

33.3 Numerals¹

The ancient Greeks had a decimal system of numeration. The symbols that represented them were as diverse as the dialects of the language in ancient times. The following notation, which became a standard only in the second century BCE, uses letters of the alphabet to represent numbers, with a stroke to the right of each to indicate that it symbolizes a number. To the 24 letters of the alphabet were added three that had become obsolete when this system developed: Ϛ stigma (= 6), ϛ koppa (=90), and Ϟ sampi (=900.)

This notation is systematic but with some peculiarities:

- the first nine letters (with the interference of stigma Ϛ' for 6) represent the first nine numbers;
- after = 10, the letters representing the digits are added to :
- the same system is applied up to 89, but ϛ koppa is added for 90;
- once again the same system continues for the hundreds, but for 900 Ϟ sampi is used.
- after 1,000 a stroke under and to the left of each letter indicates that the number must be multiplied by 1,000.

| | SIGN | CARDINAL | ORDINAL | ADVERB |
|---|------|--|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | α' | εἷς, μία, ἓν <i>one</i> | πρῶτος <i>first</i> | ἅπαξ <i>once</i> |
| 2 | β' | δύο <i>two</i> | δεύτερος <i>second</i> | δίς <i>twice</i> |
| 3 | γ' | τρεις, τρία <i>three</i> | τρίτος <i>third</i> | τρίς <i>thrice</i> |
| 4 | δ' | τέτταρες, τέτταρα (τέσσαρες, τέσσαρα) | τέταρτος, -η, -ον | τετράκις |
| 5 | ε' | πέντε | πέμπτος | πεντάκις |
| 6 | ς' | ἕξ | ἕκτος | ἑξάκις |

¹ This is a reduced version of the [table](#) in Herbert W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges*.

| | | | | |
|----|-----|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| 7 | ζ' | ἑπτὰ | ἑβδομος | ἑπτάκις |
| 8 | η' | ὀκτώ | ὄγδοος | ὀκτάκις |
| 9 | θ' | ἐννέα | ἕνατος | ἐνάκις |
| 10 | ι' | δέκα | δέκατος, -η, -ον | δεκάκις |
| 11 | ια' | ἑνδεκα | ἐνδέκατος | ἐνδεκάκις |
| 12 | ιβ' | δώδεκα | δωδέκατος | δωδεκάκις |
| 13 | ιγ' | τρεῖς (τρία) καὶ δέκα (or τρεισκαίδεκα) | τρίτος καὶ δέκατος | τρεισκαιδεκάκις |
| 14 | ιδ' | τέτταρες (τέτταρα) καὶ δέκα | τέταρτος καὶ δέκατος | τετταρεσκαιδεκάκις |
| 15 | ιε' | πεντεκαίδεκα | πέμπτος καὶ δέκατος | πεντεκαιδεκάκις |
| 16 | ισ' | ἐκκαίδεκα < ἑξακαίδεκα | ἕκτος καὶ δέκατος | ἐκκαιδεκάκις |
| 17 | ιζ' | ἑπτακαίδεκα | ἑβδομος καὶ δέκατος | ἑπτακαιδεκάκις |
| 18 | ιη' | ὀκτωκαίδεκα | ὄγδοος καὶ δέκατος | ὀκτωκαιδεκάκις |
| 19 | ιθ' | ἐννεακαίδεκα | ἕνατος καὶ δέκατος | ἐννεακαιδεκάκις |
| 20 | κ' | εἴκοσι (ν) | εἰκοστός, -ή, -όν | εἰκοσάκις |
| 21 | κα' | εἶς καὶ εἴκοσι (ν) or εἴκοσι (καὶ) εἶς | πρῶτος καὶ εἰκοστός | εἰκοσάκις ἅπαξ |
| 30 | λ' | τριᾶκοντα | τριᾶκοστός | τριᾶκοντάκις |
| 40 | μ' | τετταράκοντα | τετταρακοστός | τετταρακοντάκις |
| 50 | ν' | πεντήκοντα | πεντηκοστός | πεντηκοντάκις |

| | | | | |
|---------|----|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 60 | ξ' | ἑξήκοντα | ἑξηκοστός | ἑξηκοντάκις |
| 70 | ο' | ἑβδομήκοντα | ἑβδομηκοστός | ἑβδομηκοντάκις |
| 80 | π' | ὀγδοήκοντα | ὀγδοηκοστός | ὀγδοηκοντάκις |
| 90 | ζ | ἐνενήκοντα | ἐνενηκοστός | ἐνενηκοντάκις |
| 100 | ρ' | ἑκατόν | ἑκατοστός, -ή, -όν | ἑκατοντάκις |
| 200 | σ' | διᾱκόσιοι, -αι, -α | διᾱκοσιοστός | διᾱκοσιάκις |
| 300 | τ' | τριᾱκόσιοι | τριᾱκοσιοστός | τριᾱκοσιάκις |
| 400 | υ' | τετρακόσιοι | τετρακοσιοστός | τετρακοσιάκις |
| 500 | φ' | πεντακόσιοι | πεντακοσιοστός | πεντακοσιάκις |
| 600 | χ' | ἑξακόσιοι | ἑξακοσιοστός | ἑξακοσιάκις |
| 700 | ψ' | ἑπτακόσιοι | ἑπτακοσιοστός | ἑπτακοσιάκις |
| 800 | ω' | ὀκτακόσιοι | ὀκτακοσιοστός | ὀκτακοσιάκις |
| 900 | ῥ | ἐνακόσιοι | ἐνακοσιοστός | ἐνακοσιάκις |
| 1,000 | ,α | χίλιοι, -αι, -α | χίλιοστός, -ή, -όν | χιλιάκις |
| 2,000 | ,β | δισχίλιοι | δισχίλιοστός | δισχιλιάκις |
| 3,000 | ,γ | τρισχίλιοι | τρισχίλιοστός | τρισχιλιάκις |
| 10,000 | ,ι | μύριοι, -αι, -α | μῦριοστός | μῦριάκις |
| 20,000 | ,κ | δισμύριοι | δισμῦριοστός | δισμῦριάκις |
| 100,000 | ,ρ | δεκακισμύριοι | δεκακισμῦριοστός | δεκακισμῦριάκις |

Above 10,000: δύο μῦριάδες 20,000, etc., μῦριάκις μύριοι, i.e. 10,000 x 10,000.

NOTES

1) For the numbers from 1 to 24 the letters, used in continuous succession, are frequently used to designate the books of the *Iliad* (Α, Β, Γ, etc.) and of the *Odyssey* (α, β, γ, etc.).

2) The cardinals from 1 to 4 are declined:

| | <i>one</i> | | | <i>two</i> | | <i>three</i> | | <i>four</i> | |
|------|------------|------|------|------------|-------|--------------|------|-------------|---------|
| Nom. | εἷς | μία | ἓν | N. A. | δύο | τρῆς | τρία | τέτταρες | τέτταρα |
| Gen. | ἑνός | μιάς | ἐνός | G. D. | δυσίν | τριῶν | | τεττάρων | |
| Dat. | ἐνί | μιά | ἐνί | | | τρισί(ν) | | τέτταρσι(ν) | |
| Acc. | ἓνα | μίαν | ἓν | | | τρῆς | τρία | τέτταρες | τέτταρα |

3) *πρῶτος* means the first among more than two, *πρότερος* the first of two.

4) *δύο* may be used with the gen. and dat. pl., as *δύο μηνῶν* of two months. For “both” we find *ἄμφω*, *ἀμφοῖν* and *ἀμφότεροι*.