GR

LANGUAGE COURSE

Greek Alphabet 2

10 Chapters

Philip Osztromok

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GREEK ALPHABET 2

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Greek Alphabet 2

Course 2 · Chapter 1 · Vowel Pairs 1

Ζευγάρια φωνηέντων — Vowel Pairs 1

Greek Alphabet 1 taught you all 24 letters, and it warned you that some pairs of letters do not say what each letter says alone. This course teaches those pairs. We start with three that are the easiest to learn, because they all say the same sound you already know: ***ει, οι, υι*** *all say* ***"ee"****.*

How a Pair Works

A ***pair*** *(also called a digraph) is two letters that together make* ***one sound****, and the sound is usually not what you would get by saying each letter in turn. When you meet* ***Ει*** *you do not say "eh-ee": you say a single "ee". The pairs in this chapter are the vowel pairs that, in modern Greek, have become the same sound as ι.*

Your Next Three Pairs — ει οι υι

Ει

epsilon + iota

"ee", the same as η, ι and υ

Memory hook: ε and ι stand side by side and say a single "ee", as if the e had dissolved into the i. Think of the English words *see* and *seat*: two vowel letters, one sound.

Οι

omicron + iota

"ee" again

Memory hook: the ο is a round mouth and the ι is a stick; together they say "ee", not "oy" as the English *boy* suggests. The English *oi* is the trap: do not use it.

Υι

upsilon + iota

"ee" once more, but rare

Memory hook: υ and ι both say "ee" alone, so together they say it once. You will see this pair in only a few formal words, so recognise it and move on.

Six Ways to Spell "ee"

*With these pairs the sound "ee" now has **six** spellings:*

Spelling	Kind	Example
ι	single letter	πιτ́α (PEE-tah)
η	single letter	βημ́α (VEE-mah)
υ	single letter	ρυζι (REE-zee)
ει	pair	σειρά (see-RAH)
οι	pair	μοιρ́α (MEE-rah)
υι	pair, rare	formal words only

You cannot tell by ear which of the six is written, so learn the spelling with each word, as you do for English meet and meat.

How to Tell a Pair From Two Separate Letters

*Sometimes the same two letters are **not** a pair, and each says its own sound. The accent mark tells you:*

- **The tonos goes on the second letter of a pair.** In τοιχος the mark is on the ι, so οι is a pair and says "ee": TEE-khos.
- **If the tonos is on the *first* letter**, the two are separate vowels. In ρολοί the mark is on the ό, so ο and ι are not a pair: they are said separately, ro-LO-ee.
- A second sign, the diaeresis (¨) over the second letter, also keeps two vowels apart. It is taught in Chapter 3 and Chapter 7.

> **Look-Alike Warning**
>
> **ει vs ε ι:** the pair looks like two letters you know, so check the accent mark before you read it. **οι vs the English "oy":** οι never says "oy" (as in *boy*); it says "ee". Also remember that οι on its own is a word: it is the form of *the* used before plural masculine and feminine nouns.

Read It — Real Words

These words use the new pairs and the letters from Greek Alphabet 1. Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	οι	EE	the (plural, masculine or feminine)	*a word of its own, one syllable, no mark*
2	τρεις	TREES	three	*ει then final ς*
3	πείνα	PEE-nah	hunger	*tonos on the ί, the second letter of the pair*
4	σειρά	see-RAH	row, series	*stress on the last syllable*

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
5	κειμένο	KEE-meh-no	text	*three syllables, stress on the first*
6	τειχος	TEE-khos	city wall, rampart	*ει says "ee"*
7	τοιχος	TEE-khos	wall (of a room or house)	*the same sound as the word above, spelled with οι*
8	μοιρα	MEE-rah	fate	*οι says "ee"*
9	κοιταζω	kee-TAH-zo	I look	*stress on the second syllable*

Words 6 and 7 sound the same but are spelled differently and mean different things: that is why you have to learn the spelling.

An exception to watch

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ρολοί	ro-LO-ee	clock, watch	*the tonos is on the ό, so ο and ι are **not** a pair here*

Sound practice (not words)

Read these aloud and check that every pair says "ee": τει · κοι · μει · πειτο · κοιτα *— TEE · KEE · MEE · PEE-to · KEE-tah.*

Watch Out: Never "Eh-Ee"

The commonest mistake is to read ει as "eh-ee" or οι as "oy". Both are a single "ee". Look at where the accent mark is first: on the second letter, it is a pair.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for the vowel pairs and the accent rules returned a general reference on Greek orthography and several grammar and learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results agreed that in Modern Greek the spellings η, ι, υ, ει, οι and υι all represent the sound "ee", that the accent goes on the second vowel of a pair, and that an accent on the first vowel (or a

diaeresis on the second) means the two vowels are said separately. **Not checked against a source:** the word *ρολόι* itself (no result mentioned it; the reading ro-LO-ee follows the rule and is my own inference), the meanings, stress and spelling of the nine words, the claim that τείχος and τοίχος sound alike, that υι is rare and formal, and that οι is the plural article for masculine and feminine nouns. Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Foundalis, Accent marks denoting stress in Greek; Wikipedia, Greek orthography; Visit Sithonia, Digraphs and diphthongs; Wikipedia, Help:IPA/Greek. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. What sound do ει, οι and υι make?

▼ Show answer

All three say “ee”, the same as ι, η and υ.

2. Name the six spellings of “ee”.

▼ Show answer

ι, η, υ, ει, οι and υι.

3. Read these aloud: τρεις · πείνα · μοιρα · κοιταζω

▼ Show answer

TREES · PEE-nah · MEE-rah · kee-TAH-zo (“three”, “hunger”, “fate”, “I look”).

4. In τοίχος the accent is on the ί. In ρολόι it is on the ό. What does that tell you about οι in each word?

▼ Show answer

In τοιχος the accent is on the second letter, so οι is a pair and says “ee” (TEE-khos). In ρολοί the accent is on the first letter, so ο and ι are separate vowels (ro-LO-ee).

5. Write in Greek letters: *three* · *fate* · *row* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

τρεις · μοιρα · σειρά — TREES · MEE-rah · see-RAH.

Coming Up in Chapter 2

Next come two more vowel pairs: **αι**, which says “eh”, and **ου**, which says “oo”. With them you can read very common words such as είναι (“is, are”), and you will meet a table of every Greek vowel spelling.

Ζευγάρια φωνηέντων 2 — Vowel Pairs 2

Greek Alphabet 2 Chapter 1 gave you the three pairs that say "ee". This chapter gives you two more, ***αι*** *and* ***ου****, which are among the most common in the language. Between them they are in words you will see all the time:* **και** *("and"),* **είναι** *("is, are") and* **μου** *("my, me").*

Your Next Two Pairs — αι ου

αι

alpha + iota

"eh", the same as ε

Memory hook: in English the letters *ai* say "ay" (*rain*), but in Greek they say the short "eh" of *pen*, exactly like ε. Read **και** as KEH and **ναι** as NEH.

ου

omicron + upsilon

"oo", as in *mood*

Memory hook: the ο is a round mouth and the υ is a cup; together they say a long, round "oo". Remember that υ alone says "ee" and ο alone says "o", but the two together say neither: they say "oo".

All the Greek Vowel Spellings

Now you know every way to write a Greek vowel sound. There are ***five sounds*** *and* ***twelve spellings****:*

Sound	Spellings	Example
ah	**α**	γατα (GHAH-tah)

Sound	Spellings	Example
eh	**ε, αι**	ένα (EH-nah), και (KEH)
ee	**ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι**	πιτά, βημά, ρυζι, σειρά, μοιρά
o	**ο, ω**	νοτα (NO-tah), τωρα (TO-rah)
oo	**ου**	μου (MOO)

The sound "ee" has the most spellings (six) and "oo" has only one, so ου is the most reliable pair: when you see it you can always say "oo".

Look-Alike Warnings

αι vs the English "ai": never say "ay" (as in *rain*): αι says "eh". **ου vs ο υ:** the pair is one sound, "oo", not "o-ee" or "o-u". **The accent mark:** as in Chapter 1, the tonos goes on the *second* letter of a pair: γυναίκα (the ί), ούζο (the ύ). If the mark is on the *first* letter, the two are not a pair.

Read It — Real Words

These words use αι and ου, along with the pairs from Chapter 1. Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	και	KEH	and	*one syllable, no mark; αι says "eh"*
2	ναι	NEH	yes	*the same pair, the Greek for "yes" (it does not mean "no")*
3	είναι	EE-neh	is, are	*ει says "ee" and αι says "eh"*
4	καιρός	keh-ROS	weather, time	*stress on the last syllable*
5	παιδί	peh-DHEE	child	*δ is the "th" of this*
6	γυναίκα	yee-NEH-kah	woman	*γ before υ says "y"; the tonos is on the ί*
7	μου	MOO	my, me	*one syllable, no mark*
8	πουλί	poo-LEE	bird	*stress on the last syllable*
9	ούζο	OO-zo	ouzo (an aniseed spirit)	*the tonos is on the ύ, the second letter of ου*
10	μουσείο	moo-SEE-o	museum	*ου, then ει, then ο: three sounds you now know*

An exception to watch

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	Καίρο	KAH-ee-ro	Cairo	*the tonos is on the ά, so α and ι are **not** a pair here*

Sound practice (not words)

Read these aloud and check each pair: καιρα · μουρα · ταιρου · ουσαι *— KEH-rah · MOO-rah · teh-ROO · oo-SEH.*

Watch Out: Never "Ay" or "Oy"

The two commonest mistakes are to read αι as "ay" and ου as "ow" (as in *out*) or "oh-oo". Greek has neither: αι is a flat "eh" and ου is a clean "oo". The word και sounds like the English *keh*, not *kay* or *kie*.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for the vowel pairs αι and ου returned general reference pages (including Britannica) and several learner sites; I did not read any page in full. The results agreed that Modern Greek has five vowel sounds, that αι says the same sound as ε and that ου says "oo". **Not checked against a source:** the words themselves (none of the ten was in the results, so every meaning, stress and spelling comes from general knowledge, including the transcription of *είναι*, *μουσείο* and *ούζο*); the claim that the count of spellings is exactly twelve; the exception word *Κάιρο* and its reading KAH-ee-ro (an inference from the accent rule); and the English comparisons ("eh" as in *pen*, "oo" as in *mood*). Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Britannica, Modern Greek; Project Razon, Orthography and phonology; Breezy Greek, Vowel combinations in Greek; Elon, The five vowel sounds. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. What sound do αι and ου make?

▼ Show answer

αι says “eh”, the same as ε, and ου says “oo”.

2. How many vowel sounds does Greek have, and which sound has the most spellings?

▼ Show answer

Five (ah, eh, ee, o, oo). “ee” has the most, six: ι, η, υ, ει, οι and υι.

3. Read these aloud: και · ναι · είναι · μου · πουλί

▼ Show answer

KEH · NEH · EE-neh · MOO · poo-LEE (“and”, “yes”, “is, are”, “my, me”, “bird”).

4. The word Καρο has α and ι side by side but they are not read as a pair. Why?

▼ Show answer

The tonos is on the first letter, ά, so α and ι are separate vowels: KAH-ee-ro.

5. Write in Greek letters: *and* · *yes* · *museum* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

και · ναι · μουσειό — KEH · NEH · moo-SEE-o.

Coming Up in Chapter 3

The last two vowel pairs are **αυ** and **ευ**, which say “av” and “ev” or “af” and “ef” depending on the sound after them. You will also meet the diaeresis, the little double dot that breaks a pair apart.

Ζευγάρια φωνηέντων 3 — Vowel Pairs 3

*Greek Alphabet 2 Chapter 2 gave you αι and ου. This chapter finishes the vowel pairs with **αυ** and **ευ**, the pairs that change with the letter that follows them, and with a first look at the little double dot that stops a pair from being a pair. These pairs are in the word you will use more than any other when you visit Greece:* ευχαριστω *("thank you").*

Your Next Two Pairs — αυ ευ

αυ

alpha + upsilon

"av" or "af" (see the rule below)

Memory hook: α is "ah" and υ is "ee", but in the pair the υ turns into a consonant, a v or an f, and the pair says *av* or *af*. The English *ow* is the trap: do not say it.

ευ

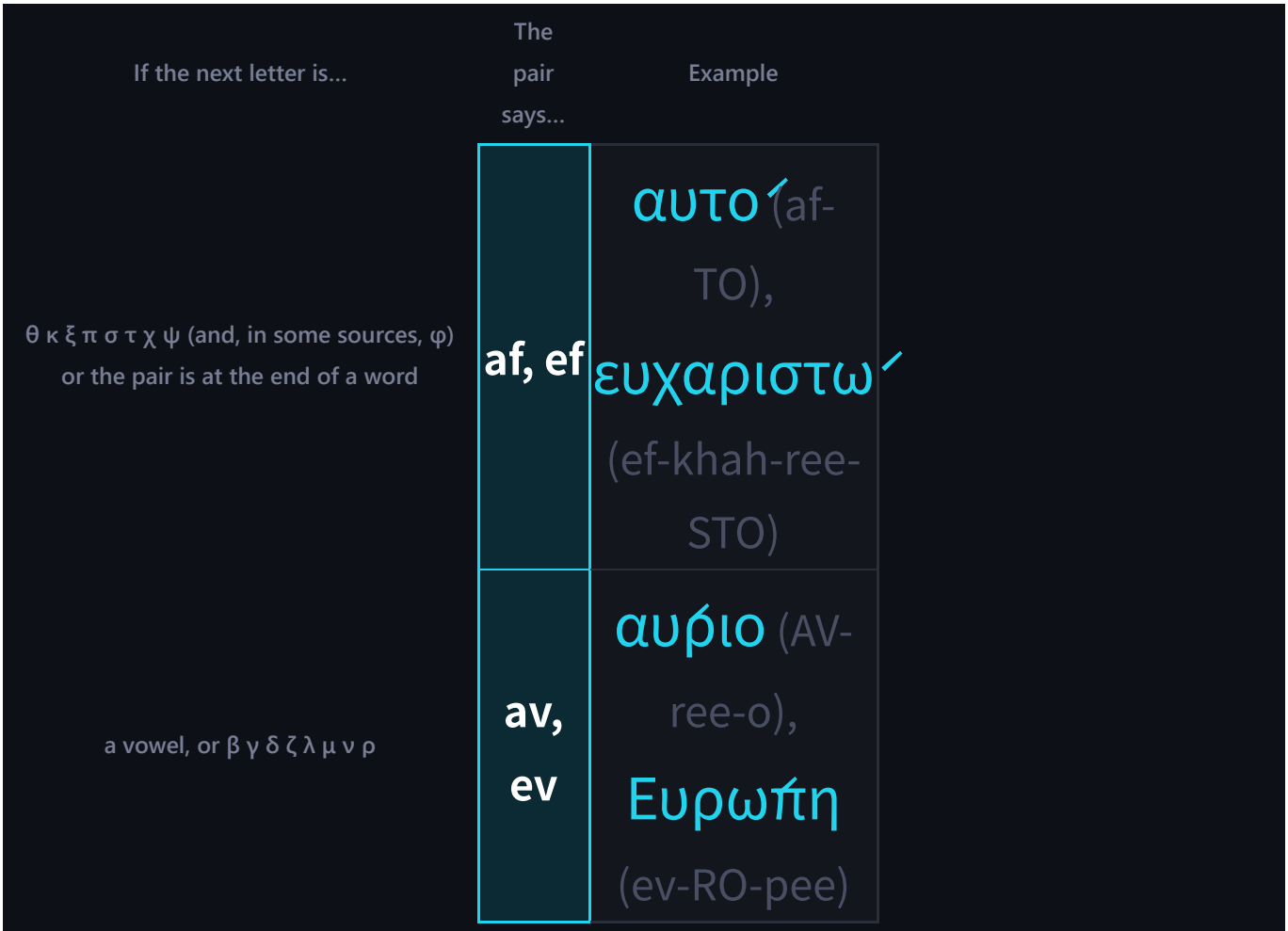
epsilon + upsilon

"ev" or "ef" (the same rule)

Memory hook: the same trick with ε: the pair says *ev* or *ef*. The English *you* is the trap: ευ never says "you".

The Rule: v or f?

*The υ in αυ and ευ says **"f"** before a **voiceless** sound (one you say with no buzz in your throat) and **"v"** before everything else.*



A shortcut: check the next letter against the voiceless letters θ κ ξ π σ τ χ ψ (some lists add φ). If it is in the list, say "f". If it is not, say "v".

> **Look-Alike Warnings**
>
> **αυ vs the English "ow":** αυ is not "ow" or "ah-oo"; it ends in a v or f. **ευ vs the English "you":** ευ is not "you" or "eh-oo". **Accent mark:** as in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, the tonos goes on the second letter of a pair: αυρίο, ευκόλο. **ηυ:** a third, rarer pair, ηυ, follows the same rule (iv or if); you will see it only in formal words.

The Diaeresis: When a Pair Is Not a Pair

*The **diaeresis** (Ϊ, Ϋ) is two dots over the second letter of what looks like a pair. It means **"this vowel stands on its own"**, so the two letters are said separately. A word you will see: προϊόν ("product"), said **pro-ee-ON**, where ο and ϊ are two separate vowels and not οι. Chapter 7 teaches the diaeresis in full.*

Like the tonos placed on the first letter (Chapter 1), the diaeresis is a signal that two vowels are not a pair.

Read It — Real Words

These words use αυ and ευ, with the pairs from the first two chapters. Check the letter after the pair, then decide on "υ" or "f". Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	αυτό	af-TO	this, it	*next letter τ is voiceless, so "af"*
2	αυτί	af-TEE	ear	*again τ, so "af"*
3	αυγό	av-GHO	egg	*next letter γ is voiced, so "av"*
4	αύριο	AV-ree-o	tomorrow	*next letter ρ is voiced, so "av"*
5	αυτοκίνητο	af-to-KEE-nee-to	car	*five syllables, stress on the third from the end*
6	ναυτής	NAF-tees	sailor	*next letter τ, so "af"; the tonos is on the ύ*
7	εύκολο	EF-ko-lo	easy	*next letter κ is voiceless, so "ef"*
8	Ευρώπη	ev-RO-pee	Europe	*next letter ρ is voiced, so "ev"*
9	ευχαριστώ	ef-khah-ree-STO	thank you	*next letter χ is voiceless, so "ef"; stress on the last syllable*

An exception to watch

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	προϊόν	pro-ee-ON	product	*the diaeresis on ϊ means ο and ι are **not** a pair*

Sound practice (not words)

Apply the rule to each: αυκα · αυλα · ευτα · ευβα *— AF-kah · AV-lah · EF-tah · EV-vah.*

Watch Out: Never "Ow" or "You"

The commonest mistakes are to read αυ as "ow" (so αυτό becomes "OW-to") and ευ as "you" (so ευχαριστώ becomes "you-kha-ri-STO"). Both end in a v or an f. Look at the next letter, then choose.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for αυ, ευ and the diaeresis returned Wikipedia, Wiktionary and several learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results agreed on the main rule: αυ and ευ say "av" and "ev" before a vowel or a voiced consonant, and "af" and "ef" before a voiceless consonant, with *αυγό* and *ευχαριστώ* given as examples; and that a diaeresis (or a tonos on the first letter) makes the two vowels separate. **Not settled:** whether φ belongs in the voiceless list (a forum list has it, Wiktionary's does not), and whether the pairs at the end of a word say "af" and "ef" (Wiktionary says so; none of my words ends in the pair). **Not checked against a source:** the word *προϊόν* and its reading pro-ee-ON (an inference from the diaeresis rule, no result gave it), the other seven words, every meaning and stress mark, and the English comparisons. Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Wikipedia, Greek orthography; Wiktionary, Appendix: Greek pronunciation; Wikipedia, Modern Greek phonology; Textkit, Quick modern Greek pronunciation question. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. When does αυ say "af", and when "av"?

▼ Show answer

"af" before a voiceless letter (θ κ ξ π σ τ χ ψ), "av" before a vowel or a voiced letter (β γ δ ζ λ μ ν ρ). The same rule gives "ef" and "ev" for ευ.

2. Say each word aloud: αυτό · αυγό · εύκολο · Ευρώπη

▼ Show answer

af-TO · av-GHO · EF-ko-lo · ev-RO-pee (“this”, “egg”, “easy”, “Europe”).

3. Read the most useful word of the chapter, ευχαριστώ, and say why the pair says “f”.

▼ Show answer

ef-khah-ree-STO (“thank you”). The next letter is χ, which is voiceless, so ευ says “ef”.

4. What does the double dot in προϊόν tell you?

▼ Show answer

That the ϊ stands on its own, so ο and ι are not the pair οι: pro-ee-ON.

5. Write in Greek letters: *tomorrow* · *car* · *thank you* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

αύριο · αυτοκίνητο · ευχαριστώ — AV-ree-o · af-to-KEE-nee-to · ef-khah-ree-STO.

Coming Up in Chapter 4

The vowel pairs are done. Chapter 4 begins the **consonant pairs** with **μπ** and **ντ**, which say “b” and “d”, the two sounds Greek writes with pairs because it has no single letters for them.

Σκληροί ήχοι — Hard Sounds 1

*The vowel pairs are done. This chapter starts the **consonant pairs**, with the two that give Greek its hard **"b"** and **"d"**: **μπ** and **ντ**. You need them because Greek has no single letter for either sound: β says "v" and δ says the "th" of this, so a hard b or d has to be spelled with two letters.*

Your Next Two Pairs — μπ ντ

μπ

mu + pi

"b" at the start of a word; usually "mb" inside one

Memory hook: μ and π together say *b*, as if the m and the p were joined into one sound. At the start of a word say a plain "b", as in *ball*. Inside a word, say a short "m" before the "b", as in *lamb*.

ντ

nu + tau

"d" at the start of a word; usually "nd" inside one

Memory hook: ν and τ together say *d*. At the start of a word say a plain "d", as in *dog*. Inside a word, say a short "n" before the "d", as in *end*.

The Rule: Start or Middle?

Where the pair is	μπ says…	ντ says…
start of a word	b	d
inside a word	usually mb	usually nd

Inside a word, speakers vary: some say a clear "mb" or "nd", others drop the nasal and say only "b" or "d". This course teaches the clear nasal version in the middle of a word, and the plain sound at the start.

Look-Alike Warnings

μπ vs "mp": the pair does *not* say "mp" (as in *lamp*); it says "b" or "mb". Read λαμπα as LAHM-bah, not "LAHM-pah". **ντ vs "nt":** the pair does *not* say "nt"; it says "d" or "nd". Read πεντε as PEHN-deh, not "PEHN-teh".

Read It — Real Words

These words use μπ and ντ at the start and in the middle. Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	μπαλα	BAH-lah	ball	*μπ at the start: "b"*
2	μπυρα	BEE-rah	beer	*μπ at the start; υ says "ee"*
3	μπορω´	bo-RO	I can	*stress on the last syllable*
4	μπροστα´	bro-STAH	in front	*a cluster of consonants (μπρ, then στ)*
5	λαμπα	LAHM-bah	lamp	*μπ inside a word: "mb"*
6	ντοματα	do-MAH-tah	tomato	*ντ at the start: "d"*
7	ντροπη´	dro-PEE	shame	*ντ at the start; stress on the last syllable*
8	πεντε	PEHN-deh	five	*ντ inside a word: "nd"*
9	κοντα´	kon-DAH	near	*ντ inside a word, stress on the last syllable*
10	ενταξει	en-DAH-ksee	OK	*ντ inside a word, then ξ and ει: "ks" and "ee"*

Sound practice (not words)

Check each pair against the rule: μπα · μπο · ντα · ντι · αμπα · εντο *— BAH · BO · DAH · DEE · AHM-bah · EHN-do.*

Watch Out: Do Not Say "P" or "T"

The commonest mistake is to read μπ as "mp" and ντ as "nt": μπύα as "MPEE-rah" ("beer" comes out as nonsense) or ντομάτα as "ntomata". They are the hard b and d, a voiced sound with no puff of breath.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for μπ and ντ returned Britannica, Wiktionary, Wikipedia and learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results agreed that at the start of a word μπ says "b" and ντ says "d", that inside a word they are usually heard as "mb" and "nd", and that this varies by speaker (Wiktionary gives *ντομάτα* and *πέντε* as examples; Britannica explains the nasal as a history of voicing after n or m). **Not checked against a source:** *μπάλα* and the other seven words (every meaning, stress and respelling), and the English comparisons (*lamb*, *end*). One source said ντ can also be a simple "d" in the middle of a word for some speakers. Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Britannica, Modern Greek; Wiktionary, Appendix: Greek pronunciation; Fluent in 3 Months, Greek alphabet; Let's Learn, The Greek Alphabet. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. What sounds do μπ and ντ make, and why does Greek need them?

▼ Show answer

μπ says "b" (and usually "mb" inside a word) and ντ says "d" (usually "nd" inside a word). Greek has no single letter for either sound, because β says "v" and δ says the "th" of *this*.

2. Say each word aloud: μπαλα · μπυρα · ντοματα · ντροπη

▼ Show answer

BAH-lah · BEE-rah · do-MAH-tah · dro-PEE (“ball”, “beer”, “tomato”, “shame”).

3. Say each word aloud: λαμπα · πεντε · κοντα · ενταξει. How is the pair said in each?

▼ Show answer

LAHM-bah · PEHN-deh · kon-DAH · en-DAH-ksee (“lamp”, “five”, “near”, “OK”). Inside each word the pair has a short nasal before the b or d.

4. Is πεντε said “PEHN-teh”? Explain.

▼ Show answer

No. ντ never says “nt”; inside a word it says “nd”, so the word is PEHN-deh.

5. Write in Greek letters: *five* · *ball* · *tomato* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

πεντε · μπαλα · ντοματα — PEHN-deh · BAH-lah · do-MAH-tah.

Coming Up in Chapter 5

More consonant pairs: **γκ** and **γγ**, which give the hard “g” and the “ng” sound, and **τσ** and **τζ**, which say “ts” and “dz”.

Σκληροί ήχοι 2 — Hard Sounds 2

*Greek Alphabet 2 Chapter 4 gave you the pairs for "b" and "d". This chapter finishes the hard consonants with the pair for "g" and the "ng" sound (**γκ** and **γγ**) and the two pairs that make a single sudden sound out of a stop and a hiss (**τσ** and **τζ**). Between them they cover words such as Αγγλιά ("England") and τζατζίκι ("tzatziki").*

Your Next Four Pairs — γκ γγ τσ τζ

γκ

gamma + kappa

"g" at the start of a word; usually "ng" inside one

Memory hook: the same trick as μπ and ντ: γ and κ together say a hard *g*, as in *go*. At the start say a plain "g". Inside a word say a short "n" before the g, as in *finger*.

γγ

gamma + gamma

"ng", as in *finger*

Memory hook: two gammas say "ng", and this pair is always inside a word. The doubled letter is not "gh-gh"; it is a nasal "ng" followed by a hard g.

τσ

tau + sigma

"ts", as in *cats*

Memory hook: τ and σ are said together in one quick sound, like the end of *cats*, but it can start a word as well. It is not the "ch" of *chip*.

τζ

tau + zeta

"dz", as in *adze* (the buzzing version of τσ)

Memory hook: τζ is τσ with a buzz in the throat: put a finger on your throat and feel it. It is not the "j" of *jeans*, even though the word τζιν is the Greek for "jeans".

The Rule

Pair	Says…	Where
γκ	**g (start), ng (inside)**	γκρι (GREE), αγκυρα (AHN-gee-rah)
γγ	**ng**	αγγουρι (ahn-GOO-ree)
τσ	**ts**	τσαντα (TSAHN-dah)
τζ	**dz**	τζαμι (DZAH-mee)

As with μπ and ντ, speakers vary inside a word: some say a clear "ng" and others only "g". This course teaches the clear version.

Look-Alike Warnings

γκ vs "gk": γκ does not say "gh-k"; it says "g" or "ng". **γγ:** never say the soft γ twice, as "gh-gh". **τσ vs the English "ch":** τσ is "ts", so τσάντα is TSAHN-dah, not "CHAHN-dah". **τζ vs the English "j":** τζ is "dz", so τζάμι is DZAH-mee, not "JAH-mee".

Read It — Real Words

These words use the four pairs. Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	γκρι	GREE	grey	*γκ at the start: "g"*
2	γκαζι	GAH-zee	gas, accelerator	*γκ at the start*
3	αγκυρα	AHN-gee-rah	anchor	*γκ inside a word: "ng"*
4	σαλιγκάρι	sah-leeng-GAH-ree	snail	*stress on the second-last syllable*
5	αγγούρι	ahn-GOO-ree	cucumber	*γγ says "ng"; ου says "oo"*
6	Αγγλιά	ahn-GLEE-ah	England	*γγ before λ*
7	τσάντα	TSAHN-dah	bag	*τσ at the start; ντ inside the word says "nd"*
8	τσιγάρο	tsee-GHAH-ro	cigarette	*τσ before ι; γ before α says the soft "gh"*
9	τζάμι	DZAH-mee	pane of glass	*τζ at the start: "dz"*
10	τζατζίκι	dzah-DZEE-kee	tzatziki	*τζ twice, then κ, ι*

An exception to watch

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	τσαί	TSAH-ee	tea	*the tonos is on the ά, so α and ι are **not** a pair here*

Sound practice (not words)

Check each pair: γκα · αγκο · αγγα · τσα · τζα *— GAH · AHN-go · AHN-gah · TSAH · DZAH.*

Watch Out: Do Not Say "Ch" or "J"

English speakers read τσ as "ch" and τζ as "j" because those are the nearest sounds they know. Greek has neither: τσ is "ts" and τζ is "dz". Say the first part of the pair as a quick touch of the tongue to the teeth, then let the hiss follow.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for γκ, γγ, τσ and τζ returned learner pages, Wiktionary and a phonology page; I did not read any page in full. **No result covered γκ or γγ**: the rules "g at the start and ng inside" and "ng" are from general knowledge, as is the claim that the sound varies by speaker. The results did list τσ and τζ as the affricate pairs and gave *τσάι* and *τζάκι* as examples, which fits the sounds "ts" and "dz"; the exact values were not stated. **Not checked against a source:** all eleven words (every meaning, stress mark and respelling, including *Αγγλία*, *τζατζίκι* and *σαλιγκάρι*), and the English comparisons (*finger*, *cats*, *adze*). Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Wiktionary, Appendix: Greek pronunciation; Vaia, Greek affricates; Fluent in 3 Months, Greek alphabet; Project Razon, Orthography and phonology. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. What sound does each pair make: γκ, γγ, τσ, τζ?

▼ Show answer

γκ says “g” (“ng” inside a word), γγ says “ng”, τσ says “ts” and τζ says “dz”.

2. Say each word aloud: γκρι · αγγουρί · Αγγλιά · άγκυρα

▼ Show answer

GREE · ahn-GOO-ree · ahn-GLEE-ah · AHN-gee-rah (“grey”, “cucumber”, “England”, “anchor”).

3. Say each word aloud: τσάντα · τσιγάρο · τζάμι · τζατζίκι

▼ Show answer

TSAHN-dah · tsee-GHAH-ro · DZAH-mee · dzah-DZEE-kee (“bag”, “cigarette”, “pane of glass”, “tzatziki”).

4. Is τζάμι said “JAH-mee”? Explain.

▼ Show answer

No. τζ never says the “j” of *jeans*; it says “dz”, so the word is DZAH-mee.

5. Write in Greek letters: *bag* · *England* · *tea* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

τσάντα · Αγγλιά · τσαί — TSAHN-dah · ahn-GLEE-ah · TSAH-ee.

Coming Up in Chapter 6

Chapter 6 turns to the **soft sounds**: how γ and χ change before the front vowels, and how σ can sound like “z” before a voiced consonant. They make the same letters say different things depending on what follows.

Greek Alphabet 2

Course 2 · Chapter 6 · Soft Sounds

Μαλακοί ήχοι — Soft Sounds

*You now know every letter and every pair. This chapter is about three **changes** that a letter makes depending on the sound next to it. They are not new letters, only a new way of reading letters you know: **γ** and **χ** become softer before the front vowels, and **σ** buzzes before some voiced sounds.*

The Front Vowels

*A **front vowel** is one said with the tongue pushed forward in the mouth. In Greek spelling they are **ε, αι, ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι** — the vowels that say "eh" and "ee". The vowels that say "ah", "o" and "oo" (**α, ο, ω, ου**) are **back vowels**.*

Change 1 — γ Before a Front Vowel

*Greek Alphabet 1 Chapter 6 told you that γ says a soft "gh" before α and ο and a "y" before ε, ι, η and υ. Now you know the full list: it says **"y"** before every front vowel, including the pairs αι, ει and οι.*

γ before…	Says…	Example
a back vowel (α ο ω ου)	gh (soft g)	γατά (GHAH-tah)
a front vowel (ε αι ι η υ ει οι υι)	y	γειτονας (YEE-to-nas), γυριζω

γ before…	Says…	Example
		(yee-REE-zo)

Change 2 — χ Before a Front Vowel

*The same thing happens to χ. Before a back vowel it is the throaty "kh" of Greek Alphabet 1 Chapter 5. Before a front vowel it softens to a **soft "h"**, like the h in huge or hue.*

χ before…	Says…	Example
a back vowel (α ο ω ου)	**kh (throaty)**	χαρά́ (khah-RAH), χωρά (KHO-rah)
a front vowel (ε αι ι η υ ει οι υι)	**soft h**	χερί (HYEH-ree), χειμώνας (hee-MO-nas)

Look back at Greek Alphabet 1 Chapter 5, where χερί was given as KHEH-ree: that was the simpler version. The more exact sound is the soft h.

Change 3 — σ Before Some Voiced Sounds

*Greek Alphabet 1 Chapter 7 warned that σ sometimes sounds like **"z"**. It does so before a voiced sound, for example before **β, μ** (and in some words γ and ρ): κοσ́μος is said **KOZ-mos**, not "KOS-mos".*

σ before…	Says…	Example
β μ (and some γ ρ)	z	κοσ́μος (KOZ-mos), σβηνώ (ZVEE-no)
anything else	s	σαλατα (sah-LAH-tah)

Look-Alike Warnings

γ and χ: there is only one letter, and its sound is chosen by the vowel that comes after it, so always look *forward* before you read γ or χ. **The pairs:** a pair counts as a front vowel when it says “ee” or “eh” (ει, οι, υι, αι), but not when it says “oo” (ου), which is a back vowel. **σ:** a σ before a vowel is always “s”; the z-sound appears only when a voiced sound follows it.

Read It — Real Words

Check the letter after each γ, χ and σ before you read. Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	γειτονας	YEE-to-nas	neighbour	*γ before ει: “y”*
2	γυριζω	yee-REE-zo	I turn	*γ before υ: “y”*
3	γιατρος	yah-TROS	doctor	*γ before ι: “y”; the ι here is a glide, said “yah”*

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
4	γιαγιά	yah-YAH	grandmother	*γ before ι twice*
5	Γιώργος	YOR-ghos	George	*first γ before ι: "y"; second γ before ο: "gh"*
6	χέρι	HYEH-ree	hand	*χ before ε: soft h*
7	χιόνι	HYO-nee	snow	*χ before ι: soft h*
8	χειμώνας	hee-MO-nas	winter	*χ before ει: soft h*
9	κόσμος	KOZ-mos	world, crowd	*σ before μ: "z"*
10	σβήνω	ZVEE-no	I put out, I switch off	*σ before β: "z"; β says "v"*

Compare: hard and soft

#	BACK VOWEL	FRONT VOWEL
1	γάτα GHAH-tah (cat)	γειτόνας YEE-to-nas (neighbour)
2	χαρά khah-RAH (joy)	χέρι HYEH-ree (hand)

Sound practice (not words)

Apply the change to each: γα · γε · χα · χι · σμα · σβι *— GHAH · YEH · KHAH · HEE · ZMAH · ZVEE.*

> **Watch Out: Do Not Say a Hard "G"**
>
> The slip to avoid here is to read γ as the hard g of *go* before a front vowel, so γειτόνας becomes "GEE-to-nas". Greek has no hard g in single-letter spellings: it is "gh" before a back vowel and "y" before a front one. The hard g is only written γκ (Chapter 5).

> **Not Yet Verified**

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for these changes returned Wikipedia's IPA guide for Greek, a 2016 journal article and a few learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results agreed that γ and χ are pronounced as palatals ("y" and a soft h) before front vowels and as velars ("gh" and "kh") elsewhere, giving *χέρι* and *χιόνι* as examples, and that σ is voiced before a voiced consonant (*σμήνος* was given). **Not checked against a source:** the exact list of consonants that voice σ (a source listed the *sounds* [b v m r ɣ]; I wrote β μ and "some γ ρ" and left δ out); the words *γείτονας*, *γυρίζω*, *γιατρός*, *γιαγιά*, *Γιώργος*, *χειμώνας*, *κόσμος* and *σβήνω* (every meaning, stress and respelling); and the claim that the pairs ει, οι, υι and αι also trigger the change (an inference from the rule). One source warned that a popular page has errors in its examples, so I did not use it. Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Wikipedia, Help:IPA/Greek; Glossa (2016), article on Greek palatalization; Greek orthography (Wikipedia copy). Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. How does γ change before a front vowel? And χ?

▼ Show answer

γ says "y" (instead of the soft "gh") and χ says a soft "h" (instead of the throaty "kh").

2. Read these aloud and say whether γ is "gh" or "y" in each: γατά · γειτόνας · γυριζω

▼ Show answer

GHAH-tah ("gh", before α) · YEE-to-nas ("y", before ει) · yee-REE-zo ("y", before υ).

3. Read these aloud: χαρά· χέρι · χιόνι · χειμώνας

▼ Show answer

khah-RAH (throaty kh) · HYEH-ree · HYO-nee · hee-MO-nas (soft h before front vowels): “joy”, “hand”, “snow”, “winter”.

4. How is κοσ́μος said, and why is it not “KOS-mos”?

▼ Show answer

KOZ-mos. σ says “z” when a voiced sound such as μ follows it.

5. Write in Greek letters: *neighbour* · *doctor* · *snow* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

γειτ́ονας · γιατρός · χιον́ι — YEE-to-nas · yah-TROS · HYO-nee.

Coming Up in Chapter 7

Next the diaeresis in full (ϊ and ϋ, and the combined mark ΐ ΰ), doubled consonants, and words that look as though they contain a pair but do not.

Διαλυτικά και διπλά — Diaeresis and Doubles

Greek Alphabet 2 Chapters 1 to 6 taught you the pairs and the changes that make Greek spelling look strange. This chapter tidies up the last special cases. It covers the ***diaeresis*** *(the double dot you glimpsed in Chapter 3), the* ***doubled consonants*** *(such as the νν of Άννα and the λλ of Ελλάδα that you met in Greek Alphabet 1) and the vowels that sit side by side without being a pair.*

Your Next Three Items

ϊ ϋ

the diaeresis (two dots)

"this vowel stands alone"; ϊ says "ee" and ϋ says "ee"

Memory hook: two dots are a pair of tiny eyes looking apart, so the two vowels beside each other are *not* a pair. In μαϊδανός (parsley) the ϊ is its own vowel: mah-ee-dhah-NOS. It goes only on ι and υ.

ΐ ΰ

tonos and diaeresis together

a stressed ι or υ standing alone

Memory hook: when the vowel that stands alone is also the stressed one, it carries both marks at once: ΐ and ΰ. The commonest word is ταΐζω ("I feed"), said tah-EE-zo. ΰ is rare; you will hardly see it.

νν σσ λλ

doubled consonants

written double, said as **one** sound

Memory hook: the doubling is for spelling only, like the double *m* of English *summer*. Say αλλά as ah-LAH, with one l, and κόκκινο as KO-kee-no, with one k.

The Diaeresis in Full

Mark	What it does	Example
ϊ	keeps ι apart from the vowel before it	μαϊδανός (mah-ee-dhah-NOS), κοροϊδευώ (ko-ro-ee-DHEH-vo)
ϋ	keeps υ apart from the vowel before it	αϋπνιά (ah-eep-NEE-ah), a rare example
ΐ ΰ	the same, on a stressed vowel	ταΐζω (tah-EE-zo)

Compare ταΐζω (tah-EE-zo, "I feed"), where α and ι are two vowels, with ταινιά ("film"), where αι is a pair that says "eh". The dots are the only difference.

Three ways two vowels can stand apart

- **A diaeresis** on the second vowel (μαϊδανός).

- **A tonos on the first vowel** (Καΐρο, τσαΐ, ρολοΐ, as in Chapters 1, 2 and 5).
- **The two letters were never a pair.** Only eight pairs exist (the vowel pairs ει οι υι αι ου αυ ευ ηυ), so any other two vowels side by side are simply two vowels: ιδεά (ee-DHEH-ah) and θεάτρο (THEH-ah-tro) have εα, which is not a pair.

Doubled Consonants

Greek spells many doubled consonants but says them as a single sound. The seven you will see most are:

Written	Said as	Example
λλ	l	αλλαΐ (ah-LAH)
νν	n	Αΰννα (AH-nah)
μμ	m	γραμμα (GHRAH-mah)
σσ	s	θαλασσα (THAH-lah-sah)
κκ	k	κοκκινο (KO-kee-no)

Written	Said as	Example
ττ	t	Αττικη΄ (ah-tee-KEE)
ββ	v	σαββατο (SAH-vah-to)

Do not confuse a doubled letter with a pair: γγ and μμ are different things. γγ is a pair that says "ng" (Chapter 5), but μμ, νν, λλ and the others are doubled letters that say one sound.

Look-Alike Warnings

ϊ vs ΐ: ϊ has two dots and no accent, so it is not stressed by the mark; ΐ has the tonos and no dots. **ΐ:** the one letter with both marks. **Doubled letters:** say one sound. If you say a long "l" in αλλα΄ you are speaking Cypriot Greek, not standard Greek (one source). **ια and ιο:** at the end of a word many speakers run ια, ιο, ιου together into one beat ("ya", "yo"), as in παιδια΄ (peh-DHYAH); this book spells out the vowels slowly.

Read It — Real Words

Read each aloud, with the stress on the CAPITAL syllable. Look for the dots and for the doubled letters.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	μαϊδανος΄	mah-ee-dhah-NOS	parsley	*ϊ keeps α and ι apart*
2	κοροϊδευώ	ko-ro-ee-DHEH-vo	I mock, I trick	*ϊ after ο; ευ before ω is "ev"*
3	ταΐζω	tah-EE-zo	I feed	*ΐ is stressed and stands alone*

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
4	ευρωπαϊκός	ev-ro-pah-ee-KOS	European	*ευ is "ev" before ρ; ϊ keeps α and ι apart*
5	αλλά	ah-LAH	but	*λλ says one "l"*
6	κόκκινο	KO-kee-no	red	*κκ says one "k"*
7	γράμμα	GHRAH-mah	letter	*μμ says one "m"; γ before ρ says "gh"*
8	σαββατο	SAH-vah-to	Saturday	*ββ says one "v"*
9	ιδεά	ee-DHEH-ah	idea	*εα is two vowels, not a pair*
10	θεάτρο	THEH-ah-tro	theatre	*εα is two vowels, not a pair*

Sound practice (not words)

Check each mark: αϊκα · οϊτο · αλλα · εκκο · τεα *— AH-ee-kah · O-ee-to · AH-lah · EH-ko · TEH-ah.*

Watch Out: Do Not Read ϊ as a Pair

The slip to avoid is to read μαϊδανος as "meh-dha-NOS" (αι = "eh"). The two dots break the pair: the α and the ι are said one after the other.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for the diaeresis and doubled consonants returned Wikipedia, Wikiversity and learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results confirmed that the diaeresis marks a vowel pronounced separately (with *μαϊδανός* and *κοροϊδεύω* as examples), that tonos and diaeresis combine on one vowel (*ταΐζω*, contrasted with *ταινία*), and that Greek doubled consonants such as σσ, λλ, μμ, νν, κκ, ββ are pronounced as single sounds (*θάλασσα* was given), except in Cypriot Greek. **Not checked against a source:** *ευρωπαϊκός* and *αϋπνία* (no result gave them), the words *αλλά*, *κόκκινο*, *γράμμα*, *σάββατο*, *Αττική*, *ιδέα*, *θέατρο* (every meaning, stress and respelling); that exactly eight pairs exist (my count from this course; ηυ is rare); and the claim about ια and ιο running together at the end of a word. Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Foundalis, Accent marks denoting stress in Greek, and other diacritics; Wikipedia, Greek diacritics; Elon, Double consonants; Wikiversity, Greek Language/Diphthongs. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. What does the diaeresis (¨) do?

▼ Show answer

It shows that the vowel under it (ι or υ) stands on its own and does not make a pair with the vowel before it.

2. Say each word aloud: ταΐζω · ταινιά. What is the difference?

▼ Show answer

tah-EE-zo (“I feed”) has α and ι as two separate vowels, shown by the ΐ. In ταινιά (“film”) αι is a pair that says “eh”.

3. Say each word aloud: αλλά · κόκκινο · γράμμα · σάββατο

▼ Show answer

ah-LAH · KO-kee-no · GHRAH-mah · SAH-vah-to (“but”, “red”, “letter”, “Saturday”). Each double letter says a single sound.

4. Are the εα of θεάτρο a pair? Explain.

▼ Show answer

No. εα is not one of the eight pairs, so each vowel is said on its own: THEH-ah-tro.

5. Write in Greek letters: *but* · *red* · *idea* · *I feed* (copy the accent marks). Then say them.

▼ Show answer

αλλά · κόκκινο · ιδεά · ταΐζω — ah-LAH · KO-kee-no · ee-DHEH-ah · tah-EE-zo.

Coming Up in Chapter 8

The spelling rules are done. Chapters 8 and 9 teach **handwriting**: how the small letters are written by hand, which differs from print for several letters. Chapter 8 covers A to M.

Greek Alphabet 2

Course 2 · Chapter 8 · Handwriting 1

Γράφουμε με το χέρι — Handwriting 1

*Everything so far has been about reading printed Greek. This chapter and the next are about **writing** it by hand. This chapter takes the twelve letters from **α to μ** (α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ). It is a different kind of chapter from the others, so please read the next box before you start.*

> **What This Chapter Can and Cannot Do**
>
> This course is written for the page, so it **cannot show stroke order or draw the letters**. It describes, in words, the shape of each small letter to aim for, and it warns you which letters can look alike when written quickly. My searches did not find a reliable letter-by-letter guide to Greek cursive. The sources even disagree about whether a single standard cursive exists, and they say that writers differ on letters such as λ, δ and σ and that handwritten θ differs from the printed one. So **treat the descriptions as a way to start**, copy the printed shapes carefully, and for the exact school forms use a Greek primary-school handwriting workbook (in Greek, a *γραφή* book) or a teacher.

Habits to Build

- **Write the small letters first.** Almost everything you write is in small letters, and the capitals are used only at the start of a name or sentence.
- **Copy the printed shape.** Print and handwriting are close for most of the letters here. Where you are unsure, copy the printed letter from this course.
- **Write slowly at first,** with the letters the same size and the descenders (tails below the line) clear. Speed comes later.
- **Say the sound** as you write each letter, as you did in Greek Alphabet 1.

The Letters α to μ

For each letter: the capital and small form, the shape to aim for (a description of the printed small letter), and the letter it is most likely to be confused with when written quickly.

#	LETTER	SHAPE TO AIM FOR	QUICK-WRITING TRAP
1	A α	an oval with a short tail rising on the right	*α vs ο: keep the tail*
2	B β	a tall upstroke with a bowl, then a tail that drops below the line	*β vs ρ: both drop below the line; β has the tall stroke on top*
3	Γ γ	a curve that drops below the line, like an English y	*γ vs υ and ν: γ is the one with a tail below the line*
4	Δ δ	a round loop with a short flag leaning up and to the left	*δ vs ο: keep the flag*
5	E ε	a small backwards 3: two curves open to the right	*ε vs ς: ς has a tail; ε has none*
6	Z ζ	a hook at the top, a stem, and a curled tail below the line	*ζ vs ξ: ξ has one more curl*
7	H η	an n whose right stem drops below the line	*η vs ν and π: only η has the long right leg*
8	Θ θ	an upright oval with a bar across the middle	*θ vs ο: the bar makes it θ; some writers draw θ differently from print*
9	I ι	a short single stroke, no dot	*ι vs the tonos: the tonos goes above a vowel and slants*
10	K κ	a stem with two short arms, like a small k	*κ vs χ: κ has a stem; χ crosses over like an x*
11	Λ λ	a leaning stroke with a short tail	*λ vs ν: writers differ on λ, so make the lean clear*
12	M μ	like an English u with a long tail on the left that drops below the line	*μ vs u and ν: the left tail below the line is what makes it μ*

These descriptions are my own, from the printed shapes. If a teacher or workbook shows you a different handwritten form, follow that.

Words to Copy

These ten words use only the twelve letters of this chapter. Read each aloud first, then copy it slowly three times.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	μελι	MEH-lee	honey	*μ, ε, λ, ι*
2	βημα	VEE-mah	step	*β has a tail below the line*
3	γαλα	GHAH-lah	milk	*γ drops below the line*
4	δεκα	DHEH-kah	ten	*δ with its flag*
5	καλα′	kah-LAH	well, good	*stress on the last syllable*
6	θεμα	THEH-mah	subject, topic	*θ with its bar*
7	ιδεα	ee-DHEH-ah	idea	*εα is two vowels, not a pair*
8	κλειδι′	klee-DHEE	key	*ει says "ee"*
9	μαθημα	MAH-thee-mah	lesson	*θ and η together*
10	μεγαλη	meh-GHAH-lee	big (feminine)	*γ before α says "gh"*

A copy-it drill

1. Write each of the twelve small letters five times, saying the sound as you write.
2. Write the capital and the small form side by side for **Α α, Β β, Δ δ**.
3. Copy the ten words above, three times each, then cover the printed word and write it from memory.
4. Compare what you wrote with the printed word. Mark any letter that looks like a different letter.

> **Watch Out: Letters That Merge When You Hurry**

The sources agree that several Greek letters look alike when written fast. The ones to watch from this chapter are **α/ο**, **β/ρ**, **γ/υ/ν**, **η/ν/π** and **μ/ν/u**. When you read your own writing back and a word looks wrong, check these first.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-17 for Greek cursive returned forum threads, a Wikipedia article on Greek minuscule and a few learner pages; I did not read any page in full, and **none gave a reliable letter-by-letter guide**. The results said that handwritten Greek differs from print for several letters (theta was named), that writers differ on letters such as lambda, delta and sigma, that letters can look alike when written quickly, and that there is disagreement about whether a standard cursive is taught. **Not checked against a source:** every description in the "shape to aim for" column (they describe the printed forms; I could not confirm the school cursive forms), every quick-writing trap, and the ten words (meanings, stress and respellings). Please check these before relying on them, and prefer a Greek handwriting workbook.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-17): Textkit, Greek handwriting; Wikipedia, Greek minuscule; Vaia, Greek handwriting; Textkit, Greek handwriting (second thread). Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check. Questions 4 and 5 need paper and a pen.

1. Why does this chapter only describe the shapes instead of showing stroke order?

▼ Show answer

The course is made of pages and cannot draw stroke order, and no reliable letter-by-letter guide to Greek cursive was found. So the chapter gives shapes to aim for and sends you to a workbook or a teacher for the exact school forms.

2. Which small letters in this chapter drop below the line?

▼ Show answer

β, γ, ζ, η and μ (as described here), as well as the tails of ρ, υ and others you will meet in Chapter 9.

3. Read these aloud: μελι · γαλα · κλειδί · μεγαλη

▼ Show answer

MEH-lee · GHAH-lah · klee-DHEE · meh-GHAH-lee (“honey”, “milk”, “key”, “big”).

4. Write *honey*, *ten* and *idea* in Greek, from memory, with the accent marks. Then check your letters against the print.

▼ Show answer

μέλι · δέκα · ιδέα. Check that your α, ο and δ are not alike, and that your accent marks are above the vowels.

5. Which letters can look alike when you write quickly? Name two groups.

▼ Show answer

For example α and ο; β and ρ; γ, υ and ν; η, ν and π; μ and ν. Check the descender, the tail and the bar.

Coming Up in Chapter 9

Chapter 9 covers the rest of the small letters, **ν to ω**, including how the final sigma ς is written, and the letters that look alike when you write a whole line quickly.

Γράφουμε με το χέρι 2 — Handwriting 2

*Greek Alphabet 2 Chapter 8 started handwriting with α to μ. This chapter finishes the small letters with **ν to ω** (ν ξ ο π ρ σ ς τ υ φ χ ψ ω), including the final sigma **ς**, and then looks at the letters that can be mixed up when you write a whole line quickly.*

> **The Same Caution as Chapter 8**
>
> This course cannot draw letters or show stroke order, and I did not find a reliable guide to the Greek school cursive. So the descriptions below are the shapes to aim for, based on the printed forms, with a few points from sources noted. For the exact school forms use a Greek handwriting workbook or a teacher.

The Letters ν to ω

#	LETTER	SHAPE TO AIM FOR	QUICK-WRITING TRAP
1	N ν	a rounded v shape	*ν vs υ and the English v: ν says "n"*
2	Ξ ξ	like a ζ with one extra curl	*ξ vs ζ: count the curls*
3	O ο	a plain round o	*ο vs α, σ and θ: no tail, flag or bar*
4	Π π	a bar on top with two short legs	*π vs η and n: the flat bar and two straight legs*
5	P ρ	a round bowl on a stem that drops below the line	*ρ vs β and the English p: ρ says "r"*
6	Σ σ	a round o with a short flag on top	*σ vs ο: keep the flag; writers differ on σ*
7	ς	a small c-shaped curve with a tail, used only at the end of a word	*ς vs ε and σ: ς has the tail and never begins a word*

#	LETTER	SHAPE TO AIM FOR	QUICK-WRITING TRAP
8	Τ τ	an upright stem with a bar curling to the right across the top	*τ vs the English t and γ: τ stays on the line*
9	Υ υ	a rounded cup, like a u	*υ vs ν and γ: υ sits on the line without a tail*
10	Φ φ	a loop with a long stem through it	*φ vs ψ: φ has a loop, ψ has a cup*
11	Χ χ	two crossing strokes, like an x with a longer left leg	*χ vs κ and the English x: χ says "kh"*
12	Ψ ψ	a cup on a tall stem	*ψ vs φ and υ: ψ has the stem through the cup*
13	Ω ω	two rounded humps, like a w with round bottoms	*ω vs w and o: ω says "o"*

These descriptions are mine, from the printed shapes. Where a workbook or teacher shows a different form, follow that.

The Final Sigma

*The small sigma has **two forms**: **σ** at the start and in the middle of a word and **ς** at the end. The final form is the older curve of the letter with a tail added (one source describes it as a lunate sigma with a tail, and says it became clear in manuscripts of about 1416). Both say "s", and you never write ς at the start of a word.*

Where	Write…	Example
start or middle	**σ**	σπιτάκι (SPEE-tee), κοσμος (KOZ-mos)

Where	Write…	Example
end of a word	ς	ξένος (KSEH-nos), χρόνος (KHRO-nos)

Letters That Look Alike When You Write Quickly

Across the whole alphabet, these are the groups to check when you read your own writing back:

#	GROUP	HOW TO TELL THEM APART
1	α ο σ θ	*tail on α; nothing on ο; a flag on σ; a bar on θ*
2	β ρ	*β has a tall stroke above; ρ does not*
3	γ υ ν	*only γ has a tail below the line*
4	η ν π	*only η has a long right leg; π has a flat bar*
5	ζ ξ	*ξ has one more curl*
6	ε ς	*ς has a tail and only ends a word*
7	κ χ	*κ has a stem; χ crosses like an x*
8	φ ψ	*φ is a loop; ψ is a cup*
9	μ ν	*μ has a long tail on the left below the line*

Words to Copy

These ten words use the letters of this chapter (and a few you already know). Read each aloud, then copy it slowly three times.

#	WORD	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ψωμί	pso-MEE	bread	*ψ and ω*
2	ξένος	KSEH-nos	stranger, foreign	*ξ and a final ς*
3	χρόνος	KHRO-nos	time, year	*χ and a final ς*
4	νερό	neh-RO	water	*ν and ρ*
5	ουρανός	oo-rah-NOS	sky	*ου says "oo"; a final ς*
6	πρωί	pro-EE	morning	*π and ρ and ω*
7	σπίτι	SPEE-tee	house	*σ at the start*
8	τρένο	TREH-no	train	*τ and ρ*
9	φωνή	fo-NEE	voice	*φ and ω*
10	ποτό	po-TO	drink	*π and τ*

A copy-it drill

1. Write each small letter from ν to ω five times, saying its sound as you write.
2. Write σ and ς side by side, then copy ξένος and σπίτι to see where each goes.
3. Copy the ten words, three times each, then cover the printed word and write it from memory.
4. Write one line of the words quickly, then read it back and check the look-alike groups above.

> **Watch Out: A Final σ**

The classic mistake in handwriting is to write σ at the end of a word. Use ς for the last letter of a word and σ everywhere else, and in capitals use Σ everywhere because capitals have only one form.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-18 for the final sigma and handwritten ξ, φ, ψ and ω returned the Foundalis handwriting page, a Vatican manuscript exhibition, Britannica and learner pages; I did not read any page in full, and **no result gave the Greek school cursive**. The results supported that ς is a word-final form (never used in the middle of a word), that it developed as a tailed form of the lunate sigma and became clear in manuscripts of about 1416, and (a Foundalis snippet) that the handwritten ξ is like a ζ with an extra curl. **Not checked against a source:** every other description in the "shape to aim for" column (they describe the printed forms), every quick-writing trap, and the ten words (meanings, stress and respellings). Please check these before relying on them, and prefer a Greek handwriting workbook.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-18): Foundalis, Greek handwriting; Vatican Library, Greek paleography: the Greek minuscule alphabet; Britannica, Greek handwriting; Wiktionary, Appendix: Greek script. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check. Questions 4 and 5 need paper and a pen.

1. When do you write σ and when ς?

▼ Show answer

σ at the start and in the middle of a word, and ς only at the end. Both say "s".

2. Name a group of letters that can be mixed up when written quickly, and say how to tell them apart.

▼ Show answer

For example φ and ψ: φ is a loop and ψ is a cup. Or γ, υ and ν: only γ has a tail below the line.

3. Read these aloud: ψωμί· σπιτί · ουρανός · φωνή

▼ Show answer

pso-MEE · SPEE-tee · oo-rah-NOS · fo-NEE (“bread”, “house”, “sky”, “voice”).

4. Write *house*, *time* and *water* in Greek, from memory, with the accent marks and the correct sigma.

▼ Show answer

σπιτί · χρόνος · νερό. Check the final ς in χρόνος.

5. Why does a capital word such as ΧΡΟΝΟΣ have no ς?

▼ Show answer

Capitals have only one sigma, Σ, so the final letter of the word in capitals is the same Σ as anywhere else.

Coming Up in Chapter 10

The last chapter is **reading practice**: menus, signs and a short text using every pair and rule from this course, a recap, and a look ahead at **Greek Basic Conversation 1**, where you start to speak.

Διαβάζουμε — Reading Practice

*This is the last chapter, and it has nothing new to learn. You know the 24 letters, the vowel pairs, the consonant pairs, the soft sounds, the diaeresis and the doubled letters. Now you **read**: a taverna menu, some signs and a short ordering conversation. Read everything aloud, and for each word ask yourself the same three questions: Is this a pair? What follows the γ, χ or σ? Where is the stress mark?*

Your Reading Checklist

Look for…	Then say…	Chapter
ει οι υι	ee	1
αι ου	eh, oo	2
αυ ευ	av/ev before a voiced sound, af/ef before a voiceless one	3
μπ ντ	b, d (mb, nd inside a word)	4

Look for…	Then say…	Chapter
γκ γγ τσ τζ	g (ng), ng, ts, dz	5
γ χ σ	y or gh; soft h or kh; z before some voiced sounds	6
ϊ ϋ ΐ, tonos on the first vowel, doubled letters	two separate vowels; one consonant sound	7

Read It — The Taverna Menu

#	ON THE MENU	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	μουσακάς	moo-sah-KAHS	moussaka	*ου, then a final ς*
2	σουβλακάκι	soo-VLAH-kee	souvlaki	*ου; β says "v"*
3	χωριάτικη σαλάτα	kho-RYAH-tee-kee sah-LAH-tah	village salad	*χ before ω is the throaty "kh"*

#	ON THE MENU	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	NOTE
4	τζατζικάκι	dzah-DZEE-kee	tzatziki	*τζ says "dz"*
5	ντομάτα	do-MAH-tah	tomato	*ντ at the start: "d"*
6	αγγουράκι	ahn-GOO-ree	cucumber	*γγ says "ng"*
7	τυρί	tee-REE	cheese	*stress on the last syllable*
8	ελιές	eh-LYEHS	olives	*ιέ run together; a final ς*
9	μπύρα	BEE-rah	beer	*μπ says "b"*
10	ούζο	OO-zo	ouzo	*tonos on the ύ, second letter of ου*

Read It — Signs in Capitals

Signs are in capitals with no tonos. The lower-case form shows where the stress falls.

#	ON THE SIGN	RESPELLING	ENGLISH	LOWER CASE
1	ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	EE-so-dhos	entrance	*είσοδος*
2	ΕΞΟΔΟΣ	EH-kso-dhos	exit	*έξοδος*
3	ΑΝΟΙΧΤΟ	ah-nee-KHTO	open	*ανοιχτό*
4	ΚΛΕΙΣΤΟ	klee-STO	closed	*κλειστό*
5	ΤΟΥΑΛΕΤΕΣ	too-ah-LEH-tes	toilets	*τουαλέτες*
6	ΣΤΑΣΗ	STAH-see	stop (bus stop)	*στάση*

A Short Dialogue: At the Taverna

Read the lines aloud first, then check the English.

Στην ταβέρνα

Καλησπέρα.

kah-lee-SPEH-rah.

Good evening.

Ένα τραπεζι για δυό, παρακαλω.΄

EH-nah trah-PEH-zee yah DHEE-o, pah-rah-kah-LO.

A table for two, please.

Θελω νερο,΄ψωμι΄και τζατζικι΄.

THEH-lo neh-RO, pso-MEE keh dzah-DZEE-kee.

I want water, bread and tzatziki.

Μια ντοματα και ένα αγγουρι.

MYAH do-MAH-tah keh EH-nah ahn-GOO-ree.

One tomato and one cucumber.

Τι ωρα είναι;

tee O-rah EE-neh?

What time is it?

Είναι οκτω.΄

EE-neh ok-TO.

It is eight.

Ευχαριστω΄πολυ!΄

ef-khah-ree-STO poh-LEE!

Thank you very much!

The dialogue is a reading exercise made from words in this course and the last; it is not a model of what a waiter would say. The words μια, πολυ,΄παρακαλω,΄οκτω΄and τραπεζι are new, but you can read them with what you know.

Not Yet Verified

A web search run on 2026-11-18 for taverna words and signs returned travel and learner pages; I did not read any page in full. The results covered *μουσακάς*, *σουβλάκι* and *χωριάτικη σαλάτα* (one result gave moussaka roughly as moo-sa-KAS). **Not found in any result:** the four signs (*ΕΞΟΔΟΣ*, *ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ*, *ΑΝΟΙΧΤΟ*, *ΚΛΕΙΣΤΟ*, from general knowledge), *ελιές* and *τυρί*. **Not checked against a source:** every other menu word and sign (*τουαλέτες*, *στάση*), all stress marks and respellings (including the run-together *ιέ* in *ελιές* and *ια* in *χωριάτικη* and *μια*), the meanings, and the grammar of the dialogue (*για δύο*, *τι ώρα είναι*, *είναι οκτώ*, *ένα*, *μια*). Please check these before relying on them.

Sources for This Chapter

Search results (2026-11-18): Greek Trip Planner, Ordering food in Greek; Real Greek Experiences, A local's guide to ordering Greek food; Polyglot Club, Common foods and drinks; Wikipedia, Taverna. Only the titles and short summaries in the search results were used.

Try It Yourself — Πρακτική

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Read aloud: μουσακάς · σουβλάκι · τζατζίκι · αγγούρι

▼ Show answer

moo-sah-KAHS · soo-VLAH-kee · dzah-DZEE-kee · ahn-GOO-ree (moussaka, souvlaki, tzatziki, cucumber).

2. Read the signs and say what each means: ΑΝΟΙΧΤΟ · ΚΛΕΙΣΤΟ · ΕΞΟΔΟΣ

▼ Show answer

ah-nee-KHTO (open) · klee-STO (closed) · EH-kso-dhos (exit).

3. Which sound does the pair in each word make: ευχαριστω, αύριο, πέντε?

▼ Show answer

ευ says “ef” before χ (ef-khah-ree-STO); αυ says “av” before ρ (AV-ree-o); ντ says “nd” inside πέντε (PEHN-deh).

4. How are γ and χ read in γειτόνας and χέρι?

▼ Show answer

Both come before a front vowel, so γ says “y” (YEE-to-nas) and χ says a soft “h” (HYEH-ree).

5. Read the dialogue aloud from the first line to the last, then say it in English.

▼ Show answer

“Good evening. A table for two, please. I want water, bread and tzatziki. One tomato and one cucumber. What time is it? It is eight. Thank you very much!”

Recap of the Whole Course

Chapters	What you learned
1 to 3	The vowel pairs: ει οι υι, αι ου, αυ ευ, and a first look at the diaeresis
4 and 5	The consonant pairs: μπ ντ, γκ γγ τσ τζ

Chapters	What you learned
6	The soft sounds: γ and χ before front vowels, σ before voiced sounds
7	The diaeresis and the tonos together, doubled consonants, vowels that are not pairs
8 and 9	Handwriting α to ω (shapes to aim for), the final σ/ς, the look-alike groups

Chapters	What you learned
10	**Reading a menu, signs and a short dialogue**

Course Complete

You have finished **Greek Alphabet 2**. Together with Greek Alphabet 1 you can now read almost any Greek word aloud: you know the 24 letters, the vowel and consonant pairs, the soft sounds, the diaeresis and the doubled letters, and you can write the small letters by hand. You can read a menu, a sign and a short conversation.

What Greek Basic Conversation 1 Will Add

The next course, **Greek Basic Conversation 1**, starts speaking: greetings, introductions and the first everyday situations, with dialogues, vocabulary and practice. You will use everything from the two alphabet courses, and the respellings will fade out as your reading grows.