

The Subjunctive Mood

Hypothetically Speaking

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app
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Mood Issues

- The category of “mood” in Greek grammar confuses two different issues
 - What kind of syntactical role does the verb play
 - (Finite verbs)
 - Infinitives
 - Participles
 - What is the relationship between the verb and reality
 - Indicative: describing reality
 - Imperative: creating reality
 - Subjunctive: describing events whose reality is uncertain
 - Optative



Forming Subjunctive Verbs

- There are subjunctive forms of two tenses
 - Present and Aorist
- Fortunately, they're easy to recognize if you know the indicative
 - Lengthened connecting vowel
 - No augment (in aorist)
- Same personal endings as indicative finite verbs
 - All tenses and voices use primary endings
 - So even simpler than indicative mood



Parts of a Present Subjunctive Verb

Augment	Stem	Tense marker	Conn. vowel	Ending	Complete form
-	λυ	-	ω	μεν	λυωμεν

↑
Lengthened connecting vowel



Primary Personal Endings (Active)

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	-	-μεν
2 nd person	-ς	-τε
3 rd person	-ι	-νσι(ν)



Present Active Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λυω	λυωμεν
2 nd person	λυης	λυητε
3 rd person	λυη	λυωσι(ν)



Primary Personal Endings (Middle/Passive)

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	-μαι	-μεθα
2 nd person	-σαι	-σθε
3 rd person	-ται	-νται



Present Middle/Passive Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λυωμαι	λυωμεθα
2 nd person	λυη	λυησθε
3 rd person	λυηται	λυωνται



Parts of a First Aorist Subjunctive Verb

Augment	Stem	Tense marker	Conn. vowel	Ending	Complete form
-	λυ	σ	ω	μεν	λυσωμεν

No augment

Lengthened connecting vowel



First Aorist Active Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λυ ^σ ω	λυ ^σ ωμεν
2 nd person	λυ ^σ ῃς	λυ ^σ ῃτε
3 rd person	λυ ^σ ῃ	λυ ^σ ωσι(ν)



First Aorist Middle Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λυσωμαι	λυσωμεθα
2 nd person	λυση	λυσησθε
3 rd person	λυσηται	λυσωνται



First Aorist Passive Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λυθω	λυθωμεν
2 nd person	λυθης	λυθητε
3 rd person	λυθη	λυθωσι(ν)



Parts of a 2nd Aorist Subjunctive Verb

Augment	Stem	Tense marker	Conn. vowel	Ending	Complete form
-	λαβ	-	ω	μεν	λαβωμεν

No augment

Lengthened connecting vowel



2nd Aorist Active Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	λάβω	λάβωμεν
2 nd person	λάβῃς	λάβῃτε
3 rd person	λάβῃ	λάβωσι(ν)



2nd Aorist Middle Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	γενωμαι	γενωμεθα
2 nd person	γενη	γενησθε
3 rd person	γενηται	γενωνται



2nd Aorist Passive Subjunctive

	Singular	Plural
1 st person	γραφω	γραφωμεν
2 nd person	γραφης	γραφητε
3 rd person	γραφη	γραφωσι(ν)



Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

- Expressing Purpose: **ἵνα** + subjunctive
 - **ἵνα** ("in order to, so that") almost always followed by subjunctive verb
- Examples
 - Καὶ παρετήρουν αὐτὸν ... **ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ**. (Mark 3:2)
 - "Then they were watching him ... so that they could accuse him."
 - ... εἶπον **ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας**. (John 11:42)
 - "I spoke so that they might believe that you have sent me."
 - Περιπατεῖτε ἕως τὸ φῶς ἔχετε, **ἵνα μὴ σκοτία ὑμᾶς καταλάβῃ**. (John 12:35)
 - "Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness will not overcome you."



Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

- Expressing Purpose: *iva* + subjunctive
- Conditional sentences: if ... then ...
 - We'll deal with these in a separate lesson



Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

- Expressing Purpose: *ἵνα* + subjunctive
- Conditional sentences: if ... then ...
- Hortatory subjunctive
 - A first-person plural subjunctive is used to urge one's companions to take some action.
 - *Ἄγωμεν ἀλλαχοῦ εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας κωμοπόλεις, ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖ κηρύξω.*
(Mark 1:38)
 - "Let us go elsewhere, to the villages nearby, so that I can preach there as well."



Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

- Expressing Purpose: **ἵνα** + subjunctive
- Conditional sentences: if ... then ...
- Hortatory subjunctive
- Deliberative subjunctive
 - A subjunctive verb is used in questions where the answer is unclear
 - **Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε, λέγοντες, Τί φάγωμεν, ἢ τί πίνωμεν, ἢ τί περιβαλώμεθα;** (Matt 6:31)
 - "Do not worry and say "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink" or "What will we wear?"



The Subjunctive and Prohibition

- One can forbid an action using
 - οὐ + future indicative
 - μη + infinitive (present or aorist)
- One can also use μη + aorist subjunctive
 - A strong, emphatic prohibition
 - Can be further strengthened with the double negative οὐ μη
 - Two negatives do not cancel each other out
 - Reinforce one another to make the denial emphatic



The Subjunctive and Prohibition

- Examples

- **Μὴ νομίσητε** ὅτι ἤλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας. (Matt 5:17)

- "Do not think that I came to do away with the law or the prophets."

- **Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε**, λέγοντες, Τί φάγωμεν, ἢ τί πίνωμεν, ἢ τί περιβαλώμεθα; (Matt 6:31)

- "Do not worry and say "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink" or "What will we wear?"

- Ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθωσιν. (Matt 24:35)

- "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words must not pass away."



Keep Learning

- You can learn more about the Greek subjunctive mood here:
 - Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek* (3rd edition)
 - Subjunctive mood, 31.1—22 (pp. 287—97)
 - Wallace, *Basics of New Testament Syntax* (1st edition)
 - “The Subjunctive mood” section in the “Moods” chapter (pp. 201-209)

