

5.2: Masculine nouns of the first declension

In lesson 4 we considered the distribution of genders in the first two declensions, but that is not the total picture. There are in the first declension not only feminine nouns (the majority) but also some masculine nouns. They parallel the feminine nouns in that they may be based on an **-η** or an **-α** stem. The good news is that they can be identified as masculine because their *nominative* does not simply end in **-η** or **-α** but rather in **-ης** or **-ας**. The nominative alone, of course, does not allow us to place a noun in a specific declension—although it gives us a hint. Nouns are cited in the *singular nominative and genitive*. When the genitive of these masculine nouns of the first declension is shown, there can be no doubt that they belong to this particular group, for while they **borrow** the second declension genitive ending **-ου**, they cannot belong to the second declension, where the nominative of masculine nouns ends in **-ος** and that of neuter nouns ends in **-ον**.

Let us list in a chart the nouns of the Greek first and second declensions:

	SECOND DECLENSION		FIRST DECLENSION			
gender	masculine	neuter	feminine		masculine	
stem vowel	ο	ο	η	α	η	α
citation:	nom -ος	nom -ον	nom -η	nom -α	nom -ης	nom -ας
	gen -ου	gen -ου	gen -ης	gen -ας	gen -ου	gen -ου
examples	φίλος, ου	ίερών, οῡ	κόρη, ης	χαρά, ᾱς	ποιητής, οῡ	νεανίας, ου

If we decline, side by side, two masculine nouns of the first declension, we will note that:

- **-η and -α stems have parallel endings**
- **in the singular they are applied to the stem vowels of each group**
- **in the plural all first declension nouns, feminine and masculine, take the stem vowel -α**

	<i>singular</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>plural</i>
<i>nom</i>	ποιητ-ής	νεανί-ας	ποιητ-αί	νεανί-αι
<i>gen</i>	ποιητ-οῦ	νεανί-ου	ποιητ-ῶν	νεανι- ῶν
<i>dat</i>	ποιητ-ῇ	νεανί-α	ποιητ-αῖς	νεανί-αῖς
<i>acc</i>	ποιητ-ήν	νεανί-αν	ποιητ-άς	νεανί-ας
<i>voc</i>	ποιητ-άῃ	νεανί-α	ποιητ-αί	νεανί-αι

Note 1 Masculines of the 1st declension ending in -τής and a few others have -α in the vocative.