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BIBLICAL GREEK

A COMPACT GUIDE

Second Edition

WILLIAM D. MOUNCE

Table of Contents

Preface

Second year Greek and beyond can be a bit daunting. You have left the comfortable and controlled confines of your first year grammar, and you are carrying your Greek Testament and trying to use it in sermons and classes. And yet, with all that you learned in first year, there is much to be reviewed and much to forget.

This minigrammar is designed to fit well with your Greek Testament, and contains the information you need when using Greek. It can function as a review, quick reference, and has new material to help you move into second year grammar. It is not a replacement for a full lexicon or grammar, but it can start you down the right path. Have fun.

Abbreviations

BBG	*Basics of Biblical Greek*, 4th edition. William D. Mounce. Zondervan, 2019.
BDAG	*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, eds. W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, third edition. University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, eds. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk. University of Chicago Press, 1961.
Fanning	*Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek.* Buist Fanning. Clarendon, 1991.
GGBB	*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics.* Daniel B. Wallace. Zondervan, 1996.
MBG	*The Morphology of Biblical Greek.* William D. Mounce. Zondervan, 1994.

BASICS

Greek Alphabet

Name (English and Greek), transliteration, capital and small form, pronunciation

Alpha	ἄλφα	*a*	A	α	a as in f**a**ther
Beta	βῆτα	*b*	B	β	b as in **B**ible
Gamma	γάμμα	*g*[1]	Γ	γ	g as in **g**one
Delta	δέλτα	*d*	Δ	δ	d as in **d**og
Epsilon	ἒ ψιλόν	*e*	E	ε	e as in m**e**t
Zeta	ζῆτα	*z*	Z	ζ	z as in da**z**e
Eta	ἦτα	*ē*	H	η	e as in ob**ey**
Theta	θῆτα	*th*	Θ	θ	th as in **th**ing
Iota	ἰῶτα	*i*	I	ι	i as in **i**ntr**i**gue
Kappa	κάππα	*k*	K	κ	k as in **k**itchen
Lambda	λάμβδα	*l*	Λ	λ	l as in **l**aw
Mu	μῦ	*m*	M	μ	m as in **m**other
Nu	νῦ	*n*	N	ν	n as in **n**ew
Xi	ξεῖ	*x*	Ξ	ξ	x as in a**x**iom
Omicron	ὂ μικρόν	*o*	O	ο	o as in n**o**t

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[1] Gamma (γ) usually has a hard "g" sound, as in "get." However, when it is immediately followed by γ, κ, χ, or ξ, it is pronounced as a "n."

Pi	πεῖ	*p*	Π	π	p	as in **p**each
Rho	ῥῶ	*r*	P	ρ	r	as in **r**od
Sigma	σίγμα	*s*	Σ	σ/ς	s	as in **s**tudy
Tau	ταῦ	t	T	τ	t	as in **t**alk
Upsilon	ὖ ψιλόν	*u/y*[1]	Y	υ	υ	as German **ü**
Phi	φεῖ	*ph*	Φ	φ	ph	as in **ph**one
Chi	χεῖ	*ch*	X	χ	ch	as in lo**ch**
Psi	ψεῖ	*ps*	Ψ	ψ	ps	as in li**ps**
Omega	ὦ μέγα	*ō*	Ω	ω	o	as in t**o**ne

Diphthongs

The second vowel of a diphthong is an ι or υ.[2]

αι	as in **ai**sle	αἴρω
ει	as in **ei**ght	εἰ
οι	as in **oi**l	οἰκία
αυ	as in s**au**erkraut	αὐτός
ου	as in s**ou**p	οὐδέ
υι	as in s**ui**te	υἱός
ευ, ηυ	as in f**eu**d	εὐθύς / ηὔξανεν

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[1] *u* if part of a diphthong, otherwise *y*.

[2] ωυ is used in Classical Greek, but occurs in the NT only in the name Μωϋσῆς where there is always a diaeresis, indicating that it is not a diphthong.

Contractions

Single Vowels

Here are all possible contractions of single vowels. The four most common are in blue.

	α	ε	η	ι	υ	ο	ω
α	α	α	α	αι	αυ	ω	ω
ε	η	ει	η	ει	ευ	ου	ω
η	η	η	η	ῃ	ηυ	ω	ω
ο	ω	ου	ω	οι	ου	ου	ω
ω	ω	ω	ω	ῳ	ωυ	ω	ω

Vowels and Diphthongs

	αι	ει[3]	ει[4]	ῃ	οι	ου[4]	ῳ
α	ᾳ	ᾳ	ᾳ	ᾳ	ῳ	ω	ῳ
ε	ῃ	ει	ει	ῃ	οι	ου	ῳ
η	ῃ	ῃ	η	ῃ	ῳ		ῳ
ο	ῳ	οι	ου	οι	οι	ου	ῳ

---

[3] "Genuine" diphthong (not formed by a contraction)
[4] "Spurious" diphthong (formed by a contraction)

Rules of Contraction

1. ου is formed from εο, οε, and οο.

ου	←	εο	ποιοῦμεν	←	ποιεομεν
ου	←	οε	πληροῦτε	←	πληροετε
ου	←	οο	πληροῦμεν	←	πληροομεν

2. ει is formed from εε.

ει	←	εε	ποιεῖτε	←	ποιεετε

3. ω is formed from almost any combination of omicron or omega with any other vowel, except for rule 1.

ω	←	αο	ἀγαπῶμεν	←	ἀγαπαομεν[1]

4. α is formed from αε.

α	←	αε	ἀγαπᾶτε	←	ἀγαπαετε
ᾳ	←	αει	ἀγαπᾷ	←	ἀγαπαει

5. η is formed from εα.

η	←	εα	ἠγάπησα	←	ἐαγάπησα

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[1] In the first person singular of epsilon and omicron contracts, there is one extra step in the contraction process. No personal ending is used, so the connecting vowel lengthens to compensate, and the ensuing contraction is between the contract vowel and the lengthened connecting vowel. ποιεο → ποιεω → ποιῶ. πληροο → πληροω → πληρῶ.

6. Miscellaneous

  οι ← οει   πληροῖς ← πληροεις
             πληροῖ ← πληροει

7. The contraction of diphthongs

 ■ If the contract vowel and the first vowel of the diphthong are the *same,* they simplify (i.e., one of the double letters drops off).

  ει ← εει   ποιεῖς   ← ποιεεις
  ου ← οου   πληροῦσι ← πληροουσι

 ■ If the contract vowel and the first vowel of the diphthong are *different,* they contract. If the second vowel of the diphthong is an iota, it subscripts if possible; if it is an upsilon, it drops off.

  ᾳ ← αει ἀγαπᾳ ← ἀγαπαει
  ου ← εου ποιοῦσι ← ποιεουσι

8. Contract verbs contract as if the true personal endings are those visible in the present active indicative.

  αω   → ἀγαπῶ
  αεις → ἀγαπᾷς
  αει   → ἀγαπᾷ

  αομεν → ἀγαπῶμεν
  αετε → ἀγαπᾶτε
  αουσι → ἀγαπῶσι

Accent Rules

The acute (´) can occur on any of the last three syllables: ἀκηκόαμεν. λόγου. αὐτός.

The circumflex (ˆ) can occur only on one of the last two syllables and will always be over a long vowel:[1] πλανῶμεν. ἀρχῆς.

The grave (`) is formed when a word is normally accented with an acute on the final syllable. When the word is not followed by a punctuation mark, then the acute becomes a grave: καὶ νῦν.

Accents on nouns try to stay on the same syllable (*consistent accent*). Accents on verbs try to move as far back toward the beginning of the verb as possible (*recessive accent*).

"Enclitics" are words pronounced so closely with the preceding word that the accent rules behave as if both words are one word. What this often means is that the accent over the enclitic will back up onto the preceding word.[2]

Enclitics include γέ, εἰμί (except εἶ), μου, πέρ, ποτέ, πού, πώ, πώς, σύ, τέ, τοί, τίς, present indicative of φημί (except φῇς). ἐστιν can be unaccented, or accented ἔστιν and ἐστίν.

"Proclitics" have no accent as they "lean forward" to the following word. They include the article (masc. and fem.), some prepositions (εἰς, ἐκ, ἐν), conjunctions (εἰ, ὡς), and the negation οὐ (οὐκ, οὐχ).

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[1] η and ω are long vowels. α is always long. α, ι, and υ can be either long or short.

[2] The preceding word will be oxytone, i.e., it has an acute on its final syllable.

When Accents & Breathings Are Important

ἄρα	particle, "then, therefore"
ἀρά	fem noun, "curse" (Rom 3:14)
ἀλλά	particle, "but, yet, rather"
ἄλλα	neut pl of ἄλλος, "other"
αὐτή, αὐταί	αὐτός
αὕτη, αὗται	fem, οὗτος
εἰ	"if"
εἶ	2nd sg pres act, εἰμί
εἰς	"into"
εἷς	masc, "one"
ἐν	preposition, "in"
ἕν	neuter, εἷς
ἔξω	adverb: without; prep (gen): outside
ἕξω	fut act of ἔχω
ἡ	nom sg fem, ὁ
ἥ	nom sg fem, ὅς
ἤ	"or"
ᾗ	dative sg fem, ὅς
ᾖ	3rd sg pres act subj, εἰμί
ἧς, ἥν	fem, ὅς
ἦν	3rd sg imperfect act ind, εἰμί
ᾖς	2nd sg pres act subj, εἰμί
ὁ, οἱ, αἱ	ὁ
ὅ, οἵ, αἵ	ὅς
οὐ	"not"
οὗ	gen sg masc/neut, ὅς; also "where"

ποτέ   particle, "at some time"
πότε   interrogative adverb, "when?"

τις, τι   indefinite pronoun
τίς, τί   interrogative pronoun
ὦ̃   interjection
ὦ̃   1st sg pres act subj, εἰμί
ᾧ̃   dat sg masc/neut, ὅς
ὤν   pres act ptcp, εἰμί
ὦ̃ν   gen pl, ὅς
Liquid futures   μένω, μενῶ

Syllabification

1.   There is one vowel (or diphthong) per syllable.

ἀ κη κό α μεν   μαρ τυ ροῦ μεν

A single consonant by itself (not a cluster) goes with
the following vowel.[1]

ἐ ω ρά κα μεν   ἐ θε α σά με θα

2.   Two consecutive vowels that do not form a diph-
thong are divided.

ἐ θε α σά με θα   Ἠ σα ΐ ας

3.   A consonant cluster that cannot be pronounced
together is divided, and the first consonant goes with
the preceding vowel.

ἔμ προ σθεν   ἀρ χῆς

---

[1] If the consonant is the final letter in the word, it goes with the
preceding vowel.

4. A consonant cluster that can be pronounced to-
gether goes with the following vowel.

> Χρι στός   γρα φή

This includes a consonant cluster formed with μ or ν
as the second letter.

> ἐ πί γνω σις   ἔ θνε σιν

5. Double consonants are divided.

> ἀ παγ γέλ λο μεν   παρ ρη σί α

**6.** Compound words are divided where joined.

> ἀντι χριστός   ἐκ βάλλω

Crasis

Crasis is when a word is formed by combining two
words. The first word is almost always καί.

καὶ ἐγώ	→	κἀγώ	76x
καὶ ἐμοί	→	κἀμοί	5x
καὶ μέ	→	κἀμέ	3x
καὶ ἐκεῖ	→	κἀκεῖ	10x
καὶ ἐκεῖθεν	→	κἀκεῖθεν	10x
καὶ ἐκεῖνος	→	κἀκεῖνος	7x
καὶ ἐάν or ἄν	→	κἄν	17x
τὸ ἐναντίον	→	τοὐναντίον	3x
τὸ ὄνομα	→	τοὔνομα	1x

There are other words that were originally formed
through crasis but in our texts can be written as one
(ἐάνπερ, καίτοιγε, μενοῦνγε) or two (καίγε, μήγε, μήπου,
μήπως) words.

Prepositions
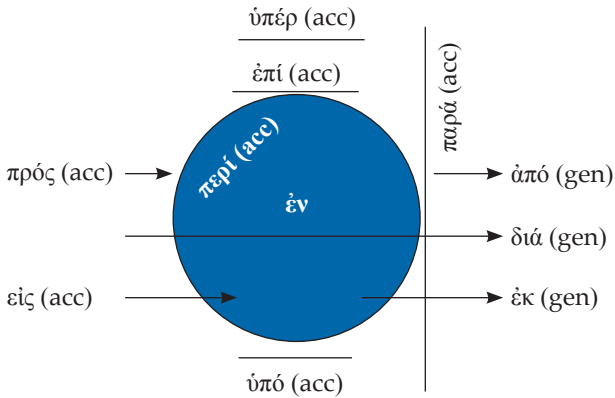
Additional Prepositions

ἀντί	gen:	instead of, for
διά	acc:	on account of
ἐπί	gen:	on, over, when
	dat:	on the basis of, at
κατά	gen:	against
	acc:	according to
μετά	gen:	with
	acc:	after
παρά	gen:	from
	dat:	beside, near
περί	gen:	concerning, about
ὑπέρ	gen:	in behalf of
ὑπό	gen:	by

Numbers

	Cardinals[1]	*Ordinals*	*Adverbials*
1.	εἷς	πρῶτος	ἅπαξ
2.	δύο	δεύτερος	δίς
3.	τρεῖς	τρίτος	τρίς
4.	τέσσαρες	τέταρτος	τετράκις
5.	πέντε	πέμπτος	πεντάκις
6.	ἕξ	ἕκτος	ἑξάκις
7.	ἑπτά	ἕβδομος	ἑπτάκις
8.	ὀκτώ	ὄγδοος	ὀκτάκις
9.	ἐννέα	ἔνατος	ἐνάκις
10.	δέκα	δέκατος	
11.	ἕνδεκα	ἑνδέκατος	
12.	δώδεκα (δεκαδύο)	δωδέκατος	
14.	δεκατέσσαρες	τεσσαρεσκαιδέκατος	
15.	δεκαπέντε	πεντεκαιδέκατος	
16.	δέκα ἕξ		
18.	δέκαοκτώ (δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ)		
20.	εἴκοσι(ν)	εἰκοστός	
30.	τριάκοντα		
40.	τεσσαράκοντα (τεσσεράκοντα)		
50.	πεντήκοντα	πεντηκοστός	
60.	ἑξήκοντα		
70.	ἑβδομήκοντα	ἑβδομηκοστός	ἑβδομηκοντάκις
80.	ὀγδοήκοντα		
90.	ἐνενήκοντα		
100.	ἑκατόν	ἑκατοστός	

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[1] The cardinals from five through 199 are indeclinable; the rest decline.

Square of Stops

Stops are consonants that form their sound by impeding the airflow. They are broken down into three classifications.

- Labial. π, β, and φ are formed by using the lips to impede the air flow momentarily.

- Velar. κ, γ, and χ are formed by pushing up the middle of the tongue against the soft part of the roof of the mouth.[1]

- *Dental*. τ, δ, and θ are formed by clicking the tongue against the back of the teeth.[2]

- The final column shows what happens when the stop is followed by sigma.

	voiceless	*voiced*	*aspirate*	*with sibilant*
Labial	π	β	φ	→ ψ
Velar	κ	γ	χ	→ ξ
Dental	τ	δ	θ	→ σ

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[1] Some people use the term "palatals" to describe velars because the soft part of the mouth's roof is the "palate."

[2] Actually, it is not the teeth but the alveolar ridge behind the teeth that is used, but the word "teeth" is easier for most to associate with "dental."