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Overview of Greek

Greek is the official language of Greece and one of the two official languages of Cyprus. It is spoken by some 11 million people in Greece and Cyprus. In the United States there are approximately 400,000 speakers of Greek.

Greek is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. Modern Greek is derived from the Athenian dialect of Ancient Greek. Until 1976, two distinct versions of Greek were used. Katharevousa was the formal language used for newspapers, broadcasting, higher education, church, law and medicine. Demotic was the spoken language and the language of modern fiction. In 1976, Demotic was adopted as the official language.

The Greek alphabet dates back to 1,000 BC. In fact, it was the first written alphabet in which the letters denoted vowels as well as consonants. There are 24 letters in the Modern Greek alphabet: 7 vowels and 17 consonants. Modern Greek has adopted many words from Turkish and Italian.

The text presented here is transliterated. For your convenience, only the stressed syllables appear in capital letters.

Alphabet

The Greek alphabet consists of twenty four letters:

Letter	Pronunciation:
Alfa	ah
Veeta	v
Gamma	gh
Delta	th
Epsilon	eh
Zeeta	zz
Eeta	ee
Theeta	th
Yeeota	ee
Kappa	k
Lamda	l
Mee	m
Nee	n
Ksee	ks
Omeekron	o (as in got)
Pee	p
Rho	r
Seegma	s
Tahf	t
Epsilon	ee
Fee	f
Khee	kh
Psee	ps
Omega	o (as in got)

Nouns

A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing or idea.

domatio	room
eemera	day
dromos	street
Rhodos	Rhodes

Greek nouns change their endings according to their use in a sentence. A noun which serves as the subject of a sentence takes a different form from a noun which is the object of a sentence. Additionally, another ending is used to show possession. These different forms are called cases.

See Also:

[Gender and Agreement](#)

[Number and Agreement](#)

[Articles](#)

Gender and Agreement

The gender of a Greek noun is **feminine, masculine** or **neuter**. There are also some nouns which can be masculine or feminine.

Knowing the gender of every noun is important in order to decline the noun correctly.

The gender of the noun also determines the article which precedes it and the adjective which modifies it.

See also:

[Adjectives](#)

[Articles](#)

[Pronouns](#)

Number and Agreement

There are two numbers in Greek, **singular** and **plural**.

Most nouns in Greek have singular and plural forms.

eemera	(day)	eemeres	(days)
tetragono	(block)	tetragona	(blocks)

Adjectives and Articles agree with nouns in number, gender and case.

teen gnorimia	(the acquaintance)
to banio	(the bath)
to galahzyo veevleeo	(the blue book)

Verbs agree with the subject of the sentence in number:

Den eho tipota na deeloso.	(I have nothing to declare.)
Den ekoumeh tipota na deelosomeh.	(We have nothing to declare.)

See Also

[Noun](#)

[Pronoun](#)

[Adjectives](#)

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[Verb Conjugations](#)

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word which stands for a noun or noun phrase. It can serve as the subject of a verb, the object of a verb or the complement of a verb.

Pronouns can be used in various ways.

Generally, personal subject pronouns are not used in sentences because the subject is indicated by the verb ending, however, the subject pronoun may be used for emphasis.

Ego to ehkahnah (I did it.)

A pronoun can be the object of a verb:

Ee Eleni **to** ehee. (Eleni has **it**.)

A pronoun can be the indirect object of a verb.

Moo to ethoseh. (He gave it **to me**.)

Here is a chart of Personal Pronouns

Subject:	Direct Object	Indirect Object
ego (I)	me (me)	moo (me)
ehssee (you)	seh (you)	soo (you)
ahftoss (he)	ton (him)	too (him)
ahftee (she)	tee (her)	tees (her)
ahfto)	to (it)	too (it)
ehmees (we)	mahs (us)	mahs (us)
ehssee (you)	sas (you)	sas (you)
aftee (they-m)	toos (them)	toos (them)
aftes (they-f)	tis (them)	toos (them)
afta (they-n)	ta (them)	toos (them)

Articles

Both **definite** (the) and **indefinite** articles (a/an) agree in gender, number and case with the nouns they modify.

to onoma	(the name)
ee teemee	(the price)
o dromos	the street)
mia soopa	(a soup)
ena domatio	(a room)

Definite articles have a singular and plural form for each case:

SINGULAR

	M	F	N
Subject	o	ee	toh
Object	to/ton	tee/teen	toh
Possessive	too	teess	too

Note that the object forms of the male and female singular definite articles have a final **n** sound when the following word begins with a vowel or certain consonants or consonant clusters.

PLURAL

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Subject	ee	ee	ta
Object	tooss	teess	ta
Possessive	tonn	tonn	tonn

Definite articles are often used in Greek where English would omit them.

Names of places:

ee Atheena (Athens)

Names of people:

ee Stephania Karalee (Stephanie Karali)

Days of the week, months of the year, seasons:

ee treetee (Tuesday)
o eeonios (June)

The **indefinite article** only modifies singular nouns

SINGULAR

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Subject	enas	mia	ena
Object	ena/enan	mia/mian	ena
Possessive	enos	mias	enos

The final **n** sound for the object form of the male and female indefinite article may be used before a vowel or certain consonants or consonant clusters, but it is not mandatory.

See Also:

[Nouns](#)
[Gender and Agreement](#)
[Number and Agreement](#)

Adjectives

An adjective agrees in gender, number and case with the noun it modifies.

o kalos anthropos (the good man)
ee kali yeeneka (the good woman)

Adjectives generally precede the nouns they modify.

ena diplo domatio (a double room)

See Also:

[Gender and Agreement](#)
[Number and Agreement](#)
[Articles](#)

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs.

In Greek, many adverbs are formed from adjectives which end in **ees** or **os** by adding **a** to the stem. This is comparable to adding **ly** to an adjective to form an adverb in English.

For example:

kalos (good) **kala** (well)

See Also:

[Adjectives](#)

Verb Conjugations

All Greek verbs have a root to which endings are added. The different endings denote subject, tense and mood.

The tense of a verb focuses on the time in which a certain action takes place:
Almost all of the Greek verbs belong to two conjugations. Once you have learned which conjugation a verb belongs to, the endings are predictable.

Here is an example of a present tense conjugation:

pehzo	(to play)
pehzo	(I play)
pehzis	(you play)
pehzee	(he, she, it plays)
pezoumeh	(we are)
pezehteh	(you are)
pehzoon	(they are)

Prepositions

Prepositions are the connecting words that show the relationships between the words in the sentence.

In Greek, prepositions are followed by the object form of the noun.

The most common prepositions in Greek are:

se	(to, at)
me	(by, with)
apo	(from, of)
gia	(for)

The preposition **se** which means at, to or in is contracted with the definite article. For example, **se + to** becomes **sto** and **se + tis** becomes **stis**.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases and clauses together.

The most commonly used conjunction in Greek is **ke** (and).

Particles

In Greek, particles are the auxiliary words that precede the verb and express future conditional tenses or the subjunctive mood. They express a wish or a condition.

The particle **na** can often be translated as to, so that or in order to.

Tha eethela na agoraso ena eseeteerio. (I would like to buy a ticket.)

The particle **tha** indicates future or conditional tenses:

Tha eethela ena potiree beera. (I would like a glass of beer.)

Numerals

Cardinal Numbers are used to express specific quantities.

ena (one)
ohto (eight)
eekosee (twenty)

Ordinal numbers are used to express order or sequence.

protoss (first)
defteross (second)

Negatives and Questions

Generally, negatives are formed by placing **den** before the verb.

Den eho tipota na deeloso. (I have nothing to declare.)

Den milo anglika. (I do not speak English.)

Questions are formed by changing the intonation of your voice, or by using the interrogative pronouns such as **tee** (what).

Note that in written Greek, a semi-colon is used instead of a question mark.

