

New Testament Greek for the Beginner

Textbook

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Lesson One

THE GREEK ALPHABET

The Greek alphabet is composed of twenty-four letters: seventeen consonants and seven vowels.

<i>Capital</i>	<i>Lowercase</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>
A	α	alpha	<u>a</u> as in <u>f</u> ather
B	β	beta	<u>b</u> as in <u>b</u> ook
Γ	γ	gamma	<u>g</u> as in <u>g</u> o
Δ	δ	delta	<u>d</u> as in <u>d</u> og
E	ε	epsilon	<u>e</u> as in <u>e</u> lbow
Z	ζ	zeta	<u>z</u> as in <u>Z</u> ion
H	η	eta	<u>e</u> as in <u>o</u> bey

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Θ	θ	theta	<u>th</u> as in <u>throw</u>
Ι	ι	iota	<u>i</u> as in <u>kid</u> (also <u>i</u> as in <u>intrigue</u>)
Κ	κ	kappa	<u>k</u> as in <u>kite</u>
Λ	λ	lambda	<u>l</u> as in <u>lizard</u>
Μ	μ	mu	<u>m</u> as in <u>mom</u>
Ν	ν	nu	<u>n</u> as in <u>nothing</u>
Ξ	ξ	xi	<u>x</u> as in <u>box</u>
Ο	ο	omicron	<u>o</u> as in <u>hot</u>
Π	π	pi	<u>p</u> as in <u>path</u>
Ρ	ρ	rho	<u>r</u> as in <u>red</u>
Σ	σ/ς	sigma	<u>s</u> as in <u>bl<u>ess</u></u>
Τ	τ	tau	<u>t</u> as in <u>ta<u>ll</u></u>
Υ	υ	upsilon	<u>u</u> as a combined sound of <u>tru<u>e</u></u> and <u>bo<u>o</u>k</u>
Φ	φ	phi	<u>ph</u> as in <u>gra<u>ph</u></u>

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X	χ	chi	<u>ch</u> as in lo <u>ch</u> ¹
Ψ	ψ	psi	<u>ps</u> as in to <u>ps</u>
Ω	ω	omega	<u>o</u> as in go <u>o</u>

FINAL SIGMA

The letter sigma has a special rule pertaining to it. When it occurs as the final letter of a word, the sigma changes to a *final sigma*: ς. At all other times, the sigma retains its original form (σ).

This concept is identical to the old English letter *s*, which was written ꝛ when occurring either at the beginning of or in the middle of a word, while the current symbol *s* was only used at the end of a word or as a capital letter. For example, in 1776 the phrase *in Congress assembled* would have been written *in Congreꝛs aꝛꝛsembled*.

BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the assent of Congress is hereby given and declared to an act of the General assembly of
Excerpt of a congressional act passed in 1802.

¹ Chi is a guttural, *i.e.*, the sound is made in the back of the throat, similar to the German word *Reich*. A simple *k* pronunciation is also acceptable.

HOW TO MEMORIZE

It is important to memorize the Greek alphabet *in order*. Both the names and pronunciations of each letter should also be committed to memory. Capital letters need not be memorized at this point.

Theta and phi's similarities may cause confusion. Remember that phi's line looks up, just like a giraffe.

Many Greek letters are very similar to their English counterparts. α , β , δ , ϵ , ι , κ , \omicron , ζ , τ , and υ all closely resemble their corresponding English letters.

Other Greek letters, such as η , ν , ρ , χ , and ω , may appear to be similar to English. Take special care not to confuse these false similarities with their apparent English counterparts: η is not an 'n,' nor is ν a 'v,' etc.

The Greek vowels are α , ϵ , η , ι , \omicron , υ , and ω .

REMEMBER THIS!

At the end of each lesson will be found a *Remember This!* section in which all grammar learned throughout the lesson will be summarized.

1. Memorize the Greek alphabet (lowercase), both letter names and pronunciation.
2. Learn the proper order of the Greek alphabet.

Lesson Two

FURTHER PRONUNCIATION AND DIACRITICAL MARKS

Though the pronunciation of each letter of the Greek alphabet was learned in Lesson One, a few letters display a new sound when joined together or joined to other marks. We will learn these in the present lesson.

GAMMA NASAL

When two gammas occur together ($\gamma\gamma$), they are pronounced as ng. Thus, $\theta\iota\gamma\gamma$ would be pronounced *thing*. Gamma also makes the sound of an n when preceding kappa (κ) or chi (χ). For example, $\sigma\iota\gamma\kappa$ would be pronounced *sink*, and $\theta\iota\gamma\chi$ would be pronounced *think*.