

The Nominative Case

The Basics of Greek Nouns

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app

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A Few Key Ideas

- Case
- Stem, connecting vowel and case ending
- Declension



What Is a Noun's "Case"?

- Not a familiar idea for English speakers
- "Case" in the sense of a job, an assignment
 - the word is "on the case"
- Case = a job for a noun to do in a clause
 - How does it modify the other words?
 - How does it contribute the the overall idea of the clause?
- Nouns take different forms in different "cases"
 - Like uniforms for different jobs
 - different endings (usually)
 - different stems (sometimes)



Noun Cases in English?

- English does have cases (nouns play different roles)
 - subject, possessive, direct object, indirect object, etc.
- English no longer uses different word-forms to indicate case
 - Subject: "The **ball** flew."
 - Direct object: "She caught the **ball**."
 - Indirect object: "He swung at the **ball**."
- Why not?
 - replaced by word order & prepositions



Case "Uniforms" in English Pronouns

- Case "uniforms" only in personal pronouns
 - Not endings, but the whole word

	1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person			
Subject	I	you (thou)	he	she	it	Singular
Direct object	me	you (thee)	Him	her	it	
Subject	we	you	they			Plural
Direct object	us	you	them			



Why Does Greek Use Different Case Forms?

- English can use word order to show a word's job
 - Different orders, different meaning
 - Some word orders don't make sense at all

The girl fed the dog.

The dog fed the girl.

Fed the dog the girl.



Why Does Greek Use Different Case Forms?

- In Greek, word order doesn't tell us much
 - You can rearrange the words without changing the idea
 - So you need different endings to know whether a noun is the subject, object, etc.
- How will we know each word's role?
 - Subject? Object? Indirect object?

Θεος ἦν ὁ λογος.

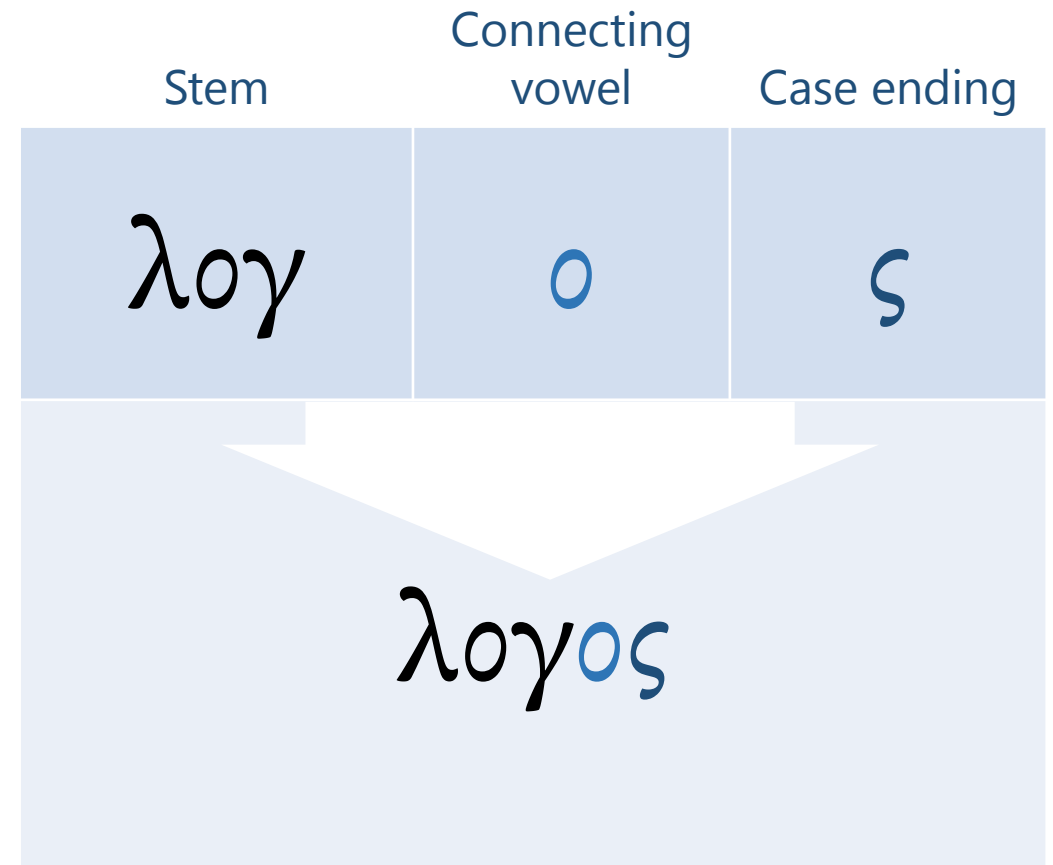
Ὁ λογος ἦν θεος.

Ἦν ὁ λογος θεος.



Noun Stems and Case endings

- Greek nouns have three parts
 - The **stem** conveys the word's basic meaning
 - doesn't change (much)
 - The **case ending** signals the word's role in the clause
 - often changes
 - The **connecting vowel** is the "glue" holding the case ending on the stem
 - doesn't usually change, but often hidden



Noun Declensions

- A declension is a big family of nouns
 - 3 of these “families” in Greek
- Share basic traits
 - Same connecting vowel
 - The “glue” between the stem and the case ending
 - Same case endings

Declension	Stem	Conn. vowel	Case ending
first	ἀδελφ	η	ς
second	λογ	ο	ς
third	πατηρ	-	-

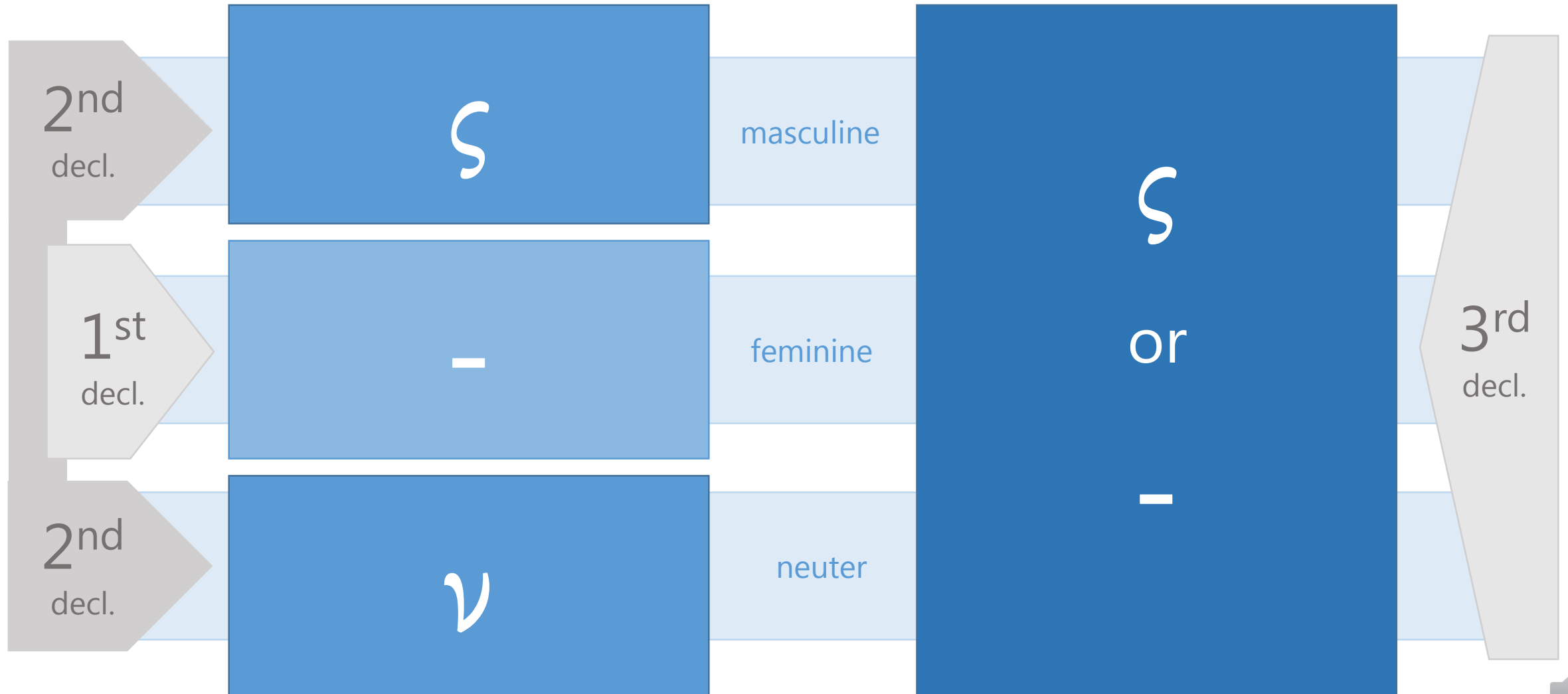


The Nominative Case

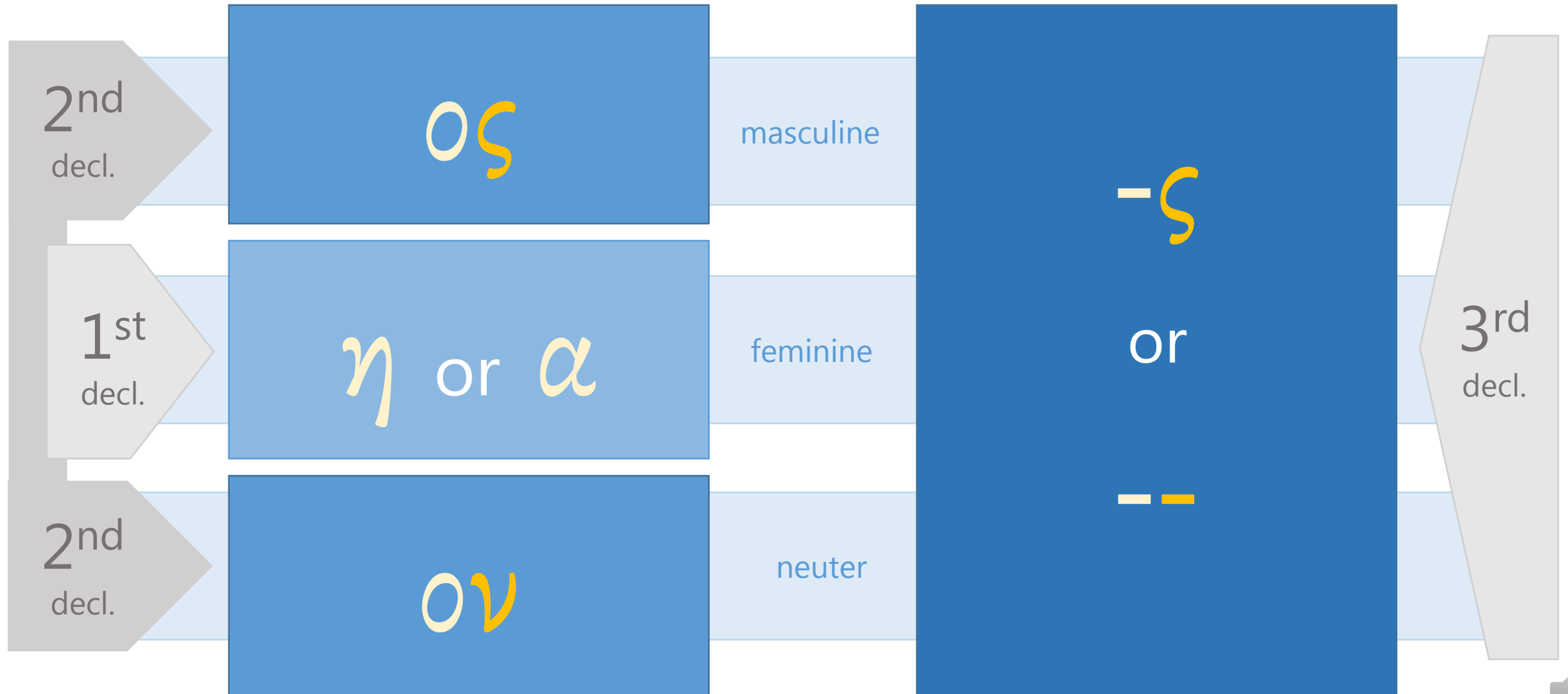
- The “subject” of the sentence
- How do we recognize that a word is **nominative** case?
 - Its nominative case ending
- You might already recognize these case forms
 - It's used as the "dictionary form" of a noun



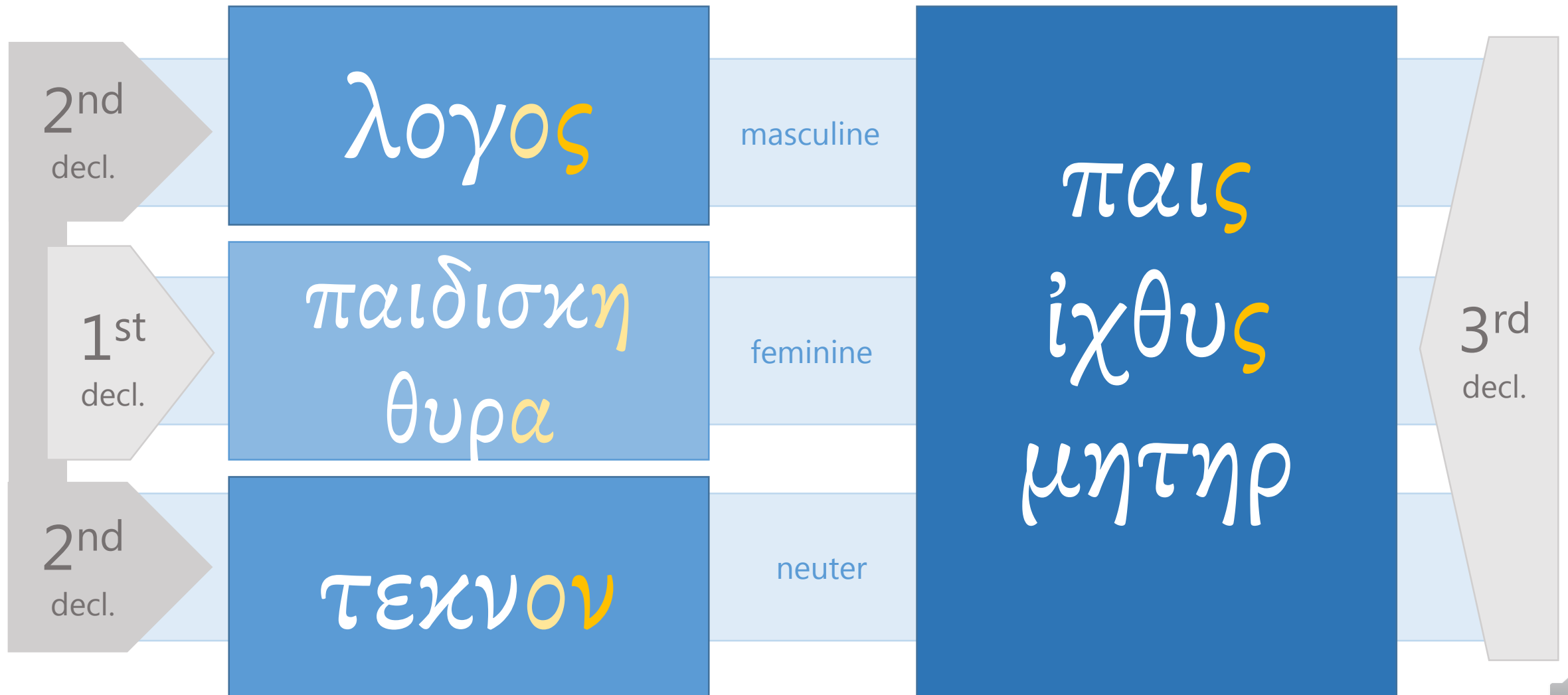
Nominative Case Endings



Case Endings with Connecting Vowels



Examples of Nominative Nouns



Some Implications For . . .

- How we read English translations
 - What we *can't* tell from a translation
 - Word order is often very different in Greek
- The significance of Greek word order
 - Often used for emphasis
- John 1:1
 - "God" (θεος) comes first in the Greek clause
 - Stressing that the word was *God*

John 1:1

Θεος ἦν ὁ λόγος.

The word was God.



Keep Learning

- You can learn more about Greek cases and the nominative case in particular here:
 - Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek* (3rd edition)
 - nominative case, 6.8 (p. 30), 6.12-6.18 (pp. 32-35)
 - word order in Greek, 6.10 (p. 31)



Mounce introduces two cases together (nominative and accusative), while we are starting with just the nominative. Don't worry yet about the sections that deal with the accusative case.

