) Πέτροoooo! Ελένηηηηη!

These long vowels are not real vowels; they are just an instance of shouting. People often shout at each other, and this is not necessarily a sign of offensive or aggressive behavior. Keep in mind that the Greek culture is an open-air culture, and sometimes a loud voice is necessary in order for someone to be audible.

SUMMARY

Chapter 1 aims at developing elementary skills for language learning like pronunciation, and reading/writing. The Greek alphabet is the starting point for the introduction of the Modern Greek sounds, which work together with stress to form the phonetic “profile” of any Modern






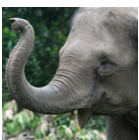
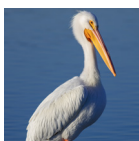

Greek word. Apart from single words the chapter also deals with sentences, in order to introduce intonation and focus phenomena.

KEY WORDS

alphabet, letter, sound, vowel, consonant, stress, accent mark, intonation, focus

EXERCISES

1. After all this grammar, it is time for a break in a grammar-free world, such as the animal world. Read the following words and relate them to the pictures.

1. ζέβρα	a. 
2. ρινόκερος	b. 
3. ελέφαντας	c. 
4. λιοντάρι	d. 
5. κροκόδειλος	e. 
6. τίγρη	f. 
7. δελφίνι	g. 
8. πελεκάνος	h. 

2. Lots of Ancient Greek words have survived not only in Modern Greek but also in English and other languages. Match the following words with their description.

1. τραγωδία
2. κωμωδία
3. πρωταγωνιστής
4. σκηνή
5. διάλογος
6. μονόλογος

a. The main character in a story.
b. The background of a play.
c. A conversation between two people.
d. A story which makes us laugh and usually has a happy ending.
e. A speech made by only one person, which is usually addressed to herself/himself.
f. A story which ends in ruin or destruction.

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 1 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 2 | Nouns and Verbs

Nouns and verbs are Very Important Parts of any language. Take the words *water* and *drink*. These words describe basic facts of human experience. These words can stand alone to form elementary meaningful sentences such as *Water!* or *Drink!* Therefore such words are basic for communication and usually come first in language learning (any teacher in her/his right mind would introduce *water* and *drink* prior to *curious* or *nevertheless*). Modern Greek is not an exception in this respect.

Modern Greek nouns and verbs are inflected words. Therefore, apart from their (lexical) meaning, they come with lots of grammar inside them. In the following units I shall introduce basic grammatical features for each one of these groups, focusing on those features that seem to be less evident for learners of Modern Greek.

2.1 The Grammar of Nouns

Modern Greek nouns are present in speech in different forms. Here is an example:

- | | | |
|-----|----------|-----------|
| (1) | δρόμος | δρόμοι |
| | “street” | “streets” |

Different forms of the same noun share a common left part (*δρόμ-* in our example), which bears the lexical meaning of the noun. Checking this left part (or stem of the noun) I can tell that this noun means “street”. Their right part (*-ος* or *-οι* in our example) bears grammatical information about the noun. Checking the right side (or ending of the noun) I can tell for instance that *δρόμος* is in the singular and *δρόμοι* is in the plural.

Number, gender and case are the three major grammatical features that shape the Modern Greek noun system. Number (here as singular vs. plural) is a very common inflectional feature for many languages, not only Indo-European ones, so we have few things to say. Gender and case are less common, so it is worth mentioning a few things about them.

2.1.1 Gender

If you are familiar with gender languages such as German, French, Russian, Italian or Spanish, then you have some idea about what gender is. For those who are not, I will try to explain gender using an analogy from real life: Humans and animals can be assigned a sex (a man or a bull are males, a woman or a cow are females), things cannot (tables and chairs are “neuter” in this respect). Likewise nouns must be either masculine, or feminine, or, finally, neuter (which originally meant “neither masculine, nor feminine”). This three-fold distinction of gender (compare

to the two-fold distinction of gender in Spanish, Italian or French) is the basis for the division of Modern Greek nouns in three major gender categories. Any Modern Greek noun must be either masculine, or feminine, or neuter. All nouns can have one and only gender, I mean they cannot be feminine here and masculine there. And absolutely no noun can be gender-free.

As part of grammatical information, gender is assigned to the right part of the noun:

- (2) δρόμος (MASC.) ώρα (FEM.) βιβλίο (NEUT.)
 “street” “hour” “book”

Gender is also manifested outside the noun itself, in words like the definite article (a word equivalent of the English *the*):

- (3) ο δρόμος (MASC.) η ώρα (FEM.) το βιβλίο (NEUT.)

Having these in mind, let's make a table about the gender groups of basic Modern Greek nouns:

MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
ο δρόμος (“street”)		το βιβλίο (“book”)
ο άντρας (“man”)	η ώρα (“hour”)	το παιδί (“child”)
ο χάρτης (“map”)	η ζώνη (“belt”)	το πράγμα (“thing”)

Table 2.1: Gender Groups of Basic Modern Greek Nouns.

Nouns of the same gender share the same definite article, but not the same endings. It would be reasonable then to use this short word as a safe way to recognize a noun's gender. This is what most dictionaries do, and this is what I am going to do from now on.

Dictionaries give information not only about a noun's meaning but also about its gender. Some of them use abbreviations such as *αρσ.* (*αρσενικό*, “masculine”), *θηλ.* (*θηλυκό*, “feminine”), and *ουδ.* (*ουδέτερο*, “neuter”). Others register each noun along with the appropriate definite article (*ο* for masculine, *η* for feminine, *το* for neuter), usually following the noun (inside parentheses, or separated by a comma). Keep in mind that the definite article in Modern Greek always precedes the noun, never follows it. Dictionaries simply choose the final position for the article in order to make alphabetical classification easier. For example: *δρόμος, ο / δρόμος (ο)* (press here to see the real entry: http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/search.html).

Is gender predictable in Modern Greek? The answer is “no”. For Modern Greek, as for many

Indo-European languages, gender lies far from the idea of “natural” sex I used before just to explain what gender looks like. A chair in real life is definitely a neuter, but the word *καρέκλα* is not (it’s a feminine). Coffee, chocolate and tea might be related as non-alcoholic, usually hot drinks, but gender seems to disagree with our concept and treats them differently.

- (4) **ο** καφές **η** σοκολάτα **το** τσάι
 “coffee” “chocolate” “tea”

Personally, I see no reason why coffee is registered as masculine in Modern Greek, chocolate as feminine and tea as neuter. Equally I see no reason why a pencil, a marker and a quill pen do not share the same gender (which is which? Ask yourselves first and then check here: “pencil” is **το** μολύβι, “marker” is **ο** μαρκαδόρος, “quill pen” is **η** πένα).

There are some fields, though, where reason might help. Nouns typically associated with humans and animals are generally affected by sex. Males are usually masculine, while females are usually feminine:

- (I) **ο** άντρας (“man”) **η** γυναίκα (“woman”)
 ο Πέτρος (“Peter”) **η** Κατερίνα (“Catherine”)
 ο ταύρος (“bull”) **η** αγελάδα (“cow”)

The same holds for professions as a property of humans:

- (II) **ο** δάσκαλος (“male teacher”) **η** δασκάλα (“female teacher”)
 ο γιατρός (“male doctor”) **η** γιατρός (“female doctor”)

There are also some regularities in gender that should not be ignored. For example, most countries are feminine, simply because the word “country” in Modern Greek is feminine (**η** χώρα).

- (III) **η** Αγγλία (“UK”), **η** Γαλλία (“France”), **η** Ισπανία (“Spain”)

But even inside this group there are considerable exceptions:

- (IV) **ο** Καναδάς (“Canada”), **ο** Λίβανος (“Lebanon”),
 το Μεξικό (“Mexico”), **το** Ιράκ (“Iraq”)

Loanwords (words borrowed from other languages) are not uncommon in Modern Greek. When a loan noun becomes part of the Modern Greek vocabulary, it must definitely get a gender. Which one? The noun *πίτσα* (did you recognize *pizza*?) looks like a feminine because of its ending *-α* (compare to the noun *ώρα* of Table 2.1 on [page 22](#)). Therefore it is classified as a feminine (*η πίτσα*). Countries like *Λίβανος* or *Μεξικό* have gone through a similar classification project (the former looks like a masculine, the latter like a neuter).

But what about the following nouns?

(V) φεστιβάλ (“festival”), κομπιούτερ (“computer”),
γκαράζ (“garage”), Ιράκ (“Iraq”), ευρώ (“euro”)

The endings of these nouns do not match any of the three gender groups of Table 2.1. Therefore the nouns cannot be classified as masculine, feminine, or neuter. This kind of words all fall under the category of neuter, perhaps because the neuter is constructed on a “neither-nor” basis.

Cars

Gender draws an interesting distinction among cars.

- Everyday, average cars are usually neuter:

(VI) το Φιάτ (“Fiat”), το Πεζό (“Peugeot”), το Σμαρτ (“Smart”)

- Luxury cars on the other side are usually feminine:

(VII) η Μερσεντές (“Mercedes”), η Φεράρι (“Ferrari”)

Why? Here is a possible answer: Expensive cars are usually beloved items (not tools, like ordinary cars), so people tend to humanize them. But then, why would a Ferrari become a “she” and not a “he”? The explanation goes beyond the scope of this grammar, so I will skip it, to focus on gender again.

If gender is unpredictable, then reason cannot help you with it. The safest way to handle gender is to use your memory and learn a noun’s gender along with its meaning (don’t leave it for later, you’ll get lost). And if those familiar with another gender language are looking for analogies to get some help, they should abandon the idea. A chair is feminine in Modern Greek (*η καρέκλα*), Spanish (*la silla*) and French (*la chaise*), but masculine in German (*der Stuhl*). I know that sometimes it can be frustrating, but there it is. If you need some motivation, keep in mind that the gender of nouns affects words that depend on them, such as adjectives, pronouns and numerals (see Chapters 5 on [page 66](#) and 6 on [page 82](#)).

Considering that nouns of the same gender share the same endings (masculines for example all end in -ς, realized as -ος, -ας, -ης), one might conclude that guessing a noun's gender from its ending is possible. This way may seem much easier than memorizing each noun's gender (and in fact many teaching books are based on it), but it is not always efficient. As you will find out if you go on with Modern Greek, there are many words that share the same ending but not the same gender:

(VIII) ο δρόμος (“street”), η έξοδος (“exit”), το κράτος (“state”)

2.1.2 Case

If you are familiar with case languages (like Russian, Turkish, Arabic or German), then you know what case is. For those who are not, I shall try to explain the basics of case using an elementary scenario. Imagine two Greek male students, Γιάννης and Πέτρος, who live together. This situation could be described by the following sentences:

- (5a) Ο Γιάννης μένει με τον Πέτρο.
“John lives with Peter.”
- (5b) Ο Πέτρος μένει με τον Γιάννη.
“Peter lives with John.”
- (5c) Ο Γιάννης και ο Πέτρος μένουν μαζί.
“John and Peter live together.”

Μένει / μένουν are “lives” / “(they) live”, *με* is “with”, *και* is the Modern Greek “and”. John and Peter of the above sentences are present in two different forms:

- | | | |
|-----|------------|-----------|
| (6) | “John” | “Peter” |
| | ο Γιάννης | ο Πέτρος |
| | τον Γιάννη | τον Πέτρο |

The use of these forms is not random. I mean you are not free to replace one form with another. Why? The answer lies in syntax: Each one of these forms seems to hold a different role inside the sentence. Let's take the forms *τον Γιάννη / τον Πέτρο*. These forms are used only after a preposition (*με* in this case). Modern Greek nouns then may vary according to their (syntactic) role, and this sort of variation is reflected in their case.

The above examples do not exhaust case in Modern Greek, which will be examined in the following chapter. What you should keep in mind for the moment is that nouns may vary accord-

ing to their syntactic role. And, if this variation sounds “exotic” for your linguistic standards, check the following example:

- (7a) **He** lives here.
(7b) Peter lives with **him**.

This is an instance of case in English: *He* and *him* are two forms of the same personal pronoun (third person, masculine), and their use depends on syntax in a way similar to our examples.

2.2 The Grammar of Verbs

Modern Greek verbs seem to share the same internal structure as nouns:

- (8) παίζω παίζεις
 “I play” “you play”

These forms share an identical left part (the stem), namely παίζ-, that bears the (lexical) meaning of the verb (“play”, in our example). The right part (the ending) is variable and bears grammatical information. In the case of παίζεις the ending -εις indicates, among other things, that the verb is in the second person singular.

Modern Greek verbs carry grammatical information not only about person and number, but also about tense, aspect, mood and voice. This sort of information is basically located in the ending of the verb, but may also be found in the middle of it, even in front of it, either as part of the verb itself or as a separate word (compare with the article in front of nouns). Thus, there is a lot to be said about the grammar of verbs, and this is what I am going to do in the following units.

2.2.1 Person, Number, and an Optional Subject

I believe you are all familiar with the notions of person and number, so I will skip the explanation. What you must keep in mind in the case of Modern Greek, is that person (first, second and third) and number (singular vs. plural) are clearly manifested in the ending of the verb. This fact allows for an optional (not obligatory) subject in Modern Greek. Compare again some forms of the Modern Greek verb παίζω (“to play”) with the English verb *to play*.

- (9) παίζω παίζουμε
 “I **play**” “we **play**”

Checking παίζω or παίζουμε I can “read” person and number inside the verb itself (consider *play*, which gives no such information). Therefore I do not need a subject-pronoun like “I” or “We” to tell me about person and number. So, if I had to say “I play basketball” or “We play

basketball”, I would skip “I” or “We” and go like this (the hyphen indicates the missing subject-pronoun in the Modern Greek sentences):

(10a) (-) παίζω μπάσκετ.

“I play basketball.”

(10b) (-) παίζουμε μπάσκετ.

“We play basketball.”

But what about the following sentences?

(11a) **ΕΓΩ** παίζω μπάσκετ.

“It’s me who plays basketball.”

(11b) **Ο ΠΕΤΡΟΣ** παίζει μπάσκετ.

“It is Peter who plays basketball.”

The English translation shows clearly that here we have a focus (contrastive) reading (check Unit 1.7.3 on [page 17](#)): It is Peter (*not* Catherine, for example) who plays basketball. And in this context the subject (either as a pronoun or as a noun) becomes necessary.

The focus sentences of 11a-11b are just an instance of contrast. Compare the following sentences:

(12a) Είμαστε στο σχολείο. (-) παίζουμε μπάσκετ.

“We are at school. We are playing basketball.”

(12b) Είμαστε στο σχολείο. **Εγώ** παίζω βόλεϊ. **Η Μαρία** παίζει μπάσκετ.

“We are at school. I am playing volleyball. Maria is playing basketball.”

The verb *παίζουμε* in 12a does not need a subject, because its subject is clearly identical to the subject of the first sentence. The verbs *παίζω* and *παίζει* in 12b do need a subject because the subjects now are not identical to the subject of the first sentence. I believe you all see some sort of contrast between subjects, which brings sentence 12b close to focus sentences such as 11a-11b.

Verbs must share the same person and number with their subject, either present or missing (but still presumed).

(IX) (Εγώ) παίζω.

(Εμείς) παίζουμε.

This is an instance of agreement (for other instances, check Chapter 5 on [page 66](#)).

At the moment nobody expects you to handle optional subject perfectly (unless you come from a subject-optional language like Spanish or Italian). The point of the unit is to develop your subject-optional awareness, and this is it. Remember that people will be delighted to hear you speak Modern Greek, and they will definitely not mind a pleonastic use of the subject.

Verbs are entered in dictionaries according to the first person singular of the present tense. So don't look for "to be" or "to have" but rather for "I am", "I have". So the Modern Greek verb "to play" will be registered as *παίζω*. For a real entry press here: http://www.greeklanguage.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/search.html.

2.2.2 Tense and Aspect

Verbs basically describe events or states (in order to save time and space, I will use the term "action" instead). Actions may have a time reference like in the following sentences:

(13a) **Παίζουμε** μπάσκετ.

"We **play** basketball."

(13b) **Παίξαμε** μπάσκετ.

"We **played** basketball."

(13c) **Θα παίζουμε** μπάσκετ.

"We **will play** basketball."

Playing basketball may be a present (like in 13a), a past (like in 13b), or a future action (like in 13c). This is roughly what tense is about.

Notice that the present here basically coincides with the moment of speaking. So a past action is an action that happened before the moment of speaking. Accordingly, a future action is an action that will happen after the moment of speaking.

Tense in Modern Greek is marked by the endings of the verbs but also by independent words which precede the verb, like in the future tense (compare to the English *will/shall*):

- (14) παίζ**αμε** **θα** παίζουμε
 “we played” “we **will** play”

Perhaps you have already noticed that the stem of the verb is not the same everywhere. In order to explain this fact, I will have to introduce aspect. Check the following sentences:

- (15a) Παί**ξαμε** μπάσκετ.
 “We **played** basketball.”

- (15b) Παί**ζαμε** μπάσκετ.
 “We **were playing** basketball.”

Both sentences describe a past action. The first sentence describes it as a perfect (completed) action. The second sentence describes the same action, but this time as an imperfect (in this case ongoing) action. The different ways to view an action represent aspect.

Aspect in Modern Greek is clearly related to the stem of the verb, and not to its endings. The verbs in the above sentences share exactly the same endings, so, obviously, the difference in aspect is marked by the difference in stems (*παίξ-* vs. *παίζ-*). The first one, called perfective stem, combines here with endings of the past to form the Modern Greek simple past. The second one, called imperfective stem, combines here with endings of the past to create the Modern Greek past continuous. Aspect and tense then work together to produce the actual tenses of Modern Greek, in this case past simple and past continuous:

- (16) παί**ξ**-αμε PERFECTIVE-PAST → PAST SIMPLE
 παί**ζ**-αμε IMPERFECTIVE-PAST → PAST CONTINUOUS

I won't go into further details, so I will conclude this discussion here. What I want you to remember is this: These stems (perfective and imperfective) are basic for any possible form of any Modern Greek verb. To put it simply: As long as you know these stems (along with the appropriate endings), the Modern Greek verbal system will be really easy to handle.

How to learn these stems? It is very simple. The imperfective stem comes along with every new verb you learn, since it is the basis for the present tense. The perfective stem is the basis for other tenses such as the past and future simples, so you learn it when you learn either one of these tenses. In this book, information about the imperfective and perfective stems can be found in Chapters 4, 8, 9 and in the Appendix.

2.2.3 Modality and Mood

Let's see the following sentences:

- (17a) **Παίζω** μπάσκετ.
“I **play** basketball.”
- (17b) **Μπορώ να παίζω** μπάσκετ.
“I **am able to** / I **can play** basketball.”
- (17c) **Πρέπει να παίζω** μπάσκετ.
“I **have** (I **must**/I **should**/I **ought**...) **to play** basketball.”
- (17d) **Μπορεί να παίζω** μπάσκετ.
“I **might play** basketball.”

All of the above sentences involve the same action: playing basketball. But there are considerable differences in the way the action is perceived. In the first sentence playing basketball is considered a fact. In the other three sentences playing basketball is considered not a fact but rather an ability, an obligation or a possibility. These are instances of modality.

Modality is the basis for mood distinctions in the Modern Greek verbal system: the indicative (*παίζω*) is the mood that refers to facts, while the subjunctive (*να παίζω*) refers to non-facts, such as abilities, obligations or possibilities. There are other moods which will be introduced later. For the moment keep in mind that subjunctive (which is roughly equivalent to the English infinitive) is as important as the indicative for communication and therefore a necessary part of levels A1-A2 (see Chapter 9).

2.2.4 Voice

Statements like *I go home* or *I am coming from school* are essential for everyday communication. Accordingly verbs meaning “to go” or “to come” are basic in language learning, and usually they can be found in the first chapters of any relevant teaching method. Here are the Modern Greek versions of these verbs:

(18) *πάω* (“to go”) / *έρχομαι* (“to come”)

These verbs represent voice distinctions in Modern Greek. Like gender divides nouns, so voice divides verbs into two major inflectional groups. *Πάω* represents the “active” voice. *Έρχομαι* represents the “passive” (or “medio-passive”) voice. Every Modern Greek verb must fall on either one of the two categories according to its ending in the first person singular of the present tense (as a dictionary entry, in other words).

Grammar terminology might be misleading at this point (I guess you all had to go through exercises on the passive voice in English), so I must make the following point: The term “voice” as used in this context is related to form, not meaning. The verb *έρχομαι* is a “passive” verb because of its ending, not because of its meaning (personally, I see nothing “passive” in a motion verb). And the same holds for other verbs of this category like the following:

(19) *είμαι* (“to be”) / *θυμάμαι* (“to remember”)

Your main concern at levels A1-A2 will be “active”, not “passive” verbs. Nevertheless you cannot avoid basic “passive” verbs like *είμαι*, *έρχομαι*, *θυμάμαι*. Considering “passive” verbs, keep in mind the following:

- “Active” and “passive” verbs are structured along the same grammatical features. Like “active” verbs, “passive” verbs also contain information about person, number and the rest. Like “active” verbs again, “passive” verbs are structured along an imperfective and a perfective stem. So what was said in Units 2.2.1 on [page 26](#) -2.2.3 on [page 30](#) holds for the “passive” voice as well.
- The endings of the two groups seem to be totally different, but in fact they are not. As you will find out by the end of levels A1-A2, the Modern Greek verbal system is based on economy: It “recycles” endings, changing other parts of the verb (such as the stem, check 15a-15b on [page 29](#)) in order to produce a great variety of forms. Therefore the Modern Greek verbal system is a field which addresses reason rather than memory. As long as you understand some basic rules and memorize a few models, you will be able to do things properly.

Street Food

Street food is here to remind us of gender distinctions in Modern Greek: A masculine (ο γύρος), a feminine (η τυρόπιτα) and a neuter (το κουλούρι) represent the basic trio of Modern Greek street food.

Κουλούρι and *τυρόπιτα* stand for a late breakfast (most Greeks have only coffee in the morning and then they eat something around 11 a.m.). *Κουλούρι*, a ring made of bread dough with sesame sprinkled on top (it looks somewhat like the New York bagel), is sold at stands on the street or in bakeries. *Τυρόπιτα* is the most famous instance of a series of *πίτα*, which is basically a baked sandwich of flat pastry dough or strudel leaves and various fillings that give every *πίτα* its name (for example, *σπανακόπιτα* is a pie filled with spinach). All sorts of *πίτα* are sold in bakeries or specialized shops (the name is *τυροπιτάδικο*, because *τυρόπιτα* is the queen of such pies).

Unlike *κουλούρι* and *τυρόπιτα*, *γύρος* is preferred for lunch or dinner. *Γύρος* basically consists of slivers of roasted meat cut from a huge meat loaf on a vertical spit that goes around next to the fire (*γύρος* derives from *γυρίζω*, a verb meaning “to go round”, “to turn”). *Γύρος* is served in a *πίτα* (here flat bread dough) usually with tomato, sliced onion and *τζατζίκι* (a thick sauce made of Greek yoghurt, cucumber, vinegar, olive oil, and lots of garlic). *Γύρος* is sold in specialized shops (the most common word for such shops is *σουβλατζίδικο*).

Whatever your taste in street food is, keep in mind the following: *Τυρόπιτα* and *κουλούρι* are morning food, *γύρος* is afternoon and evening food. You are perfectly entitled to have a *κουλούρι* in the afternoon and a *γύρος* in the morning, but they will not be as fresh and delicious as they are when the time is right.

SUMMARY









Apart from their (lexical) meaning, Modern Greek verbs and nouns carry lots of grammar inside them, basically as part of their endings. Chapter 2 introduces main grammatical features of nouns and verbs, such as gender and case (for nouns), or tense and aspect (for verbs).

KEY WORDS

nouns, verbs, inflection, stem/ending, grammatical features, number, person, gender, case, aspect, tense, modality/mood, voice, optional subject

EXERCISES

1. After the animal world, let's visit the world of fruit, vegetables and roots. Match the following nouns with the pictures.

1. η ντομάτα	a. 
2. η πατάτα	b. 
3. το καρότο	c. 
4. το μπρόκολο	d. 
5. η μπανάνα	e. 
6. το σπανάκι	f. 
7. το λεμόνι	g. 
8. ο ανανάς	h. 

2. Here are some basic Modern Greek verbs. Check the sentences and then match the verbs with their meaning.

- τρώω φρούτα
- ακούω μουσική
- γράφω μέιλ

- παίζω κιθάρα
- πίνω καφέ
- πάω σινεμά

1. τρώω
2. ακούω
3. γράφω
4. παίζω
5. πίνω
6. πάω

a. “to play”
b. “to eat”
c. “to drink”
d. “to go”
e. “to listen”, “to hear”
f. “to write”

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 2 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 3 | More about Nouns: Nominative and Accusative Cases

In the previous chapter I introduced case as part of the grammar of nouns and promised (but some promises might sound like threats) to come back to this issue later. “Later” is now, so let’s start!

The Modern Greek case system consists of four cases. All of them are important, but two are crucial for basic communication. Let me then introduce them using an example from Unit 2.1.2:

- (1a) **Ο Γιάννης** μένει με **τον Πέτρο**.
“John lives with Peter.”
- (1b) **Ο Πέτρος** μένει με **τον Γιάννη**.
“Peter lives with John.”
- (1c) **Ο Γιάννης και ο Πέτρος** μένουν μαζί.
“John and Peter live together.”

The forms *ο Πέτρος* / *ο Γιάννης* are instances of the nominative case. The forms *τον Πέτρο* / *τον Γιάννη* are instances of the accusative case. Each case seems to be governed by several regularities:

- In use. The accusative holds a specific syntactic role in those sentences: It is used after a preposition like *με* (technically I would say it is part of a prepositional phrase). The nominative holds another syntactic role, which will be explained below.
- In form. The forms of the nominative *ο Γιάννης* / *ο Πέτρος* seem to differ in exactly the same way from the forms of the accusative *τον Γιάννη* / *τον Πέτρο* (check the article and the ending).

There is then a lot to be said about both issues. For practical reasons, I shall first deal with matters of form, to come back later to matters of use.

3.1 Case as Form

The nouns we used before for our “living together” scenario were masculine nouns. And masculine nouns seem to share a similar pattern regarding case. The nominative and the accusative are related to a different form of the article as well as different endings:

- (2) **ο Πέτρος / ο Γιάννης** (NOMINATIVE)
 τον Πέτρο / τον Γιάννη (ACCUSATIVE)

Let's now work with a similar scenario. This time two Greek female students, *Ελένη* and *Κατερίνα*, share the same apartment. This situation can again be described by the following sentences:

- (3a) **Η Ελένη** μένει με **την Κατερίνα**.
 “Helen lives with Catherine.”
- (3b) **Η Κατερίνα** μένει με **την Ελένη**.
 “Catherine lives with Helen.”
- (3c) **Η Ελένη και η Κατερίνα** μένουν μαζί.
 “Helen and Catherine live together.”

Like masculine nouns, feminine nouns seem to share a similar pattern regarding case. But this time the pattern is different. Nominative and accusative are related to a different form of the article again, but now the endings remain the same:

- (4) **η Ελένη / η Κατερίνα** (NOMINATIVE)
 την Ελένη / την Κατερίνα (ACCUSATIVE)

I believe it is clear by now that nouns follow different patterns according to their gender. It would then be reasonable to start from gender distinctions (see Table 2.1 on [page 22](#)) in order to introduce case as form, and this is what most grammars do:

	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE
MASCULINE	ο δρόμος	τον δρόμο
	ο άντρας	τον άντρα
	ο χάρτης	τον χάρτη
FEMININE	η ώρα	την ώρα
	η ζώνη	την ζώνη
NEUTER	το βιβλίο	το βιβλίο
	το παιδί	το παιδί
	το πράγμα	το πράγμα

Table 3.1: *Nominative and Accusative (Singular) for Basic Modern Greek Nouns.*

Following dictionaries, I shall consider the nominative to be the “initial” case, which undergoes a number of changes in order to “produce” the accusative. In this respect:

- Masculine nouns undergo two changes: one in the definite article ($\sigma \rightarrow \tau\sigma\nu$), another one in the ending (the final $-\varsigma$ is removed).
- Feminine nouns undergo only one change, in the definite article ($\eta \rightarrow \tau\eta\nu$).
- Neuter nouns undergo no change at all.

Gender groups, then, are structured along a scale of complexity regarding case. In this scale masculine nouns represent the top, and neuter nouns represent the bottom.

	CHANGES	DIFFERENCE
MASCULINE NOUNS	2	Major
FEMININE NOUNS	1	Medium
NEUTER NOUNS	0	None/Zero

Table 3.2: *Modern Greek Nouns on a Scale of Inflectional Complexity.*

Nouns are entered in dictionaries by the nominative, not the accusative, case. So, don't look for $\delta\rho\acute{o}\mu\sigma\sigma$, $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\alpha$, $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta$, but for $\delta\rho\acute{o}\mu\sigma\varsigma$, $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\alpha\varsigma$, $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta\varsigma$. For real entries press here: http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/.

When speaking, people usually drop the final $-\nu$ of the definite article in the accusative before some sounds (so you might hear $\tau\sigma\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\alpha$, $\tau\eta\nu \acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$, but $\tau\sigma \chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta$, $\tau\eta \zeta\acute{\omega}\nu\eta$), and sometimes this is reflected on writing. In my opinion you already have enough to worry about, so I kept the same form everywhere. Keep in mind, though, that there are books about levels A1-A2 that follow this difference. For details press here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology (see Unit Sandhi).

3.2 Case in Use

The nominative and the accusative hold specific syntactic roles within the sentence. In this unit I shall examine these roles introducing five basic syntactic “contexts” as instances of the use of these cases. I know that by the end of the unit you will be exhausted, so there is a short summary there to help you survive and go on.

3.2.1 Subject, Object, and Free Word Order

Let's see the following sentence:

- (5) **Ο Πέτρος** αγαπάει **την Μαρία**.
“Peter loves Mary.”

Peter is the subject of the verb, the one who loves Mary. Mary is the object of the verb, the one who is loved by Peter. What if Mary loves Peter?

- (6) **Η Μαρία** αγαπάει **τον Πέτρο**.
“Mary loves Peter.”

Mary is now the subject, the one who loves Peter. Peter now is the object, the one who is loved by Mary. I believe it is clear that the nominative holds the role of the subject, and the accusative holds the role of the object.

What about the following sentence? (Think before you read the answer.)

- (7) **Τον Πέτρο** αγαπάει **η Μαρία**.

This sentence means again “Mary loves Peter”, and not “Peter loves Mary”. Why? Because *η Μαρία* is clearly in the nominative, and the nominative is the subject *regardless* of its position. Equally *τον Πέτρο* is in the accusative, therefore it is the object no matter where it is. In other words: Syntactic roles like subject and object are clear inside a Modern Greek noun, so position within the sentence becomes irrelevant. Compare now to English: Nouns carry no such information inside them, therefore position is what counts. So if I change the position of the nouns in a sentence like *Mary loves Peter*, what I will get is a totally different sentence (*Peter loves Mary*).

Subjects and objects may in fact occupy various positions inside the sentence:

- (8a) **Η Μαρία** αγαπάει **τον Πέτρο**.
(8b) **Τον Πέτρο** **η Μαρία** αγαπάει.
(8c) **Η Μαρία** **τον Πέτρο** αγαπάει.
(8d) Αγαπάει **τον Πέτρο** **η Μαρία**.
(8e) Αγαπάει **η Μαρία** **τον Πέτρο**.

All of the above sentences are real. And all of them mean the same (“Mary loves Peter”). What you should keep from this discussion is the following:

- Subject and object may take different positions inside the sentence. These different positions do not affect the basic meaning of the sentence, but they are related to focus and accordingly they combine with different emphatic readings (see Unit 1.7.3 on [page 17](#)).
- Examples 8a-e represent free word order in Modern Greek. But free word order in this case has its limits. You can reverse the order S-V-O (Subject-Verb-Object) in Modern Greek and make S-O-V, V-S-O etc. But you cannot reverse the words inside the subject unit itself and put the noun first and the article second.
- Nobody expects you at the moment to master free word order. This will come with time and practice. But at least you must have some sort of free-word-order awareness, in order to understand natives when they do it. For the moment you can use the S-V-O order, or, if you feel adventurous, the V-S-O order, which is very common in Modern Greek.

The terms “subject” and “object” go much beyond the type of sentences we have examined so far. A subject does not need to be the “doer” of an action directed at the object:

- (1a) **Ο Πέτρος** κοιμάται.
“**Peter** is sleeping.”
- (1b) **Ο Πέτρος** νομίζει ότι κάνω λάθος.
“**Peter** thinks I am wrong.”
- (1c) **Ο Πέτρος** είναι γιατρός.
“**Peter** is a doctor.”

3.2.2 Predication

Let's see the following sentences:

- (9a) **Ο Πέτρος** θέλει **γιατρό**.
“**Peter** needs a **doctor**.”
- (9b) **Ο Πέτρος** είναι **γιατρός**.
“**Peter** is a **doctor**.”

Sentence 9a clearly involves two persons, Peter and the doctor. Peter is the subject and the doctor is the object. Unlike sentence 9a, sentence 9b involves only one person, Peter. What about the doctor? The doctor of 9b is not another person, it's Peter's profession. Technically, the word *γιατρός* of 9b is not an object but a predicate to the subject. It gives extra information about the subject. In this sense doctor works like an adjective, and Modern Greek adjectives must follow the case of the noun they modify (this is the technical term for such relations). This is why we have the nominative (*γιατρός*) in sentence 9b.

Note that a predicate may modify not only the subject but also the object. In that case, it will be in the accusative:

- (10) Τα παιδιά έκαναν **τον Πέτρο ήρωα**. (NOM. *ο ήρωας*)
“The children made **Peter** a **hero**.”

3.2.3 Apposition

Let’s start from the following sentences:

- (11a) **Ο φίλος της, ο Πέτρος**, είναι από τον Καναδά.
“**Her boyfriend, Peter**, is from Canada.”
- (11b) Ξέρεις **τον φίλο της, τον Πέτρο**;
“Do you know **her boyfriend, Peter**?”

Peter of sentences 11a and 11b is not a person other than the boyfriend. Basically it is a piece of extra information about the boyfriend. As the doctor in sentence 9b, Peter here works like an adjective modifying another noun. And, again as the doctor of 9b, it follows the case of the noun it modifies. This is why it may be in the nominative (11a) or the accusative (11b).

Let’s now turn to less obvious cases of apposition and examine content relations. These relations typically involve a container and its content.

- (12) Θέλω ένα **ποτήρι νερό**.
“I need a **glass of water**.”

Like English, in Modern Greek the container comes first and content comes second. Unlike English, there is no intermediate word to connect the two terms.

What about case in this structure? Let’s see the following sentences:

- (13a) Θέλω ένα **ποτήρι χυμό**. (NOM. *ο χυμός*)
“I need a **glass of juice**.”
- (13b) Ένα **ποτήρι χυμός** κάνει πάντα καλό.
“A **glass of juice** always helps.”

Sentences 13a and 13b show that content follows the case of the container. In 13a the noun *ο χυμός* is in the accusative because the container is in the accusative (as the object). In sentence 13b, the content again follows the case of the container (now it’s nominative, because the con-

tainer is in the nominative, as the subject).

Notice that the above pattern in Modern Greek extends from “literal” content relations to abstract appositive relations like the following. The container is now a measure holding a specific quantity of the content:

- (IIa) ένα κιλό φέτα
“a kilo of feta cheese”
(IIb) ένα λίτρο γάλα
“a liter of milk”

Notice also that the above pattern is the basis for hundreds of everyday phrases like the following:

- (IIIa) χυμός πορτοκάλι
“orange juice”
(IIIb) παγωτό σοκολάτα
“chocolate ice cream”
(IIIc) ζελέ φράουλα
“strawberry jelly”

Phrases like these are based on simple reasoning: Like there is coffee in my cup, so there is orange in my juice and chocolate in my ice cream.

3.2.4 Prepositional Phrases

In the previous units, the nominative and the accusative held contrastive (subject vs. object) or complementary roles (as in predication and apposition). From now on, the nominative abandons the picture, leaving the accusative alone. Nouns preceded by a preposition (basically *με, σε, για, από*) are parts of a prepositional phrase. And as parts of a prepositional phrase, these nouns are always in the accusative case:

- (14a) Ο Γιάννης μένει **με τον Πέτρο**.
“John lives **with Peter**.”
(14b) Το βιβλίο είναι **για τον Πέτρο**.
“The book is **for Peter**.”
(14c) Είμαι **από την Ιταλία**.
“I am **from Italy**.”

- (14d) Μένω **στην Ελλάδα**.
“I live **in Greece**.”

The use of the accusative in prepositional phrases is really easy to handle and has already been examined (see Unit 2.1.2 on [page 25](#)), so there are few things to be said here. Keep in mind that as part of a prepositional phrase, the accusative may be either the (indirect) object of the verb (like in 15a) or an adverbial (like in 15b):

- (15a) Δίνω ένα βιβλίο **στον Πέτρο**.
“I give a book **to Peter**.”

- (15b) Είμαι **στο σχολείο**.
“I am **at school**.”

3.2.5 Time

The expression of time in Modern Greek often requires not a prepositional phrase or an adverb, but a single accusative:

- (16) Φεύγω **την Παρασκευή**.
“I am leaving **on Friday**.”

The single accusative is typical for days, periods of the day, months, seasons, and holidays (for the relevant vocabulary press here: <http://quizlet.com/1975167/modern-greek-days-months-seasons-flash-cards/>):

- (17a) Έρχομαι **την Πέμπτη**.
“I am coming **on Thursday**.”

- (17b) Πίνω καφέ **το πρωί**.
“I have coffee **in the morning**.”

- (17c) Τα γενέθλιά μου είναι **τον Οκτώβριο**.
“My birthday is **in October**.”

- (17d) Τα σχολεία είναι κλειστά **το καλοκαίρι**.
“Schools are closed **in the summer**.”

- (17e) Πάντα κάνουμε πάρτι **τα Χριστούγεννα**.
“We always have a party **at Christmas**.”

The only exception is “clock time”, where you need a prepositional phrase instead:

- (18) Έχω ραντεβού **στις πέντε**.
 “I have an appointment **at five**.”

The single accusative also expresses time seen as quantity or frequency:

- (19a) Περιμένω **πέντε λεπτά**.
 “I’ve been waiting **for five minutes**.”
- (19b) Πάω στην Κρήτη **κάθε χρόνο**.
 “I go to Crete **every year**.”

Words typically associated with time do not need to be used only as adverbials. They may hold other syntactic roles within the sentence, and consequently they may take another case. Let’s take *Τρίτη* (“Tuesday”) as an example:

- (IVa) Φεύγω **την Τρίτη**. (ADVERBIAL: SINGLE ACCUSATIVE)
 “I am leaving **on Tuesday**.”
- (IVb) **Η Τρίτη** είναι μετά την Δευτέρα. (SUBJECT: NOMINATIVE)
 “**Tuesday** comes after Monday.”
- (IVc) Σήμερα είναι **Τρίτη**. (PREDICATE: NOMINATIVE)
 “It’s **Tuesday** today.”
- (IVd) Προτιμώ **την Τρίτη**. (OBJECT: ACCUSATIVE)
 “I prefer **Tuesday**.”

Notice that in IVd the noun *Τρίτη* is in the accusative again, but for different reasons. Now it is the object, not an adverbial.

For similar reasons, two questions like the following have different answers (check your own language):

- (Va) A: Τι μέρα είναι σήμερα; B: **Τρίτη**.
 A: “What day is it today?” B: “**Tuesday**.”
- (Vb) A: Πότε / Τι μέρα έχεις τεστ; B: **Την Τρίτη**.
 A: “When / Which day do you have a test?” B: “**On Tuesday**.”

3.2.6 Synopsis

Case is strongly related to syntax: The nominative and the accusative represent the major complements of the verb, the subject and the object respectively. They are also related to any noun

that modifies the subject and the object, either by predication or by apposition. The accusative is also used inside prepositional phrases, either as the (indirect) object of the verb or as an adverbial. Finally, the single accusative can work as an adverbial, expressing time.

NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE
1. Subject	1. Object (<i>single accusative</i>)
-	2. Object (indirect) / Adverbial (<i>prepositional accusative</i>)
-	3. Time adverbial (<i>single accusative</i>)

Table 3.3: *A Synopsis of the Use of the Nominative and the Accusative.*

3.3 Back to Form: The Plural

The plural in Modern Greek is simply an ordinary plural. Therefore there is nothing to be said about its use. All you need to know concerns its form. The following table will help you with it (the singular in parentheses is here only to help):

	(SINGULAR)		PLURAL	
	(NOMINATIVE)	(ACCUSATIVE)	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE
MASCULINE	(ο δρόμος)	(τον δρόμο)	οι δρόμοι	τους δρόμους
	(ο άντρας)	(τον άντρα)	οι άντρες	τους άντρες
	(ο χάρτης)	(τον χάρτη)	οι χάρτες	τους χάρτες
FEMININE	(η ώρα)	(την ώρα)	οι ώρες	τις ώρες
	(η ζώνη)	(την ζώνη)	οι ζώνες	τις ζώνες
NEUTER	(το βιβλίο)	(το βιβλίο)	τα βιβλία	τα βιβλία
	(το παιδί)	(το παιδί)	τα παιδιά	τα παιδιά
	(το πράγμα)	(το πράγμα)	τα πράγματα	τα πράγματα

Table 3.4: *Nominative and Accusative (Plural) for Basic Modern Greek Nouns.*

A few remarks about the plural now:

- Grammars usually deem the singular, and among all cases the nominative, to be the starting point for the plural. In this respect nouns in the singular must undergo changes in order to become plural. These changes have to do with the definite article and the endings of the nouns:

(20) **ο** δρόμος → **οι** δρόμοι
 τον δρόμο → **τους** δρόμους

Loanwords have an ordinary plural if their ending resembles the endings of Modern Greek nouns. So *η πίτσα* is inflected like *η ώρα* (see Table 3.1 on [page 36](#)) and the plural is *οι πίτσες*. If it doesn't, the ending remains untouched and the plural is signaled by the article alone: *το γκαράζ* / *τα γκαράζ*, *το κομπιούτερ* / *τα κομπιούτερ*. Notice that “euro” in Modern Greek falls into this category (*το ευρώ* / *τα ευρώ*).

- Compared to the singular, the boundaries among gender groups in the plural seem to be less fixed. First, the article of masculine nouns in the nominative is now identical to that of feminine ones:

(21) ο δρόμος οι δρόμοι
η ώρα οι ώρες

Second, two subcategories of masculine nouns share the same endings with the feminine nouns.

(22) ο άντρας οι άντρες
ο χάρτης οι χάρτες
η ώρα οι ώρες
η ζώνη οι ζώνες

This sort of “fusion” among gender groups supports the idea that you cannot guess gender based simply on the endings of the words. Instead you must have an a priori piece of information about gender in order to survive in this field.

- The plural is constructed in two ways. First, the ending of the singular may be replaced by a new one.

(23) δρόμος → δρόμοι
ώρα → ώρες
βιβλίο → βιβλία

Second, the ending of the singular may stay, receiving an additional unit:

(24) το παιδί → τα παιδιά
το πράγμα → τα πράγματα

This latter change is typical of two subcategories of neuter nouns (those ending in *-ι* and those

ending in *-μα*).

Neuter nouns in *-μα* get longer in the plural, because they get an additional syllable:

(VI) *πράγμα* → *πράγματα* (“thing” → “things”)
διαμέρισμα → *διαμερίσματα* (“apartment” → “apartments”)

How to explain the different position of the stress in the second example? I will remind you that the stress in Modern Greek is restricted to one of the last three syllables (check Unit 1.2 on [page 6](#)). *Διαμέρισμα* is OK in this respect, but when the noun gets an additional syllable, things are not OK any longer. The stress will now be on the fourth syllable (a real scandal according to stress standards). This is why the stress moves to what is now the third syllable of the word.

Neuter nouns in *-ι* get an additional unit, but they do not become longer. Why? Unit 1.6.2 on [page 13](#) is here to explain this paradox (a Greek word again). The [i] sound of the ending is unstressed, either because the stress was on another syllable, or because the additional unit gets its stress. So [i] goes away and the word preserves the same number of syllables:

(VII) *παιδί* → *παιδιά* (“kid” → “kids”)
κορίτσι → *κορίτσια* (“girl” → “girls”)

I believe it is time to show how grammar can help with spelling. Let’s take the vowel [i] and its various representations: The letter *η* is typical of feminine and masculine nouns in the singular (*η ζώνη*, *ο χάρτης*). The letter *ι* is typical of neuters (*το σπίτι*). The combination *οι* is typical of articles and masculine nouns in the plural (*οι δρόμοι*, *οι ώρες*). The letter *υ* and the combination *ει* play no significant role here.

Let’s take the [o] sound now. Apparently it is the letter *ο* that pulls the strings here, as a typical letter for masculines and neuters in the singular (*ο δρόμος*, *το βιβλίο*).

These are the basics you must know about the plural, but they are not enough for everyday communication. I mean you cannot rationalize (“OK, now I want to use the word *διαμέρισμα*, it’s a neuter and gets an additional syllable, but I also have to move the stress”) and speak at the same time. The best way to go through the plural (and the singular as well) is memorization and practice. This statement sounds contradictory (why then bother to write grammars, or even grammar notes?), but it is not. Rationalization (what most grammars do) helps people insert

some order into chaos so as to get on with the real language. In this respect, grammar is only the first step to communication.

Uncountable nouns (words like *water*, *beer*, *flour*, *sugar*) behave like ordinary nouns in Modern Greek and are totally acceptable in the plural, under a specific reading:

(VIII) Θα ήθελα δύο **νερά**.

In the above sentence “two waters” means “two glasses (or bottles) of water”.

Notice that in content relations uncountable nouns always keep the singular, regardless of the number of containers. Countable nouns, on the other hand, are always in the plural:

(IXa) Θα ήθελα ένα ποτήρι **νερό**.

“I’d like a glass of **water**.”

(IXb) Θα ήθελα δύο ποτήρια **νερό**.

“I’d like two glasses of **water**.”

(IXc) Θα ήθελα ένα κιλό **πορτοκάλια**.

“I’d like one kilo of **oranges**.”

(IXd) Θα ήθελα δύο κιλά **πορτοκάλια**.

“I’d like two kilos of **oranges**.”

Sometimes languages behave differently regarding number. English nouns referring to money or news have only singular number, but the Modern Greek words are in the plural (*τα λεφτά*, *τα νέα*). On the other hand, “trousers” in Modern Greek is not plural but singular (*το παντελόνι*).

3.4 Modern Greek Nouns in Three Steps

After an exhausting chapter like 3, it is time to summarize what you must know in order to use a Modern Greek noun properly. Let’s take a new noun, to let some fresh air in here. This noun is *υπολογιστής*.

- First you must know what the noun means. Open the dictionary and you will find out it means “computer”. At this moment (don’t leave it for later) check the gender. It’s a masculine, and you must remember it (*ο υπολογιστής*).
- Then you must know what different forms *υπολογιστής* takes according to number and case. Go back to Table 3.1 on [page 36](#) and check masculines. *Υπολογιστής* looks more like *χάρτης* because they share the same ending (the position of the stress is irrelevant here). What you have now is an appropriate inflectional model, which you can apply to *υπολογιστής* (along with lots of similar nouns) and get the following forms: *ο υπολογιστής*

/ τον υπολογιστή / οι υπολογιστές / τους υπολογιστές.

- The above forms are useless unless combined with syntactic rules which tell you how to use them in communication. At this point you must go back to Unit 3.2 on [page 37](#) and refresh your memory about the use of cases. Remember: You may be a master of case as form, but if you don't know the rules of use, then you simply cannot say anything bigger than a word.

Keep in mind that knowledge of the theory does not guarantee proper use. You'll need lots of practice afterwards. People make mistakes in the beginning, but this is part of learning anyway.

Craving for Meaning

From Chapter 2 and on, meaning is leaving the background to come to the foreground (it's all about communication, after all). It is time then to introduce two basic questions that might help with meaning:

- Suppose you come across a new word (τραπέζι, for example) and want to ask about its meaning. What you must ask is this:

(X) Τι σημαίνει “τραπέζι”?

“What is the meaning of ‘τραπέζι’?”

What you will get as an answer is this:

(XI) Σημαίνει “table”.

“It means ‘table’”.

The same question applies not only to words, but also to larger units, like phrases or sentences.

- Suppose now you are writing an essay in Modern Greek and you need to know the Modern Greek word for “table”. What you must ask now is this:

(XII) Πώς λέμε “table” στα ελληνικά;

“How do we say ‘table’ in Modern Greek?”

Now you get the following answer:

(XIII) Το λέμε “τραπέζι”.

“We call it ‘τραπέζι’”.

In the first case you start from the form of a Modern Greek word and get its meaning (represented by its equivalent in English or any language). In the second case you start from meaning (represented by an equivalent word in English or any language) in order to get the form of the Modern Greek word.

The Modern Greek περίπτερο

I believe you all are familiar with those tiny kiosks standing on Greek streets surrounded by various stands and fridges. Each one of them is an all-service shop. Some of them may sell practically everything, from papers, books and cigarettes, to milk, beverages, chocolates, even over-the-counter pain killers. Well, it is not exactly everything (you cannot buy bread, meat or vegetables there), but it is definitely the place to go when you need to buy everyday stuff and you don't want to visit three stores instead or these stores are closed. Going to the περίπτερο is like a crash course in Modern Greek nouns.

- Don't forget to use the accusative when asking for something:

(XIVa) Θα ήθελα έναν χυμό πορτοκάλι. (=“I would like an orange juice.”)

(XIVb) Έναν χυμό πορτοκάλι, παρακαλώ. (=“An orange juice, please.”)

- If you need more, then it is time to refresh the plural:

(XV) Δύο χυμούς πορτοκάλι, παρακαλώ.

- Let's remember that loanwords do not change in the plural, but some of them do:

(XVIa) Δύο κρουασάν, παρακαλώ.

(XVIb) Δύο σοκολάτες, παρακαλώ.

- It is now time to pay. But first you need to ask about the price:

(XVIIa) Πόσο κάνει ο χυμός;
“How much is the juice?”

(XVIIb) Πόσο κάνουν οι χυμοί;
“How much are the juices?”

At this very moment going to the mini market looks far more attractive than before. After all, you just pick what you need, pay and go. But then you miss a vital piece of the Modern Greek culture and a great opportunity for practice. Take it and go!

SUMMARY

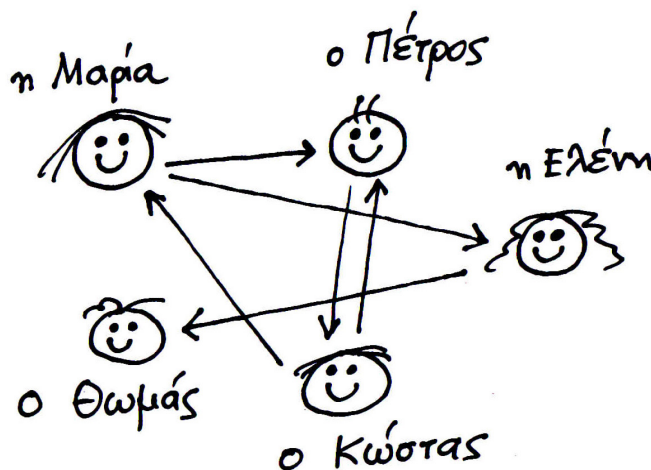
Nominative and accusative cases are related to major syntactic roles within the sentence, and therefore are crucial for communication. Chapter 3 examines the various forms a Modern Greek noun may take regarding case. A great deal of the chapter is dedicated to case in use, examining basic syntactic contexts for the nominative and the accusative.

KEY WORDS

case (nominative/accusative), subject, object, free word order, predication, apposition, modify/modifier, prepositional phrase, adverbial

EXERCISES

1. Party time! Who knows whom? Check the picture first. Then read the following sentences and choose Right (Σ) or Wrong (Λ). *Ξέρει / δεν ξέρει* are “knows” / “doesn’t know”, and *αλλά* is “but”.



	Σ	Λ
1. Η Μαρία ξέρει τον Πέτρο και την Ελένη.		
2. Ο Κώστας ξέρει τον Θωμά.		
3. Η Μαρία ξέρει τον Πέτρο, αλλά ο Πέτρος δεν ξέρει την Μαρία.		
4. Η Μαρία δεν ξέρει τον Θωμά.		
5. Η Ελένη δεν ξέρει τον Κώστα, αλλά ξέρει τον Πέτρο, την Μαρία και τον Θωμά.		
6. Ο Κώστας ξέρει τον Πέτρο και ο Πέτρος ξέρει τον Κώστα.		

2. Back to the animal world. Read the sentences and choose Right (Σ) or Wrong (Λ).

	Σ	Λ
1. Η ζέβρα είναι από την Αφρική.		
2. Το κοάλα είναι από την Ασία.		
3. Ο ελέφαντας είναι από την Αφρική.		
4. Το καγκουρό είναι από την Αυστραλία.		
5. Ο ιπποπόταμος είναι από την Αμερική.		
6. Ο πιγκουίνος είναι από την Ευρώπη.		

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 3 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 4 | More about Verbs: The Modern Greek Present Tense

The Modern Greek present tense is both good and bad news for absolute beginners. Let's start with the good news. Check the following sentences:

- (1a) **Βλέπω** τηλεόραση **τώρα**.
“I **am watching** TV **now**.”
- (1b) **Βλέπω** τηλεόραση **κάθε μέρα**.
“I **watch** TV **every day**.”

Sentence 1a describes an ongoing action in the present. Sentence 1b describes a routine action, whose performance includes the present. The verb is different in the English sentences, but in the Modern Greek sentences it remains the same.

I believe it is clear that the Modern Greek present is not a simple or a continuous present. It is both. Therefore, don't look for another present tense in Modern Greek, because there is none. And this is really great news for you: You simply have to bother only with one tense in the present, not two.

It is now time for the bad news. Here are the first person singular and first person plural of some basic Modern Greek verbs:

- | | | | |
|------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| (2a) | κάνω | κάνουμε | (“I do” / “we do”) |
| | τρώω | τρώμε | (“I eat” / “we eat”) |
| | μιλάω/-ώ | μιλάμε | (“I speak” / “we speak”) |
| | μπορώ | μπορούμε | (“I can” / “we can”) |
| (2b) | έρχομαι | ερχόμαστε | (“I come” / “we come”) |
| | θυμάμαι | θυμόμαστε | (“I remember” / “we remember”) |

Modern Greek verbs in the present tense are not uniform in their endings. Verbs belonging to 2a share roughly the same endings in the first person singular but have slightly different endings in the first person plural. On the contrary, verbs belonging to 2b look the same regarding the first person plural, but their ending is slightly different in the first person singular. Obviously what lies behind these verbs is not a single but several inflectional patterns. There is then a lot to be said about the form of the present tense, and this is what I am going to do in the following unit.

4.1 The Form of the Present

As mentioned previously, the Modern Greek present is easy to use, but not that easy to form. Verbs follow different inflectional patterns, as shown in example 2. What we need then is a categorization frame to put verbs in and to group them around an inflectional model. Let's see how this goes:

Check again the verbs in 2. The maximal difference lies between the verbs in 2a and those in 2b (compare *κάνω* / *κάνουμε* to *έρχομαι* / *ερχόμαστε*). It is reasonable then to use voice (see Unit 2.2.4 on [page 30](#)) as a first step in order to categorize verbs, and this is what most grammars do: Modern Greek verbs are first divided into “active” and “passive” verbs according to their endings in the first person singular of the present tense. If a verb ends in *-ω*, it belongs to the “active” group. If a verb ends in *-μαι*, then it belongs to the “passive” group.

(3)	“ACTIVE” GROUP	“PASSIVE” GROUP
	κάνω	έρχομαι
	τρώω	θυμάμαι
	μιλάω/-ώ	
	μπορώ	

This distinction is very clear, I guess, but still some practice wouldn't harm. What about the following verbs? Think first and then check the answer after 4 (and don't cheat!).

- (4) σκέφτομαι (“to think”), πλένω (“to wash”),
λέω (“to say”, “to tell”), φοβάμαι (“to fear”)

(OK, *πλένω*, *λέω* are “active”, *σκέφτομαι*, *φοβάμαι* are “passive”).

Each one of these two major groups is categorized again and again into several groups. Let's start with “active” verbs. They are divided into two major groups, A and B, according to the position of the stress. If the stress falls on the stem of the verb, and therefore the ending is not stressed, the verb belongs to group A. If the stress falls on the ending of the verb, and therefore the stem is unstressed, then the verb belongs to group B.



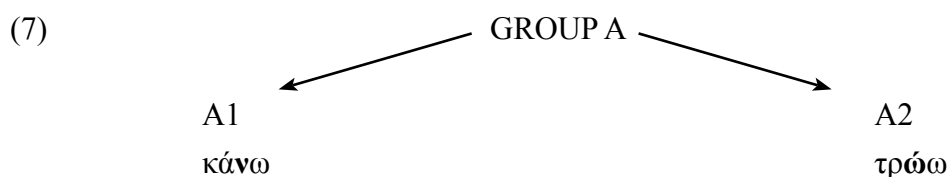
Again some practice might help. Which one of the following verbs is group A and which is group B? Think first, then check the answer after 6:

(6) παίζω (“to play”), προσπαθώ (“to try”), φοράω/-ώ (“to wear”), τρέχω (“to run”)

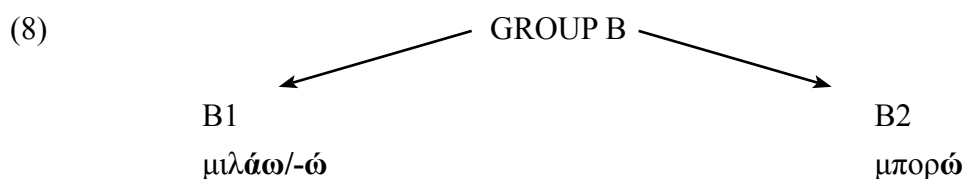
(OK, παίζω, τρέχω belong to group A, προσπαθώ, φοράω/-ώ belong to group B.)

Groups A and B are further divided into two sub-groups each.

Group A gives A1 and A2 on the basis of the stem: If its final sound is a consonant, then the verb goes to A1. If its final sound is a vowel, then the verb goes to A2.



Group B gives B1 and B2 on the basis of the ending: If there is an -ά- in it, then the verb goes to B1. If there is no -ά- in it, then the verb goes to B2.



This is it! No more groups and subgroups for “active” verbs. Here is a table to help:



Table 4.1: Basic Inflectional Groups of “Active” Verbs in the Present Tense.

Some practice is necessary, don’t you think? OK, which verb is in which group? Think and then you know what to do. But I believe you need some help at the moment, so I will split the verbs for you.

(9) γυρίζω (“to turn”, “to return”), μετράω/-ώ (“to count”, “to measure”), καίω (“to burn”), τηλεφωνώ (“to call”), ακούω (“to listen”, “to hear”), δουλεύω (“to work”), τελειώνω (“to finish”, “to end”), αγαπάω/-ώ (“to love”), φτιάχνω (“to make”)

(And here is the answer: γυρίζω, δουλεύω, τελειώνω, φτιάχνω are A1, ακούω, καίω are A2,

μετράω/-ώ, αγαπάω/-ώ are B1 and τηλεφωνώ is B2.)

- The verb *δουλεύω* belongs to A1 group. The letter *υ* here represents [v], therefore a consonant (see Unit 1.4.2 on [page 10](#)).
- Take the verbs *τελειώνω* and *τηλεφωνώ* to see how stress affects their categorization. The first one is stressed on the stem, therefore it goes to A1. The second one is stressed on the ending, therefore it goes to B2.

“Passive” verbs follow the distinctions of “active” verbs. Considering that “passive” voice is basically examined in levels B1-B2, I will skip a detailed presentation and focus only on two groups of “passive” verbs:

- The first group consists of verbs ending in *-ομαι*, like *έρχομαι*. In order to save time and energy I will call it “passive” group 1.
- The second group is a rather limited group consisting of verbs ending in *-άμαι*, like *θυμάμαι*. Let’s call it “passive” group 2.

In the following units you will find tables representing “active” groups A1, A2, B1, B2 and the two “passive” groups. Each group is presented as an inflectional model. This model can be applied to all verbs of each group. The verbal forms of each inflectional model are represented first as whole, then split into the stem and the ending. The endings alone come last. Each inflectional model is followed by a list of basic verbs for levels A1-A2.

Personal pronouns are optional (see Unit 2.2.1 on [page 26](#)) but still necessary. They will be introduced with group A1 but will not be mentioned in the following groups.

4.1.1 Group A1: *κάνω*

Verbs in group A1 have an unstressed ending. The final sound of the stem is a consonant.

SINGULAR			
1st (εγώ)	κάνω	κάνω	-ω
2nd (εσύ)	κάνεις	κάνεις	-εις
3rd (αυτός/αυτή/αυτό)	κάνει	κάνει	-ει
PLURAL			
1st (εμείς)	κάνουμε	κάνουμε	-ουμε
2nd (εσείς)	κάνετε	κάνετε	-ετε
3rd (αυτοί/αυτές/αυτά)	κάνουν(ε)	κάνουν(ε)	-ουν(ε)

Table 4.2: An Inflectional Model for Group A1.

The third person plural has alternative forms (*κάνουν/κάνουνε*). As absolute beginners, you are free to use any one of them.

Of all groups, A1 is by far the largest. The vast majority of basic Modern Greek verbs belong to group A1 (for more verbs, see the Appendix on [page 162](#)).

αγοράζω (“to buy”)	αλλάζω (“to change”)	ανοίγω (“to open”)
αρέσει (“to like”)	αρχίζω (“to start”)	αφήνω (“to leave”, “to let”)
βγαίνω (“to go out”)	βλέπω (“to see”, “to watch”)	βρίσκω (“to find”)
γράφω (“to write”)	γυρίζω (“to turn”, “to return”)	διαβάζω (“to read”, “to study”)
δίνω (“to give”)	δουλεύω (“to work”)	έχω (“to have”)
θέλω (“to want”)	κάνω (“to do”)	κλείνω (“to close”)
κοιτάζω (“to look”, “to stare”)	μαγειρεύω (“to cook”)	μαθαίνω (“to learn”)
μένω (“to live”, “to stay”)	μπαίνω (“to enter”, “to go in”)	νομίζω (“to think”)
ξέρω (“to know”)	παίρνω (“to take”, “to get”)	πίνω (“to drink”)
πρέπει (“must”, “have to”)	στέλνω (“to send”)	τελειώνω (“to end”, “to finish”)
υπάρχει (“there is”)	φέρνω (“to bring”, “to fetch”)	φεύγω (“to leave”)
φτάνω (“to arrive”)	φτιάχνω (“to make”, “to fix”)	χάνω (“to loose”, “to miss”)
χορεύω (“to dance”)	ψάχνω (“to look for”)	ψωνίζω (“to shop”)

Table 4.3: Basic Verbs of Group A1.

Three of the above verbs are entered in the third person singular instead of the first person singular. *Πρέπει* is an impersonal verb (to be examined in Chapter 9). *Αρέσει* and *υπάρχει* come most of the times as third-person verbs because of their syntax in Modern Greek.

4.1.2 Group A2: *τρώω*

Verbs in group A2 have an unstressed ending. The final sound of the stem is a vowel.

SINGULAR			
1st	τρώω	τρώω	-ω
2nd	τρώς	τρώς	-ς
3rd	τρώει	τρώει	-ει

Table 4.4: An Inflectional Model for Group A2.

PLURAL			
1st	τρώμε	τρώμε	-με
2nd	τρώτε	τρώτε	-τε
3rd	τρώνε	τρώνε	-νε

Table 4.4: *An Inflectional Model for Group A2.*

Group A2 comprises only few verbs, but all of them are basic for communication:

ακούω (“to hear”, “to listen”) καίω (“to burn”) κλαίω (“to cry”)
λέω (“to say”, “to tell”) πάω (“to go”) τρώω (“to eat”)
φταίω (“to be responsible for something negative”, “to be blamed for something”)

Table 4.5: *Basic Verbs of Group A2.*

The verb πάω has an alternative form (πηγαίνω), which belongs to group A1.

4.1.3 Group B1: μιλάω/-ώ

Verbs in group B1 have a stressed ending. The first series of their endings include -ά-.

SINGULAR			
1st	μιλάω/μιλώ	μιλάω/μιλώ	-άω/-ώ
2nd	μιλάς	μιλάς	-άς
3rd	μιλάει/μιλά	μιλάει/μιλά	-άει/-ά
PLURAL			
1st	μιλάμε/μιλούμε	μιλάμε/μιλούμε	-άμε/-ούμε
2nd	μιλάτε	μιλάτε	-άτε
3rd	μιλάνε/μιλούν	μιλάνε/μιλούν	-άνε/-ούν

Table 4.6: *An Inflectional Model for Group B1.*

Group B1 is the second biggest group after A1, comprising lots of basic verbs:

αγαπάω/-ώ (“to love”) απαντάω/-ώ (“to answer”, “to reply”)
γελάω/-ώ (“to laugh”) διψάω/-ώ (“to be thirsty”)
ζητάω/-ώ (“to ask [as in requests]”) κρατάω/-ώ (“to hold”, “to last”)
μετράω/-ώ (“to count”, “to measure”) μιλάω/-ώ (“to speak”, “to talk”)

Table 4.7: *Basic Verbs of Group B1.*

ξυπνάω/-ώ (“to wake up”)	πεινάω/-ώ (“to be hungry”)
περνάω/-ώ (“to pass”, to cross”)	περπατάω/-ώ (“to walk”)
προτιμάω/-ώ (“to prefer”)	ρωτάω/-ώ (“to ask [as in questions]”)
σταματάω/-ώ (“to stop”)	φοράω/-ώ (“to wear”)

Table 4.7: Basic Verbs of Group B1.

Verbs like *μιλάω* are present in a great variety of alternative forms. These forms have almost equal status in speech. Why “almost equal”? Because the lengthy forms (*μιλάω*, *μιλάει* etc.) represent a more colloquial, everyday style, and the short forms (*μιλώ*, *μιλά* etc.) a slightly more formal and literary style. In principle you are free to use any one of the two. But as absolute beginners you are advised to focus on the lengthy forms, so as not to confuse verbs in group B1 with verbs in group B2 (for example the short form *μιλώ* looks exactly like *μπορώ*).

Considering that groups A2 and B1 share roughly the same inflectional pattern, one might wonder why we need to posit two separate groups. The answer is this: Though these verbs look very much alike, they behave differently in several respects. Verbs like *μιλάω* may also have a contracted form (see the above table), while verbs like *τρώω* cannot (this is why grammars split the verbs like *μιλάω* and *τρώω*). Verbs like *μιλάω* are regular verbs in the past and the future, while verbs like *τρώω* are not. These are the main reasons why we should maintain a distinction among these groups.

4.1.4 Group B2: *μπορώ*

Verbs in group B2 have a stressed ending. Their endings do not include -ά-.

SINGULAR			
1st	μπορώ	μπορώ	-ώ
2nd	μπορείς	μπορείς	-είς
3rd	μπορεί	μπορεί	-εί
PLURAL			
1st	μπορούμε	μπορούμε	-ούμε
2nd	μπορείτε	μπορείτε	-είτε
3rd	μπορούν(ε)	μπορούν(ε)	-ούν(ε)

Table 4.8: An Inflectional Model for Group B2.

Among the basic verbs of this group we can list the following:

ζω (“to live”, “to be alive”)	μπορώ (“can”)	οδηγώ (“drive”)
προσπαθώ (“to try”)	τηλεφωνώ (“to call”)	χρησιμοποιώ (“to use”)

Table 4.9: *Basic Verbs of Group B2.*

4.1.5 “Passive” Group 1: *έρχομαι*

Verbs of this group include *-ο-* as part of their ending.

SINGULAR			
1st	έρχομαι	έρχομαι	-ομαι
2nd	έρχεσαι	έρχεσαι	-εσαι
3rd	έρχεται	έρχεται	-εται
PLURAL			
1st	ερχόμαστε	ερχόμαστε	-όμαστε
2nd	ερχόσαστε/έρχεστε	ερχόσαστε/έρχεστε	-όσαστε/-εστε
3rd	έρχονται	έρχονται	-ονται

Table 4.10: *An Inflectional Model for “Passive” Group 1.*

Some basic verbs of this group are the following:

γίνομαι (“to become”)	έρχομαι (“to come”)	κάθομαι (“to sit”)
πλένομαι (“to wash myself”)	σκέφτομαι (“to think”)	

Table 4.11: *Basic Verbs of “Passive” Group 1.*

Though the number of “passive” verbs at Levels A1-A2 may seem limited, in fact they represent an enormous group. Some of them stand as the “reflexive” counterpart of “active” verbs of group A1:

(I)	πλένω	πλένομαι
	“wash something”	“wash myself”

As absolute beginners, you are free to use anyone of the alternative types of the second person plural. The same holds for every “passive” verb.

4.1.6 “Passive” Group 2: *θυμάμαι*

Verbs of this group include -ά- as part of their ending.

SINGULAR			
1st	θυμάμαι	θυμάμαι	-άμαι
2nd	θυμάσαι	θυμάσαι	-άσαι
3rd	θυμάται	θυμάται	-άται
PLURAL			
1st	θυμόμαστε	θυμόμαστε	-όμαστε
2nd	θυμόσαστε/θυμάστε	θυμόσαστε/θυμάστε	-όσαστε/-άστε
3rd	θυμούνται	θυμούνται	-ούνται

Table 4.12: An Inflectional Model for “Passive” Group 2.

The group comprises only four verbs, namely:

θυμάμαι (“to remember”) κοιμάμαι (“to sleep”)
 λυπάμαι (“to feel sorry”, “to be sorry”) φοβάμαι (“to be afraid”, “to fear”)

Table 4.13: Verbs of “Passive” Group 2.

4.1.7 Where is the Verb “to be”?

The verb “to be” stands alone here, because it can be nowhere else. In principle *είμαι* is a “passive” verb, but its endings look like no “passive” group here (there is no -ο- or -ά- in the ending) or elsewhere. In other words, *είμαι* is a typical irregular verb. So you will have to memorize the following table only for the sake of *είμαι*. And if you are wondering why *είμαι* has to be irregular after all, note that the verb “to be” happens to be irregular across several languages (English included).

SINGULAR	
1st	είμαι
2nd	είσαι
3rd	είναι
PLURAL	
1st	είμαστε
2nd	είσαστε/είστε
3rd	είναι

Table 4.14: The Present Tense of the Verb *είμαι* (“to be”).

4.1.8 Modern Greek Verbs in Two Steps

To the eyes of the absolute beginner, Units 4.1.1-4.1.7 must look like a nightmare. “How do I know where a specific verb belongs?” is the obvious question. Well, there are simple steps for it. Let’s see the following sentence:

- (10) Ο Πέτρος **μαθαίνει** ισπανικά.
“Peter **is learning** Spanish.”

- In order to find which category the verb *μαθαίνει* belongs to, go to the first person singular of the present. This is not hard. Verbs are entered like this in dictionaries. If you are in class, the teacher will give you the first person singular as well. In our case the first person singular of the verb is *μαθαίνω*. If you are a mastermind of grammar, perhaps you are able by now to track similarities with a specific model and go to the first person.
- Let’s now put *μαθαίνω* under the microscope. Check the ending first. *Μαθαίνω* is clearly an “active” verb. Now check the stem. The stem is stressed, so you go to group A. Check the stem again. The final sound is a consonant, so you go to group A1. Now you are ready to apply the inflectional model of A1 (Table 4.2 on [page 54](#)) to *μαθαίνω* and live happily ever after.

4.2 The Use of the Present

The use of the Modern Greek present is roughly equivalent to the use of the English simple and continuous presents together. Basically the Modern Greek present is used to describe:

- Actions that happen at the present (keep I mind that the term “present” should be understood as the moment of speaking):

- (11) **Φεύγω** τώρα.
“I **am leaving** now.”

- Actions that repeat themselves in a pattern that includes the present. In this respect the Modern Greek present is used to describe everyday routines, scheduled events or even general truths.

- (12a) Ο Πέτρος πάντα **ξυπνάει** στις οχτώ το πρωί.
“Peter always **wakes up** at eight a.m.”

- (12b) Το τρένο **φεύγει** στις οχτώ.”
“The train **leaves** at eight o’clock.”

(12c) Η Γη **γυρνάει** γύρω από τον Ήλιο.

“The Earth **goes around** the Sun.”

- Actions that started in the past, but continue in the present (notice that in this context the Modern Greek present equals the English present perfect continuous).

(13) **Δουλεύω** από το πρωί.

“I **have been working** since morning.”

Accordingly, the present combines with three major groups of adverbials:

- Adverbs related to the present:

τόρα (“now”)	σήμερα (“today”)
απόψε (“tonight”)	φέτος (“this year”)

Table 4.15: *Adverbs Related to the Present Tense.*

- Adverbs of frequency (they are provided below on a frequency scale):

πάντα	“always”
συνήθως	“usually”
συχνά	“often”
μερικές φορές/ πότε πότε	“some times”
σπάνια	“rarely”
(δεν) ___ ποτέ	“(not) ever” (=“never”)

Table 4.16: *Adverbs of Frequency.*

Adverbs of frequency represent another instance of free word order in Modern Greek: Unlike English, these adverbs may hold several positions within the sentence:

(IIa) **Συνήθως** πίνω καφέ.

(IIb) Πίνω **συνήθως** καφέ.

(IIc) Πίνω καφέ **συνήθως**.

All of the above sentences mean “I **usually** have coffee”.

- Single (non-prepositional) accusative (see Unit 3.2.5 on [page 42](#)). The accusative may also be modified by the word *κάθε* to express frequency or by other words related to the present:

(14a) Δουλεύω **την Τρίτη**.

“I work **on Tuesday**.”

(14b) Δουλεύω **κάθε Τρίτη**.

“I work **every Tuesday**.”

(14c) Δουλεύω **αυτή την Τρίτη**.

“I am working **this Tuesday**.”

Apart from describing present actions, the Modern Greek present may also refer to actions that belong to the future (usually the immediate future):

(III) **Πάω** στην Ιταλία την άλλη Τρίτη.

“**I’m going** to Italy next Tuesday.”

Going to Italy seems to be a very strong possibility, a fact that relates the use of the present here to modality (see Unit 2.2.3 on [page 30](#)).

The same holds for the following sentence:

(IV) A: Ποιος θα πάει για καφέ;

B: **Πάω** εγώ.

“Who will go to get some coffee?”

“I am willing / I am ready / I can go [to get some coffee].”

Πάω in this context expresses ability, which again belongs to the area of modality.

A User-Friendly Tense

I kept the best part for the end: The Modern Greek present needs no auxiliaries and relevant syntactic changes in order to form its interrogative or negative version:

(Va) **Θέλει** παγωτό.

“She/He **wants** ice cream.”

(Vb) **Θέλει** παγωτό;

“**Does** she/he **want** ice cream?”

(Vc) **Δεν θέλει** παγωτό.

“She/He **doesn’t want** ice cream.”

In Modern Greek, in order to ask a yes-no question (sentence Vb) all you have to do is change your intonation (see Unit 1.7.2 on [page 16](#)). In order to refuse or deny (sentence Vc) you just add the negative particle *δεν* before the verb. In both cases you skip all formal changes involved in languages like English. The Modern Greek present then is an “auxiliary-free” tense and this is true about the Modern Greek past and the future (you will be reminded later about this).

- If you want to ask a question starting with an interrogative word, you simply put this word first and follow the intonation pattern for questions:

(VI) **Τι** θέλει;

“**What** does she/he want?”

Notice, though, that when the sentence includes an explicit subject, it is usually posited after the verb:

(VII) Τι θέλει **η Ελένη**;

“What does **Helen** want?”

Νιάου!

Cats sound much the same everywhere, but people across cultures seem to hear them differently. In human terms, Modern Greek cats say *νιάου!* Dogs say *γαβ!* Hens say *κο, κο, κο!* while roosters say *κικιρίκου!* Sheep and goats say *μπεεε!* Cows say *μουουουου!* Birds say *τσίου, τσίου!* And fish say nothing at all.

If you wish to call a cat, what you should do is *ψι, ψι, ψι, ψι*. If you wish to call a dog, what you should do is a sound like a kiss. If you want to send them away (but I hope you don't) what you should do is *ζουτ!*

There are several verbs to describe animal voices, among them *νιαουρίζω* for cats, *γαβγίζω* for dogs, *κακαρίζω* for hens, *μουγκανίζω* for cows, *τιτιβίζω* for birds (and at least twenty more in dictionaries). Which group are they? Yes, you guessed right. It's the almighty group A1.

SUMMARY

Chapter 4 introduces the Modern Greek present tense. Considering that there is not a single inflectional model for verbs in the present tense, the greatest part of the chapter is dedicated to form, in order to offer a comprehensive categorization frame for basic Modern Greek verbs. The use of the present tense is exemplified by typical adverbials related to its use.

KEY WORDS

present tense, stem/ending, inflectional model, inflectional group

EXERCISES**1. What is Peter doing? Match the sentences with the sounds.**

1. Πίνει χυμό πορτοκάλι.
2. Ακούει μουσική.
3. Βλέπει τηλεόραση.
4. Κάνει μπάνιο.
5. Φτιάχνει ομελέτα.
6. Μιλάει με την Κατερίνα.
7. Οδηγεί.
8. Κοιμάται.

a.
b.
c.
d.
e.
f.
g.
h.

2. Choose the correct verb.

1. Ο Πέτρος _____ τζιν παντελόνι.

- a. φοράει b. μιλάει c. αγαπάει

2. Εμείς συνήθως _____ καφέ.

- a. τρώμε b. πάμε c. πίνουμε

3. Από πού _____ η Κατερίνα;

- a. είναι b. είμαι c. είσαι

4. Η Ελένη _____ τα αεροπλάνα.

- a. κοιμάται b. λυπάται c. φοβάται

5. Ο Πέτρος κι εγώ _____ συχνά στο τηλέφωνο.

- a. φοράμε b. λέμε c. μιλάμε

6. Τα παιδιά τώρα _____ μπάσκετ.

- a. περνάνε b. παίζουν c. πίνουν

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 4 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 5 | Before the Noun: Adjectives and More

Nouns in use do not usually appear by themselves to form sentences. Let's start with the following example:

- (1) **Ο σκύλος** κυνηγάει **την γάτα**.
“**The dog** is after **the cat**.”

The nouns *σκύλος* and *γάτα* do not stand alone. Both are combined with a form of the definite article (see Unit 5.2 on [page 68](#)), as parts of a larger unit. Let's now see the following sentence:

- (2) **Ο μαύρος σκύλος** κυνηγάει **την άσπρη γάτα**.
“**The black dog** is after **the white cat**.”

What we have now are two even larger units. They consist of a noun in tandem with the definite article and an adjective. Here are two different units:

- (3) **Ένας σκύλος** κυνηγάει **δύο γάτες**.
“**A dog** is after **two cats**.”

The first unit consists of a noun preceded by the indefinite article. The second unit consists of a noun preceded by a numeral.

What do these units have in common?

- The noun is an essential part of all such units. Other words, such as articles, adjectives or numerals, are not essential. To put it simply: You can remove an adjective and still have a meaningful unit. But if you remove the noun, you have nothing. In this sense the noun (either present or presumed) is the “head” of these units, and other words are considered to be “secondary”. They depend on this “head” noun to exist.
- These “secondary” words are in fact not secondary at all. They provide extra information about the noun, to make communication more effective. This sort of information may be abstract/non-descriptive (like in the case of articles) or concrete/descriptive (like in the case of adjectives).
- Inside these units, words appear in a certain order. Perhaps you have already noticed that the noun keeps the final position and other words precede it.

In this chapter I am going to deal with this kind of noun-dependent words that precede the

noun, providing extra information about it. We shall then focus on articles, numerals and adjectives. Pronouns represent a peculiar case of noun dependency, therefore they will be examined on their own, in Chapter 6.

Cats and Dogs

The examples of the introduction were taken from the animal kingdom, so let's stay here for a while. Cats and dogs, perhaps the most common pets on the planet, are usually perceived as opposites (you must have heard that if you like cats, then you probably don't like dogs, etc. etc.). Gender draws an interesting distinction among them. The term for male dogs (*ο σκύλος*) may also stand for the species "dog" regardless of sex, while the term for female cats (*η γάτα*) stands for the species "cat".

5.1 The Grammar of Noun-Dependent Words

Articles, adjectives and other noun-dependent words have a lot in common:

- They are basically inflected words. For example, the Modern Greek adjective meaning "expensive" can be found in different forms:

(4) ακριβός / ακριβή / ακριβό

I believe it is easy to see the similarity of adjectives to verbs and nouns: The left part is invariable and bears lexical information (the adjective means "expensive"). The right part is variable and bears grammatical information. What sort of grammatical information? Considering that these words are part of a noun phrase (this is the technical term for phrases with a noun as their "head") and provide extra information about the "head" noun, this sort of information is again about gender, number and case. Checking the adjective *ακριβός* in the previous example I can tell it's a masculine and in the singular number, and that its case is the nominative.

Noun-dependent words are generally entered in dictionaries according to the masculine in the nominative singular. So "expensive" is represented as *ακριβός*, usually followed by the feminine and the neuter endings (For a real example press here http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/triantafyllides/search.html?lq).

- The use of these forms again is not random. Noun-dependent words must follow the grammatical "profile" of the "head" noun. In other words, they must have the same number, gender, and case as the noun they depend on (in grammar terminology this is called agreement). Let's take an example from a field you are familiar with: There is a specific definite

article for each gender category (5a) and there are more if you combine number (5b) and case (5c):

(5a) ο αναπτήρας, η ομπρέλα, το βιβλίο

(5b) η ομπρέλα, οι ομπρέλες

(5c) η ομπρέλα, την ομπρέλα

Having these in mind, let's now take a closer look at each one of these categories.

5.2 The Definite and the Indefinite Articles

After chapters 2 and 3, I believe that the forms of the definite article must be quite familiar to you. If they are not, here is a table to help:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	ο	η	το
ACC.	τον	την	το
PLURAL			
NOM.	οι	οι	τα
ACC.	τους	τις	τα

Table 5.1: *The Modern Greek Definite Article (Nominative and Accusative).*

In Modern Greek the indefinite article “a(n)” (ένας) is the same as the numeral “one” (ένα), a coincidence present in many languages (German, French, Spanish among them). What lies behind it, is simple reasoning: If I need a coffee, then it is one coffee I need, not two or three.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	ένας	μία / μια	ένα
ACC.	έναν	μία / μια	ένα

Table 5.2: *The Modern Greek Indefinite Article (Nominative and Accusative).*

The Modern Greek indefinite article has no plural forms (compare to Spanish and German, which do have one). When such forms are necessary, other indefinite words (like the pronoun κάποιος, “someone”) do the job instead.

The two articles (definite and indefinite) provide abstract information that radically affects the reading of the “head” noun. Let’s start with the following sentences:

(6a) **Οι σκύλοι** έχουν μεγάλα δόντια.

“(–) **Dogs** have big teeth.”

(6b) **Ο σκύλος** είναι σαρκοφάγο ζώο.

“**The dog** is a carnivorous animal.” (=Dogs are carnivorous animals.)

In these sentences the “head” noun refers to *all* dogs. But let’s see the following sentence:

(7) **Ο σκύλος** γαβγίζει στην πόρτα.

“**The dog** is barking at the door.”

Now the “head” noun does not refer to all dogs, but to a very specific dog. *This* dog may be specific for several reasons. Perhaps it is the only dog around. Perhaps it is the dog of the house. Perhaps it was just a dog that became part of the picture because it had previously been mentioned.

I believe it is clear from examples 6 and 7 that the definite article affects the scope of reference of the “head” noun. In this sense, nouns preceded by the definite article are related either to generic (“all”) or specific (“this”) reference.

The indefinite article moves along similar lines. Let’s see the following sentences:

(8a) **Ένας σκύλος** τρέχει πάνω από 20 χιλιόμετρα την ώρα.

“**A dog** can run faster than 20 kms /hour.” (=Dogs can run faster than 20 kms/hour.)

(8b) **Ένας σκύλος** γαβγίζει στην πόρτα.

“**A dog** is barking at the door.”

Sentence 8a represents another version of generic reference. *Any* dog can run faster than 20 kms per hour. Sentence 8b represents another version of specific reference (now it is *some* unknown dog, not a specific dog, which is barking at the door).

Both articles then may be related to generic and specific reference, but in a different way: *All* is not exactly *any*, as *this* is not exactly *some*. We could then say that the definite article imposes a definite reading of the “head” noun, either generic or specific. The indefinite article in its turn imposes an indefinite reading of the “head” noun, either generic or specific.

ARTICLE	REFERENCE	MEANING
DEFINITE	DEFINITE-GENERIC	“all”
	DEFINITE-SPECIFIC	“this”
INDEFINITE	INDEFINITE-GENERIC	“any”
	INDEFINITE-SPECIFIC	“some”

Table 5.3: *The Use of the Definite and the Indefinite Articles.*

These distinctions are important as general guidelines to help you deal with the definite and the indefinite articles in Modern Greek. It will be hard, especially for people whose mother tongue has no such articles. What you should have in mind is this:

- The definite article is strongly related to generic definiteness. It is then obligatory in all sorts of generic statements (compare to English):

(9a) Μου αρέσει **ο καφές**.
“I like **(-) coffee**.”

(9b) **Οι γάτες** μισούν **το νερό**.
“**(-) Cats** hate **(-) water**.”

The definite article is strongly related to specific definiteness, too. This fact explains why it is obligatory with proper nouns (par excellence specific nouns, referring to unique entities). Compare again to English:

(10a) **ο Πέτρος, η Μαρία**
“**(-) Peter**”, “**(-) Mary**”

(10b) **η Γαλλία, η Αθήνα, τα Χριστούγεννα**
“**(-) France**”, “**(-) Athens**”, “**(-) Christmas**”

This fact also explains why the definite article is obligatory with words specifying a noun, like demonstrative or possessive pronouns (see Units 6.2 on [page 85](#) and 10.2.3 on [page 144](#)):

(11a) **Αυτό το βιβλίο** είναι ακριβό.
“**This (-) book** is expensive.”

(11b) Ψάχνω **το βιβλίο μου**.
“I am looking for **(-) my book**.”

- The indefinite article is less strongly related to indefiniteness, either generic or specific. Syntax seems to play an important role here. If the definite article depends on a noun in the subject position, it is obligatory in its generic use. In its specific use, though, it may be replaced by other indefinite words, like *κάποιος*.

(12a) **Ένα** παιδί πρέπει να ακούει τους γονείς του (GENERIC)
 “**A** child should listen to its parents.”
 (=Children should listen to their parents.)

(12b) **Ένας** φίλος / **Κάποιος** φίλος λέει ότι... (SPECIFIC)
 “**A** friend / **Some** friend says that...”

Let’s see what happens when the indefinite article depends on a noun in the object position.

(13a) Ψάχνω **μια** / **κάποια** δουλειά για το πρωί. (SPECIFIC)
 “I am looking for **a** morning **job**.”

(13b) Ψάχνω **μια** δουλειά. (GENERIC)
 “I am looking for **a** **job**.”

Sentence 13a is specific. If I am looking for a morning job, *some* job will be OK for me. Sentence 13b on the contrary is generic. If I am an unemployed person, then *any* job will do. But let’s look at the following sentence:

(14) Ψάχνω **(-) δουλειά**.

Now the indefinite article is dropped to form a periphrasis (a Greek word again), whose meaning is slightly different. This sentence focuses on the point that I am looking for a job, and *not* for an apartment or a dog. What is clear now is that I am a “job-seeker”, an unemployed person. This sort of connotation is the basis for hundreds of everyday expressions like the following:

(15a) Πίνω **(-) καφέ** το πρωί.
 “I have **a/(-) coffee** in the morning.”

(15b) Διαβάζω **(-) εφημερίδα**.
 “I read **the paper**.”

(15c) Συνήθως φοράω **(-) παντελόνι** και **(-) μπλουζάκι**.
 “I usually wear **(-) trousers** and **a t-shirt**.”

- (15d) Έχω (-) **μεγάλη** μύτη.
 “I’ve got **a big nose**.”

The point in the above sentences is that I am a “coffee-lover” (as in 15a), a “paper-reader” (as in 15b), I am a person wearing trousers and t-shirts (as in 15c) or that my nose is big (as in 15d). This fact brings such sentences close to predicate structures such as the following, where (once again) the indefinite article is dropped:

- (16a) Ο Πέτρος είναι (-) **γιατρός**.
 “Peter is **a doctor**.”
- (16b) Ο Μαξ είναι (-) **σκύλος**, όχι (-) **γάτα**.
 “Max is **a dog**, not **a cat**.”

Friends and Partners

Modern Greek people, especially teenagers, refer to their partner using the noun *φίλος/φίλη* (“male friend” / “female friend”) with the definite article. If they refer to a simple friend of theirs, they use the same noun, but this time with the indefinite article:

- (Ia) Μένω με **τον** φίλο μου.
 “I live with my boyfriend.”
- (Ib) Μένω με **έναν** φίλο μου.
 “I live with a friend of mine.”

This is a very clear instance of the difference between the definite and the indefinite article. A boyfriend in this respect seems to be a very specific (or should I say special?) friend, a unique friend. On the contrary, a friend is just a friend among other friends.

The difference is far from clear-cut, and frankly there are instances where it is hard (even for natives) to tell if someone refers to her/his partner or to a friend of hers/his. In order to avoid misunderstandings, try not to use this term to refer to your partner, and choose another way (I am sure your teenage Greek friends will be far greater help than me in this field).

5.3 Numerals and More

The Modern Greek numeral system is purely decimal, with bigger units preceding smaller ones. The number 172, for example, is:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------|--------------------|------|
| (17) | 100 | 70 | 2 |
| | εκατόν | (-) εβδομήντα | δύο |
| | “one hundred | and seventy | two” |

The numeral system looks very much like the English one, so there are few things to be said here. Just make sure you know the basics from 1 to 100 (press here for numbers 1-100: <http://www.foundalis.com/lan/grknum.htm>).

The vast majority of numerals are not inflected, so they remain the same regardless of the actual gender or case of the “head” noun:

(18a) **δύο** χάρτες (MASCULINE)
“two maps”

(18b) **δύο** καρέκλες (FEMININE)
“two chairs”

(18c) **δύο** βιβλία (NEUTER)
“two books”

But rules always have an exception, and here we have three: Numerals 1, 3, and 4 are inflected words. Numeral 1 is identical to the indefinite article, so go to Table 5.2 on page 68 to see how it goes. Numerals 3 and 4 have the same form for masculine and feminine and a different one for neuter (and, of course, they have only plural).

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
NOM.	τρεις	τρεις	τρία
ACC.	τρεις	τρεις	τρία

Table 5.4: *The Numeral τρεις/τρία (Nominative and Accusative).*

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
NOM.	τέσσερις	τέσσερις	τέσσερα
ACC.	τέσσερις	τέσσερις	τέσσερα

Table 5.5: *The Numeral τέσσερις/τέσσερα (Nominative and Accusative).*

What Time Is It?

The basic question about clock time in Modern Greek is this:

- (II) Τι ώρα είναι;
“What time is it?”

Telling the time in Modern Greek involves the following routines: Hours come first, minutes come second. The Modern Greek words for “past” and “to” are *και* and *παρά* respectively. “Quarter” is *τέταρτο* and “half” is *μισή*. Having these in mind, let’s answer the question (note that the verb and the expression “o’clock” are usually omitted):

(IIIa) 05.00 Είναι πέντε η ώρα. / Είναι πέντε. / Πέντε.

(IIIb) 05.10 Είναι πέντε και δέκα. / Πέντε και δέκα.

(IIIc) 05.15 Πέντε και τέταρτο.

(IIId) 05.30 Πέντε και μισή.

(IIIe) 05.45 Έξι παρά τέταρτο.

Hours in Modern Greek are feminine (*η ώρα*). This is why we use *μία*, *τρεις* and *τέσσερις* instead of *ένα*, *τρία* and *τέσσερα*.

(IVa) 13.05 **Μία** και πέντε.

(IVb) 15.00 **Τρεις**.

(IVc) 16.20 **Τέσσερις** και δέκα.

The abbreviations *a.m./p.m.* are *π.μ./μ.μ.* respectively (yes, the Modern Greek *π.μ.* corresponds to the English *a.m.*). They are used in writing but not in speaking. Instead, people use periods of the day (such as *morning* or *evening*) to specify time:

(Va) 05.00 Πέντε **το πρωί**.

(Vb) 17.00 Πέντε **το απόγευμα**.

Numerals express precise quantity. What about imprecise quantity? As in other languages, here there are some special words (called general quantifiers, or simply quantifiers) to do the job. For levels A1-A2 you need to know only two basic quantifiers, and here they are:

- Large quantity is expressed by *πολύς*, which is equal to *much*, *a lot of*, *many*.
- Small quantity is expressed by *λίγος*, which equals to *(a) few*, *(a) little*.

For absolute beginners like you, this is one of the happiest moments of the Modern Greek language. So, forget about countable or uncountable nouns, forget about sentence types and enjoy quantification!

(19a) Δεν έχω **πολλά** λεφτά.
“I don’t have **much** money.”

(19b) Έχω **πολλούς** καλούς φίλους.
“I have **many** good friends.”

(19c) Έχω **πολλούς** φίλους.
“I have **a lot** of friends.”

In order to make this happy moment even happier, I must tell you that relevant adverbs derive directly from these quantifiers:

(VIa) Είναι **πολύ** έξυπνος.
“She/He is **very** clever.”

(VIb) Σε αγαπάω πάρα **πολύ**.
“I love you very **much**.”

(VIc) Τρώω **πολύ**.
“I eat **a lot**.”

The only problem in this field is form. The quantifier *λίγος* is inflected like an ordinary adjective (see Table 5.7 on [page 76](#)), but the quantifier *πολύς* is irregular. Here is a table to help:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	πολύς	πολλή	πολύ
ACC.	πολύ	πολλή	πολύ
PLURAL			
NOM.	πολλοί	πολλές	πολλά
ACC.	πολλούς	πολλές	πολλά

Table 5.6: The Quantifier *πολύς/πολλή/πολύ* (Nominative and Accusative).

A few words now about syntax: Numerals and quantifiers come right after the definite article and generally precede ordinary adjectives. In this respect Modern Greek does not differ radically from English:

(20a) οι **δύο** ακριβοί χάρτες
“the **two** expensive maps”

- (20b) **πολλοί ακριβοί** χάρτες
 “many expensive maps”

5.4 Adjectives

Basic Modern Greek adjectives follow two main inflectional models. The only difference between them is the ending of the feminine (-α vs. -η). I will not engage in a detailed explanation and leave it for levels B1-B2; I will give you some practical guidance instead: Focus on the masculine of the adjectives *ακριβός* (“expensive”) and *νέος* (“young”). If the final sound of the stem is a consonant (*ακριβός*), the feminine ends in -η (see Table 5.7). If the final sound is a vowel (*νέος*), the feminine ends in -α (see Table 5.8).

Basic Modern Greek adjectives do not have their own morphology. Their inflection follows major categories of Modern Greek nouns. The adjectives *ακριβός* and *νέος* of our example are exactly like masculine nouns in -ος (*δρόμος*). *Ακριβή* and *νέα* are identical to feminine nouns in -η or -α (*ζώνη*, *ώρα*). Finally, *ακριβό* and *νέο* are based on neuter nouns in -ο (*βιβλίο*). Therefore, you don’t really have to learn anything new here. All you have to do is refresh your knowledge of nouns (see Tables 3.1 on [page 36](#) and 3.4 on [page 44](#)) and/or check the following tables:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	ακριβός	ακριβή	ακριβό
ACC.	ακριβό	ακριβή	ακριβό
PLURAL			
NOM.	ακριβοί	ακριβές	ακριβά
ACC.	ακριβούς	ακριβές	ακριβά

Table 5.7: *The Nominative and the Accusative for Adjectives Ending in -ος/-η/-ο.*

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	νέος	νέα	νέο
ACC.	νέο	νέα	νέο
PLURAL			
NOM.	νέοι	νέες	νέα
ACC.	νέους	νέες	νέα

Table 5.8: *The Nominative and the Accusative for Adjectives Ending in -ος/-α/-ο.*

What is crucial about adjectives is not form but use. Like other noun-dependent words adjectives must follow the grammatical “profile” of the “head” noun. In grammar terminology, they must “agree” with the “head” noun in gender (as in 21a), number (as in 21b) and case (as in 21c):

(21a) ο ακριβός χάρτης / η ακριβή ζώνη / το ακριβό βιβλίο

(21b) ο ακριβός χάρτης / οι ακριβοί χάρτες

(21c) ο ακριβός χάρτης / τον ακριβό χάρτη

Like many other rules, the rule of agreement looks very nice and clear in theory, but not that nice and clear in practice. As absolute beginners, you will most probably make several mistakes before you can really master this rule. Don’t get disappointed, it has happened to everyone before you.

- Adjectives must follow the noun’s number, gender and case, not their actual endings.

(VIIa) ακριβός φακός

“expensive torch”

(VIIb) ακριβός αναπτήρας

“expensive lighter”

(VIIc) ακριβός χάρτης

“expensive map”

- Adjectives provide information about nouns not only directly, but also indirectly via a verb (usually *είμαι*, “to be”), again following the rule of agreement. This is another instance of predication (see Unit 3.2.2 on [page 39](#)).

(VIII) Ο χάρτης είναι ακριβός.

“The map is expensive.”

Now, a few words about the position of adjectives. Generally, an adjective must immediately precede the noun, which means that it must be closer to it than other words like articles, pronouns (see Chapter 6 on [page 82](#)) or numerals:

(22a) Θέλω τον ακριβό χάρτη.

“I want the expensive map.”

(22b) Θέλω έναν ακριβό χάρτη.

“I want an expensive map.”

(22c) Θέλω αυτόν τον ακριβό χάρτη.

“I want **this expensive** map.”

(22d) Θέλω δύο ακριβούς χάρτες.

“I want **two expensive** maps.”

What if there are more than one adjectives? If you compare to your own language or English, I believe you’ll find more similarities than dissimilarities:

(23a) 😊 Θέλω ένα ωραίο ζεστό τσάι.

“I want a **nice hot** tea.”

(23b) 😊 Ξέρω ένα καινούριο γαλλικό εστιατόριο.

“I know a **new French** restaurant.”

In Modern Greek sentences 23a and 23b sound much better than the following:

(24a) 😞 Θέλω ένα ζεστό ωραίο τσάι.

“I want a **hot nice** tea.”

(24b) 😞 Ξέρω ένα γαλλικό καινούριο εστιατόριο.

“I know a **French new** restaurant.”

Check the following sentence:

(IX) Δεν μου αρέσει το κόκκινο αυτοκίνητο. Προτιμώ το μαύρο (-).

“I don’t like the red car. I prefer **the black one**.”

In order to create such elliptical sentences in Modern Greek, you simply remove the noun (I mean you don’t need *one* to support the adjective).

Comparison

People often need to make comparisons. Someone may be taller or shorter than another person, cars may be faster or slower than other cars, prices may be higher or lower etc. This fact makes comparison one of the basic fields for absolute beginners. And here are the basics of comparison:

(X) Ο Πέτρος είναι **πιο** ψηλός **από** τον Κώστα.

“Peter is taller **than** Kostas.”

In order to form the comparative (“taller than”), all you need is the comparative adverb *πιο* (“more”) before the adjective and the preposition *από* (in this case “than”) after it. Keep in mind that as an adverb, *πιο* is not affected by agreement rules. Great news, right?

In order to form the superlative (“the tallest of”), all you have to do is add the definite article before the comparative *πιο* and some version of “all” after the preposition *από* (but this last part is not obligatory).

(XI) Ο Πέτρος είναι **ο πιο** ψηλός (**από όλους**).

“Peter is **the** tallest (**of all**).”

What about sameness? Here is a typical sentence:

(XII) Ο Πέτρος είναι **το ίδιο** ψηλός **με** τον Κώστα.

“Peter is **as** tall **as** Costas.”

Phone Numbers

Modern Greek people have a whim about phone numbers: Instead of spelling out each number separately, they usually join some of them in groups of two or three, following a metrical pattern. Thus a phone number like the following

(XIII) 6978124715

could be

(XIV) 6-9-78-124-7-15

or even

(XV) 6-97-8-12-47-15

These short poems are something you definitely must avoid if you want to get someone’s phone number correctly. You can stop her/him by saying something polite like *Ένα ένα, παρακαλώ, δεν μιλάω πολύ καλά ελληνικά ακόμα* (“One by one, please, I don’t speak Modern Greek fluently yet”).

SUMMARY

Chapter 5 deals with noun-dependent words (such as articles, adjectives or numerals) that precede the noun providing extra information about it. As with nouns and verbs, the introduction of the above categories is again structured on the axis form/use, with a focus on agreement, which shapes the form of these words in order to match the grammatical profile of the “head” noun.






KEY WORDS

noun phrase, “head” noun, noun-dependent words, agreement, article, definite/indefinite, generic/specific, numeral, quantifier, adjective, modify/modifier

EXERCISES

1. Let’s talk about colours:

- **Basic colours in Modern Greek (with the exception of “light blue”) come like ordinary adjectives.**

	μαύρος, μαύρη, μαύρο	“black”
	άσπρος, άσπρη, άσπρο	“white”
	κόκκινος, κόκκινη, κόκκινο	“red”
	πράσινος, πράσινη, πράσινο	“green”
	κίτρινος, κίτρινη, κίτρινο	“yellow”
	γαλάζιος, γαλάζια, γαλάζιο	“light blue”

- **Secondary colours (with the exception of “dark blue”) come basically in one form, therefore are not inflected.**

	ροζ	“pink”
	μοβ	“purple”
	λilά	“lilac”
	μπεζ	“beige”
	γκρι	“grey”
	μπλε	“dark blue”
	πορτοκαλί	“orange”
	καφέ	“brown”

Having these in mind, fill in the blanks with the appropriate word.

1. Τα λεμόνια είναι _____

a. κίτρινα

b. κόκκινα

c. ροζ

2. Οι ζέβρες είναι _____

a. άσπρες και μαύρες

b. άσπρες και κίτρινες

c. ροζ και μαύρες

3. Οι ελέφαντες είναι _____

a. πορτοκαλί

b. μπλε

c. γκρι

4. Οι ντομάτες είναι _____

a. άσπρες

b. γαλάζιες

c. κόκκινες

5. Η ασπιρίνη είναι _____

a. μοβ

b. πράσινη

c. άσπρη

6. Τα καρότα είναι _____

a. καφέ

b. πορτοκαλί

c. ροζ

2. Match the description of an animal with the appropriate animal.

1. Είναι άσπρο και μαύρο. Είναι από την Ασία.
2. Είναι άσπρη και μαύρη. Είναι από την Αφρική.
3. Είναι άσπρος και μαύρος.
4. Είναι ροζ. Ζει στο νερό.
5. Είναι ροζ. Τρώει πολύ!
6. Είναι κίτρινο.
7. Είναι κίτρινη και μαύρη.
8. Είναι πράσινος και ζει στο νερό.

a. Το γουρούνι.
b. Ο κροκόδειλος.
c. Το καναρίνι.
d. Η τίγρη.
e. Η ζέβρα.
f. Το φλαμίνγκο.
g. Ο πιγκουίνος.
h. Το πάντα.

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 5 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 6 | Instead of Nouns: Pronouns

Dictionaries and grammars are an absolute beginner's best friend. Sometimes, though, they are simply not enough. **I** will start with the following sentence:

- (1) Έχω έναν **αδερφό**, αλλά δεν **τον** βλέπω συχνά.
“I have a **brother**, but I don't see **him** often.”

In order to get the meaning of the word *αδερφό* you must use a dictionary and a grammar (see Unit 3.4 on [page 47](#)). You will find out there it is a form of the noun “brother”. In order to get the meaning of the word *τον*, you certainly need a grammar or a dictionary. You will find out there it means “him”. But this is not enough: In order to get the *actual* meaning of this word, you must look in the context. You will find out there that *τον* refers to the word *αδερφό*.

Words like *τον* or *him* are typical pronouns. They always need a point of reference outside them in order for one to get their actual meaning. This point of reference may be inside the text like in sentence 1, or outside it. The blue “**I**” in the second line of this page (no, it's not a misprint) and the black “**I**” inside sentence 1 refer to two different persons: The first one is me, the second one is this hypothetical person who produced a statement such as 1.

Pronouns are used instead of nouns, either because there are no nouns for some things (which noun can replace “I”?) or because nouns sometimes are too much. Imagine what life would be like if there were no pronouns to help. We would have to repeat the same noun again and again: “I have a **dog**. I love the **dog** very much. I take the **dog** out every day...”

Let's turn now to Modern Greek pronouns, and check the following examples:

- (2a) Έχω έναν **αδερφό**, αλλά δεν **τον** βλέπω συχνά.
“I have a **brother**, but I don't see **him** often.”
- (2b) Έχω μια **αδερφή**, αλλά δεν **την** βλέπω συχνά.
“I have a **sister**, but I don't see **her** often.”

Pronouns are noun-dependent words in the sense that they need a noun as a reference point in order to reveal their actual meaning. In this respect they behave like noun-dependent words. First, they have gender, number and case (*τον* and *την* in the example are masculine accusative singular and feminine accusative singular). Secondly, they must agree with the reference noun like ordinary adjectives (*τον* refers to a masculine noun; *την* refers to a feminine noun).

Modern Greek pronouns usually extend their role as noun-dependent words to become real

adjectives (compare to English, where there is significant difference between the pronominal and adjectival forms in examples like the following).

(3a) **Κάποιος** χτυπάει το κουδούνι.

“Someone is ringing the bell.”

(3b) **Κάποιος γείτονας** χτυπάει το κουδούνι.

“Some neighbour / A neighbour is ringing the bell.”

In the following units I will introduce basic groups of Modern Greek pronouns. Sometimes it is hard to follow the terminology, so I will make life easier with an English example in each title.

6.1 Personal Pronouns (*I, you*)

Personal pronouns are structured in the first, second and third person to form the following group:

	1st	2nd	3rd
SINGULAR			
NOM.	εγώ	εσύ	αυτός / αυτή / αυτό
ACC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • με • εμένα 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • σε • εσένα 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • τον / την / το • αυτόν / αυτήν / αυτό
PLURAL			
NOM.	εμείς	εσείς	αυτοί / αυτές / αυτά
ACC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • μας • εμάς 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • σας • εσάς 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • τους / τις / τα • αυτούς / αυτές / αυτά

Table 6.1: *The Personal Pronouns (Nominative and Accusative).*

- Unlike the third person, the first and second persons cannot be assigned a gender. In other words, *εγώ* or *εσύ* are gender-free pronouns.
- Some forms of the third person are taken from the demonstrative pronoun (see Unit 6.2 on [page 85](#)). In this respect, there is not a genuine *he/she/it* in Modern Greek, but rather *this one* (masculine, feminine or neuter).
- Check the third person and focus on the accusative forms *τον/την/το*, *τους/τις/τα*. Do they look familiar? The answer is yes. They are identical to the definite article in the accusative. It looks like someone has erased the noun (to avoid repetition) and kept the article to establish a connection with the reference point.
- Remember that the use of such pronouns in the subject position is optional (see Unit 2.2.1 on [page 26](#)).

Modern Greek personal pronouns have two forms for the accusative. One is short, while the other one is longer (compare *σε* to *εσένα*). The use of each pronoun is not random but depends on syntax:

(4a) **Σε** αγαπάω πολύ.

“I **love you** very much.”

(4b) Αυτό το δώρο είναι **για (ε)σένα**.

“This present is **for you**.”

I believe it is clear that the short form is used in the object position and the long form is used inside a prepositional phrase (but there is much more to be said at Levels B1-B2).

Sequences of vowels (either inside words or across word boundaries) are not always welcome in Modern Greek. This is why the word-initial (and unstressed) vowel of some personal pronouns is usually dropped after a word-final (and stressed) vowel (*από σένα*).

Unlike English (and very much like Spanish or French), Modern Greek personal pronouns in the accusative must be positioned right before the verb. But which part of the verb?

(5a) **Σε** θέλω.

“I want **you**.”

(5b) **Δεν σε** θέλω.

“I don’t want **you**.”

Pronouns are placed right before the “real” verb, this part of the verbal construction that bears grammatical information. The negation particle *δεν* does not have such grammar inside it, so the pronoun goes right before *θέλω*.

Note that the accusative of personal pronouns replaces basically definite expressions. Indefinite expressions cannot be replaced by personal pronouns:

(Ia) A: Θέλεις **τον καφέ σου**; B: Ναι, **τον** θέλω.

(Ib) A: Θέλεις **καφέ**; B: Ναι, **(-)** θέλω.

Likes and Dislikes

In Modern Greek, coffee is not something you may or may not like, but rather something that pleases (or doesn't please) you. Check the following sentences:

(IIa) Μου αρέ**σει** ο καφές.

“I like coffee.”

(IIb) Μου αρέ**σουν** οι μπανάνες.

“I like bananas.”

The subject of the verb is clearly coffee or bananas (this is why their case is nominative and this is why the verb turns from singular to plural).

The person who likes something is represented by this short word preceding the verb.

(IIIa) **Μου** αρέσει ο καφές.

“**I** like coffee.”

(IIIb) **Του / Της** αρέσει ο καφές.

“**He/She** likes coffee.”

These short words belong to another group of personal pronouns, about which you will learn more at levels B1-B2. For the moment you need to know these forms only to express likes and dislikes (a very basic need after all): *μου* (1st, sing.), *σου* (2nd, sing.), *του/της/του* (3rd, sing.), *μας* (1st, pl.), *σας* (2nd, pl.), *τους* (3rd, pl.).

And don't forget: The subject of *αρέσει* must be preceded by the definite article (see Unit 5.2 on [page 70](#)).

6.2 Demonstrative Pronouns (*this, that*)

Modern Greek has two demonstrative pronouns for short (“here”) and long (“there”) distance respectively: *αυτός* (“this”) and *εκείνος* (“that”). Both are formed like ordinary adjectives (but

notice the final -ν in *αυτόν/αυτήν*).

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	αυτός	αυτή	αυτό
ACC.	αυτόν	αυτή(ν)	αυτό
PLURAL			
NOM.	αυτοί	αυτές	αυτά
ACC.	αυτούς	αυτές	αυτά

Table 6.2: *The Demonstrative Pronoun αυτός (Nominative and Accusative).*

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	εκείνος	εκείνη	εκείνο
ACC.	εκείνο	εκείνη	εκείνο
PLURAL			
NOM.	εκείνοι	εκείνες	εκείνα
ACC.	εκείνους	εκείνες	εκείνα

Table 6.3: *The Demonstrative Pronoun εκείνος (Nominative and Accusative).*

The demonstrative *αυτός* (but also *εκείνος*) are basically used like personal pronouns of the third person, whenever necessary (remember that in subject position they are optional).

- (6) **Αυτός** θέλει παγωτό, **εκείνος** θέλει μπίρα.
 “**This one** wants ice cream, **that one** wants beer.”

Both pronouns can also be used like adjectives, with an obligatory definite article (see Unit 5.2 on [page 70](#)) and no considerable change in meaning:

- (7a) Θέλω **αυτόν** τον αναπτήρα.
 “I want **this** lighter.”
- (7b) Θέλω **εκείνο** τον αναπτήρα.
 “I want **that** lighter.”

- (7c) Θέλω **αυτόν** τον ακριβό αναπτήρα.
 “I want **this** expensive lighter.”

6.3 Interrogative Pronouns (*who?*, *what?*)

There are three basic interrogative pronouns, one for persons (*ποιος*, “who”), one for things (*τι*, “what”), and one for quantification (*πόσος*, for its meaning see below).

- (8a) **Ποιος** θέλει παγωτό;
 “**Who** wants ice cream?”

- (8b) **Τι** θέλεις;
 “**What** do you want?”

Ποιος goes like an ordinary adjective (but notice the final -v in *ποιον*):

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR			
NOM.	ποιος	ποια	ποιο
ACC.	ποιον	ποια	ποιο
PLURAL			
NOM.	ποιοι	ποιες	ποια
ACC.	ποιους	ποιες	ποια

Table 6.4: *The Interrogative Pronoun ποιος (Nominative and Accusative).*

Unlike *ποιος*, *τι* has the same form everywhere, so no need for another table.

All these vowels and no accent mark. Why? Check the pronunciation of any form of *ποιος*. What you really hear is only one syllable (see Unit 1.6.2 on [page 13](#)). This is why the accent mark is absent.

The interrogative pronoun that focuses on quantification is *πόσος*, -η, -ο (for its endings see Table 5.7). In the singular it is equal to “how much” (*Πόση ζάχαρη θέλεις*;= “How much sugar do you need?”). In the plural it is equal to “how many” (*Πόσες μπανάνες θέλεις*;= “How many bananas do you need?”).

Note that in questions involving a preposition, the preposition comes first and the pronoun comes second (compare to English):

(IVa) **Για ποιον** είναι το δώρο;

“Who is the present **for**?”

(IVb) **Για τι** μιλάς;

“What are you talking **about**?”

Suppose now that someone knocks on the door. What I will say is **Ποιος** είναι; and not **Ποια** είναι; If I am talking to a group of 10 females and 1 male, what I will ask is again **Ποιος** θέλει καφέ; and not **Ποια** θέλει καφέ; Obviously the masculine prevails in grammar. But grammar is different from life anyway.

Interrogative pronouns are also used like ordinary adjectives. Check the following sentences:

(9a) **Ποιο** βιβλίο προτιμάς;

“Which book do you prefer?”

(9b) **Τι** βιβλίο προτιμάς;

“What sort of book do you prefer?”

Now the difference between person-reference (**ποιος**) and thing-reference (**τι**) is gone. But there is still some considerable difference of meaning between the two.

Considering that asking questions is important for everyday life, let me give you a list with the basic interrogative words:

ποιος	“who”
τι	“what”
πότε / κάθε πότε	“when” / “how often”
πού	“where”
πώς	“how”
πόσο	“how much”
γιατί	“why”

Table 6.5: Basic Interrogative Words.

6.4 Indefinite Pronouns (*someone, anyone*)

The basic indefinite pronouns are *κάποιος* (“someone”) / *κάτι* (“something”) and *κανένας* (“anyone”) / *τίποτα* (“anything”). *Κάποιος* and *κανένας* refer to persons, while *κάτι* and *τίποτα* refer to things.

A few words now about their form: *Κάποιος* and *κάτι* are compound words, consisting of *κα-* (*some-*) and *-ποιος* or *-τι*. Therefore you can go back to Table 6.4 on [page 87](#) and form the pronoun *κάποιος* by yourselves (don’t forget the form *κάποιον*). *Κάτι* has the same form everywhere, so it should be a piece of cake for you.

Κανένας is again a compound word, consisting of *καν-* (*any-*) plus the indefinite article. Go back to Table 5.2 on [page 68](#) and you can form the entire pronoun by yourselves (remember, it has no plural). *Τίποτα* keeps the same form everywhere, so it is as easy as *κάτι*.

What is important here is not form, but use. The choice of indefinite pronouns depends on sentence type: *Κάποιος* / *Κάτι* are used in affirmative sentences, while *κανένας* / *τίποτα* are used in non-affirmative sentences (such as interrogative and negative sentences).

(10a) Βλέπω **κάποιον** / **κάτι**.

“I see **someone** / **something**.”

(10b) Βλέπεις **κανέναν** / **τίποτα**;

“**Do** you see **anyone** / **anything**?”

(10c) **Δεν** βλέπω **κανέναν** / **τίποτα**.

“I **don’t** see **anyone** / **anything**.”

I believe that the analogy with English is clear. *Κάποιος* is *someone*, and *κανένας* is *anyone*. What about *no one*? *No one* (and other related words like *nowhere*) simply do not exist in Modern Greek. In negative sentences *κανένας* always needs external negation (such as *δεν*) to exist, so it has no internal negative meaning like *no one*. So, in order to say “I see no one” in Modern Greek, you must again say “I don’t see anyone”.

What about elliptical sentences like the following?

(V) A: Τι θέλεις;

B: **Τίποτα**.

The negation particle is not present but still presumed, so again the indefinite *τίποτα* is *anything*, not *nothing*.

Indefinite pronouns are also used like adjectives, with no change in form and no considerable

change in meaning. Here again indefinite adjectives are related to sentence type like before.

(11a) Περιμένω **κάποιον**. / Περιμένω **κάποιον πελάτη**.

“I am waiting for **someone**.” / “I am waiting for **a customer**.”

(11b) Περιμένεις **κανέναν**; / Περιμένεις **κανέναν πελάτη**;

“Are you waiting for **anyone**?” / “Are you waiting for **any customer**?”

(11c) Δεν περιμένω **κανέναν**. / Δεν περιμένω **κανέναν πελάτη**.

“I am **not** waiting for **anyone**.” / “I am **not** waiting for **any customer**.”

Κάποιος / κανένας and ένας

Indefinite pronouns share the same area as the indefinite article. The issue is rather complicated, so I will save your time and my energy with the following points:

- In interrogative and negative sentences, the indefinite *κανένας* stands alone; I mean it cannot be replaced by the indefinite *ένας*. In a sentence like *Δεν περιμένω έναν πελάτη αλλά δύο*, the indefinite article should be taken as a numeral, because the meaning is “I am not waiting for **one** customer but two”.
- In affirmative sentences the indefinite *ένας* and the indefinite *κάποιος* in principle can replace each other, like here: *Περιμένω έναν πελάτη / Περιμένω κάποιον πελάτη*.

Let me now give you some basic indefinite words from both sides:

κάποιος	“someone”	κανένας	“anyone”
κάτι	“something”	τίποτα	“anything”
κάπου	“somewhere”	πουθενά	“anywhere”
κάποτε	“some time”	ποτέ	“ever”
κάπως	“somehow”, “some way”	καθόλου	“any” (quantity)

Table 6.6: Basic Indefinite Words.

6.5 Relative Pronouns (*who, which, where*)

Relative pronouns are both good and bad news for absolute beginners. But let me start with the bad news. Check the following sentences:

- (12a) **Ποιος** μένει με τον Πέτρο;
 “**Who** lives with Peter?”

- (12b) Αυτός είναι ο φοιτητής **που** μένει με τον Πέτρο.
 “This is the student **who** lives with Peter.”

Relative pronouns in Modern Greek are not identical to interrogative pronouns (compare to English). So you cannot go back to Unit 6.3 on [page 87](#) and get some help. In fact, Modern Greek has a wide range of relative pronouns, but (this is where the good news starts) for levels A1-A2 only one is necessary: *που*.

Που is a general relative pronoun (it corresponds to *who*, *that*, *which*, *where*), and an obligatory part of every relative clause (compare to English):

- (13) Να ο χάρτης **που** θέλω.
 “Here is the map (-) / **that** / **which** I want.”

More good news now: *Που* is not inflected, so it stays the same everywhere, regardless of gender (14a), number (14b) or case (14c) and regardless of its syntactic role inside the relative clause (14d):

- (14a) Να **ο χάρτης που** θέλω. / Να **η ομπρέλα που** θέλω.
 “Here is the map I want.” / “Here is the umbrella I want.”

- (14b) Να **ο χάρτης που** θέλω. / Να **οι χάρτες που** θέλω.
 “Here is the map I want.” / “Here are the maps I want.”

- (14c) Να **ο χάρτης που** θέλω. / Θέλω **τον χάρτη που** έχεις.
 “Here is the map I want.” / “I want the map you have.”

- (14d) Θέλω τον χάρτη **που (OBJ.)** έχεις. / Θέλω τον χάρτη **που (SUB.)** είναι στο τραπέζι.
 “I want the map you have.” / “I want the map which is on the table.”

Note that when *που* is equal to *where* it can be replaced by the relative adverb *όπου*.

- (15) Να το σπίτι **που** / **όπου** μένω.
 “Here is the house **where** I live.”

The interrogative *πού* bears an accent mark in order to look different in writing from the relative *που*.

6.6 Where Are the Possessive Pronouns (*my, your*)?

Unlike the pronouns from Units 6.1-6.5, possessive pronouns do not appear on the left side of the “head” noun, but on its right:

- (16) το σπίτι μου
“my house”

Considering that words positioned after the noun differ in several important respects from words that come before the noun, possessive pronouns are examined in Chapter 10, along with relevant structures. Nevertheless, you can go to Unit 10.2.3 on [page 144](#) and study these pronouns right now.

Being polite

Let's start with the following scenario: You are waiting for the bus. Someone next to you is carrying some books which are too heavy for her/him while at the same time trying to find her/his ticket. If you offer to help, you might say “Do you need help?” or something like that.

In Modern Greek your offer for help would depend on the person you are addressing. If this person is someone familiar to you (such as a friend of yours or your grandfather) or any unknown person of your age, what you would say is this:

(VI) **Θέλεις** βοήθεια;

If this person is an elderly unknown person, or a “status person” (such as your professor), what you would say instead is this:

(VII) **Θέλετε** βοήθεια;

In this context *θέλετε* is not used as a real plural. It is used as a singular, to show respect. So, apart from its ordinary meaning, the second person plural (*εσείς*) may be used instead of the second person singular (*εσύ*) in order to express politeness. In this sense, Modern Greek is very close to French and less close to German or Spanish (both languages use the third person for politeness).

Like elsewhere, what was said here is meant to develop your politeness awareness and help you avoid misunderstandings in everyday situations (if you are addressed as *εσείς*, don't look around you. Perhaps the speaker only tried to be polite). It is obvious you are learning the language, and nobody expects you to be a master of politeness. So relax and keep in mind the following:

- The polite *εσείς* is only one of the means to express politeness. Politeness starts from topics of conversation (you cannot discuss personal matters with your professor) and single words like *κύριος* (“Sir”, “Mr”) for men and *κυρία* (“Madam”, “Ms”) for women. But even facial expressions and body language are involved.
- Politeness is not a clear-cut area. There are several circumstances where people have to choose between the polite path and the familiar path, and sometimes the choice is not easy.
- In the Modern Greek culture, people tend to start with the polite way and shift quickly to the familiar way (usually the “status person” suggests the shift). Using the polite way in the beginning sounds OK, but insisting on it would mean that you want to remain distant, which does not sound OK at all.

SUMMARY

Pronouns are a special case of noun-dependent words, since they are related to a noun as a point of reference in order to get their actual meaning. In this sense they behave like other noun-dependent words regarding agreement. Chapter 6 introduces basic groups of Modern Greek pronouns. The focus this time is not on form (most pronouns are inflected like typical adjectives) but on use and meaning shifts between real pronouns and their use like adjectives.

KEY WORDS

pronouns, reference noun, sentence type (affirmative, interrogative, negative)

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer.

1. Φοβάσαι τα αεροπλάνα;
a. Όχι, δεν τα φοβάμαι. b. Όχι, δεν τους φοβάμαι.
2. Ξέρεις τον Πέτρο και την Κατερίνα;
a. Ναι, τις ξέρω. b. Ναι, τους ξέρω.
3. Πίνεις καφέ;
a. Ναι, τον πίνω. b. Ναι, πίνω.
4. Ξέρεις τα παιδιά;
a. Εγώ τα ξέρω. b. Τα ξέρω.
5. Ποιος ξέρει τα παιδιά;
a. Εγώ τα ξέρω. b. Τα ξέρω.
6. Ξέρεις ελληνικά;
a. Όχι, δεν τα ξέρω. b. Όχι, δεν ξέρω.

2. There is one mistake in each sentence. Can you find it?

1. Ξέρω κανέναν φοιτητή από την Πολωνία. Τον λένε Πιοτρ.
2. Μου αρέσει πολύ αυτό βιβλίο.
3. Ο Πέτρος είναι φίλος μου, αλλά δεν τους βλέπω συχνά.
4. Να το κορίτσι όπου μένει δίπλα.
5. Ποιοι θέλει παγωτό;
6. Για ποιος είναι το δώρο;

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 6 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 7 | About the Verb: Adverbials

Verbs in use do not usually appear by themselves to form sentences. They come together with other units, like in the following examples:

- (1a) Έρχεται **την Τρίτη**.
“She/He is coming **on Tuesday**.”
- (1b) Έρχεται **στις επτά**.
“She/He is coming **at seven o’ clock**.”
- (1c) Έρχεται **αύριο**.
“She/He is coming **tomorrow**.”
- (1d) Έρχεται **όταν φεύγω**.
“She/He comes **when I leave**.”

These units (called adverbials in grammar terminology) have a lot in common: Each one of them depends on a verb, the latter being either explicit or implicit. Each one of them provides extra information about the action described by this verb (time, in our example). In this respect the relationship between an adverbial and its “head” verb is not radically different from the one between an adjective and its “head” noun (see Chapter 5 on [page 66](#)).

Two points now about adverbials in general:

- Adverbials modify the meaning of the verb, organizing it along semantic categories such as the following:

- (2a) Έρχεται **αύριο**. (TIME)
“She/He is coming **tomorrow**.”
- (2b) Έρχεται **κάθε μέρα**. (FREQUENCY)
“She/He comes **every day**.”
- (2c) Έρχεται **σπίτι**. (PLACE-DESTINATION)
“She/He is coming **home**.”
- (2d) Έρχεται **από το σχολείο**. (PLACE-ORIGIN)
“She/He is coming **from school**.”

(2e) Έρχεται **με το λεωφορείο**. (MEANS)
“She/He is coming **by bus**.”

(2f) Έρχεται **γιατί πεινάει**. (CAUSE/REASON)
“She/He is coming **because she/he is hungry**.”

- Each one of these semantic categories unites adverbials from different formal categories. For example, time in Modern Greek may be expressed by the single accusative (1a), a prepositional phrase (1b), an adverb (1c) or an adverbial clause (1d).

In the following units I will present the major formal categories of adverbials in Modern Greek. Assuming that you are well aware of semantic categories either from your mother tongue or from English, I will focus on the peculiarities of the Modern Greek adverbial system.

7.1 Prepositions

Let's start with an elementary scenario: Someone has asked me if I use my car to go to work, and I want to say that I use my feet instead. What I would say in English, French and Modern Greek would go like this:

- (3a) I go **on** foot. (MEANS-ENGLISH)
(3b) Je vais **à** pied. (MEANS-FRENCH)
(3c) Πάω **με** τα πόδια. (MEANS-MODERN GREEK)

As you see, the same semantic category (MEANS) may be expressed by a different preposition across three different languages. This is a fact that makes prepositions one of the hardest aspects of language learning. Having these in mind, let's turn to the wild world of prepositions in Modern Greek and try to put the chaos in some sort of order.

7.1.1 Simple Prepositions

Simple prepositions are ordinary prepositions like the ones you have already encountered in Chapters 2 on [page 25](#), 3 on [page 35](#), and 6 on [page 84](#):

- (4a) Ο Γιάννης μένει **με** τον Πέτρο.
“John lives **with** Peter.”
(4b) Αυτό το δώρο είναι **για** (ε)σένα.
“This present is **for** you.”

For levels A1-A2 you need to handle four basic prepositions, namely *σε*, *από*, *με*, and *για*. These prepositions are used in a great variety of contexts, representing multiple semantic categories:

(5a) Μένω **με** τον Πέτρο. (INVOLVEMENT)

“I live **with** Peter.”

(5b) Πάω **με** το λεωφορείο. (MEANS)

“I go **by** bus.”

(5c) Πλένω τα πιάτα **με** προσοχή. (MANNER)

“I wash the dishes **with** care.”

In the following units I will try to provide a comprehensive account of Modern Greek prepositions, explaining how these semantic categories are interrelated. If you think the analysis is too much for you, you can always skip it and check the examples in order to track similarities and dissimilarities with your mother tongue.

- **The preposition *σε***

The preposition *σε* is perhaps the most important of all four prepositions because of its high incidence and multiple uses. But let me first make sure you can see it in the following example:

(6) Ο Πέτρος είναι **στην** (σ[ε]+την) Αθήνα.

“Peter is **in** Athens”.

The preposition *σε* merges with the definite article, losing its vowel. The initial *σ-* here represents what is left of the preposition, as a result of this process.

The preposition *σε* merges only with the definite article. It does not merge with other words, like the indefinite article:

(I) Πάω **σε μια** φίλη μου.

“I am going **to a** friend of mine.”

Having clarified this issue, let’s now turn to issues of meaning: The preposition *σε* is strongly related to the semantic category of place, indicating the point where an action is performed (location):

(7) Κολυμπάει **στην** πισίνα.

“She/He is swimming **in** the pool.”

Swimming in the pool starts and ends within the limits of the pool. Like the English *in*, the Modern Greek *σε* indicates that the action is completed at a specific location and does not extend elsewhere. But *σε* does not only equal *in*. Check the following sentences:

(8a) Το βιβλίο είναι **στο τραπέζι**.
“The book is **on the table**.”

(8b) Το πουλί είναι **στο κλουβί**.
“The bird is **in the cage**.”

I believe it is clear that the context radically impacts the actual reading of *σε*: The form of a table (8a) differs considerably from the form of a cage (8b), and this difference easily turns *σε* from *in* to *on*.

For similar reasons *σε* may be equivalent to the preposition *at*. Check the following sentences:

(9a) Είμαστε **στην Αθήνα**.
“We are **in Athens**.”

(9b) Είμαστε **στο σχολείο**.
“We are **at school**.”

Let me now replace the verb *είμαι* with a motion verb like *πάω*:

(10) **Πάμε** στην Αθήνα.
“**We are going to** Athens”.

Σε this time is related to destination, not location like in examples 7-9. But the pattern is not really different. The motion described by *πάμε* will necessarily be completed in Athens and cannot extend elsewhere.

Buses and Drivers

The sense of destination (as in 10) is not part of the meaning of *σε*, but rather results from a clear motion verb like *πάω*. To put it simply: *σε* cannot be *to* if there is no such verb to help. Here are two examples:

- The “bus to Athens” is not *Το λεωφορείο στην Αθήνα* but *Το λεωφορείο για την Αθήνα*.
- What if I want to say “I drive to Athens”? No, it’s not *Οδηγώ στην Αθήνα*. This means that you drive inside Athens. What people say is: *Πάω με το αυτοκίνητο στην Αθήνα*.

A similar pattern can be found outside the semantic category of place, where *σε* introduces the (indirect) object of the verb:

(11a) Ο Κώστας μιλάει **στον** Πέτρο.
 “Kostas is talking **to** Peter”.

(11b) Η Ελένη γράφει ένα μείλ **στην** Κατερίνα.
 “Helen is writing an e-mail **to** Catherine.”

What we have here is another version of destination. Kostas and Helen are engaged in an action (speaking, writing), which is directed to Peter and Catherine respectively.

The preposition *σε* (along with the definite article) may be omitted in several contexts:

(IIa) Πάει **στο** σχολείο.
 “She/He is going **to the** school.”

(IIb) Πάει **(-)** σχολείο.
 “She/He is going **to (-)** school.”

The two sentences differ in a way similar to their English equivalents: Motion is prominent in IIa, where *πάω* behaves like a typical motion verb. Motion is less prominent, if not totally gone, in IIb. Here *πάω* is part of a periphrasis, whose meaning is not related to motion at all. The latter sentence basically means “She/He is a pupil”.

Unlike its English equivalents, the preposition *σε* is basically related to place, not time. Time in Modern Greek is expressed by the single accusative (see Unit 3.2.5 on [page 42](#)) or another preposition (check 12c):

(12a) Δεν έχουμε σχολείο **(-)** την Τετάρτη.
 “We do not have school **on** Wednesday.”

(12b) Δεν έχουμε σχολείο **(-)** τα Χριστούγεννα.
 “We do not go to school **at** Christmas.”

(12c) Τα σούπερ μάρκετ είναι ανοιχτά από τις εννιά **μέχρι** τις πέντε.
 “Super markets stay open from nine **to** five.”

The only temporal uses of *σε* relate to clock time (13a) and quantificational time phrases (13b and 13c):

(13a) Το ραντεβού είναι **στις** πέντε.
“The appointment is **at** five.”

(13b) Φεύγω **σε** πέντε λεπτά.
“I am leaving **in** five minutes.”

(13c) Έρχομαι **σε** λίγο.
“I am coming **in** a while.”

- **The preposition *από***

Like *σε*, the preposition *από* is related to place. Unlike *σε*, which indicates the place where an action is completed, *από* points to another place, where something started, to be completed elsewhere. Technically, *από* expresses the source, or origin, of an action:

(14a) Έρχομαι **από** το σχολείο.
“I am coming **from** school.”

(14b) Είμαι **από** την Ιταλία.
“I am **from** Italy.”

Beyond place, the pattern of source applies to causal relations. Here, *από* again indicates a starting point, the cause, which leads to an effect:

(15a) Κλαίω **από** χαρά.
“I’m crying **for/out of** joy.”

(15b) Πέθανε **από** έμφραγμα.
“She/He died **of** a heart attack.”

The same pattern can be found in comparison:

(16a) Ο Γιάννης είναι πιο ψηλός **από** τον Πέτρο.
“John is taller **than** Peter.”

(16b) Ο Γιάννης είναι ο πιο ψηλός **από** όλους.
“John is the tallest **of** all”.

Comparison involves a point of departure. There is Peter (16a), whom I take as a starting point in order to claim that John is taller. The same holds for the superlative, like in 16b.

Compared to *σε*, the preposition *από* is easier in terms of time. Here again it is related to the semantic category of source, indicating a point of temporal departure:

(17a) Τα σούπερ μάρκετ είναι ανοιχτά **από** τις εννιά μέχρι τις πέντε.
“Super markets stay open **from** nine to five.”

(17b) Περιμένω **από** το πρωί.
“I’ve been waiting **since** morning.”

- **The preposition *με***

The preposition *με* is not directly related to place. It indicates that an action involves two participants, like in the following sentence:

(18) Ο Γιάννης μένει **με** τον Πέτρο.
“John lives **with** Peter.”

Involvement, as in 18, easily turns into combination like in the following sentences:

(19a) Πίνει καφέ **με** γάλα.
“She/He has coffee **with** milk.”

(19b) Ψάχνουμε έναν άντρα **με** πράσινα μάτια.
“We are looking for a man **with** green eyes.”

Let’s return now to clear involvement (like in 18) and compare the following sentences:

(20a) Ο Γιάννης διαβάζει **με** τον φίλο του, τον Πέτρο.
“John is studying **with** his friend, Peter.”

(20b) Ο Γιάννης διαβάζει **με** την μαμά του.
“John is studying **with** his mother.”

In 20a John is studying, and so is Peter. What about sentence 20b? The mother is not studying, I believe. She is sitting with John to help him study. It seems that in this case one of the participants (the mother) becomes a condition for the performance of the action by the other participant (John). Perhaps John wouldn’t study if the mother were not there, either to assist him or just to make sure he stays away from his computer.

This sense of condition becomes stronger in the following cases:

- (21a) Ο Πέτρος κόβει το ψωμί **με** το μαχαίρι. (INSTRUMENT)
“Peter is slicing the bread **with** the knife.”
- (21b) Ο Γιάννης πάει στο γραφείο **με** το λεωφορείο. (MEANS)
“Peter goes to the office **by** bus.”
- (21c) Ο Πέτρος πλένει τα πιάτα **με** προσοχή. (MANNER)
“Peter is washing the dishes **with** care.”

As the mother is helping her son do his study (20b), so is the knife helping Peter to slice the bread (21a). Equally, the bus offers John easy access to the office (21b). Finally, care becomes a specific condition (or should I say circumstance?) under which Peter is washing the dishes (21c).

- **The preposition για**

The preposition *για* is the last (but not least) preposition of this group. Let’s start with the following examples:

- (22a) Πάμε **στο** καφέ.
“We are going **to** the cafe.”
- (22b) Πάμε **για** καφέ.
“We are going **for** a coffee.”

The preposition *σε* indicates destination, a goal to be reached by motion. The preposition *για* indicates purpose, a goal to be achieved by action. This is the foundation for several basic expressions of everyday life:

- (23a) Πάμε **για** μπάνιο.
“We go **(-)** swimming.”
- (23b) Πάμε **για** φαγητό.
“We go **for** lunch/dinner.”
- (23c) Θέλω μια ομπρέλα **για** την παραλία.
“I need an umbrella **for** the beach.”

The semantic category of purpose has a clearly subjective status. It focuses on the intentions of the speaker, which will be achieved through action. The action then may apply only to satisfy

these intentions:

(24a) Αυτό το μπλουζάκι είναι πολύ στενό **για** μένα.

“This t-shirt is too tight **for** me.”

(24b) **Για** τον Πέτρο, αυτό το εστιατόριο είναι ακριβό.

“**According to** Peter / **In** Peter’s **opinion**, this restaurant is expensive.”

The t-shirt in 24a is not too tight for everyone. It is too tight as far as I am concerned. And the statement that the restaurant is expensive (24b) is true only if we adopt Peter’s point of view. In these cases the preposition *για* introduces a point of reference, which takes a different interpretation in sentences like the following:

(25) Μιλάω **για** τον Πέτρο.

“I am talking **about** Peter.”

Here the point of reference, aided by a speech-related verb, transforms into the topic of conversation.

The purpose of an action may also be seen as an explanation for performing this action: If I go for a coffee, then I go *because* I need a coffee. In the following sentences *για* introduces such an explanation, indicating the reason for the action:

(26a) Αυτό το εστιατόριο είναι διάσημο **για** τα γλυκά του.

“This restaurant is famous **for** its desserts.”

(26b) Συγχαρητήρια **για** το τεστ!

“Congratulations **on** the test!”

7.1.2 Complex Prepositions

A complex preposition typically consists of an adverb (usually locative but also temporal) followed by a (simple) preposition:

(27a) Το σπίτι μου είναι **κοντά στο** σχολείο.

“My house is **near (-)** the school.”

(27b) Το σπίτι μου είναι **μακριά από** το σχολείο.

“My house is **far from** school.”

In the above sentences the complex prepositions establish a locative relation among two entities represented by the nouns of the sentence. *Σπίτι* is positioned in space according to a refer-

ence point, *σχολείο*, represented by the noun of the prepositional phrase.

The reference point of a locative relation may be explicit or implicit in a sentence:

(IIIa) Το σπίτι μου είναι **κοντά στο** σχολείο.

“My house is **near** the school.”

(IIIb) Το σπίτι μου είναι **κοντά (-)**.

“My house is **nearby**.”

In cases of an implicit reference point, all you have to do in Modern Greek is keep the adverb and remove the (simple) preposition.

Here is a table with the basic complex prepositions according to the simple preposition they combine:

ΣΕ	ΑΠΟ
μέσα (“in”, “inside”)	έξω (“out”, “outside”)
κοντά / δίπλα (“near”, “by”, “next to”)	μακριά (“far”, “away”)
πάνω (“on”)	κάτω (“under”)
	πίσω (“behind”)
	αριστερά (“left”)
	δεξιά (“right”)
	γύρω (“around”)
μπροστά (“in front”)	
απέναντι (“opposite”)	

Table 7.1: *Complex Prepositions of Place.*

Complex prepositions may include only two simple prepositions: *σε* or *από*. The choice of *σε* or *από* is not random, but follows a pattern. *Σε* is used when the locative relation is based on contact. Let’s see how this goes:

(28a) Το πουλί είναι **μέσα στο** κλουβί.

“The bird is **inside** the cage.”

(28b) Το βιβλίο είναι **πάνω στο** τραπέζι.

“The book is **on** the table.”

(28c) Το σπίτι είναι **κοντά στο** σχολείο.

“The house is **near** the school.”

- (28d) Το παιδί είναι **μπροστά στο** δέντρο.
“The child is **in front of** the tree.”

The bird of 28a is included in the cage (absolute contact). The book of 28b is in necessary contact with the table by the law of gravity. The position of the house in 28c offers easy access to the school (potential contact). Finally, in order to claim that the child is in front of the tree (28d), I must be in eye contact with the child.

The preposition *από* in turn is used when the locative relation is based not on contact, but on absence of contact, realized as distance:

- (29a) Το πουλί είναι **έξω από** το κλουβί.
“The bird is **outside** the cage.”
- (29b) Το βιβλίο είναι **κάτω από** το τραπέζι.
“The book is **under** the table.”
- (29c) Το σπίτι είναι **μακριά από** το σχολείο.
“The house is **far from** school.”
- (29d) Το παιδί είναι **πίσω από** το δέντρο.
“The child is **behind** the tree.”

Now the bird of 29a is excluded from the cage. The book of 29b may be lying on the floor, far away from the table. The house of 29c does not offer easy access to the school. And in order to claim that the child is behind the tree (29d), the tree must hide the child from my perspective.

Let’s now focus on sentence 29c. What if the book is not *on* the table (contact) but *over/above* the table (absence of contact)? All you have to do is keep the locative adverb and change the simple preposition:

- (30a) Το βιβλίο είναι **πάνω στο** τραπέζι.
“The book is **on** the table.”
- (30b) Το βιβλίο είναι **πάνω από** το τραπέζι.
“The book is **over/above** the table.”

I believe it is evident that the choice of *σε* or *από* is not accidental. Each one of them is selected according to a pattern, which goes back to their core meaning as introduced in Unit 7.1.1 on [page 96](#).

This fact explains why orientation adverbs utilize *από* and not *σε*. Orientation is a relative

notion. In order to claim that something is on the right or on the left, you must adopt a perspective. You need a starting point, and starting points are the specialty of *από*.

This fact also explains why some complex prepositions permit *σε* or *από*, without any considerable change in meaning. Let's take two persons sitting *απέναντι*. One of the possible scenarios is this: These persons are sitting on two sides of a table facing each other. This position involves contact (as in eye contact) and distance (the table stands between them) at the same time. This is the reason why both prepositions are permitted. The same holds for *μπροστά*. A child in front of the tree (like in 28d) may be seen the other way, like something separating the viewer from the tree (distance).

Let's turn now to temporal complex prepositions. Here we have only two: *πριν* ("before"/ "ago") and *μετά* ("after"/ "afterwards"). "Before" and "after" position events in time. They are relative notions, which need a point of reference. It is not surprising then that both combine with the preposition *από*:

- (31a) Έρχεται **πριν (από)** το φαγητό.
"She/He comes **before** lunch."

- (31b) Έρχεται **μετά (από)** το φαγητό.
"She/He comes **after** lunch."

Compared to complex prepositions of place, complex prepositions of time have some peculiarities. First, they can appear without a simple preposition (check the parentheses in 31a and 31b). Secondly, they can be placed before or after the noun. And when they come after it, the simple preposition is gone:

- (32a-b) Ήρθε **πριν (από)** τρεις μέρες. / Ήρθε τρεις μέρες **πριν**.
"She/He came three days **ago**."

Note that 32a and 32b refer to an implicit starting point in time, indicating the amount of time that separates the action from this point.

Πριν and *μετά* may also be used like simple adverbs:

- (33a) Ήρθε **πριν**.
"She/He came **earlier / before**."
- (33b) Θα έρθει **μετά**.
"She/ He will come **later / afterwards**."

7.2 Adverbs

After our visit to the wilderness of prepositions, adverbs must seem like kindergarden stuff. Modern Greek adverbs (and this is true for other languages as well) hold no surprises for the absolute beginner. Unlike prepositions, adverbs have a very concrete meaning which controls their use. And, again unlike prepositions, adverbs are related only to certain semantic categories. Each category is represented by an interrogative and/or an indefinite version (see Tables 6.5 on [page 88](#) and 6.6 on [page 90](#)), as well as other adverbs, whose meaning has already been introduced:

	INTERROGATIVE	INDEFINITE	OTHER
PLACE	πού	κάπου πουθενά	μακριά, κοντά...
TIME	πότε	κάποτε ποτέ	σήμερα, τώρα...
FREQUENCY	κάθε πότε	ποτέ	συχνά...
QUANTITY	πόσο	καθόλου	λίγο, πολύ...
MANNER	πώς	κάπως	καλά...

Table 7.2: Basic Modern Greek Adverbs.

Adverbs are so easy to handle that analysis is really not necessary. What you must keep in mind are the following points:

- Modern Greek adverbs can occupy different positions within the sentence. Therefore an English sentence like “She/He often watches TV” may have several versions in Modern Greek (check Unit 4.2 on [page 61](#)):

(34a) Βλέπει τηλεόραση **συχνά**.

(34b) Βλέπει **συχνά** τηλεόραση.

(34c) **Συχνά** βλέπει τηλεόραση.

In this respect adverbials in Modern Greek represent just another instance of free word order and focus-related phenomena (see Unit 1.7.3 on [page 17](#)).

Keep in mind, though, that interrogative adverbs usually come first in the sentence:

(35a) **Πού** είναι ο Πέτρος;

“**Where** is Peter?”

(35b) **Πότε** φτάνει το τρένο;

“**When** does the train arrive?”

- Adverbs of manner are directly related to their source adjectives, and this is a great help for you:

(36) εύκολος → εύκολα
“easy” → “easily”

Remember the plural of the neuter (Table 5.8 on [page 76](#))? This is your adverb. Take it and use it appropriately.

- Table 7.2 is not exhaustive in several respects. Some adverbs express possibility or probability like in the following examples:

(37a) Ίσως διαβάζει.
“**Maybe** she/he is studying.”

(37b) Μάλλον διαβάζει.
“She/He is **probably** studying.”

There are also adverbs that express certainty:

(38a-b) Βεβαίως διαβάζει. / Φυσικά διαβάζει.
“**Of course** she/he is studying.”

The Modern Greek adverbs *ακριβά* and *ακριβώς* look very much alike, but their meaning is different. *Ακριβά* originates from the adjective *ακριβός* (“expensive”), and *ακριβώς* originates from the adjective *ακριβής* (“exact”, “accurate”, “punctual”). Don’t look for this adjective in your book, because its inflectional model is usually part of levels C1-C2.

7.3 Adverbial Clauses

Adverbial clauses depend on the main clause expressing semantic categories like the ones we examined in the previous units. For levels A1-A2 you must handle the basics of three categories.

- Let’s start with temporal clauses. The most elementary ones are those introduced with *όταν* (“when”). *Όταν* introduces an action that happens before or at the same time with the action described by the main clause.

(39a) Όταν γυρίζει σπίτι, βλέπει τηλεόραση.
“**When** she/he comes home, she/he watches TV.”

(39b) **Όταν** τρώει βλέπει τηλεόραση.

“**When** she/he eats, she/he watches TV.”

- Clauses of cause/reason are introduced with *γιατί* or *επειδή*:

(40) Πάμε για μπάνιο **γιατί** / **επειδή** κάνει ζέστη.

“We’re going swimming **because** it is hot.”

In sentences like 40 the two words are equivalent. There are though some differences between them (see Chapter 11 on [page 151](#)).

Γιατί is not only *because*. It is also *why* in questions, direct or indirect:

(IVa) **Γιατί** δεν κοιμάσαι;

“**Why** aren’t you sleeping?”

(IVb) Ρωτάει **γιατί** δεν κοιμάμαι.

“She/He is asking **why** I am not sleeping.”

- Conditional clauses are introduced with *αν* (“if”).

(41) **Αν** πεινάω, τρώω μια μπανάνα.

“**If** I am hungry, I have a banana.”

The above example illustrates zero conditionals in Modern Greek, describing an action that repeats itself whenever the condition introduced by *αν* is present.

The landscape of conditionals is far more complex. Considering that at the moment you do not have the necessary grammatical means to explore it, conditionals that are related to futurity will be examined in Chapter 9 on [page 136](#).

Buying *χύμα*

Suppose you go to the supermarket to buy some *φέτα* cheese. You have two options. One is to go to the fridge and get packaged *φέτα*. The other option is to go to the section of cheese, and ask the employee to give you some *φέτα*. The employee will cut some *φέτα* from the barrel, wrap it and give it to you. This is an instance of buying *χύμα*.

Buying *χύμα* is the traditional method of buying goods, and reflects the world of small grocery shops, long before super markets became part of our life, back in the late 70's. But even now people buy *χύμα*, basically cheese, salami or sausages, wine, coffee, beans or rice. Buying *χύμα* is usually cheaper. Buying *χύμα* may also be more interesting. A brand package of *φέτα* tastes more or less the same, while *φέτα χύμα* is less predictable, for better or for worse.

Buying *χύμα* has another story to tell. Originally a noun, the word *χύμα* survived up to now changing its grammatical status. But what is the actual grammatical status of *χύμα*? Is it an adverb (*αγοράζω χύμα*) or an adjective (*θέλω φέτα χύμα*)? Or perhaps both? Ask yourselves and then check your dictionary to find out.

SUMMARY

Adverbials are units that depend on a “head” verb providing extra information about it. Chapter 7 introduces Modern Greek adverbials examining prepositions, adverbs and adverbial clauses. Considering that prepositions are one of the most problematic fields in language learning the greatest part of the chapter is dedicated to their use.

KEY WORDS

adverbials, “head” verb, semantic categories, prepositions (simple / complex), adverbs, adverbial clauses

EXERCISES

1. Πού είναι η γάτα; Match the pictures with the following sentences.

1. Η γάτα είναι πάνω στο σπίτι.



a.

2. Η γάτα είναι κάτω από το σπίτι.

3. Η γάτα είναι μέσα στο σπίτι.

4. Η γάτα είναι πίσω από το σπίτι.

5. Η γάτα είναι πάνω από το σπίτι.

6. Η γάτα είναι μπροστά στο σπίτι.



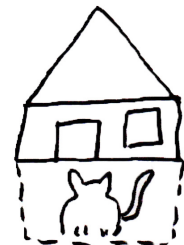
b.



c.



d.



e.



f.

2. Right or Wrong? Check the following sentences.

	Σ	Λ
1. Η Αφρική είναι πιο μεγάλη από την Ασία.		
2. Ο Απρίλιος είναι μετά τον Μάρτιο.		

3. Η Ισπανία είναι πιο μικρή από την Ολλανδία.		
4. Όλα τα παιδιά πάνε σχολείο με το λεωφορείο.		
5. Πάμε για ψώνια όταν τα μαγαζιά είναι ανοιχτά.		
6. Το ελληνικό αλφάβητο αρχίζει με το γράμμα «Α».		
7. Οι τράπεζες είναι ανοιχτές από τις οχτώ το βράδυ μέχρι τις οχτώ το πρωί.		
8. Τρώμε πάντα το παγωτό μας με πιρούνι και μαχαίρι.		

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 7 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 8 | A Tense from the Past: The Modern Greek αόριστος

The person behind this chapter is Pinelopi Michalakopoulou, who taught me how to teach the past back in the late 90's.

People have a present, a past and (hopefully) a future. So do verbs. Tense, the instantiation of time in grammar, is perhaps the most important and easy to perceive feature of verbs. Tense shapes the verbal system across the arrow of time, and combines with other features (such as the aspect) to provide the actual tenses in most languages.

Having dealt with the present (see Chapter 4 on [page 51](#)) it is now time to turn to the past, leaving the future for Chapter 9 on [page 125](#). Modern Greek has several tenses related to the past. The leading part, though, is played by the tense called αόριστος, a tense which much resembles the English past simple in terms of use.

As with the Modern Greek present tense, αόριστος is easy to use but not that easy to form. We shall then focus on matters of form and then proceed with matters of use.

8.1 The Form of αόριστος

Like the Modern Greek present tense, αόριστος comes with good and bad news for absolute beginners. Let me start with the good news. Remember the multiple endings of verbs you had to learn for the present tense? There is no such thing here. Unlike the present, αόριστος comes with only one series of endings, suitable for all verbs. Here is the inflectional model for αόριστος:

πάω → πήγα			
SINGULAR			
1st	πήγα	πήγα	-α
2nd	πήγες	πήγες	-ες
3rd	πήγε	πήγε	-ε
PLURAL			
1st	πήγαμε	πήγαμε	-αμε
2nd	πήγατε	πήγατε	-ατε
3rd	πήγαν(ε)	πήγαν(ε)	-αν(ε)

Table 8.1: An inflectional Model for the Modern Greek αόριστος.

If you compare Table 8.1 to the tables of the present tense (see Unit 4.1 on [page 52](#)), it is a relief for students: Every Modern Greek verb will be like this. So all you have to do is memo-

size this table and go on.

The previous model basically applies to “active” verbs. Most “passive” verbs follow a slightly different inflectional model, which is part of B1-B2 levels. “Passive” verbs then should not be your concern at the moment, but for practical reasons you need to know how the verb *είμαι* goes. Here it is!

είμαι → ήμουν	
SINGULAR	
1st	ήμουν(α)
2nd	ήσουν(α)
3rd	ήταν(ε)
PLURAL	
1st	ήμασταν / ήμαστε
2nd	ήσασταν / ήσαστε
3rd	ήταν(ε)

Table 8.2: *The Verb είμαι in the Past.*

Let’s go now to the bad news: The endings of the past may look OK, but the stem of the verbs does not. Let me give you an example:

(1) τρώω → έφαγα

Τρώω represents one of the most extreme cases of irregularity: no absolute beginner would even guess that *έφαγα* is related to *τρώω*. And as a teacher, I have no rule to give you in order to help you relate the past to the present tense. This is an area where memory helps much more than reason. But irregularity is not the rule. Apart from irregular verbs, there are also regular verbs, and this is where reason replaces memory. Let me then introduce some order to chaos and give you a categorization frame for irregular and regular verbs in the past.

8.1.1 Irregular Verbs (Group I)

Let me start with a list of some irregular verbs in the past. (If you need to check their meaning, go to the Appendix on [page 162](#). The same holds for the next Tables.)

PRESENT		PAST
βγαίνω	→	βγήκα
βλέπω	→	είδα
βρίσκω	→	βρήκα
έρχομαι	→	ήρθα
έχω	→	είχα
λέω	→	είπα
μπαίνω	→	μπήκα
παίρνω	→	πήρα
πηγαίνω / πάω	→	πήγα
πίνω	→	ήπια

Table 8.3: *Irregular Verbs in the Past (Group 1).*

But where is the *τρώω* of our previous example? It is right below, in your second list of irregular verbs.

8.1.2 More Irregular Verbs: A Stress Pattern for αόριστος

Here is another list of irregular verbs. As you see, *τρώω* is among them:

PRESENT		PAST
ακούω	→	άκουσα
βάζω	→	έβαλα
δίνω	→	έδωσα
κάνω	→	έκανα
καταλαβαίνω	→	κατάλαβα
μένω	→	έμεινα
περιμένω	→	περίμενα
πλένω	→	έπλυνα
τρώω	→	έφαγα

Table 8.4: *Irregular Verbs in the Past (Group 2).*

I can almost hear your question: If the verbs of Group 2 (Table 8.4) are also irregular, why separate them from the irregular verbs of Group 1 (Table 8.3)? Compare two typical verbs from each group:

(2)

Group 1

πήρα

πήρες

πήρε

πήραμε

πήρατε

πήραν / πήρανε

Group 2

κατάλαβα

κατάλαβες

κατάλαβε

καταλάβαμε

καταλάβετε

κατάλαβαν / καταλάβανε

What really makes the difference between the two verbs is the position of the stress. The forms of *παίρνω* keep the stress on the same syllable (πη-). This is not the case for the verb *καταλαβαίνω*, where the stress may be on different syllables (-τα- or -λα-). What lies behind this difference? The answer is this: unlike the verbs of Group 1, those of Group 2 follow a strict stress pattern. And the pattern goes like this:

(3)

		•	•	•
		3	2	1
	κα-	τά-	λα-	βα
κα-	τα-	λά-	βα-	με

According to this pattern, a verb in the past must be stressed on the antepenultimate syllable (the third syllable from the end of the word).

This pattern explains the “movement” of stress in the previous example. Notice that the length of the ending is crucial for the position of the stress:

(4) κατάλαβαν καταλάβανε

This pattern also explains the development of an initial ε- in some verbs but not others. Compare *καταλαβαίνω* with *τρώω*:

(5)

κατάλαβα

έφαγα

κατάλαβες

έφαγες

κατάλαβε

έφαγε

καταλάβαμε

φάγαμε

καταλάβετε

φάγατε

κατάλαβαν / καταλάβανε

έφαγαν/φάγανε

The past stem of *καταλαβαίνω* (καταλαβ-) is lengthy, and therefore suitable to carry the stress on the third syllable. The past stem of *τρώω* (φαγ-) is too short for this pattern. It must then develop an initial ε-, which bears the stress:

(6) *φαγ-α → **έ**-φαγ-α

Notice that whenever the verb is enough by itself to follow the pattern, the initial ε- is no longer necessary.

(7) **έ**φαγα (-)φάγαμε

In the 1st person plural the ending has two syllables, and now the verb does not need a support vowel.

Keep in mind that ε- develops only in order to bear the stress. In other words, you cannot have an unstressed ε-, only a stressed one (**έ**-).

The list of irregular verbs of Group 2 is not exhaustive. Here are some more irregular verbs you might need. (For more verbs go to the Appendix on [page 162](#).)

PRESENT		PAST
αρέσει	→	άρεσε
βγάζω	→	έβγαλα
θέλω	→	ή θελα
κλείνω	→	έκλεισα
ξέρω	→	ή ξερα
πέφτω	→	έπεσα
στέλνω	→	έστειλα
φέρνω	→	έφερα
φεύγω	→	έφυγα
φτάνω	→	έφτασα

Table 8.5: *Irregular Verbs in the Past (Group 2).*

Notice that *θέλω* and *ξέρω* develop an initial **ή**- instead of **έ**-.

The trisyllabic stress pattern is the leading stress pattern for αόριστος. With the exception of the irregular verbs of Group 1 (in this respect, Group 1 is more irregular than Group 2), this pattern applies to every other irregular verb, but also to regular verbs as you will find out soon.

As a leading pattern it is essential for communication, which means that you must follow it in order to be understood.

If you check the previous tables you will find out that some of the most basic verbs are irregular in the past tense. This is not a peculiarity of Modern Greek (compare to English, where the verbs *to be* and *to go* are also irregular, unlike verbs like *to explode* or *to irritate*). For a plausible explanation press here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regular_and_irregular_verbs.

8.1.3 Regular Verbs

Regular verbs in the past share two main features:

- They all follow the trisyllabic stress pattern.

(8)	κόβω	→	έκοψα
	δουλεύω	→	δούλεψα
	τρέχω	→	έτρεξα

- Their stem derives directly from the stem of the present tense with the addition of [s]. The forms *έκοψα* or *έτρεξα* in this respect is the output of a phonetic procedure which goes like this:

(9)	kov-o	→	e-kov- s -a	→	e-kop s -a
	treh-o	→	e-treh- s -a	→	e-tre ks -a

The [s] of the past is common in both verbs. What makes the difference ([ps] vs. [ks]) is the final part of the present stem, which leads to a different result. I will spare you the technical explanation of the procedure to focus on the kind of reasoning you must follow with regular verbs. The verbs below represent a major group of regular verbs:

(10)	κόβω	→	έκοψα
	δουλεύω	→	δούλεψα
	γράφω	→	έγραψα

Another group of regular verbs is represented by the following verbs:

(11)	ανοίγω	→	άνοιξα
	τρέχω	→	έτρεξα
	φτιάχνω	→	έφτιαξα

Can you now find out the past tense of the following verbs? Meaning is irrelevant at the moment, so your main concern is the form:

- (12) ρίχνω → ?
 σπρώχνω → ?
 χορεύω → ?
 κρύβω → ?

What you must do is focus on the final part of the present stem: *ρίχνω* and *σπρώχνω* resemble *φτιάχνω*, so they their past is *έριξα* and *έσπρωξα*. *Χορεύω* resembles *δουλεύω* and therefore is *δούλεψα*. Finally, *κρύβω* is more like *κόβω* and its past must be *έκρυψα*.

Here are some basic groups of regular verbs:

PRESENT		PAST
γράφω	→	έγραψα
κόβω	→	έκοψα
δουλεύω	→	δούλεψα
ανοίγω	→	άνοιξα
τρέχω	→	έτρεξα
φτιάχνω	→	έφτιαξα
τελειώνω	→	τελείωσα
γυρίζω	→	γύρισα

Table 8.6: Regular Verbs in the Past (Group 3).

Apart from these clearly regular verbs, there are some less clear cases. Check the following verbs:

- (13) αγοράζω → αγοράσα
 αλλάζω → άλλαξα

It might be helpful to know that a final -ζ- in the stem of the present turns into -σ- or -ξ- in the past, but you would still have to guess, and guessing is beyond the kind of reasoning you must develop with regular verbs. Until you go on with Modern Greek, I would advise you to treat such verbs as irregular verbs, and therefore memorize their past tense.

The same holds for the following group:

- (14) μιλάω → μίλησα
 φοράω → φόρεσα

γελάω	→	γέλασα
οδηγώ	→	οδήγησα
ζω	→	έζησα
μπορώ	→	μπόρεσα

All verbs of groups B1 and B2 in the present tense (see Units 4.1.3 on [page 56](#) and 4.1.4 on [page 57](#)) are predictable in the sense that they develop the same clear [s] in the past tense. What is not predictable is the vowel that develops before the [s]. For this reason I would advise you to treat them as irregular verbs, too.

The verb *τηλεφωνώ* looks like *τελειώνω* but it does not belong to the group represented by *τελειώνω*. Its stress falls on the final syllable. It must thus go like the verbs of B2 and become *τηλεφώνησα*. Don't get confused with phonetic similarity; Stress is also very important.

The verb *τελειώνω* may have two phonetic versions:

(I) τε-λει-ώ-νω τε-λειώ-νω

The two versions have a different syllabic structure, which leads to another result in the past:

(II) τε-λεί-ω-σα τέ-λειω-σα

To summarize: Regular and irregular verbs in the past are structured on a scale of regularity, where regular verbs represent the top and irregular verbs of Group 1 represent the bottom.

	ENDING	STRESS PATTERN	STEM	REGULARITY
Regular Verbs	+	+	+	Maximum
Irregular Verbs (Group 2)	+	+	-	Medium
Irregular Verbs (Group 1)	+	-	-	Minimum

Table 8.7: *Regular and Irregular Verbs on a Scale of Regularity.*

8.2 The Use of αόριστος

The Modern Greek αόριστος is used to describe actions that took place before the moment of speaking. Therefore it typically combines with the following expressions:

- Adverbs related to the past:

χτες	“yesterday”
προχτές	“the day before yesterday”
πέρσι	“last year”
πρόπερσι	“two years ago”

Table 8.8: *Adverbs Related to the Past.*

- Prepositional phrases introduced by *πριν* (see Unit 7.1.2 on [page 106](#)):

(15) Έφτασα **πριν** από τρεις μέρες. / Έφτασα τρεις μέρες **πριν**.
“I arrived three days **ago**.”

- The single (non-prepositional) temporal accusative modified by the adjectives *προηγούμενος* (“preceding”) and *περασμένος* (“past”, “last”)

(16a) Την **περασμένη** / **προηγούμενη** Τετάρτη πήγαμε στην Αθήνα.
“We went to Athens **last** Wednesday.”

(16b) Τον **περασμένο** / **προηγούμενο** μήνα είδα τον Πέτρο δύο φορές.
“I met Peter twice **last** month.”

The past tense is also compatible with time expressions that are typically related to the present (see Unit 4.2 on [page 60](#)):

(III) Σήμερα δεν πήγα σχολείο.
“**Today** I did not go to school.”

Like the present, the Modern Greek αόριστος needs no auxiliaries in order to form its interrogative or negative versions. All you have to do with questions is change your intonation. And all you have to do with negative sentences is add the particle *δεν* before the verb.

(17a) Πήγε σχολείο.
“She/He went to school.”

(17b) Πήγε σχολείο;
“**Did** she/he go to school?”

(17c) Δεν πήγε σχολείο.
“She/He **didn’t** go to school.”

Celebrating the Past

The past is gone, but its memory is still with us to preserve it and sometimes to rewrite it through the lens of the present. As countries need national days to remind people of critical moments in their history, so do individuals need celebrations to remind them of critical moments in their life. And one of those critical moments is the day we came into being.

Two generations ago, celebrating one's *γενέθλια* (unlike its English equivalent the Modern Greek word for birthday is always in the plural) was rather rare. As members of a traditional society, people used to celebrate their name day instead. From the 70's onwards, the society rapidly adopted a westernized way of life, and *γενέθλια* came to the foreground. Celebrating one's name day (*γιορτή*) is still common, especially in the country, but *γενέθλια* is becoming more and more popular, especially among children or teenagers.

The birthday ritual is no surprise for anyone familiar with the Western culture: There is a birthday cake (*τούρτα [γενεθλίων]*); people get presents, usually they go out with friends and/or the family, and they treat their guests (the verb is *κερνάω* and its past tense is *κέρασα*). What is different is the Modern Greek birthday song, which comes in two versions, one for females and one for males:

Να ζήσεις, Δημήτρη,
και χρόνια πολλά.
Μεγάλος να γίνεις
με άσπρα μαλλιά.
Παντού να σκορπίζεις
της γνώσης το φως,
και όλοι να λένε
να **ένας** σοφός!

Να ζήσεις, Ελένη,
και χρόνια πολλά.
Μεγάλη να γίνεις
με άσπρα μαλλιά.
Παντού να σκορπίζεις
της γνώσης το φως,
και όλοι να λένε
να **μία** σοφός!

SUMMARY

Chapter 8 introduces the Modern Greek αόριστος, the most basic of the tenses related to the past. The greatest part of the chapter is dedicated to the form of αόριστος, offering a comprehensive categorization frame for regular and irregular verbs in the past. The use of αόριστος is exemplified by typical adverbials related to the past.

KEY WORDS

αόριστος (Modern Greek past simple), inflectional model of the past, past stem, irregular verbs, regular verbs, trisyllabic stress pattern

EXERCISE

Here is a fairy tale you all know and can follow using a dictionary. The verbs in bold represent the three different groups of verbs regarding the past stem. What you must do is associate them with the verbs in the present and write their 1st person singular and plural in the past.

Η ΚΟΚΚΙΝΟΣΚΟΥΦΙΤΣΑ ΚΑΙ Ο ΚΑΚΟΣ ΛΥΚΟΣ
(REVISED EDITION)

1. ΜΕΡΟΣ Α΄

Μια φορά κι έναν καιρό...

...ήταν ένα κοριτσάκι με κόκκινα ρούχα, η Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα. Μια μέρα, η Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα δεν **είχε** σχολείο. Έτσι, **ήπια** το γάλα της, **πήρε** το καλάθι της, **βγήκε** από το σπίτι της και **πήγε** να δει τη γιαγιά της στο δάσος.

Στο δρόμο την **είδε** ο Κακός Λύκος. «Τι ωραίο και παχουλό κοριτσάκι!» **είπε** μόνος του και **πήγε** κοντά της.

1. είχε	a. πάω	<i>είχα</i>	<i>είχαμε</i>
2. ήπια	b. βγαίνω	_____	_____
3. πήρε	c. βλέπω	_____	_____
4. βγήκε	d. έχω	_____	_____
5. πήγε	e. λέω	_____	_____
6. είδε	f. παίρνω	_____	_____
7. είπε	g. πίνω	_____	_____

2. ΜΕΡΟΣ Β΄

«Γεια σου, κοριτσάκι! Πώς σε λένε;» **είπε** ο Κακός Λύκος στην Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα.

«Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα».

«Τι; Δεν **άκουσα**».

«ΚΟΚΚΙΝΟΣΚΟΥΦΙΤΣΑ!»

«Πού πας, Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα;»

«Πάω στη γιαγιά μου».

Ο Κακός Λύκος **έφυγε** γρήγορα και **έφτασε** πρώτος στο σπίτι της γιαγιάς. **Έφαγε** τη γιαγιά, **έβαλε** τα ρούχα της και **περίμενε** την Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα πάνω στο κρεβάτι της γιαγιάς.

1. άκουσα	a. βάζω	_____	_____
2. έφυγε	b. περιμένω	_____	_____

3. έφτασε	c. φεύγω	_____	_____
4. έφαγε	d. ακούω	_____	_____
5. έβαλε	e. φτάνω	_____	_____
6. περίμενε	f. τρώω	_____	_____

3. ΜΕΡΟΣ Γ΄

Μετά από λίγο, **άνοιξε** η πόρτα και μπήκε μέσα η Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα.

«Γιαγιά, γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλα μάτια;» **ρώτησε** τον Κακό Λύκο.

«Για να σε βλέπω καλύτερα», **απάντησε** εκείνος.

«Και γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλα αφτιά;»

«Για να σε ακούω καλύτερα».

«Και γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλα δόντια;»

«Για να σε φάω καλύτερα!» είπε ο Λύκος και, χραπ!, έφαγε την Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα.

Τότε, ένας κυνηγός μπήκε στο σπίτι της γιαγιάς. **Σκότωσε** τον Κακό Λύκο και έσωσε την Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα και τη γιαγιά της. Μετά έκαναν ένα πάρτι που **άρχισε** το απόγευμα και **τελείωσε** το πρωί. Η γιαγιά **μαγείρεψε** παστίτσιο, η Κοκκινোসκουφίτσα **έφτιαξε** μοχίτο, ο κυνηγός **τραγούδησε** και όλοι μαζί **χόρεψαν** φλαμένκο. Και έζησαν αυτοί καλά κι εμείς καλύτερα.

1. άνοιξε	a. μαγειρεύω	_____	_____
2. ρώτησε	b. τελειώνω	_____	_____
3. απάντησε	c. φτιάχνω	_____	_____
4. σκότωσε	d. χορεύω	_____	_____
5. άρχισε	e. τραγουδάω	_____	_____
6. τελείωσε	f. σκοτώνω	_____	_____
7. μαγείρεψε	g. ανοίγω	_____	_____
8. έφτιαξε	h. απαντάω	_____	_____
9. τραγούδησε	i. αρχίζω	_____	_____
10. χόρεψαν	j. ρωτάω	_____	_____

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 8 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 9 | To the Future: The Modern Greek μέλλοντας and More

Let's start with the following scenario: Your roommate wants you to go to the super market. You hate going to the super market, and your roommate knows it. So she/he is trying to persuade you by saying:

- (1) If you go...
- (1a) ...I **will wash** the dishes.
- (1b) ...I **can wash** the dishes.
- (1c) ...I **am willing to wash** the dishes.
- (1d) ...I **promise to wash** the dishes.
- (1e) ...I **swear to wash** the dishes.

Washing the dishes (1a-e) is an action belonging to the future, in the sense that it will be fulfilled after the moment of speaking. This future action may be described by several means: by using the future simple (like in 1a) or an infinitive combined with the appropriate main verb (like in 1b-e). Infinitives originally refer to actions to be fulfilled at a time after the moment of speaking: If I promise to wash the dishes, then I am not washing the dishes now, but I will wash them later.

Verbs used in the present or the past come with an air of certainty. If I refer to a past or a present action I seem to be describing a fact and thus my words can easily be verified or contradicted. For example, if I say “It is raining” someone might open the window and check the truth of my statement. When it comes to the future, this air of certainty seems to fade. If I say “It is going to rain” nobody can check the truth of this statement and frankly nobody can be sure. A similar sense of uncertainty covers the area of intentions, volitions, obligations, abilities or possibilities, the typical area of the infinitive. Even if I swear to wash the dishes (like in 1e), nobody can be absolutely certain that I will keep my promise. In terms of meaning, then, infinitives share a common ground with future tenses, a fact that explains their formal resemblance in several languages. One of them is Modern Greek.

9.1 A Tense for the Future: the Modern Greek μέλλοντας

Modern Greek has several tenses related to the future, but the leading role is retained by the tense called (απλός) μέλλοντας, which is equivalent to the English future simple and the structure *be going to*.

The Unit brings only good news for absolute beginners. There is nothing basic you don't

know about the Modern Greek μέλλοντας. I just have to put things in order, add some details and let you enjoy the future.

9.1.1 The Form of μέλλοντας

Let me first give you some examples of verbs in the present, past, and future tenses:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|---------|-------------------|
| (2) | δουλεύω | δούλεψα | θα δουλέψω |
| | γράφω | έγραψα | θα γράψω |

Unlike the present and the past, the Modern Greek future is a periphrastic tense. In other words it is formed out of two components: the particle *θα* and the verbal form related to the future. *Θα* remains invariable through inflection, while the verbal form does not:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------|
| (3) | θα δουλέψω | ("I will work") |
| | θα δουλέψεις | ("you will work") |
| | etc. | |

Θα is absolutely obligatory for the future. To put it differently: If you don't have *θα*, then you have no future. People simply will not understand that you are referring to a future action.

Let's focus on the verbal form. The stem of the future is based on the perfective stem (check Unit 2.2.2 on [page 28](#)). Do you know this stem? Partially, you do. The perfective stem is also the basis for the Modern Greek *αόριστος*. This is why the past and future tenses seem to have an affinity that the present does not share:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|----------------|-------------------|
| (4) | δουλεύω | δούλεψα | θα δουλέψω |
| | γράφω | έγραψα | θα γράψω |

This affinity is a great help for you. It means that you can use the stem of the past tense in order to construct the perfective stem and then use it to make the future. All you have to do is take the stem of the past and remove any feature that is typical of the past:

- Remove the endings of the past:

- | | | |
|-----|---------|--------|
| (5) | δούλεψ- | έγραψ- |
|-----|---------|--------|

- Remove the stress. Remember that the trisyllabic rule (see Unit 8.1.2 on [page 115](#)) is also typical of the past. Accordingly you should remove the initial *έ-* when present. What you see below in capital letters is the perfective stem of these verbs:

(6) ΔΟΥΛΕΨ- ΓΡΑΨ-

In order to get the future you must follow these steps:

- Add the particle *θα*

(7) **θα** δουλεψ- **θα** γραψ-

- Restore the stress of the verb on its ordinary place, as it is in the present:

(8) θα δουλέψ- θα γράψ-

- Add the endings of the future. These endings are not something new. They come directly from the present tense. Compare the following:

(9)	δουλεύω	θα δουλέψω	γράφω	θα γράψω
	δουλεύεις	θα δουλέψεις	γράφεις	θα γράψεις
	etc.		etc.	

This is it! As you see, there is absolutely nothing new to learn about the future.

Time for practice: What about the future tense of the verbs *πλένω* and *γυρίζω*?

Let's start with *πλένω*. It is an irregular verb, so you are supposed to have memorized its past form (but if you haven't, go back to Table 8.4 on [page 115](#)). OK, the past is *έπλυνα*. In order to get the perfective stem you have to remove everything that belongs to the past. What you have is this:

(10) ΠΛΥΝ-

You are ready now to add the features of the future:

(11) **θα** πλύνω

Let's go to *γυρίζω*. It is a regular verb, so you can follow the procedure by yourselves:

(12) γυρίζω → γύρισα → ΓΥΡΙΣ- → **θα** γυρίσω

It is now time to focus on two somewhat problematic points of the future:

- The relationship between the future and the past stem is less clear when it comes to the irregular verbs of the following table (most of them have irregular past forms and belong to

Group 1 of Table 8.3 on [page 115](#)). Here again you will have to use your memory and not your reason. (If you need to check the meaning of the verbs, go to the Appendix on [page 162](#). The same holds for the following Tables.)

PRESENT	PAST	FUTURE
βγαίνω	βγήκα	θα βγω
βλέπω	είδα	θα δω
βρίσκω	βρήκα	θα βρω
έρχομαι	ήρθα	θα έρθω
έχω	είχα	θα έχω
λέω	είπα	θα πω
μπαίνω	μπήκα	θα μπω
παίρνω	πήρα	θα πάρω
πηγαίνω/πάω	πήγα	θα πάω
πίνω	ήπια	θα πιω
τρώω	έφαγα	θα φάω

Table 9.1: *Verbs with an Irregular Future.*

- Verbs in the future are inflected like the present, but which one? (Please note that the Modern Greek present is not homogeneous.) The answer is rather simple: they go according to the inflectional model they look like. Take the following examples:

(13)	γράφω	→	θα γράψω
	τρώω	→	θα φάω
	λέω	→	θα πω

In *θα γράψω* there is a consonant before the (unstressed) *-ω*, therefore the future goes like group A1 (see Unit 4.1.1 on [page 54](#)). *Θα φάω* looks very much like group A2 (see Unit 4.1.2 on [page 55](#)), while *θα πω* goes like group B2 (see Unit 4.1.4 on [page 57](#)). Therefore there are three inflectional models of the future (group B1 has no representatives in the future):

	(A1)	(A2)	(B2)
SINGULAR			
1st	θα γράψω	θα φάω	θα πω
2nd	θα γράψεις	θα φας	θα πεις
3rd	θα γράψει	θα φάει	θα πει

Table 9.2: *The Inflectional Models of the Future.*

	(A1)	(A2)	(B2)
PLURAL			
1st	θα γράψουμε	θα φάμε	θα πούμε
2nd	θα γράψετε	θα φάτε	θα πείτε
3rd	θα γράψουν(ε)	θα φάνε	θα πουν(ε)

Table 9.2: *The Inflectional Models of the Future.*

The vast majority of verbs in the future go like group A1, and there are only few verbs left for groups A2 and B2.

The affinity between the past and future stems may work the other way round. If your coursebook introduces the future prior to the past, all you have to do is follow the opposite procedure:

- Remove the particle *θα*, the stress, and the endings of the future. What you will get is the perfective stem:

(I) θα δουλέψω → ΔΟΥΛΕΨ-
 θα γράψω → ΓΡΑΨ-

- Now you are ready to apply the rules of the past: add the endings and the stress following the tri-syllabic rule.

(II) ΔΟΥΛΕΨ- → δούλεψα
 ΓΡΑΨ- → έγραψα

9.1.2 The Use of μέλλοντας

The Modern Greek simple future is used to describe actions that are going to take place after the moment of speaking. Therefore, it typically combines with three major groups of adverbials:

- Adverbs related to the future:

αύριο	“tomorrow”
μεθαύριο	“the day after tomorrow”
του χρόνου	“next year”

Table 9.3: *Adverbs Related to the Future.*

- Prepositional phrases introduced by *σε*:

(14) Σε δύο μέρες / εβδομάδες / μήνες θα πάω στην Αθήνα.
 “I will go to Athens **in** two days / weeks / months.”

- The single (non-prepositional) temporal accusative modified by the adjectives *άλλος* (“other”) / *επόμενος* (“next”):

(15a) Την **άλλη** / **επόμενη** εβδομάδα θα πάμε στην Αθήνα.

“We will go to Athens **next week**.”

(15b) Τον **άλλο** / **επόμενο** μήνα θα πάω στην Κρήτη.

“I will go to Crete **next month**.”

The future is also compatible with several time expressions typically related to the present:

(III) Θα έρθω **σήμερα**.

“I will come **today**.”

The interrogative and the negative versions of the future are no surprise. As with the present or the past tenses, they are formed by intonation and the addition of the particle *δεν* (always before the particle *θα*) respectively:

(IVa) Θα πάει σινεμά.

“She/He will go to the movies.”

(IVb) Θα πάει σινεμά;

“**Will** she/he go to the movies?”

(IVc) **Δεν** θα πάει σινεμά.

“She/He **will not** go to the movies.”

Personal pronouns must be posited right before the “real” verb of the verbal construction (see Unit 6.1 on [page 84](#)).

(V) A: Θα δεις **τον Πέτρο**; “Will you see Peter?”

B1: Ναι, θα **τον** δω. “Yes, I will see him.”

B2: Όχι, δεν θα **τον** δω. “No, I won’t see him.”

9.2 The Modern Greek “Infinitive”

The semantic affinity between future tenses and infinitives across languages is the basis for the formal affinity between the Modern Greek future simple and the Modern Greek “infinitive”. And this is where there are really good news for absolute beginners.

9.2.1 The Form of the “Infinitive”

Check the following sentences:

(16a) **Θα οδηγήσω.** (FUTURE SIMPLE)
“I will drive.”

(16b) **Θέλω να οδηγήσω.** (“INFINITIVE”)
“I want to drive.”

In order to form the “infinitive” all you have to do is take the verb in the future and replace *θα* with *να*, which is equivalent to the English *to*.

Keep in mind that the Modern Greek “infinitive” is a rather peculiar case of “infinitive” (the technical term for it is “subjunctive”). Let’s start with the following examples:

(17a) **Θέλω να οδηγήσω.**
“I want to **drive**.”

(17b) **Θέλει να οδηγήσει.**
“**She/He** wants to **drive**.”

(17c) **Θέλουμε να οδηγήσουμε.**
“**We** want to **drive**.”

Unlike English infinitives, and infinitives in general, the Modern Greek “infinitive” is inflected according to person and number. It then forms an entire inflectional model, which copies the inflectional models of the future (with *να* replacing *θα*). Compare to Table 9.2 on [page 128](#):

	(A1)	(A2)	(B2)
SINGULAR			
1st	να γράψω	να φάω	να πω
2nd	να γράψεις	να φας	να πεις
3rd	να γράψει	να φάει	να πει
PLURAL			
1st	να γράψουμε	να φάμε	να πούμε
2nd	να γράψετε	να φάτε	να πείτε
3rd	να γράψουν(ε)	να φάνε	να πουν(ε)

Table 9.4: *The Inflectional Models of the “Infinitive”.*

Let's see now the following sentences:

(18a) **Θέλω να οδηγήσω.**

“I want (-) to drive.”

(18b) **Θέλω να οδηγήσεις.**

“I want **you** to drive.”

In 18a the speaker has an intention that will be fulfilled by himself. In 18b, the speaker has an intention that will be fulfilled by another person. In order to express the difference, you simply change the person of the “infinitive” according to the person who will perform the action.

9.2.2 The Use of the “Infinitive”

“Infinitives” depend on other verbs, called main verbs (usually modal verbs like *must*, *should*, *may* etc.). Here is a list of basic verbs for levels A1-A2:

θέλω	πρέπει
μπορώ	μπορεί
προτιμώ	χρειάζεται
προσπαθώ	
λέω	
σκέφτομαι	
πάω	
έχω	

Table 9.5: Verbs with an “Infinitive” as a Complement.

A few remarks about main verbs:

- All main verbs require a full “infinitive”. In other words, in Modern Greek you cannot remove *να* from the “infinitive”:

(19a) **Θέλω να οδηγήσω.**

“I **want to** drive.”

(19b) **Μπορώ να οδηγήσω.**

“I **can (-)** drive.”

- Unlike the verbs of the left column that vary according to person, the verbs of the right column do not:

(20a) **Θέλει** να γράψει ένα γράμμα.
“She/He **wants** to write a letter.”

(20b) **Θέλουμε** να γράψουμε ένα γράμμα.
“We **want** to write a letter.”

(20c) **Πρέπει** να γράψει ένα γράμμα.
“She/He **must** write a letter.”

(20d) **Πρέπει** να γράψουμε ένα γράμμα.
“We **must** write a letter.”

Verbs like *πρέπει* (equivalent to *must*, *ought to*, *should*) have only one form (usually taken from the third person singular) to denote all persons. In terms of meaning such verbs have no person (this is why they are called “impersonal” in grammar) and the person is taken from the “infinitive”.

- Let’s go now to issues of meaning. Most verbs on the list may be used with or without an “infinitive” and retain the same meaning everywhere:

(21a) **Θέλω** μια μπίρα.
“I **want/need** a beer”.

(21b) **Θέλω** να πω μια μπίρα.
“I **want/need** to have a beer.”

Some verbs, though, come with a different meaning when used as main verbs:

(22a) **Λέω** την αλήθεια. / **Λέω** ψέματα.
“I **tell** the truth.” / “I **tell** lies.”

(22b) **Λέω** να πάω σινεμά.
“I am **planning** to go to the movies.”
“I am **thinking** about going to the movies.”
“I am **considering** going to the movies.”

The structure *πάω*+ “*infinitive*” is not equivalent to the English *be going to*. The Modern Greek construction is still closer to motion, and the sense of futurity is rather weak.

There is a significant difference between the personal *μπορώ* and the impersonal *μπορεί*. The first expresses ability, while the second expresses probability.

(VIa) **Μπορώ** να οδηγήσω.

“I **can** drive.” / “I **am able** to drive.”

(VIb) **Μπορεί** να οδηγήσω.

“I **may** drive.” / “**Maybe** I’ll drive.”

What about the following sentence?

(VII) Ο Πέτρος **μπορεί** να οδηγήσει.

The above sentence may have two readings: a) Peter *is able* to drive, and b) *Maybe* Peter will drive. This happens because the verb is in the third person singular so you cannot know a priori whether it represents the personal *μπορώ* or the impersonal *μπορεί*. How can we tell which one is the correct reading? It is the context now that helps us decide about the most appropriate reading.

Χρειάζεται is the impersonal version of the verb *χρειάζομαι* (“to need”). It usually comes as part of interrogative or negative sentences:

(VIIIa) **Χρειάζεται** να πάρω ομπρέλα;

“**Do** I **need** to take an umbrella?”

(VIIIb) **Δεν** **χρειάζεται** να πάρεις ομπρέλα.

“You **do not need** to take an umbrella.”

- Main verbs may be explicit or implicit (presupposed) in sentences like the following:

(23a) (-) να φάω τα πατατάκια;

(23b) (-) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου.

Here the missing main verb can be reconstructed by the context. I would easily choose *μπορώ* for sentence 23a, and *πρέπει* or *θέλω* for sentence 23b:

(24a) (**Μπορώ**) να φάω τα πατατάκια;

(“**May** I eat the potato chips?”)

(24b) (**Θέλω**) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου. / (**Πρέπει**) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου.

“I **want** you to go to your room.” / “You **must** go to your room.”

An implicit main verb is typical of actions with a social relevance, like asking for permission or giving orders. In terms of social convenience, omitting the main verb would make things easier for the one who is asking for something (as in 23a) or the one who is asked to do something (as in 23b).

Let's now focus again on “infinitives” inside these structures. What you should keep in mind are the following:

- Modern Greek “infinitives” are tenseless. Their relevance to time is taken up by the main verb:

(25a) **Μπορώ** να οδηγήσω.

“I **can** drive.”

(25b) **Μπόρεσα** να οδηγήσω.

“I **was able** to drive.” / “I **could** drive.”

(25c) **Θα μπορέσω** να οδηγήσω.

“I **will be able** to drive.”

- Questions with an “infinitive” are again easy to form:

(26) Θέλεις να οδηγήσεις;

“**Do** you want to drive?”

- “Infinitives” combine with the negative particle *μην* instead of *δεν*:

(27) Θέλω **να μην** οδηγήσω σήμερα

“I want **not to** drive today.” = “I’d **rather not** drive today.”

Notice that negating the “infinitive” is not totally equivalent to negating the main verb:

(28a) **Δεν** θέλω να οδηγήσω.

“I **don’t** want to drive today.”

(28b) Θέλω να **μην** οδηγήσω σήμερα.

“I’d rather **not** drive today.”

Considering similar constructions (see Units 6.1 on [page 84](#) and 9.1.2 on [page 130](#)), the position of the personal pronouns is not a surprise. Notice, though, that such a pronoun must stay within the scope of the “infinitive” and not attach itself to the main verb (check the incor-

rect B3).

- (29) A: Θέλεις να δεις **τον Πέτρο**; “Do you want to see **Peter**?”
 B1: Ναι, θέλω να **τον** δω. “Yes, I want to see **him**.”
 B2: Όχι, δεν θέλω να **τον** δω. “No, I don’t want to see **him**.”
 B3: ☹ Ναι, **τον** θέλω να δω.

After a painful present and past, the future is really nicer for the verb “to be”. All you have to do is add *θα* or *να* to its present and take the future simple or the “infinitive” (*θα είμαι*, *να είμαι*).

9.3 Back to Conditional Clauses

Having acquired the necessary grammar, let’s go back to conditional clauses:

- (30a) Αν **πεινάς**, θα βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
 “If you **are hungry**, you will find some food in the fridge.”
- (30b) Αν (**θα**) **πεινάσεις**, θα βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
 “If you **get hungry**, you will find some food in the fridge.”

Example 30a refers to a present situation, and the tense of the if-clause is the present. Example 30b refers to a future situation, and the tense of the if-clause is the future simple, with the particle *θα* being explicit or implicit. Both examples illustrate factual conditionals, that is conditionals whose conclusion seems possible.

Let’s see the following cases:

- (31a) Αν πεινάσεις, **θα βρεις** φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
 “If you get hungry, you **will find** some food in the fridge.”
- (31b) Αν πεινάσεις, **μπορείς να βρεις** φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
 “If you get hungry, you **can find** some food in the fridge.”

The conclusion of a factual conditional may be represented by the future tense or an “infinitive”.

What about counterfactual conditionals? At this moment you simply cannot do it. Counterfactual conditionals need a lot more regarding the verbal system, which makes them part of levels B2 or C1.

Έλα!

This is one of the first words absolute beginners recognize within the flow of fast everyday Modern Greek as spoken by natives. *Έλα* is equivalent to *Come!*. Apart from its common use, it appears in several contexts with a variable meaning. People answer their phone saying *έλα!* when they see a call from a friend. People say *έλα!* when they hear something which is hard to believe. People also say *έλα!* when they want to express irony. Finally, people say *έλα!* when they need to hear something again.

In terms of grammar *έλα!* represents the imperative of the verb *έρχομαι*. Imperatives express commands, that is direct requests, which are not to be questioned. Commands come with an air of authority that excludes them from the area of politeness (see Chapter 6 on [page 93](#)). Most of the time people instead of the imperative people prefer to use a structure with the “infinitive” in order to sound less forceful:

(IX) **Έλα τώρα!** = **Μπορείς να έρθεις τώρα;** / **Θέλω να έρθεις τώρα.**

“Come now!” = “Can you come now?” / “I want you to come now.”

Imperatives love any context that does not require politeness. Therefore they are typical in informal everyday situations, as well as situations where a command would be appreciated by the recipient. If I were directing a (desperate) unknown driver park her/his car in a narrow place, I would use lots of imperatives and she/he would not mind at all.

Imperatives represent another chapter of the Modern Greek grammar, which is usually part of levels B1-B2. As absolute beginners then you should stick to indirect requests as expressed by the “infinitive”. But still I believe you should know some basic imperatives of everyday use:

(X)	(αφήνω)	άσε	“leave”, “let”
	(δίνω)	δώσε	“give”
	(κάθομαι)	κάθισε/κάτσε	“sit”
	(κοιτάζω)	κοίτα	“look”
	(πάω)	πήγαινε/άντε	“go”
	(παίρνω)	πάρε	“take”, “get”
	(φεύγω)	φύγε	“go away”

SUMMARY

Future tenses and infinitives share a common ground in terms of meaning, which explains their formal resemblance in several languages (one of them is Modern Greek). Chapter 9 introduces the Modern Greek μέλλοντας and “infinitive” in terms of their form and use.

KEY WORDS

future, future simple (μέλλοντας), “infinitive” (subjunctive), main verb, perfective stem

EXERCISES

1. Τι θα κάνεις αν... Match the conditional clauses with the appropriate conclusion.

1. Αν βρεις ένα πορτοφόλι με 150 ευρώ...
2. Αν συναντήσεις έναν παλιό σου φίλο στον δρόμο...
3. Αν δεν υπάρχει τίποτα στο ψυγείο...
4. Αν πας στην Ιταλία...
5. Αν πας σινεμά...
6. Αν έχεις πονοκέφαλο...

- a. ...Θα πάρεις μια ασπιρίνη.
- b. ...Θα στείλεις μια κάρτα στους γονείς σου.
- c. ...Θα κλείσεις το κινητό σου.
- d. ...Θα το πας στην αστυνομία.
- e. ...Θα πάτε μαζί για καφέ.
- f. ...Θα πας να φας έναν γύρο.

2. Τι μπορούμε να κάνουμε... Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the verb.

1. ... με ένα κουτάλι. Μπορούμε _____ (τρώω) σούπα.
2. ... με ένα μαχαίρι. Μπορούμε _____ (κόβω) ψωμί.
3. ... με ένα κομπιούτερ. Μπορούμε _____ (στέλνω) μέιλ.
4. ... με ένα ποδήλατο. Μπορούμε _____ (πάω) βόλτα.
5. ... με μια μπάλα. Μπορούμε _____ (παίζω) βόλεϊ.
6. ... με τέσσερα αυγά και λίγο τυρί. Μπορούμε _____ (φτιάχνω) ομελέτα.

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 9 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 10 | Back to Nouns: Genitive Case

Nouns are usually preceded by words that provide extra information about them. This is the case with articles, numerals, simple or pronominal adjectives (see Chapters 5 on [page 66](#) and 6 on [page 82](#)).

(1a) **αυτό το παλιό αυτοκίνητο**
“**this (-) old car**”

(1b) **δύο παλιά αυτοκίνητα**
“**two old cars**”

Is there anything to come after the noun? Yes, other nouns. One such case is familiar to you as apposition (see Unit 3.2.3 on [page 40](#)):

(2) **Ο άντρας της, ο Πέτρος**, είναι από τον Καναδά.
“**Her husband, Peter**, is from Canada.”

Apposition is not unique in this respect. Check the following sentence:

(3) **Ο άντρας της Μαρίας** είναι από τον Καναδά.
“**Mary’s husband** is from Canada.”

The phrases in blue letters in sentences 2 and 3 modify the “head” noun *άντρας*, but in a different way. Peter and the husband in 2 refer to the same person (Peter is simply the name of the husband). Mary and the husband in 3 obviously refer to two different persons (Mary is the name of the wife). Syntactically, identity of reference like in 2 is the basis for agreement (in this case the nouns share the same gender, number, and case). Difference of reference like in 3 explains the lack of agreement between the two nouns. In the case of 3 the nouns differ in gender and case (sameness of number is only accidental here). The phrase *ο άντρας* represents the nominative, as you already know. The phrase *της Μαρίας* represents the genitive case, the third of the three major cases of the Modern Greek case system.

10.1 The Use of the Genitive

Unlike the nominative or the accusative cases, whose roles are related to major constituents of the sentence like the subject or the object, the genitive keeps a rather secondary role:

- (4a) Ο άντρας της **Μαρίας** είναι από τον Καναδά.
 “**Mary’s** husband is from Canada.”

- (4b) Ξέρω τον άντρα της **Μαρίας**.
 “I know **Mary’s** husband.”

The phrase *της Μαρίας*, a typical genitive, depends on the “head” noun *άντρας* in 4a-b. Note that the genitive is not affected by any shift in the case of the “head” noun. Note also that it always follows the “head” noun, never precedes it.

The genitive may also depend on a “head” noun in the genitive, as in the following example:

- (I) Έχω το τηλέφωνο του άντρα της **Μαρίας**.
 “I have the phone number **of Mary’s** husband.”

As far as meaning is concerned, the genitive covers a wide range of semantic relations. Among them, possession is perhaps the most elementary and easy to perceive. The genitive establishes a relation between the possessor (the noun in the genitive) and the possessed entity (the “head” noun).

- (5a) το σπίτι της **Μαρίας**
 “**Mary’s** house”

- (5b) η μύτη της **Μαρίας**
 “**Mary’s** nose”

- (5c) η μητέρα της **Μαρίας**
 “**Mary’s** mother”

Sentence 5a illustrates typical possession (you can sell your house), while sentences 5b-c are instances of natural possession (a nose or a mother are not things to be sold, but you’ve still got them).

Typical possession in Modern Greek may be mediated by the verb *είμαι*:

- (II) Αυτό το σπίτι **είναι** της **Μαρίας**.
 “This house **belongs** to **Mary**”.

The genitive also covers relationships that can hardly be perceived as possessives:

(6a) η παραίτηση **της Μαρίας**
 “**Mary’s** resignation”

(6b) η απόλυση **της Μαρίας**
 “**Mary’s** dismissal”

Here the “head” noun is usually an abstract noun deriving from a verb. If I turned this noun into the verb it derives from, the genitive would have to be the subject or the object of the verb (*Mary’s resignation* = Mary [SUBJ.] *resigned*).

The above examples illustrate only some basic uses of the Modern Greek genitive. After examining the form of the genitive I shall come back to matters of use in Unit 10.3 on [page 145](#).

10.2 The Form of the Genitive

Let’s see how the genitive works for major categories of Modern Greek nouns and noun-dependent words. As we did with the accusative, here again our starting point will be the nominative.

10.2.1 The Genitive of Nouns

	NOMINATIVE	GENITIVE
MASCULINE	ο δρόμος	του δρόμου
	ο άντρας	του άντρα
	ο χάρτης	του χάρτη
FEMININE	η ώρα	της ώρας
	η ζώνη	της ζώνης
NEUTER	το βιβλίο	του βιβλίου
	το παιδί	του παιδιού
	το πράγμα	του πράγματος

Table 10.1: *Genitive Singular for Basic Modern Greek Nouns.*

A few remarks about the genitive:

- Like with the accusative, the shift from the nominative to the genitive involves shifts in the definite article and in the ending of the noun.

(7) ο δρόμος → του δρόμου
 η ώρα → της ώρας
 το βιβλίο → του βιβλίου

- Like in the case of the plural, the genitive seems to obscure the boundaries between gender groups. Masculine nouns in *-ος* and neuter nouns in *-ο* behave the same way:

(8) **ο** δρόμος → **του** δρόμου
 το βιβλίο → **του** βιβλίου

- Masculine nouns in *-ας / -ης* and feminine nouns in *-α / -η* follow a complementary pattern. The former remove their final *-ς*, while the latter take a final *-ς*:

(9) ο άντρας → του άντρα
 ο χάρτης → του χάρτη
 η ώρα → της ώρας
 η ζώνη → της ζώνης

- Finally, neuter nouns ending in *-ι* or *-μα* behave in a similar way, since they get an additional unit. Note that for neuters in *-ι* the stress falls obligatorily on this unit:

(10) το παιδί → του παιδι**ού**
 το σπίτι → του σπι**τιού**
 το γράμμα → του γράμμα**τος**

Listen again to the words *παιδιού*, *σπιτιού*. Do you hear the [i] before the new ending? I guess you don't. Why? The now unstressed [i] comes before a stressed vowel and as a result it turns into a consonant (see Unit 1.6.2 on [page 13](#)).

Neuter nouns in *-μα* acquire this additional unit as an extra syllable. So, when the noun in the nominative is stressed on the third syllable, there is a problem: No Modern Greek word can be stressed beyond the antepenultimate syllable. In order to avoid this problem, the stress moves to the next syllable on the right.

(III) το διαμέρισμα → του διαμερί**σματος**

- All nouns share the same genitive plural regarding the article and the endings:

(11) (ο δρόμος) → **των** δρόμων
 (η ώρα) → **των** ωρών
 (το βιβλίο) → **των** βιβλίων

This sounds like good news, but it's not. Check the noun *ώρα*. As you see, there is a shift in the position of the stress. The genitive (not only in the plural, but also in the singular) involves such shifts. You will have to wait for levels B1-B2 in order to have an overview of these shifts.

10.2.2 The Genitive of Noun-Dependent Words

As you already know, adjectives follow the inflectional model of some categories of nouns (see Unit 5.4). This is also true about the genitive, and here is how it goes:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
SINGULAR	ακριβοῦ	ακριβῆς	ακριβοῦ
PLURAL	ακριβών		
SINGULAR	νέου	νέας	νέου
PLURAL	νέων		

Table 10.2: Genitive Singular and Plural for Basic Modern Greek Adjectives.

The same holds for every regular adjective or pronoun of Chapters 5 and 6. There are, however, irregular cases in which you might need some help:

(ποιος)	→	ποιανού / τίνος
(ένας - ένα)	→	ενός - ενός
(κανένας - κανένα)	→	κανενός - κανενός
(τρεις - τρία)	→	τριών - τριών
(τέσσερις - τέσσερα)	→	τεσσάρων - τεσσάρων

Table 10.3: The Genitive of Irregular Noun-Dependent Words.

How Old Are You?

“How old are you” in Modern Greek goes like this:

(IV) **Πόσων χρονών** είσαι;

The idiom involves the genitive of the noun *χρόνος* (“year”). Accordingly the answer involves the genitive, and consequently a problem if your age includes the irregular numerals of Table 10.3:

(Va) Είμαι είκοσι **ενός** χρονών.

(Vb) Είμαι τριάντα **τριών** χρονών.

(Vc) Είμαι εξήντα **τεσσάρων** χρονών.

10.2.3 Possessive Pronouns: *μου / σου / του*

When a genitive needs not be present in speech again and again, possessive pronouns are here to help.

(12) **Mary's** nose is big. **Her** eyes are blue...

Modern Greek possessive pronouns follow the syntax of the genitive case. This is why they always follow the “head” noun (note that the “head” noun is always preceded by the definite article in such constructions).

(13) **το σπίτι της Μαρίας / το σπίτι της**
“**Mary's** house” / “**her** house”

In terms of agreement, Modern Greek possessive pronouns must have the same gender, number and case with the genitive they are to replace:

(14) το σπίτι **της Μαρίας** / το σπίτι **της**
το σπίτι **του Πέτρου** / το σπίτι **του**
το σπίτι **του παιδιού** / το σπίτι **του**

The full group of Modern Greek possessive pronouns is the following:

SINGULAR		
1st	μου	“my”
2nd	σου	“your”
3rd	του / της / του	“his” / “her” / “its”
PLURAL		
1st	μας	“our”
2nd	σας	“your”
3rd	τους	“their”

Table 10.4: *Possessive Pronouns.*

The pronouns of the 3rd person replace nouns in the genitive. What about the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person? They replace nothing. In fact, they represent the only way to refer to “I” or “You” inside a possessive relationship.

Modern Greek possessive pronouns are phonetically weak words, words without an inherent stress. In order to acquire one, they are taken together with the “head” noun, to create a larger phonetic unit:

(VI) το σπίτι μου
[to spítimu]

What if the “head” noun is stressed on the antepenultimate?

(VII) το τηλέφωνο μου
[to tilefonomu]

Now this larger phonetic is stressed beyond the antepenultimate, a problem for the rules of the Modern Greek stress. This is why such units develop a secondary stress:

(VIII) το τηλέφωνό μου
[to tilefonomu]

This secondary stress is stronger than the initial one, and always falls on the last syllable of the “head” noun:

(IX) το αυτοκίνητό μου
το διαμέρισμά μου

10.3 Back to Use: “Categorical” Genitive

Compare the following sentences:

- (15a) Η Άννα θέλει ένα ποτήρι **νερό**.
(15b) Η Άννα θέλει ένα ποτήρι **του νερού**.

Anna of sentence 15a needs a glass *full* of water (see Unit 3.2.3 on [page 40](#)). Anna of sentence 15b does not need a glass full of water. She needs a specific type of glass *made to* drink water. The genitive in this case is used as a means to categorize glasses according to their type or function.

- (16a) ποτήρι **του νερού** (ποτήρι **για το νερό**)
(16b) ποτήρι **της μπίρας** (ποτήρι **για την μπίρα**)
(16c) ποτήρι **του κρασιού** (ποτήρι **για το κρασί**)

The “categorical” genitive is really extended in Modern Greek to cover numerous items of everyday life. Here is a short list:

(17)	κουτάλι (της) σούπας	“soup spoon = big spoon”
	κουτάλι / κουταλάκι (του) γλυκού	“tea spoon”
	φλιτζάνι (του) καφέ	“coffee cup”
	φλιτζάνι (του) τσαγιού	“tea cup”
	σοκολάτα υγείας	“bitter chocolate”
	σοκολάτα γάλακτος	“plain chocolate”
	γυαλιά ηλίου	“sun glasses”
	χαρτί υγείας	“[hygienic] tissue paper”
	φακοί επαφής	“contact lenses”

Note that the definite article may be omitted, a sign that the genitive and the “head” noun usually come together to form a periphrasis.

“Categorical” genitive can be paraphrased by the preposition *για* (κουτάλι της σούπας = κουτάλι *για* τη σούπα), but also by other prepositions such as *από* (φέτα Ηπείρου=φέτα *από* την Ήπειρο, see below), even by an adjective: *σοκολάτα υγείας* equals to *bitter chocolate*.

Φέτα

Φέτα is a popular Greek white cheese made from sheep’s milk or goat’s and sheep’s milk. It has been a protected designation of origin product (PDO, or *ΠΟΠ* in Modern Greek). According to the relevant legislation, only some areas of Greece (the mainland and the islands that belong to the prefecture of Lesbos) may use the term “feta” for the white cheese they produce, provided they use this kind of milk in fixed proportions and follow traditional practices.

Φέτα does not taste the same throughout these areas. *Φέτα* from *Τρίπολη* (a city in the Peloponnese) is famous for its spicy aftertaste, while *φέτα* from *Ήπειρος* is equally famous for its mild taste. It is then important to know where *φέτα* comes from. This is where the “categorical” genitive comes to make things clear:

- (X) *φέτα* **Τριπόλεως**
 φέτα **Ηπείρου**

SUMMARY

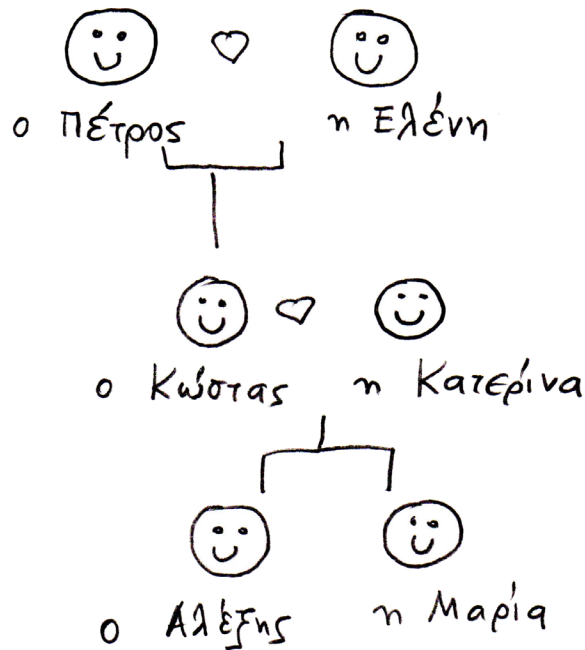
Chapter 10 introduces the genitive case of nouns and noun-dependent words and exemplifies its use taking possessive relations as a starting point. The chapter also examines possessive pronouns because of their syntactic and semantic affinity with the genitive.

KEY WORDS

genitive case, "head" noun, possession, possessive pronouns, "categorical" genitive

EXERCISES







1. Here is a typical Greek family. Check the family tree and fill in the blanks with the appropriate name in the genitive.



1. Ο Κώστας είναι ο μπαμπάς _____ και _____.
2. Η Ελένη είναι η μαμά _____ και η γιαγιά _____ και _____.
3. Η Κατερίνα είναι η γυναίκα _____.
4. Ο Πέτρος είναι ο άντρας _____.
5. Η Μαρία είναι η κόρη _____ και _____.
6. Ο Αλέξης είναι ο αδερφός _____.
7. Ο Κώστας είναι ο γιος _____ και _____.
8. Η Μαρία είναι η αδερφή _____.

2. What is this? Match the pictures with the sentences.

1. Είναι τα μουστάκια μιας γάτας.
2. Είναι η ουρά ενός σκύλου.
3. Είναι η μύτη ενός ελέφαντα.
4. Είναι τα πόδια ενός πουλιού.
5. Είναι η ουρά ενός ψαριού.
6. Είναι το στόμα ενός κροκόδειλου.

a. 
b. 
c. 
d. 
e. 
f. 

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 10 press here www.moderngreek.eu

CHAPTER 11 | Beyond Grammar: Some Notes on Vocabulary

Languages may resemble or differ in terms of their grammar. Languages may also resemble or differ in terms of their vocabulary. Now that the basic Modern Greek grammar is practically over, let me bring the Modern Greek vocabulary into foreground. For the last few pages of this grammar book, we shall leave the grammar aside and focus on vocabulary units (single words or periphrases) as such, and not as parts of an example used to illustrate the grammar. The emphasis will be on the peculiarities of the Modern Greek vocabulary, which usually cause confusion to learners of Modern Greek. The point of departure will be the English vocabulary, but I believe you will be able to find analogies with your mother tongue.

11.1 Lexical Asymmetries

Most words from English seem to have an equivalent in Modern Greek. *Expensive* is ακριβός, *table* is equivalent to τραπέζι, etc. etc.

Let's now check the following examples:

(1a) Έχασα τα κλειδιά μου.
“I **lost** my keys.”

(1b) Έχασα το λεωφορείο.
“I **missed** the bus.”

In this case two English words correspond to just one Modern Greek word. This is an instance of lexical asymmetry between the two languages. This kind of asymmetry can be found in *count* and *measure* (both are equivalent to μετράω), *hear* and *listen* (ακούω stands for both of them), or *sorry* and *excuse me* (both are represented by συγγνώμη). This kind of asymmetry is not a problem for you. You can simply enjoy the fact that you have to learn only one new word instead of two (or more). But still you need to know which words to equal to this new word.

Let's now see the following sentences:

(2a) Σκέφτομαι τον Πέτρο.
“I am **thinking** of / about Peter.”

(2b) Νομίζω ότι έχει δίκιο.
“I **think** he is right.”

Now one English word corresponds to two Modern Greek words. This is again a lexical asymmetry. But this time the asymmetry is not that easy to handle. You must have some sort of directions in order to determine how to use each Modern Greek word properly.

The previous examples illustrate only some clear cases of lexical asymmetries. I believe they were enough to make you realize what we are talking about. Having these in mind, let's now turn to some basic cases of lexical asymmetry between English and Modern Greek:

ακόμα

ακόμα is a word with several meanings depending on the context:

- In affirmative sentences, *ακόμα* means *still*:

(3) Είμαι **ακόμα** στην Αθήνα.
“I am **still** in Athens.”

- In negative sentences it is equivalent to *yet*:

(4) **Δεν** έφτασα **ακόμα** στην Αθήνα.
“I have **not** arrived to Athens **yet**.”

- Finally, taken together with a quantifier, *ακόμα* is equivalent to *more*:

(5) Θα ήθελα **λίγο** καφέ **ακόμα**.
“I would like **some more** coffee.”

άντρας - γυναίκα - παιδί

Apart from their primary biological meaning (“man”, “woman”, “child” / “kid”), in everyday language these words are widely used with different meanings.

- The words *άντρας - γυναίκα* equal to “husband” and “wife”. In this case they are usually followed by a possessive pronoun:

(6) Χαιρετίσματα **στον άντρα σου**.
“My regards to **your husband**.”

- The word *παιδί* usually is equivalent to “guy”, “champ”, “fellow”:

[the speaker is an elderly person]

(7) Ο Γιάννης είναι καλό **παιδί**.

Γιάννης in the above sentence may very well be 80 years old and still be a nice *παιδί*.

Notice that unlike the English *man*, the word *άντρας* cannot refer to human beings in gen-

eral, but only to males. There is another word equal to *human being*: *άνθρωπος*. *Άνθρωπος* may look better than *man* regarding sex discrimination, but is it? Its gender is masculine, not feminine or neuter.

γιατί - επειδή

Clauses of cause/reason in Modern Greek may be introduced either by *γιατί* or by *επειδή*. The two words basically differ in terms of syntax: A clause introduced by *επειδή* may precede or follow the main clause, but a clause introduced by *γιατί* can only follow it:

- (8a) Πέρασε το τεστ **γιατί** / **επειδή** διάβασε πολύ.
 “She/He passed the test **because** she/he studied hard.”

- (8b) **Επειδή** / ☹️ **Γιατί** διάβασε πολύ, πέρασε το τεστ.
 “**Because** she/he studied hard, she/he passed the test.”

Γιατί (unlike *επειδή*) is also used in direct or indirect questions (see Unit 7.3 on [page 109](#)).

Apart from syntax, *γιατί* and *επειδή* seem to differ in terms of meaning. Let me introduce an elementary scenario. Peter’s mother is talking to her mother in law. She is saying that John is Peter’s best friend. Peter, who is present, interrupts his mother saying:

- (Ia) Δεν είναι (ο Γιάννης) ο πιο καλός μου φίλος, **γιατί** / **επειδή** μαλώσαμε.
 “John is not my best friend, **because** we had a fight.”

- (Ib) Δεν είναι (ο Γιάννης) ο πιο καλός μου φίλος, **γιατί** / ☹️ **επειδή** ο πιο καλός μου φίλος είναι ο Κώστας.

“John is not my best friend, **because** my best friend is Costas.”

The clause introduced by *γιατί/επειδή* (Ia) represents a clear case of cause-effect relations. Peter had a fight with John, *so* John is not Peter’s best friend. The clause introduced by *γιατί* (Ib) represents a more elaborated cause-effect relation. Costas is Peter’s best friend, *therefore* the mother cannot claim that John is Peter’s best friend.

διαβάζω - σπουδάζω - μαθαίνω

- The verb *διαβάζω* refers to any activity involving reading, i.e. reading for fun or reading for learning:

- (9a) **Διαβάζω** εφημερίδα / ένα βιβλίο.
 “I am **reading** the paper / a book.”

- (9b) **Διαβάζω** Φιλοσοφία γιατί έχουμε τεστ.
 “I am **studying** Philosophy because we are writing a test.”

- The verb *σπουδάζω* does not refer to any reading activity. The following sentence

(10) **Σπουδάζω** Φιλοσοφία.

means simply that the speaker is a student of the Department of Philosophy.

- The verb *μαθαίνω* refers mostly to new information acquired by someone:

(11a) **Έμαθα** ότι αύριο δεν έχουμε μάθημα.

“I **heard** we are not having class tomorrow.”

(11b) **Έμαθα** να κάνω κέικ.

“I **learnt** how to make a cake.”

(11c) **Έμαθα** ελληνικά σε δύο χρόνια.

“I **learnt** Modern Greek in two years.”

Acquiring new information in this respect may be the result of a mental ability:

(12) Διαβάζει πολύ, αλλά δεν **μαθαίνει** εύκολα.

“She/He studies hard, but she/he does not **learn** easily.”

Acquiring new information is usually facilitated by a teacher:

(13a) **Μαθαίνουμε** ισπανικά στο Πανεπιστήμιο.

(13b) **Μαθαίνω** ισπανικά στο σπίτι.

(13c) **Μαθαίνω** τον Πέτρο ισπανικά.

Sentence 13a presupposes a class (if you study at the Library, then choose *διαβάζω*). Sentence 13b sounds normal if I have someone to help me with Spanish: a private teacher, a friend who speaks Spanish or even a method of individual learning (if you want to say that you study at home, choose again *διαβάζω*). Finally in sentence 13c the verb *μαθαίνω* simply means “to teach”.

δίκιο/άδικο - σωστό/λάθος

Δίκιο and *σωστό* correspond to the English *right*, and the same holds for their opposites and their relationship to the word *wrong*.

- *Σωστό/λάθος* are related to correctness as a result of verification. They are then related to

all kinds of verifiable statements: A sentence or a mathematical problem may *be σωστό* or *λάθος*:

(14a) Αυτή η πρόταση είναι **σωστή** / **λάθος**.

“This sentence is **right** / **wrong**.”

(14b) Αυτό το πρόβλημα είναι **σωστό** / **λάθος**.

“This problem is **right** / **wrong**.”

- *Δίκιο/άδικο* are related to correctness as a result of judgement. Judgement is a property of humans. Therefore only humans may *have δίκιο* or *άδικο*.

(15) A: Πρέπει να φύγουμε. Θα αργήσουμε. “We must go. We’ll be late.”

B: Έχεις **δίκιο**. Πάμε. “You are **right**. Let’s go.”

People in Modern Greek cannot be *σωστό/λάθος* but can lead themselves to something right or wrong:

(16) Έκανα μόνο ένα **λάθος** στο τεστ.

“I made only one **mistake** in the test”.

καινούριος - παλιός

The adjectives *καινούριος* and *παλιός* do what the English adjectives *new* and *old* do:

(17a) τα **καινούρια** παπούτσια / τα **παλιά** παπούτσια

“the **new** shoes” / “the **old** shoes”

(17b) ο **καινούριος** γιατρός / ο **παλιός** γιατρός

“the **new** doctor” / “the **old** doctor”

What these adjectives cannot do is refer to someone’s age (“someone” here includes humans and animals):

(18a) Η Ελένη είναι πιο **μικρή** / **νέα** από τον Πέτρο.

“Helen is **younger** than Peter.”

(18b) Η Ελένη είναι πιο **μεγάλη** από τον Πέτρο.

“Helen is **older** than Peter.”

The use of *νέος* (“young”) is pretty clear. The adjectives *μικρός* / *μεγάλος* (which originally

mean “small” and “big”) are the basic adjectives which refer to a person’s age. The metaphor is based on the original meaning of the words: children are smaller than adults and they grow up to become like them. These words are widely used to denote age, sometimes instead of νέος and definitely instead of the derogatory γέρος (“old”), or the politically correct term ηλικιωμένος (“elderly”).

μήπως - ίσως

Many dictionaries translate *μήπως* as “perhaps”. This is only half the truth, because *μήπως* is a polite “perhaps” / “maybe”, used only in questions. The true “perhaps” is *ίσως*, used in every type of sentence:

(19a) **Μήπως** θέλεις καφέ;
“**Perhaps** you need a coffee?”

(19b) **Ίσως** θα πάμε για καφέ το απόγευμα.
“**Perhaps** we’ll go for a coffee this afternoon.”

πότε - όταν

There are two types of “when” in Modern Greek. *Πότε* is used only in questions, direct or indirect, while *όταν* is used in temporal clauses (see Unit 7.3 on [page 108](#)):

(20a) **Πότε** φεύγεις;
“**When** are you leaving?”

(20b) Με ρώτησε **πότε** θα φύγω.
“She/He asked me **when** I was going to leave.”

(20c) **Όταν** γυρίζω σπίτι βγάζω τα παπούτσια μου.
“**When** I come home I take my shoes off.”

ρέστα - ψιλά

These two words represent the word *change* in Modern Greek. *Ρέστα* represents the 8 euros you get back when you pay 10 euros for a chocolate bar that costs 2 euros:

(21) Έδωσα 10 ευρώ και πήρα **ρέστα** 8 ευρώ.
“I paid 10 euros and the **change** was 8 euros.”

Ψιλά represents small change (cents, 1 or 2 euros) as opposed to large currency units (5, 10, 20 euros etc.). This is what a kiosk woman/man will ask you if you try to buy a 2-euro chocolate

bar with 50 euros:

- (22) Μήπως έχετε **ψιλά**;
“Perhaps you have **change**?”

σκέφτομαι - νομίζω

What is thinking? The term refers to a mental, non-verbal process that might conclude with the verbal expression of an opinion. The verb *σκέφτομαι* refers mainly to the mental process itself, while *νομίζω* associates mostly with the product of this process:

- (23a) **Σκέφτομαι** τον Πέτρο.
“I am **thinking** of/about Peter.”
- (23b) **Σκέφτομαι** να πάω σινεμά.
“I am **thinking** of going to the cinema.”
- (23c) **Νομίζω** ότι θα έρθει.
“I **think** she/he will come.”

φεύγω - αφήνω

Let's see the following sentences:

- (24a) **Φεύγω** στις 08.00.
“I am **leaving** at 08.00.”
- (24b) **Αφήνω** το βιβλίο στο τραπέζι.
“I am **leaving** the book on the table.”

Φεύγω is always an intransitive verb, that is a verb without an object. *Αφήνω* is a transitive verb, a verb that needs an object. Therefore, *φεύγω* is more like *leave* in the sense of “depart”, “abandon”, and *αφήνω* is more like *let*, in the sense of “putting down”, “depositing”, “permitting”.

11.2 “Natural” Greek

Languages often use different ways to refer to the same simple fact. Let me start with an elementary example. Greek people have coffee, beer or wine, like people in the English-speaking world do. They also enjoy a sandwich at lunch break. But these basic facts are described in different terms:

(25a) Πίνω καφέ / μπίρα.
“I **have** a coffee / a beer.”

(25b) Τρώω ένα σάντουιτς.
“I **have** a sandwich.”

Is it a mistake to say *Έχω ένα σάντουιτς* in Modern Greek? Well, it’s not the end of communication. Everybody will get what you mean. But it doesn’t sound Greek at all.

Let me give you another example. Here is what someone would say on a hot or a cold day respectively:

(26a) Ζεσταίνομαι.
“I am hot.”

(26b) Κρυώνω.
“I am cold.”

The two languages again take a very simple fact and put it differently. Lots of absolute beginners, though, start from the assumption that languages see things the same way and translate directly into Modern Greek. People again will understand, but is this enough? No, it is not.

The same differences hold in the field of elementary needs as expressed in English and Modern Greek:

(IIa) Θέλω καφέ.
“I **need** coffee.”

(IIb) Πεινάω.
“I am hungry.”

(IIc) Διψάω.
“I am thirsty.”

(IIId) Νυστάζω.
“I am sleepy”.

Let’s focus now on some everyday periphrases, consisting of a verb and a noun, like *to have a shower* or *to do the shopping*. This area is problematic in language learning, because there seems to be a list of basic verbs to choose from, but every language makes different choices. As far as Modern Greek is concerned, *κάνω* is perhaps the most powerful verb of this list. *Κάνω* often stands for the English verbs *to be*, *to do*, *to have* or *to take*.

- (27a) Τι **κάνεις**;
“How **are** you?”
- (27b) Τι δουλειά **κάνεις**;
“What do you **do** for a living?”
- (27c) **Κάνω** ψώνια.
“I **do** the shopping.”
- (27d) **Κάνω** μπάνιο.
“I **have** a shower.” / “I **take** a bath.” / “I swim.”

In some periphrases the verb *κάνω* may be replaced by the verb *έχω*:

- (28a) **Κάνω** / **Έχω** διακοπές.
“I **take** / **have** holidays.”
- (28b) **Κάνω** / **Έχω** πάρτι.
“I **have** a party.”
- (28c) **Κάνω** / **Έχω** διάλειμμα.
“I **take** a break.”
- (28d) **Κάνω** / **Έχω** μάθημα.
“I **have** class.”
- (28e) **Κάνει** / **Έχει** κρύο. / **Κάνει** / **Έχει** ζέστη.
“It **is** hot.” / “It **is** cold.”
- (28f) Πόσο **κάνει** / **έχει** ο καφές;
“How much **is** the coffee?”

The two verbs are not totally equivalent. Let’s take 28b: *Κάνω πάρτι* means that I am the one who is organizing the event. *Έχω πάρτι* means that I am just invited to the event.

Another powerful verb is *παίρνω*. *Παίρνω* relates to the English *take* and *get*, as it has become a necessary constituent of numerous everyday expressions:

- (29a) **Παίρνω** (τηλέφωνο) τον Πέτρο αλλά δεν απαντάει.
“I **call** Peter but he does not answer the phone.”

(29b) Πήγα στο σούπερ μάρκετ και **πήρα** καφέ.
“I went to the super market and **got** some coffee.”

(29c) **Παίρνω** / **Βγάζω** φωτογραφίες.
“I **take** pictures.”

The above discussion was not exhaustive of course. There is a lot to be said, but it won't be. The point of this unit was to help you realize that each language represents a slightly different way to see things, even the most common and evident ones. Having acquired the basics, I believe you must start seeing Modern Greek as insiders. It is time to let yourselves merge into the Modern Greek language and hope that study and practice will eventually turn you from an absolute beginner to an absolutely stunning advanced learner.

Μιλάω ελληνικά

Τώρα ξέρετε τα βασικά ελληνικά και νομίζω ότι μπορείτε να καταλάβετε αυτά που θα γράψω:

Στα ελληνικά ένας άντρας από την Ελλάδα είναι **Έλληνας**, και μια γυναίκα από την Ελλάδα είναι **Ελληνίδα**:

(IIIa) Ο Πέτρος είναι **Έλληνας**.

(IIIb) Η Ελένη είναι **Ελληνίδα**.

Αυτό αλλάζει όταν μιλάμε για κάτι και όχι για κάποιον:

(IVa) Αυτός ο καφές είναι **ελληνικός**.

(IVb) Αυτή η σοκολάτα είναι **ελληνική**.

(IVc) Αυτό το βιβλίο είναι **ελληνικό**.

(IVd) Μιλάω **ελληνικά**.

Στα ελληνικά, λοιπόν, όταν λέμε από πού είναι κάτι ή κάποιος, δεν έχουμε μία μόνο λέξη αλλά τρεις. Αν είσαι από την Ιταλία, τότε είσαι **Ιταλός** ή **Ιταλίδα**, αλλά ο εσπρέσο είναι **ιταλικός** καφές. Αν είσαι από την Κίνα, τότε είσαι **Κινέζος** ή **Κινέζα**, αλλά μιλάς **κινέζικα**.

Όλα αυτά δεν είναι μεγάλο πρόβλημα για εσάς. Αν δεν ξέρετε τη λέξη **Ιταλός**, μπορείτε να πείτε *Είμαι από την Ιταλία*. Είναι ακριβώς το ίδιο. Και να θυμάστε:

- Στα ελληνικά υπάρχει πάντα μια λέξη για τους άντρες και τις γυναίκες, αλλά όχι για τα παιδιά. Αν μιλάμε για ένα παιδί μπορούμε μόνο να πούμε *Αυτό το παιδί είναι από την Ελλάδα*.
- Ένας σκύλος ή μια γάτα δεν είναι άνθρωπος. Αν ο σκύλος σας είναι τεριέ από την Σκοτία, μπορείτε να πείτε *Ο σκύλος μου είναι σκωτσέζικο τεριέ*.

SUMMARY

Chapter 11 takes English as a starting point in order to examine some aspects of the Modern Greek vocabulary that cause confusion to learners of Modern Greek. The first part of the chapter deals with lexical asymmetries between English and Modern Greek, while the second part focuses on periphrases and the main Modern Greek verbs that participate in such constructions.

KEY WORDS

vocabulary, lexical asymmetry, vocabulary units (single words, periphrases)

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct verb.

1. Η αδερφή μου πρέπει να _____ μαθηματικά γιατί γράφει τεστ αύριο.
a. διαβάσει b. σπουδάσει c. μάθει
2. Ο αδερφός μου _____ Ιστορία στην Ιταλία.
a. διαβάζει b. σπουδάζει c. μαθαίνει
3. Χτες το βράδυ άρχισα ένα πολύ ωραίο βιβλίο και το _____ όλο!
a. διάβασα b. σπούδασα c. έμαθα
4. _____ ελληνικά σε έναν χρόνο γιατί έζησε στην Ελλάδα.
a. Διάβασε b. Σπούδασε c. Έμαθε
5. Αν θέλεις να περάσεις το τεστ πρέπει να _____!
a. διαβάσεις b. σπουδάσεις c. μάθεις
6. Κάθε πρωί πίνω καφέ και _____ την εφημερίδα μου.
a. διαβάζω b. σπουδάζω c. μαθαίνω

2. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word.

1. Κάθε καλοκαίρι _____ σέρφινγκ.
a. έχω b. κάνω c. παίρνω
2. Ο Γιάννης δεν _____ πολλά λεφτά για αυτή τη δουλειά.
a. κάνει b. παίρνει c. έχει
3. Δεν μπορώ να έρθω τώρα, γιατί _____ δουλειά.
a. έχω b. παίρνω c. δίνω
4. Το καλοκαίρι _____ ζέστη στην Ελλάδα.
a. είναι b. κάνει c. δίνει

5. Πρέπει να _____ τηλέφωνο τον μπαμπά μου.

a. κάνω

b. δώσω

c. πάρω

6. Έδωσα 10 ευρώ και _____ ρέστα 5 ευρώ.

a. έκανα

b. είχα

c. πήρα

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 11 press here www.moderngreek.eu

APPENDIX

Basic Modern Greek Verbs Revisited

The following list comprises basic verbs for levels A1-A2. Verbs (in alphabetical order) appear in the present, past and future tenses (along with the “infinitive”). Most of these verbs have been introduced throughout Chapters 1-11, yet their meaning might be necessary for you.

In order to work with this list, keep in mind the following:

- Some verbs do not easily form with the past and/or the future/“infinitive”. The hyphen signals that a verb has no such forms. The parenthesis shows that a form is possible but not widely used.
- Some verbs have alternative forms in the past and/or the future/“infinitive”. Unless one of them is in parentheses, these forms have almost equal status in speech.
- Some verbs are registered as two entries: The impersonal *μπορεί* differs from the personal *μπορώ* not only regarding meaning, but because the former has only present forms. On the other side the personal *χρειάζομαι* and the impersonal *χρειάζεται* are registered as one entry because of their almost identical meaning and because they both have past and future/“infinitive” forms.
- Some verbs seem to form their past and future/“infinitive” from their imperfective stem (compare *ξέρω* to *ήξερα* - *θα/να ξέρω*). For a full explanation, you will have to wait until levels B1-B2.
- Some “passive” verbs (such as *γίνομαι*, *έρχομαι* or *κάθομαι*) behave exactly like “active” verbs regarding the past and the future/“infinitive”. Other “passive” verbs (such as *θυμάμαι*, *κοιμάμαι* etc.) follow specific rules regarding the stem of the past and the future/“infinitive”. These rules are part of levels B1-B2, and definitely not your concern at the moment. Keep in mind, though, that all of them follow the inflectional model of the “active” past and future/“infinitive”.

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
αγαπάω/-ώ	to love	αγάπησα	θα/να αγαπήσω
αγοράζω	to buy	αγόρασα	θα/να αγοράσω
ακούω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to hear to listen 	άκουσα	θα/να ακούσω
αλλάζω	to change	άλλαξα	θα/να αλλάξω

APPENDIX

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
ανεβαίνω	to go up	ανέβηκα	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θα/να ανέβω θα/να ανεβώ
ανοίγω	to open	άνοιξα	θα/να ανοίξω
απαντάω/-ώ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to answer to reply 	απάντησα	θα/να απαντήσω
αρέσει	to like	άρεσε	θα αρέσει
αρχίζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to begin to start 	άρχισα	θα/να αρχίσω
αφήνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to leave to let 	άφησα	θα/να αφήσω
βάζω	to put	έβαλα	θα/να βάλω
βγάζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to take out to remove 	έβγαλα	θα/να βγάλω
βγαίνω	to go out	βγήκα	θα/να βγω
βλέπω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to see to watch 	είδα	θα/να δω
βρέχει	it rains	έβρεξε	θα/να βρέξει
βρίσκω	to find	βρήκα	θα/να βρω
γελάω/-ώ	to laugh	γέλασα	θα/να γελάσω
γίνομαι	to become	έγινα	θα/να γίνω
γράφω	to write	έγραψα	θα/να γράψω
γυρίζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to turn to return 	γύρισα	θα/να γυρίσω
διαβάζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to read to study 	διάβασα	θα/να διαβάσω
δίνω	to give	έδωσα	θα/να δώσω
διψάω/-ώ	to be thirsty	δίψασα	θα/να διψάσω
δουλεύω	to work	δούλεψα	θα/να δουλέψω
είμαι	to be	ήμουν(α)	θα/να είμαι
έρχομαι	to come	ήρθα	θα/να έρθω
έχω	to have	είχα	θα/να έχω
ζεσταίνομαι	to be hot	ζεστάθηκα	θα/να ζεσταθώ

APPENDIX

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
ζητάω/-ώ	to ask (to request)	ζήτησα	θα/να ζητήσω
ζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to live to be alive 	έζησα	θα/να ζήσω
θέλω	to want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (θέλησα) ήθελα 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (θα/να θελήσω) θα/να θέλω
θυμάμαι	to remember	θυμήθηκα	θα/να θυμηθώ
κάθομαι	to sit	κάθισα	θα/να καθίσω
καίω	to burn	έκαψα	θα/να κάψω
κάνω	to do	έκανα	θα/να κάνω
καταλαβαίνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand to realize 	κατάλαβα	θα/να καταλάβω
κατεβαίνω	to go down	κατέβηκα	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θα/να κατέβω θα/να κατεβώ
κλαίω	to cry	έκλαψα	θα/να κλάψω
κλείνω	to close	έκλεισα	θα/να κλείσω
κόβω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to cut to slice 	έκοψα	θα/να κόψω
κοιμάμαι	to sleep	κοιμήθηκα	θα/να κοιμηθώ
κοιτάζω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to look to stare 	κοίταξα	θα/να κοιτάξω
κρατάω/-ώ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to hold to last 	κράτησα	θα/να κρατήσω
κρύβω	to hide	έκρυψα	θα/να κρύψω
κρυώνω	to be cold	κρύωσα	θα/να κρυώσω
λέω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to say to tell 	είπα	θα/να πω
λέω (να)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to think to plan to consider 	είπα	-
λυπάμαι	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to feel sorry to be sorry 	λυπήθηκα	θα/να λυπηθώ
μαγειρεύω	to cook	μαγείρεψα	θα/να μαγειρέψω
μαθαίνω	to learn	έμαθα	θα/να μάθω

APPENDIX

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
μένω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to live to stay 	έμεινα	θα/να μείνω
μετράω/-ώ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to count to measure 	μέτρησα	θα/να μετρήσω
μιλάω/-ώ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to speak to talk 	μίλησα	θα/να μιλήσω
μπαίνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to enter to go in 	μπήκα	θα/να μπω
μπορεί	may / might	-	-
μπορώ	can	μπόρεσα	θα/να μπορέσω
νομίζω	to think (to believe)	νόμισα	θα/να νομίσω
νυστάζω	to be sleepy	νύσταξα	θα/να νυστάξω
ξέρω	to know	ήξερα	θα/να ξέρω
ξυπνάω/-ώ	to wake up	ξύπνησα	θα/να ξυπνήσω
οδηγώ	to drive	οδήγησα	θα/να οδηγήσω
παίζω	to play	έπαιξα	θα/να παίξω
παίρνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to take to get 	πήρα	θα/να πάρω
πάω / πηγαίνω	to go	πήγα	θα/να πάω
πεινάω/-ώ	to be hungry	πείνασα	θα/να πεινάσω
περιμένω	to wait	περίμενα	θα/να περιμένω
περνάω/-ώ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to pass to cross 	πέρασα	θα/να περάσω
περπατάω/-ώ	to walk	περπάτησα	θα/να περπατήσω
πέφτω	to fall	έπεσα	θα/να πέσω
πίνω	to drink	ήπια	θα/να πιω
πλένω	to wash	έπλυνα	θα/να πλύνω
πρέπει	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> must / should have to ought to 	έπρεπε	θα/- πρέπει
προσπαθώ	to try	προσπάθησα	θα/να προσπαθήσω
προτιμάω/-ώ	to prefer	προτίμησα	θα/να προτιμήσω

APPENDIX

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
ρίχνω	to throw	έριξα	θα/να ρίξω
ρωτάω/-ώ	to ask (to make a question)	ρώτησα	θα/να ρωτήσω
σημαίνει	to mean	σήμαινε	(θα σημάνει)
σκεφτομαι	to think	σκέφτηκα	θα/να σκεφτώ
σπουδάζω	to study (to be a student)	σπούδασα	θα/να σπουδάσω
σπρώχνω	to push	έσπρωξα	θα/να σπρώξω
σταματάω/-ώ	to stop	σταμάτησα	θα/να σταματήσω
στέλνω	to send	έστειλα	θα/να στείλω
τελειώνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to end to finish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> τελείωσα τέλειωσα 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> θα/να τελειώσω θα/να τελειώσω
τηλεφωνώ	to call	τηλεφώνησα	θα/να τηλεφωνήσω
τρέχω	to run	έτρεξα	θα/να τρέξω
τρώω	to eat	έφαγα	θα/να φάω
υπάρχει	there is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (υπήρξε) υπήρχε 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (θα/να υπάρξει) θα/να υπάρχει
φέρνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to bring to fetch 	έφερα	θα/να φέρω
φεύγω	to leave	έφυγα	θα/να φύγω
φοβάμαι	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be afraid to fear 	φοβήθηκα	θα/να φοβηθώ
φοράω/-ώ	to wear	φόρεσα	θα/να φορέσω
φταίω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be blamed to be responsible 	έφταιξα	θα/να φταίξω
φτάνω	to arrive	έφτασα	θα/να φτάσω
φτιάχνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to make to fix 	έφτιαξα	θα/να φτιάξω
χάνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to lose to miss 	έχασα	θα/να χάσω
χορεύω	to dance	χόρεψα	θα/να χορέψω
χρειάζομαι	to need	χρειάστηκα	θα/να χρειαστώ
χρησιμοποιώ	to use	χρησιμοποίησα	θα/να χρησιμοποιήσω

APPENDIX

PRESENT	MEANING	(SIMPLE) PAST	(SIMPLE) FUTURE “INFINITIVE”
ψάχνω	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to look for• to search	έψαξα	θα/να ψάξω
ψωνίζω	to shop	ψώνισα	θα/να ψωνίσω

KEY TO EXERCISES

CHAPTER 1

EXERCISE 1: 1.c., 2.d., 3.f., 4.a., 5.b., 6.e., 7.h.

EXERCISE 2: 1.f., 2.d., 3.a., 4.b., 5.c., 6.e.

CHAPTER 2

EXERCISE 1: 1.d., 2.e., 3.b., 4.f., 5h., 6.a., 7.c., 8.g.

EXERCISE 2: 1.b., 2.e., 3.f., 4.a., 5.c., 6.b.

CHAPTER 3

EXERCISE 1: 1.Σ., 2.Λ., 3.Σ., 4.Σ., 5.Λ., 6.Σ.

EXERCISE 2: 1.Σ., 2.Λ., 3.Σ., 4.Σ., 5.Λ., 6.Λ.

CHAPTER 4

EXERCISE 1: 1.d., 2.g., 3.e., 4.f., 5.b., 6.h., 7.a., 8.c.

EXERCISE 2: 1.a., 2.c., 3.a., 4.c., 5.c., 6.b.

CHAPTER 5

EXERCISE 1: 1.a., 2.a., 3.c., 4.c., 5.c., 6.b.

EXERCISE 2: 1.h., 2.e., 3.g., 4.f., 5.a., 6.c., 7.d., 8.b.

CHAPTER 6

EXERCISE 1: 1.a., 2.b., 3.b., 4.b., 5.a., 6.b.

EXERCISE 2: 1. κανέναν – έναν, 2. αυτό – αυτό το, 3. τους – τον, 4. όπου – που, 5. ποιοι – ποιος or θέλει – θέλουν, 6. ποιος – ποιον

CHAPTER 7

EXERCISE 1: 1.b., 2.e., 3.a., 4.f., 5.c., 6.d.

EXERCISE 2: 1.Λ., 2.Σ., 3.Λ., 4.Λ., 5.Σ., 6.Σ., 7.Λ., 8.Λ.

CHAPTER 8

EXERCISE:

1.d. (είχα/είχαμε), 2.g. (ήπια/ήπιαμε), 3.f. (πήρα/πήραμε), 4.b. (βγήκα/βγήκαμε), 5.a. (πήγα/πήγαμε), 6.c. (είδα/είδαμε), 7.e. (είπα/είπαμε)

1.d. (άκουσα/ακούσαμε), 2.c. (έφυγα/φύγαμε), 3.e. (έφτασα/φτάσαμε), 4.f. (έφαγα/φάγαμε), 5.a. (έβαλα/βάλαμε), 6.b. (περίμενα/περιμέναμε)

1.g. (άνοιξα/ανοίξαμε), 2.j. (ρώτησα/ρωτήσαμε), 3.h. (απάντησα/απαντήσαμε), 4.f. (σκότωσα/σκοτώσαμε), 5.i. (άρχισα/αρχίσαμε), 6.b. (τελείωσα/τελειώσαμε), 7.a. (μαγείρεψα/μαγειρέψαμε), 8.c. (έφτιαξα/φτιάξαμε), 9.e. (τραγούδησα/τραγουδήσαμε), 10.d. (χόρεψα/χορέψαμε)

CHAPTER 9

EXERCISE 1: 1.d., 2.e., 3.f., 4.b., 5.c., 6.a.

EXERCISE 2: 1. να φάμε, 2. να κόψουμε, 3. να στείλουμε, 4. να πάμε, 5. να παίξουμε, 6. να φτιάξουμε

CHAPTER 10

EXERCISE 1: 1. του Αλέξη, της Μαρίας, 2. του Κώστα, του Αλέξη, της Μαρίας, 3. του Κώστα, 4. της Ελένης, 5. του Κώστα, της Κατερίνας, 6. της Μαρίας, 7. του Πέτρου, της Ελένης, 8. του Αλέξη

EXERCISE 2: 1.c., 2.e., 3.d., 4.f., 5.a., 6.d.

CHAPTER 11

EXERCISE 1: 1.a., 2.b., 3.a., 4.c., 5.a., 6.a.

EXERCISE 2: 1.b., 2.b., 3.a., 4.b., 5.c., 6.c.

GLOSSARY

The following text includes the basic terminology of this book with examples and brief explanations (in italics when following an example).

1. Speaking and Writing

Human speech consists of **sounds**. These minimal units are put together to make larger units, such as words, phrases, clauses or sentences. As far as Modern Greek is concerned, these sounds are basically divided into **vowels** (1a) and **consonants** (1b):

(1a) [a], [e]

(1b) [pa], [ma]

Vowels in Modern Greek can be assigned a **stress**, which makes them sound louder and longer than unstressed vowels. Stress is basically a property of words (2a) or phrases (2b):

(2a) [pote] [pote]
 “when” (not) “ever”

(2b) [opetros / ine / apotinaθina]
 “Peter is from Athens.”

Larger units are assigned additional features:

- **Intonation** covers the distinct melodic patterns that signal, for instance, the difference between making a statement (3a) and asking a question (3b):

(3a) [θeli payoto]
 “She/He wants ice cream.”

(3b) [θeli payoto?]
 “**Does** she/he want ice cream?”

- **Focus** is a sort of phonetic emphasis that highlights some part of the sentence in order to produce contrast:

(4) [O PETROS efaje ta psarja].
 “**It is Peter** who ate the fish.”

When writing, sounds are represented by **letters**, as minimal units of the **Greek alphabet** (5a).

The stress in turn is represented by an **accent mark** (5b):

(5a) [pa] → πα

(5b) [po^{te}] → πότε

Intonation is signaled by **punctuation marks** (6a). Finally, focus may be represented in various ways (6b).

(6a) Θέλει παγωτό;

(6b) Ο ΠΕΤΡΟΣ έφαγε τα ψάρια. / Ο Πέτρος έφαγε τα ψάρια.

2. Putting Words Together

Speaking is about conveying messages. The most elementary ones refer to an **action**, represented by a verb. The “**performer**” of this action (usually a noun or a pronoun) functions as the **subject** of this verb:

(7) Εμείς παίζουμε. (“We play.”)

SUBJ. VERB

The subject in Modern Greek may be **optional** (implicit), depending on the **context** (the surrounding text and/or the assumptions that control its understanding):

(8) (Ο Πέτρος) παίζει.

- *Peter is the obvious subject because he was mentioned earlier in the text.*
- *Peter is the obvious subject because I see him playing.*

The action may affect something or be directed to someone (the **direct** or **indirect object** of the verb):

(9) Δίνω ένα βιβλίο στον Πέτρο. (“I am giving a book to Peter.”)

DIR.OBJ. / INDIR.OBJ.

As far as Modern Greek is concerned, the subject, the verb and the object may hold various positions within the sentence. This is an instance of **free word order**:

(10a) Η Μαρία αγαπάει τον Πέτρο.

(10b) Τον Πέτρο αγαπάει η Μαρία.

“Maria loves Peter.”

Nouns and verbs usually come together with other units that provide extra information about

them. These units are called **modifiers**. Modifiers **depend** either on a “**head**” **noun** as in 11a or on a “**head**” **verb** as in 11b:

(11a) Θέλω **αυτόν τον ακριβό** χάρτη.

“I want **this expensive** map.”

(11b) Έρχεται **αύριο**.

“She/He is coming **tomorrow**.”

3. Putting the Right Words Together

Modern Greek is an **inflectional** language. **Inflected** words (such as verbs and nouns) are present in speech in different forms:

(12a) παίζω παίζεις
“I play” “you play”

(12b) δρόμος δρόμοι
“street” “streets”

These different forms share a common left part (the **stem**) and a variable right part (the **ending**):

(13a) **δρόμος** δρόμοι

(13b) **παίζω** παίζεις

Verbs are divided into two main **inflectional groups** according to **voice** (“active” vs. “passive”)

(14) πάω έρχομαι
“to come” “to go”

and are further inflected for **person**, **number**, **tense** and **mood**:

(15) παίζω
“I play” / “I am playing”

- *Person (1st): The performer of the action is the speaker.*
- *Number (singular): The performer of the action is only one person.*
- *Tense (present): The action is being performed at the moment of speaking.*
- *Mood (Indicative): The action is seen as a fact.*

Inflection does not stand alone in this field:

- **Modality** is assigned by **particles**:

(16a) Αύριο **θα** παίζω.

“Tomorrow I **will** play.”

(16b) Θέλω **να** παίζω.

“I want **to** play.”

Both actions are not performed yet, therefore they are seen as non-facts.

- **Aspect** is assigned by the stem of the verb:

(17a) **παίξαμε** (“we played”)

(17b) **παίζαμε** (“we were playing”)

The action in 17a is seen as completed. The action in 17b is seen as not completed.

Nouns are divided into three groups according to **gender**:

(18) ο δρόμος η ώρα το βιβλίο

The first noun is a masculine, the second is a feminine, and the third is a neuter.

and are further inflected for **number**

(19) δρόμος / δρόμοι

“street” / “streets”

and **case**: Case is related to the actual **syntactic role** of a noun inside a sentence:

(20a) **Η Μαρία** αγαπάει τον Πέτρο.

“**Mary** loves Peter.”

(20b) Ο Πέτρος αγαπάει **την Μαρία**.

“Peter loves **Mary**.”

(20c) Ο άντρας **της Μαρίας** είναι από τον Καναδά.

“**Mary’s** husband is from Canada.”

Nominative: Mary of 20a is the subject.

Accusative: Mary of 20b is the object.

Genitive: Mary of 20c is a modifier, following the “head” noun.

The subject and the verb must **agree** in person and number; that is, they should share those grammatical features they have in common:

(21) Εμείς παίζουμε.

The two terms agree in person (1st) and number (plural).

Agreement is a feature of the **noun phrase** as well: Modifiers of the noun (**articles**, **adjectives**, **numerals**) are inflected for gender, number and case in order to agree with the “head” noun.

(22) ακριβός αναπτήρας

The adjective ακριβός agrees in gender (masculine), number (singular) and case (nominative) with the “head” noun.

The same holds for **pronouns**, which must agree with the **reference noun**:

(23) Έχω έναν **αδερφό**, αλλά δεν **τον** βλέπω συχνά.

“I have a **brother**, but I don’t see **him** often.”

The pronoun agrees in gender (masculine) and number (singular) with the reference noun. Case is taken up by the actual role of the pronoun within the sentence.

Modifiers of the verb (**prepositions**, **adverbs**) are not inflected. They come only in one form, so their choice depends on meaning alone. The same holds for particles and **conjunctions**.

4. Dealing with Meaning

Inflected words have an ordinary meaning (their **lexical meaning**), manifested by their stem. Their endings carry **grammatical meaning**:

(24) **βιβλίο** / **βιβλία**

Both words have the same lexical meaning (“book”) but their grammatical meaning is different (singular vs. plural).

Lexical meaning is concrete, while grammatical meaning is abstract. **Grammatical words** such as articles and prepositions are also carriers of **abstract meaning**:

(25a) **Οι γάτες** μισούν το νερό.

“(All) **cats** hate water.”

(25b) Ο Γιάννης μένει **με** τον Πέτρο.

“John lives **with** Peter.”

(25c) Έρχεται **με** το λεωφορείο.

“She/He is coming **by** bus.”

The article in 25a gives the noun a definite generic reading. The different uses of the preposition in 25 b and c follow a single pattern that lies behind them.

Lexical meaning is not a property of single words. Some words are usually taken together and have a single meaning, creating a **periphrasis**:

- (26) Κάνω μπάνιο.
“I swim.”

Meaning goes well beyond words to cover larger units. Sentences are assigned a meaning depending on **sentence type** (**affirmative**, **interrogative**, **negative**):

- (27a) Θέλει παγωτό.
“She/He wants ice cream.”
(27b) Θέλει παγωτό;
“**Does** she/he want ice cream?”
(27c) Δεν θέλει παγωτό. / Θέλει να **μην** φάει παγωτό.
“She/He **doesn’t** want ice cream”. “She’d rather **not** eat ice cream.”

The affirmative and the interrogative sentences (27a and 27b) differ only regarding intonation. Negation as in 27c is formed by particles.

Intonation, focus and the context play an important role here, since they determine the **actual meaning** of what is said.

- (28a) Βρέχει.
(28b) Βρέχει...

An affirmative sentence can be taken as a simple statement in 28 a, and as irony in 28b.

Languages may differ in the way they structure meaning. **Lexical asymmetries** represent one of the most obvious cases of such differences:

- (29a) Έχασα τα κλειδιά μου.
“I **lost** my keys.”
(29b) Έχασα το λεωφορείο.
“I **missed** the bus.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Suggested Links

If you wish to know more about the Modern Greek language, you should start from here:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_phonology
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language

If you wish to take online classes or get extra material, you should check the following:

- <http://www.greece.org/gr-lessons/gr-english/>
- <http://www.kypros.org/LearnGreek/>
- <http://www2.media.uoa.gr/language/exercises/>
- <http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/filog/>
- http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/dictionaries/english_new.asp
- <http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/akoustikh/default2.asp>

If you wish to find dictionaries and coursebooks, or get any sort of information about Modern Greek, please press here:

- <http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/index.html>
- <http://ins.web.auth.gr/index.php?lang=en&Itemid=301>

The introduction (p. 1) is based on information from the following sources:

- http://www.orbilat.com/Encyclopaedia/G/Greek_Language.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_accent
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Greek_grammar
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_case
- http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/andreou_karapetsas_galantomos/article.pdf
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V2_word_order
- <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/grammar/chapter7.pdf>
- http://www.philology.upatras.gr/ralli.angela/files/edited_volumes/Ralli_2010_Compounding%20vs%20Derivation.pdf