

The Greek Alphabet III

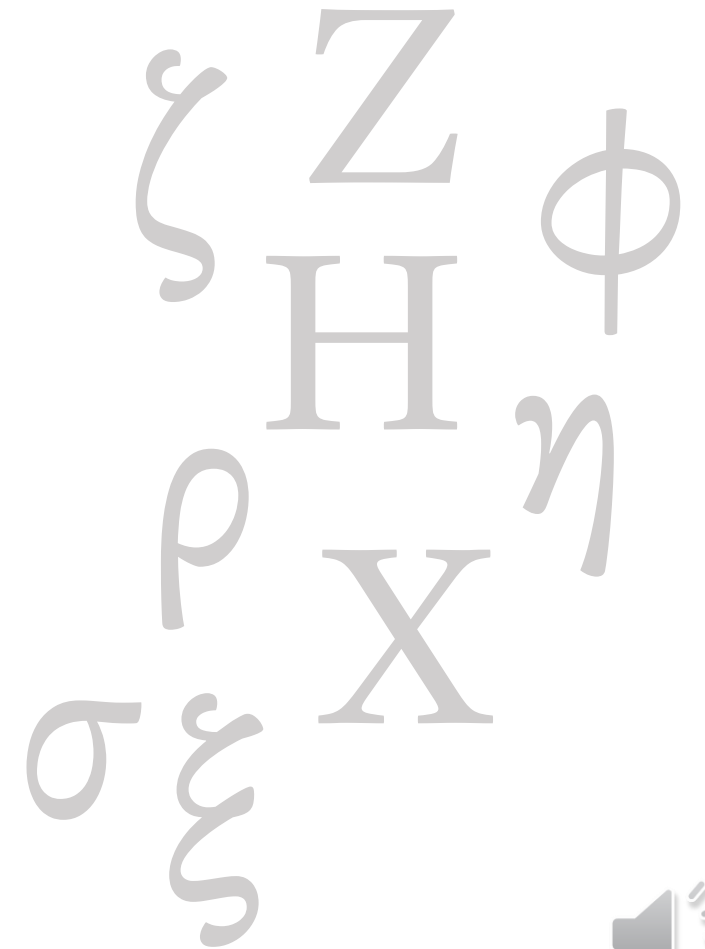
Some Tricky Letters

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app
© Ian W. Scott, 2015



Slippery Customers

- A few Greek letters are confusing at first
 - Some look like an English letter with a different sound
 - Some are easily confused with other Greek letters



The Alpha-bet

Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Epsilon	Zeta	Eta	Theta	Iota	Kappa	Lambda	Mu
α	β	γ	δ	ϵ	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	μ

Nu	Xi	Omicron	Pi	Rho	Sigma	Tau	Upsilon	Phi	Chi	Psi	Omega
ν	ξ	\omicron	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ	ϕ	χ	ψ	ω



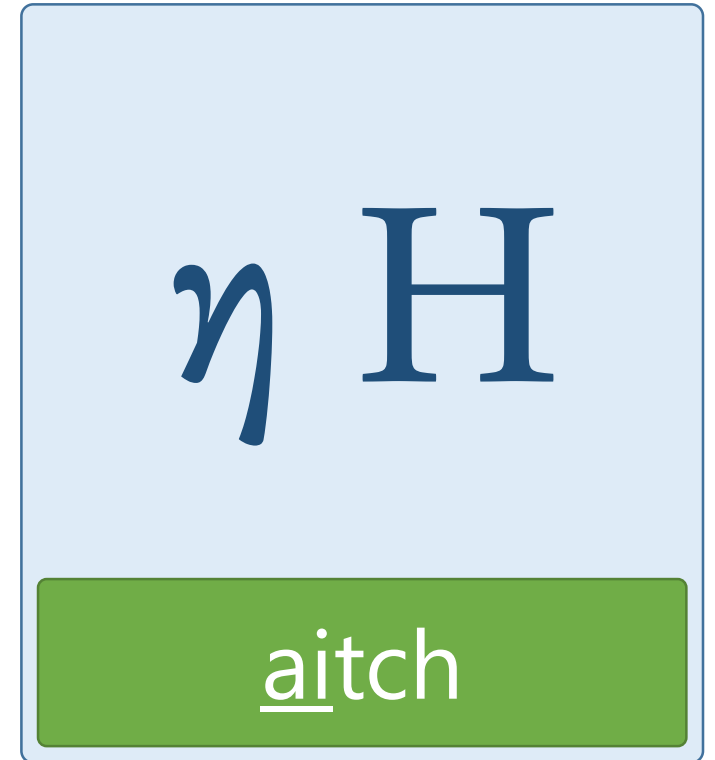
Zeta

- Source of confusion
 - capital looks like an English 'Z'
 - lower case vaguely like a final ζ (but taller upper section)
- Sound
 - Like 'dz' in 'adze' (woodworking tool)
 - Like 'ds' in 'ads' or 'fads'
 - Sound like our 'z' in modern Greek
 - we're not sure when this changed
- Typing tip
 - usually typed with the 'z' key



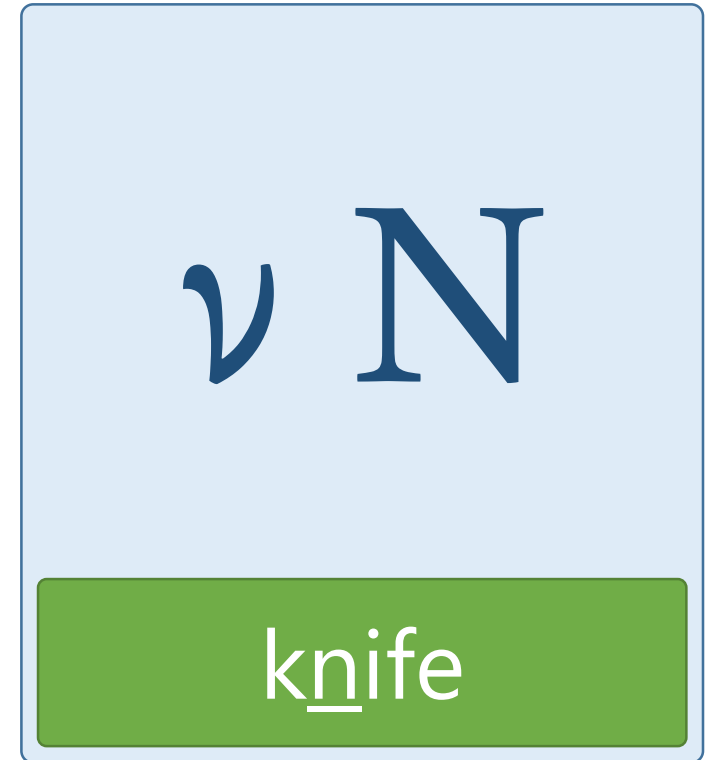
Eta

- Source of confusion
 - Lower case looks like an English 'n'
 - Upper case looks like an 'H'
- Sound
 - actually makes a long 'e' sound
 - Like é in French
 - Like 'ai' in 'pair' or 'hair'
 - As in the name of the letter 'h': aitch
- Typing tip
 - usually typed with the 'h' key



Nu

- Source of confusion
 - lower case looks like the English letter 'v'
- Sound
 - actually makes an 'n' sound
 - like in 'nine' or 'knife' (with silent 'k')
 - looks a bit like the tip of a knife blade
- typing tip
 - v is usually typed with the 'n' key



Nu

- Source of confusion
 - lower case looks like the English letter 'v'
- Sound
 - actually makes an 'n' sound
 - like in 'nine' or 'knife' (with silent 'k')
 - looks a bit like the tip of a knife blade
- typing tip
 - v is usually typed with the 'n' key

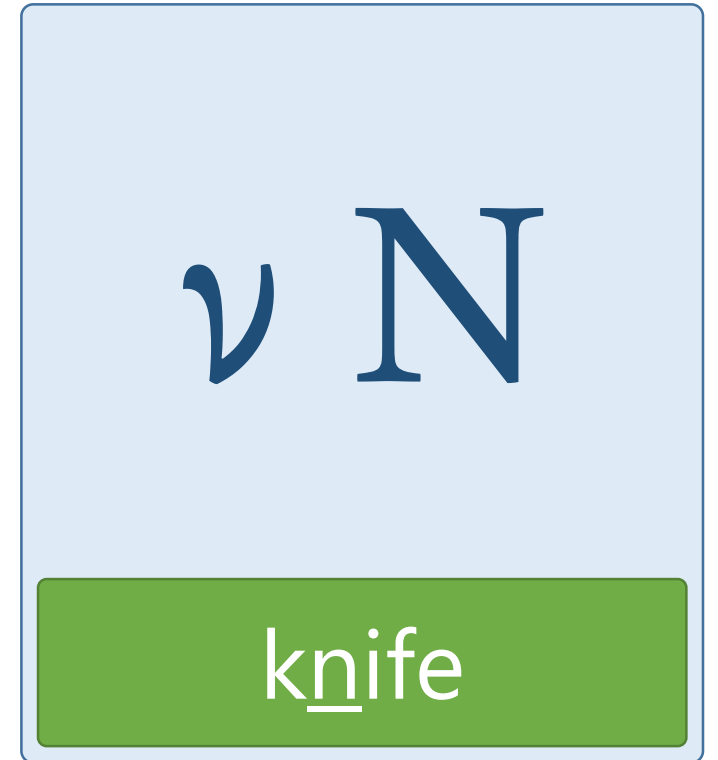


knufe



Nu

- Source of confusion
 - lower case looks like the English letter 'v'
- Sound
 - actually makes an 'n' sound
 - like in 'nine' or 'knife' (with silent 'k')
 - looks a bit like the tip of a knife blade
- typing tip
 - v is usually typed with the 'n' key



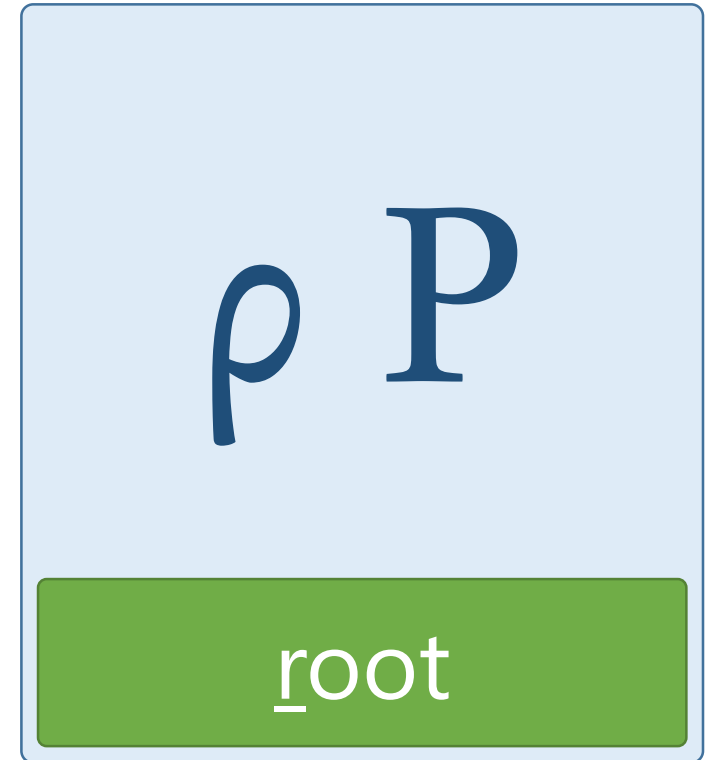
Xi (or Ksi)

- Source of confusion
 - lower case looks like an English 'E' or backwards 3
 - upper case might be confused with Θ
- Sound
 - makes a 'ks' sound
 - like 'x' in 'axe' or 'tex mex'
 - never like 'x' in 'xylophone'
- typing tip
 - Typed with either the 'c' key or the 'j' key



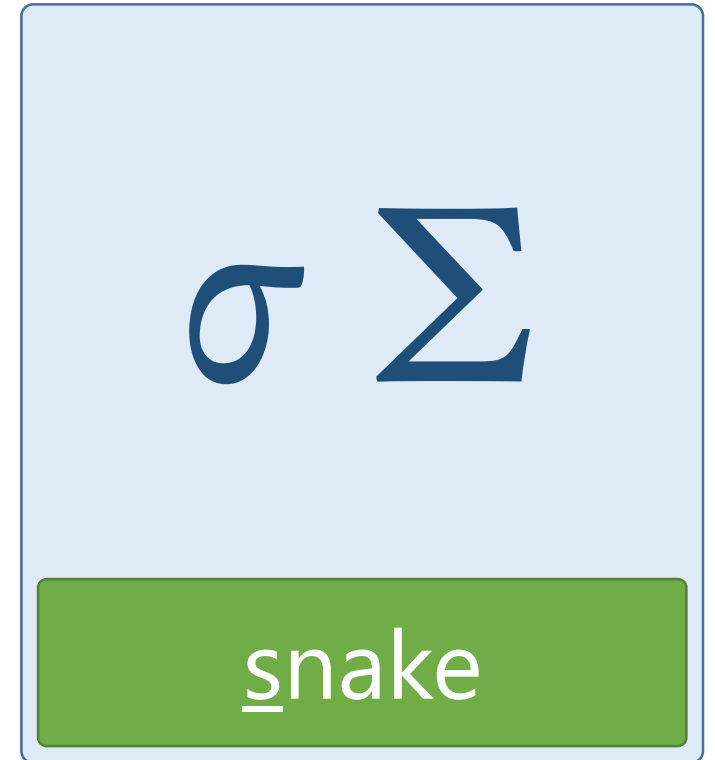
Rho

- Source of confusion
 - Rho looks like an English 'p'
 - Both upper and lower case
- Sound
 - makes an 'r' sound
 - probably lightly rolled 'r' (like Italian)
- The only consonant that can take a breathing mark
 - Always rough breathing when ρ starts a word
 - as in ῥημα, "speech"



Sigma (initial and medial)

- Source of confusion
 - When lower-case sigma is not at the end of a word, it changes shape
 - looks more like an 'o' with a tail at the top
 - actually, the downward curve in the ϣ form is just flipped upward
 - But the upper case Σ doesn't change
- Sound
 - Doesn't change: still 's' as in 'snake'
- Typing tip
 - Most keyboards use 's' key for this form
 - Final sigma (ς) usually typed with 'v' or 'w'



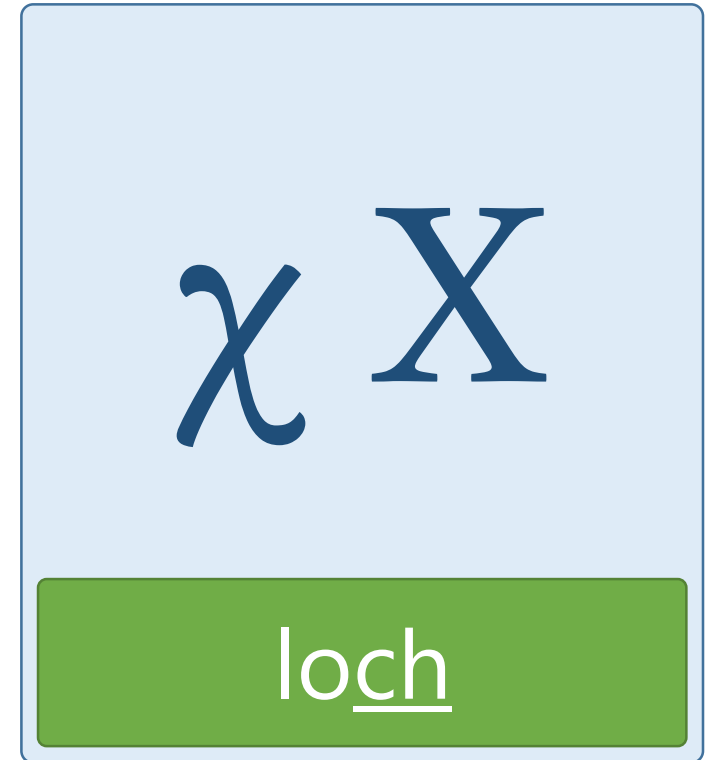
Phi

- Source of confusion
 - like 'o' but has a vertical line through it
 - like ψ but the circle is closed at the top
 - like θ and Θ but the line is vertical
- Sound
 - like 'f' in 'fish' or 'finger'
 - like 'ph' in 'philosophy'
 - never like voiced 'f' in 'of'
- Typing tip
 - usually typed with the 'f' key



Chi

- Source of confusion
 - looks like an English 'x'
- Sound
 - a guttural 'ch' sound as in "Bach" or "loch"
 - never 'ch as in church'
 - some have trouble pronouncing χ
 - if so, you can pronounce it like 'k'
 - but remember this isn't its proper sound
- Typing tip
 - usually typed with the 'x' key



Keep Learning

- You can find more about the Greek alphabet and pronunciation in the following slide decks as well as in:
 - Mounce, Basics of Biblical Greek
 - The Greek alphabet, Chapter 2

