

“Merkle and Plummer show how to get started with New Testament Greek without getting lost in an ancient language. This book explains Greek in a way that people who are not language nerds can easily understand and eventually progress toward being able to read the New Testament in the original Greek. This book is informed by good knowledge of linguistics and pedagogy, but it doesn’t drown readers in acronyms, scholarly jargon, or technical details. Lots of good explanations on things like textual criticism and word-study fallacies that students should learn in their language studies. In short, this is a book that students will enjoy and instructors will appreciate.”

—**Michael Bird**, academic dean and lecturer in theology, Ridley College

“*Beginning with New Testament Greek* is exactly what today’s teachers and students need. The layout is realistic, the progression through the material makes perfect sense, and the use of NT texts throughout is motivating. Students will benefit from Merkle and Plummer’s linguistic expertise, their masterful pedagogy, and their love for God’s Word. Students can rest assured they are getting here the very best of scholarship in the service of the church. I recommend *Beginning with New Testament Greek* with enthusiasm—an abundant feast for mind and heart alike.”

—**J. Scott Duvall**, professor of New Testament and J. C. and Mae Fuller Chair of Biblical Studies, Ouachita Baptist University

“Incorporating up-to-date research and helpful links to digital resources, here is a comprehensive introductory grammar written by experienced teachers for the serious student of New Testament Greek. Recent developments in the understanding and significance of verbal aspect, middle voice and discourse analysis are discussed and threaded pervasively through the conversational style of this work. Directed throughout at reading for meaning, all translation exercises and illustrations of grammatical features are taken from the New Testament itself. These attributes along with the many supporting materials make this a valuable resource not only for the classroom but also for teachers and scholars wishing to update or further their own understanding of Koine Greek.”

—**Sue Kmetko**, adjunct lecturer in New Testament Greek, Stirling Theological College

“Two of the most important elements of a first-year Greek experience aiming for student success are methodical presentation and motivational enrichment. Merkle and Plummer load this textbook with first-quality material of both kinds. Two of the leading motivational factors are extensive direct interaction with the actual New Testament text—both in the lesson exercises and in exegetical discussions showing the value of knowing Greek—and excursus introducing students to broader fields of Greek studies and resources to aid their exegetical pursuits, both in print and online. Measured exposure to ‘state-of-the-discussion’ questions about the meanings of the verb tenses and the middle voice contribute further value to assure this grammar has a lasting place as a marketplace heavyweight.”

—**Randy Leedy**, founder, NTGreekGuy.com, and former professor of New Testament, Bob Jones University

“Do we really need another beginning Greek grammar? Merkle and Plummer show us that the answer is, ‘Yes!’ The book is written by two veterans of teaching Elementary Greek, by two master teachers, and the clarity of their teaching is evident on every page of their

grammar. The book is not only accessible but also practical. They explain with helpful illustrations why the study of Greek makes a difference. Also, they are up-to-date on recent scholarship on Greek grammar. Whether they discuss verbal aspect or deponent verbs, students and teachers can have confidence that Merkle and Plummer know the current state of the question. I recommend this textbook with enthusiasm.”

—**Thomas R. Schreiner**, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation, professor of biblical theology, and associate dean, the School of Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Simple. Practical. Up-to-date. User-friendly. Beginners in Greek will benefit from this introduction to the language of the New Testament. The text carries the student into the complexities of the language with relative ease, always taking the time to make the grammar accessible and understandable. What is good for the learner is also good for effective teaching. This new work by Merkle and Plummer is highly commendable.”

—**Mark A. Seifrid**, professor of exegetical theology, Concordia Seminary

“The first great strength of this textbook is that the approach has been field tested in many classes by two gifted pedagogues. The second strength is that the student gets to work quickly on the real Greek of the New Testament in the excellent exercises (from the very first chapter)! The third strength is something unique. Where in any other beginning textbook will the student also be introduced to the critical texts of the Greek NT, the lexical resources, good Greek commentaries, diagramming, and the available digital resources? This textbook makes me want to teach Elementary Greek again!”

—**William C. Varner**, professor of Bible and Greek, The Master’s University

“Drs. Merkle and Plummer have given us an excellent volume that serves as a beginning for the study of the Greek New Testament. Though this volume is primarily directed to those beginning the study, it will also serve as an excellent refresher for those of us who have been studying New Testament Greek for many years. I commend this current volume to all who are beginning and who are continuing to study God’s inerrant Greek New Testament.”

—**Jerry Vines**, pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL, and two-time president, the Southern Baptist Convention

“Merkle and Plummer have a strong reputation of being clear and effective teachers of New Testament Greek. In their grammar, they combine both their knowledge of Greek and their seasoned pedagogy to provide the beginning students of New Testament Greek with a valuable and clear resource that will help them develop the necessary skills to begin their journey to read and understand the Greek New Testament.”

—**Jarvis J. Williams**, associate professor of New Testament interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

BEGINNING GREEK

//////
WITH NEW
TESTAMENT

An **Introductory** Study of the Grammar
and Syntax of the New Testament

Benjamin L. **Merkle** and Robert L. **Plummer**

Beginning with New Testament Greek
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At the Classroom Door

*Lord, at Thy word opens yon door, inviting
Teacher and taught to feast this hour with Thee;
Opens a Book where God in human writing
Thinks His deep thoughts, and dead tongues live for me.*

*Too dread the task, too great the duty calling,
Too heavy far the weight is laid on me!
O if mine own thought should on Thy words falling
Mar the great message, and men hear not Thee!*

*Give me Thy voice to speak, Thine ear to listen,
Give me Thy mind to grasp Thy mystery;
So shall my heart throb, and my glad eyes glisten,
Rapt with the wonders Thou dost show to me.*

—**J. H. Moulton**
Bangalore, India
February 21, 1917

CONTENTS



Acknowledgments	xi
Morphological Abbreviations	xiii
Introduction	1
1. The Greek Alphabet	3
2. First Declension Nouns	15
3. Second Declension Nouns	27
4. The Basics of Greek Verbs	35
<i>Introducing Critical Texts of the Greek New Testament</i>	47
5. Present Indicative Verbs	53
6. Imperfect Indicative Verbs	61
7. Contract Verbs	69
8. Prepositions	79
<i>Introducing Textual Criticism</i>	89
9. Personal and Relative Pronouns	97
10. Future Indicative Verbs	107
11. First Aorist Indicative Verbs	117
12. Second Aorist Indicative Verbs	125
<i>Introducing Vocabulary-Building Resources, Lexicons, and Other Word Study Tools</i>	133
13. Liquid Verbs	141
14. Third Declension Nouns	147
15. Perfect and Pluperfect Indicative Verbs	155
16. Adjectives and Adverbs	167
<i>Introduction to Commentaries</i>	179

17. Present Participles	181
18. Aorist Participles	195
19. Perfect Participles	209
20. Other Pronouns	219
<i>Introduction to Diagramming</i>	231
21. Infinitives	235
22. Subjunctives	247
23. Imperatives and Optatives	259
24. Mt Verbs	271
<i>Introducing Digital Resources</i>	279
Appendix	283
Key to the Practice Exercises	307
Vocabulary	371
Glossary of Terms	381
Name Index	393
Subject Index	394
Scripture Index	398

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Benjamin L. Merkle
Robert L. Plummer
Pentecost 2020

MORPHOLOGICAL ABBREVIATIONS



Tense

present	pres
imperfect	impf
future	fut
aorist	aor
perfect	per
pluperfect	pluper

Voice

active	act
passive	pass
middle	mid

Mood

indicative	ind
participle	ptc
subjunctive	sub
imperative	imp
infinitive	inf
optative	opt

Person

first	1st
second	2nd
third	3rd

Gender

masculine	masc
feminine	fem
neuter	neut

Case

nominative	nom
genitive	gen
dative	dat
accusative	acc
vocative	voc

Number

singular	sg
plural	pl

INTRODUCTION



If you are a student who has been assigned this textbook, it is our prayer that it will help instill in you a passion for reading the Greek New Testament. After all, what is more exciting than reading the very words that God inspired? Our advice to you at this point is to follow carefully your instructor’s advice. If you are using this book for self-study, start each chapter by watching its brief overview video via the web links provided. After that, read the chapter, study the material, and test your mastery by doing the practice exercises at the end of the chapter. Answers to the exercises are found at the back of the book. Additional free materials are available for you at beginninggreek.com.

We wish we could also provide you with dozens of inspiring quotes or stories, advice on study habits, and many effective memory techniques. In fact, we do provide such a “personal trainer in paperback” for your Greek journey in our volume, *Greek for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving New Testament Greek* (Baker, 2017). We encourage you to read that volume along with this one.

Here we turn to address a broader audience—especially the professors who might adopt this textbook for classroom use. “There is no end to the making of many books” (Eccl 12:12). The biblical sage’s observation is especially true of New Testament Greek grammars penned in English. More than 100 introductory Greek grammars have been published in the last century. Why one more?

- Advances in technology now enable the production of a textbook seamlessly integrated with other pedagogical resources, greatly improving student learning. (Note the web links throughout the book whereby students can immediately watch mini-lectures and listen to Greek vocabulary pronounced.) We recommend that you immediately check out beginninggreek.com to see many other free resources prepared for both students (vocabulary flashcards, PDFs of PowerPoint files, links to videos and other resources, etc.) and professors (tests, quizzes, PowerPoint files, syllabi, etc.).
- Beginning Greek students need to be informed accurately and engagingly of the growing consensus among Greek scholars on verbal aspect, discourse functions of tenses, and middle voice/deponency. Recent decades of linguistic analysis have helped Greek scholarship to speak more precisely

and objectively about patterns that the best Greek grammarians have observed for centuries. We are hopeful that students who use our textbook will never wander through the wasteland of confusion over these topics.

- Though most beginning grammars do not discuss text criticism, commentaries, critical editions of the Greek New Testament, diagramming, Greek word studies, or digital resources, we have included a brief introductory essay for each one of these topics. A professor may choose to cover all, part, or none of these matters in the classroom, but students will have been provided with accurate, up-to-date information on critical matters—with recommendations of additional resources to explore the topics further.
- The vocabulary lists at the end of each chapter provide working vocabulary for the *following* chapters. This simple and innovative tweak to the traditional method of learning Greek vocabulary enables students to focus on new grammatical concepts without the distraction of learning many new words at the same time.
- Without sacrificing accuracy or essential detail, this textbook streamlines and consolidates essential Greek grammar into 24 chapters—giving professors maximum flexibility in choosing to cover the material in one or two semesters.

Though not original to our grammar, we also think the following features help increase its pedagogical effectiveness:

- Each chapter begins with a “significance” section—looking at specific text from the Greek New Testament that illustrates the meaning payoff of the new grammatical category that is being introduced.
- Chapters contain multiple practice exercises that isolate specific new skills before applying them to translation sentences.
- All translation sentences come directly from the Greek New Testament—a great encouragement to students who are learning Greek in order to read the Bible more faithfully. If you find the exercises at the end of the chapter are taking your students too long, feel free to assign only a percentage of them.
- An answer key is provided in the back of the book, allowing students to check their work immediately.

We love seeing students ablaze with a passion to read, understand, believe, obey, enjoy, and teach the Greek New Testament. It is our prayer and hope that this textbook aids in igniting that fire in many hearts.

CHAPTER 1



THE GREEK ALPHABET

1.1 Overview¹

In this opening chapter, we will introduce you to the Greek alphabet as well as how to pronounce the various letters and letter combinations. We will also explain breathing marks, accent marks, and punctuation marks. Are such terms completely new to you? Don't worry. We are here to guide you. Your joyful journey into reading the Greek New Testament is about to begin!

1.2 Significance

In this chapter, you will learn the letters of the Greek alphabet. Did you know that a single Greek letter can make a difference in interpretation? The Greek text of James 2:14 looks like this:

Τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγῃ τις ἔχειν, ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη;
μὴ δύναται **ἦ** πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;

An English translation (ESV) reads this way:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can **that** faith save him?

The bold Greek letter toward the end of the verse is an eta (ἦ). It looks much like the English letter “n.” This one-letter word is the Greek article (similar to “the” in English), but it also has other functions. One function is called “the article of previous reference.” That is, in some contexts, it can serve to mark a previous reference to the same noun (which usually appears the first time without an article).

¹ For an overview video lecture of chapter 1, go to bit.ly/greeklecture1 or beginninggreek.com.

Note above how the first (underlined) instance of faith (πίστιν) does not have an eta in front of it, but the second (also underlined) appearance of the word (πίστις) does. This use of eta allows the writer to say, in effect, “the kind of faith I just mentioned above.” Observe the apt translation of the ESV above (“that faith”). Of course, interpretations based on Greek grammatical observations should always be further supported by the surrounding context, as this interpretation is. Not to translate the noun “faith” with an explicit marker for previous reference in English (e.g., “such” or “that”) actually introduces significant theological distortion. Note how the Douay-Rheims version (DRA) introduces this error:

What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him?

This translation wrongly gives the impression that faith cannot save. James actually says that a *false* faith characterized by an empty verbal profession (“that faith”) is unable to save. One Greek letter can make a significant difference in interpretation.

1.3 Alphabet²

LOWER CASE	UPPER CASE	LETTER NAME	ERASMIAN PRONUNCIATION	RECONSTRUCTED KOINE GREEK ³ PRONUNCIATION	MODERN PRONUNCIATION
α	A	Alpha	father		
β	B	Beta	ball	Habana vault	vault
γ	Γ	Gamma	gift	ghoul yes	ghoul yes
δ	Δ	Delta	dog	dh	dh, that
ε	E	Epsilon	echo		
ζ	Z	Zeta	kudzu	zoo	zoo
η	H	Eta	ate	Pedro	eat
θ	Θ	Theta	thin		
ι	I	Iota	sit (short) ski (long)	ski	ski
κ	K	Kappa	key		
λ	Λ	Lambda	lock		
μ	M	Mu	mom		

² For instructions on handwriting Greek letters, see bit.ly/greeklecture1. To hear the Greek alphabet song, go to bit.ly/greekalphabetsong or beginninggreek.com.

³ This is adapted from Randall Buth, “Notes on the Pronunciation System of Koine Greek,” <https://www.biblicallanguagecenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Koine-Pronunciation-2012.pdf>.

LOWER CASE	UPPER CASE	LETTER NAME	ERASMIAN PRONUNCIATION	RECONSTRUCTED KOINE GREEK ⁴ PRONUNCIATION	MODERN PRONUNCIATION
ν	Ν	Nu	nail		
ξ	Ξ	Xi	fox		
ο	Ο	Omicron	often	obey	obey
π	Π	Pi	pond	spill	pond bond
ρ	Ρ	Rho	rhyme		
σ / ς	Σ	Sigma	sand		
τ	Τ	Tau	tap	still	toe doe
υ	Υ	Upsilon	boot	German "ü"	beat
φ	Φ	Phi	phone		
χ	Χ	Chi	ache	German "ch"	ache hue
ψ	Ψ	Psi	oops		
ω	Ω	Omega	obey		

1.4 Pronunciation

Since you are using a textbook written in English, it's possible you have never thought about other languages in the world, such as Chinese, that use tiny pictures (or ideographs) to convey meaning. To be competent in reading such a language one must learn thousands of characters. English and Greek, on the other hand, employ a limited number of symbols (26 and 24, respectively) to create a phonetic approximation of spoken speech. The famous biblical archaeologist W. F. Albright (1891–1971) once quipped about the Hebrew alphabet: "Since the forms of the letters are very simple, the 22-letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest."⁴ We take alphabets for granted, but their introduction was revolutionary—akin to the introduction of the smart-phone in more recent history.

Scholars debate the best way to pronounce Koine Greek, which is Greek used from roughly 300 BC to AD 330 and the language in which the New Testament was penned. We follow a pronunciation system ultimately derived from Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536). This system is used by most Greek professors and has the benefit of clearly differentiating the various vowel sounds. In contrast, modern

⁴ Carl H. Kraeling and R. M. Adams, eds., *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 123.

Greek is pronounced such that eta (η), iota (ι), and upsilon (υ) all have the same sound.

Some scholars advocate pronouncing Koine Greek the same way as modern Greek because we don't know precisely how Koine Greek was pronounced. Others argue for a "reconstructed Koine" pronunciation based on a study of spelling mistakes made by ancient scribes. There are benefits and limitations to any pronunciation scheme. Therefore, we suggest that you use the pronunciation system employed by your instructor.

Note that sigma has two forms. The first form (σ) is used at the beginning (σύν) and middle (πίστιν) of a word. The final sigma (ς) is used if it is the last letter of a word (λόγος).

The Greek alphabet has 24 letters. Perhaps you will find it easier to learn them in six groups of four:

α β γ δ	ν ξ ο π
ε ζ η θ	ρ σ/ς τ υ
ι κ λ μ	φ χ ψ ω ⁵

One of the most effective ways to learn a new language's alphabet is with a song. Use the web links in this book to access additional audio and video resources, including a version of the Greek alphabet song.⁶

Five Greek letters are considered **double consonants** since they require the use of two letters when transliterated: θ (th), ξ (xs), φ (ph), χ (ch), and ψ (ps). **Transliteration** means writing one language phonetically (that is, writing out its sounds) with another language's letters or characters.

The letter *gamma* (γ), by itself, is always pronounced with a hard g (as in "goat" but never like "giraffe"). When placed before certain other consonants (γ, κ, ξ, χ), it is pronounced with an "n" sound. For example, ἄγγελος is pronounced an-ge-los (not ag-ge-los).

Pay attention, since some letters are easy to confuse with others:

γ → ν ζ → ξ θ → φ κ → χ υ → ο ο → σ π → τ φ → ψ

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

(1466–1536) published the first printed Greek New Testament in 1516. He wrote, "It was not for empty fame or childish pleasure that in my youth I grasped at the polite literature of the ancients, and by late hours gained some slight mastery of Greek and Latin. It has been my cherished wish to cleanse the Lord's temple of barbarous ignorance, and to adorn it with treasures brought from afar, such as may kindle in hearts a warm love for the Scriptures." ~Erasmus, *Enchiridion Militis* (1501)

⁵ Hint: The letter's name includes the sound of the letter. For example, the letter beta makes the "b" sound found in the name of the letter (*beta*).

⁶ To hear the Greek alphabet song, go to bit.ly/greekalphabetsong or beginninggreek.com.

Moreover, you will soon notice that Greek fonts differ slightly from each other. The difference seems huge to some beginning students, but in a short time, you will barely notice the slight variations—just as you likely don’t consciously think about the differences between the Times New Roman and Courier fonts. Even if you are one of those aesthetically sensitive people who does notice the differences in English fonts, you’re neither confused nor troubled by them.

Take care because some Greek letters closely resemble letters in the English alphabet.

η (eta) → “n”	ρ (rho) → “p”	χ (chi) → “x”
ν (nu) → “v”	υ (upsilon) → “u”	ω (omega) → “w”

1.5 Vowels

In using the terms “short vowel” and “long vowel,” linguists are classifying sounds based on how long it originally took to say them, relative to other vowels in the same language. This time difference is not something you will be able to distinguish by listening to Greek and is somewhat hypothetical based on where and how the vowels are articulated in the mouth. These labels of “short” and “long,” however, will become important later.⁷ For now, learn this: there are seven vowels in Greek: α, ε, η, ι, ο, υ, and ω. Some of these vowels are considered short (α, ε, ι, ο, υ) and others are considered long (α, η, ι, υ, ω). Note that the vowels α, ι, and υ can be either long or short. Later, you will learn that vowels can sometimes lengthen (shift from short to long) when changes are made to a word. Here is a chart demonstrating how short vowels lengthen:

Short		Long		Short/Long
ε	→	η	←	α
ο	→	ω		ι
				υ

When the letter iota (ι) follows the long vowels α, η, and ω, it is frequently written underneath that vowel and is not pronounced. This is called an *iota subscript*: καρδιά, ἀγάπη, λόγω. You will not have to decide whether to subscript the iota. It will just be part of the spelling of the word or form you are memorizing or reading.

1.6 Diphthongs

A *diphthong* (from the Greek word διφθόγγος, meaning “having two sounds”) is two vowels together that are pronounced as one sound.

⁷ The technical term for vowels that change their length (short → long or long → short) is *ablaut*.

LOWER CASE	PRONUNCIATION
αι	aisle
αυ	kraut
ει	freight
ευ	feud
οι	oil
ου	soup
υι	suite

When two vowels are together yet *not* a diphthong, a **diaeresis mark** (i.e., two raised dots above the vowel: ÿ, ü) is frequently placed above the second vowel to signal that the two vowels are pronounced separately (cf. the English word naïve).⁸ This mark is most commonly found on proper nouns (names and places—especially those imported from Hebrew or Aramaic) and usually occurs above an iota (e.g., Κόϊν = Kah-een, “Cain”; Μωϋσῆς = Mō-oo-seys, “Moses”; Ἑβραῖστί = Heh-bra-ee-stee, “in Hebrew/Aramaic”). Other vowel combinations don’t form diphthongs and are also pronounced separately (e.g., ηυ = ay-oo; ιε = ee-eh, and ιη = ee-ay). Because this last vowel combination (ιη) is used to mirror the Hebrew/Aramaic *yod* sound, the vowels are typically pronounced together (“yea”). Thus, the name for “Jesus” is Ἰησοῦς and is pronounced “yea-soos.”

1.7 Breathing Marks

Every Greek word that begins with a vowel (including a diphthong) is given a **breathing mark**. Writing a breathing mark is analogous to dotting the lowercase letter “i” in English. Most of the time, it does not even effect pronunciation; the accepted conventions of writing the language just require it. There are two types of breathing marks: smooth and rough. With a smooth breathing mark (´), the most common type, there is no change in pronunciation. With a rough breathing mark (´), an “h” sound is added to the beginning of the word. If a word begins with a single uppercase (capital) vowel, the breathing mark is written to the left of that letter, at the top of the line (e.g., Ἀβὰδδὼν, “Abaddon” or Ἡρῶδης, “Herod”).⁹ Also, if a word begins with a diphthong, the breathing mark appears over the second letter (αἷμα, “blood” or Αἴγυπτος, “Egypt”). An initial upsilon (υ) always has a rough

⁸ *Diaeresis* is pronounced die-AIR-eh-sis. In other languages, two dots above a vowel can have a different function, as the umlaut does in German. Although it is important for us to note them, diaeresis marks are uncommon.

⁹ Note that the initial capital Greek letter in the name Ἡρῶδης that looks like an English *H* is actually a capital *eta*—a vowel pronounced like the “ay” in the English word *may*. It is only the rough breathing mark that gives the Greek word Ἡρῶδης an initial “h” sound in pronunciation.

breathing mark. The only consonant to receive a (rough) breathing mark is rho (ῥ). The “h” sound does not affect the pronunciation of rho but is evidenced in English words derived from Greek (e.g., rhetoric → ῥητορικὴ). If you have a Greek lexicon, flip to the list of words that begin with rho and note how few there are. Observe too how all the words that begin with rho have a rough breathing mark. In ancient Greek, the rough breathing mark over the rho was apparently a cue to the reader to trill the “r sound.”

ἁμαρτία	→	hah-mar-teé-ah	“sin”
ἑπτὰ	→	hep-táh	“seven”
ἡμέρα	→	hey-mér-ah	“day”
ὁδός	→	hah-dós	“way/road”
ὕδωρ	→	hoó-dōr	“water”
ὠσαννά	→	hō-san-náh	“hosanna”
ῥῆμα	→	ráy-mah	“word”

1.8 Accent Marks

Most words in a modern Greek New Testament will have *accent marks*. According to tradition, it was the head of the library in Alexandria, Aristophanes of Byzantium (c. 257–180 BC), who first developed a system of accentuation to help non-native speakers pronounce Greek. In the second and third centuries BC, Greek was still a tonal language, with accents guiding speakers on rising and falling pitches. By the first century AD, the time of the composition of the New Testament, Greek likely had lost its tonality; thus, we should understand the accents as communicating stress or emphasis to the reader/speaker.

That is, a reader should say the accented syllable a bit louder or longer, stressing or emphasizing it. For example, as we saw above, the word for “sin” is ἁμαρτία, pronounced “hah-mar-teé-ah.” The accent mark signifies that the emphasis is given to the third syllable (“teé”). The presence and behavior of accents on words can also help readers know whether a vowel is long or short, which reveals the proper pronunciation. Accents are not found widely in Greek manuscripts until the fifth century AD and are lacking from the oldest manuscripts of the Greek New Testament.

We consistently stress certain syllables when we say English words, but we don’t mark those syllables with accents. Can emphasizing a different syllable change meaning? You bet! Pronounce Indianapolis with the “an” stressed (In-diANapolis), and it sounds like you are saying “Indiana police,” rather than the city, “IndiaNapolis.”

Modern editions of the Greek New Testament have three different accent marks:

Acute	acute	→	ἀγάπη	ah-gáp-ay
Grave ¹⁰	grave	→	κεφαλὴ	keh-fal-áy
Circumflex	circumflex	→	σοφῶν	sah-fóne

Accent marks can only be placed on a word's last three syllables. The names of these syllables are the (1) antepenult (before next-to-last syllable), (2) penult (next-to-last syllable), and (3) ultima (last syllable).

antepenult	penult	ultima
ἄν—	θρῶ—	πος

We will not spend much time on accent marks except when it is significant, especially in distinguishing words (e.g., τίς [“who”] versus τις [“anyone”] or εἰ [“if”] versus εἶ [“you are”]). For now, we simply provide the following guidelines: (1) the acute can be placed on any of the last three syllables; (2) the circumflex can be placed on the last two syllables; and (3) the grave can be placed only on the last syllable. Finally, if the ultima is long (that is, if it contains a long vowel or diphthong with a long value), the accent cannot be placed on the antepenult (ἄνθρωπος → ἀνθρώπων). Also, if the ultima is long, any accent on the penult will be an acute rather than a circumflex (δοῦλος, but δούλου). In addition, the circumflex can only occur over a long syllable (that is, one that contains a long vowel or a diphthong with a long value). Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, we recommend that your main focus on accents at this point would be to let them guide you in stressing the correct syllables when you read Greek aloud.¹¹

1.9 Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are rarely found in Greek manuscripts written before the eighth century. In the earliest extant (that is, still existing) New Testament manuscripts, the script consists of all capital letters (majuscule script) that lacks spacing between words and that has only rare, erratic punctuation. Over time, copies of the New Testament came to be written with lowercase letters (miniscule script) and spacing between words. Eventually, other editorial elements were added which today include paragraphs, indentations, and breaks between clauses and sentences. Below is an example of John 1:1 in a format likely similar (though neater!) to how the apostle John originally penned it. This majuscule text is followed by the same words as they appear in most modern editions of the Greek New Testament:

ΕΝΑΡΧΗΗΝΟΛΟΓΟΣΚΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣΗΝΠΙΡΟΣΤΟΝΘΕΟΝΚΑΙΘΕΟΣ
ΗΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ

¹⁰ Pronounced “grave” like the color “mauve.” If you view the grave accent like a small picture, it’s like a slide going down into the grave (tomb). This will help you remember its pronunciation.

¹¹ For an accurate and accessible introduction to Greek accents, we recommend John A. K. Lee’s *Basics of Greek Accents: Eight Lessons with Exercises* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Modern Greek editions of the New Testament do not capitalize the first word of each sentence. Capitalization usually occurs (1) in the title of New Testament books (with every letter capitalized), and in the first letter of (2) proper names, (3) direct quotations, and (4) words that begin a new paragraph. Here are the punctuation marks commonly used in most modern editions of the Greek New Testament:

Period (.)	.	α.
Comma (,)	,	α,
Semicolon (;)	·	α·
Question Mark (?)	;	α;

1.10 Practice¹²

A. Alphabet: Memorize the Greek alphabet (see section 1.3). The easiest way to do this is to learn to sing it (e.g., to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”). You’ll know you have it when you can write out the lowercase script of the alphabet in the correct order and form ten times from memory.

α β γ δ—ε ζ η θ—ι κ λ μ—ν ξ ο π—ρ σ/ς τ υ—φ χ ψ ω

B. Vowels: Circle the words in Eph 1:3–6 that have a diphthong:

Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ.

C. Accents: Identify the accent marks (A = acute; G = grave; C = circumflex) and the breathing marks (S = smooth; R = rough), if any, in the following words:

Key Word	Accent	Breathing Mark
1. εὐλογητὸς	_____	_____
2. Ἰησοῦ	_____	_____
3. ἡμᾶς	_____	_____

¹² Answers to activities are found in the back of this book, but before checking the answers, you should (1) study the material in this chapter and (2) attempt the activities without reference to the print answers or videos.

- | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| 4. καθὼς | _____ | _____ |
| 5. αὐτῶ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. πρὸ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. εἶναι | _____ | _____ |
| 8. ἁγίους | _____ | _____ |
| 9. ἀγάπη | _____ | _____ |
| 10. ἧς | _____ | _____ |

D. Reading: Read aloud John 3:16–18, paying close attention to accent and breathing marks. (Although you may not yet understand what the words mean, learning to read Greek out loud is vital. It is very difficult to learn, understand, or translate words that you cannot pronounce.)¹³

Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῆ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

1.11 Vocabulary¹⁴

In this text, some new vocabulary terms will be presented at the end of a chapter in preparation for the next chapter's teaching. We believe familiarity with new words will aid in assimilating the new grammatical discussion.

The words are listed alphabetically and are often grouped together. For instance, nouns in this lesson are all “first declension nouns”; they are further subdivided into nouns ending in eta (η) and nouns ending in alpha (α). A *declension* is a grammatical term for a pattern. Greek nouns follow certain patterns, as discussed in the next chapter. For now, you just need to know that all the nouns below are “first declension” or “pattern 1” nouns.

Also, you will notice that the article (ἡ) follows the noun, indicating the gender of the noun—something we will discuss in more detail in the next chapter. ἡ is the feminine article, so all the nouns below are feminine. In English, we have an indefinite article “a” and definite article “the.” Greek only has one article, but it is used similarly to our definite article and is frequently translated “the.” Note that below the list of nouns are two conjunctions. *Conjunctions* are small words (e.g., “and,” “but,” “also”) that speakers and writers use to stitch together larger groups of words (clauses).

The vocabulary words listed appear in their *lexical forms* (i.e., the dictionary forms which are the nominative singular form for nouns). Another term for a

¹³ To hear John 3:16–18 read, go to bit.ly/greekhw1 or beginninggreek.com.

¹⁴ To hear an author of your textbook read through the vocabulary for chapter 1, go to bit.ly/nt-greekvocab1 or beginninggreek.com.

dictionary is a lexicon. Below, each Greek term is given at least one English *gloss* (i.e., a brief English equivalent of the Greek term). Be mindful that an English definition given is merely one of many possible renderings. The more Greek you learn, the more your knowledge of individual vocabulary words will be nuanced.

One of the most helpful ways to learn new Greek vocabulary words is to note English cognates, that is, English words that can ultimately be traced to a Greek ancestor form. English cognates will be given in parentheses and italicized alongside English definitions. If a Greek word does not list any English cognates, or the cognates are not familiar to you, you are advised to create your own memory device.

For example, the word ἁμαρτία means “sin.” Those who know the term *hamartiology* from systematic theology should have no trouble remembering the meaning of ἁμαρτία. Most beginning Greek students, however, do not know such a rare, specialized word. So, you may need to make your own memory device based on associations and visual images related to the sound of the vocabulary word. When pronounced, the word ἁμαρτία sounds sort of like “hammer tea-a,” so you can imagine sinning against your mother by smashing her favorite tea cup with a hammer. In fact, the more memorable, shocking, and visual an association can be, the better. So, involve all your senses. You can even act out walking to a table, closing your eyes, raising your arm, and seeing yourself smash the tea cup with a hammer. As you do, say ἁμαρτία. Then imagine your poor mother looking at you in amazement, pointing her trembling, outstretched finger at you and yelling, “Sin!” After all, the most effective memory devices are the ones you create!

For further help in creative methods to learn Greek, we recommend another book we penned: *Greek for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017). We also suggest this helpful free website that includes a section on learning foreign language vocabulary: www.mullenmemory.com.

ἀγάπη, ἡ	love
γῆ, ἡ	earth, land, ground (<i>geology</i>)
ζωή, ἡ	life (<i>zoo, zoology</i>)
φωνή, ἡ	voice, sound (<i>phonetics, phonograph, phone</i>)
ἀλήθεια, ἡ	truth
ἁμαρτία, ἡ	sin (<i>hamartiology</i> —the theological study of sin)
βασιλεία, ἡ	kingdom, reign (<i>basilica</i>)
δόξα, ἡ	glory, majesty (<i>doxology</i>)
ἐκκλησία, ἡ	congregation, assembly, church (<i>ecclesiastical</i>)
ἡμέρα, ἡ	day (<i>ephemeral, “for a day”</i>)
καρδιά, ἡ	heart (<i>cardiologist</i>)
δέ	and, but, now
καί	and, even, also
μέν	on the one hand, indeed
ὁ, ἡ, τό	the