

Beginning Greek I
Session 3: Introduction to Verbs

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Review

Verb tense – when (past, present, future) and whether something is still occurring or not

The primary meaning of a verb is communicated in the root or stem. The root or stem is modified to indicate changes in the five verbal aspects.

- Stem + ending
- Stem change + ending
- Addition of “helping” or “linking” verbs to create a verb phrase

English verbs

The English tense system is more complex than the Greek. English has 12 different tenses. Greek has six. Here are the 12 English tenses. Note how we modify the verb root or stem to indicate different tenses.

Simple present – We **eat**. No change to verb.

Present progressive – We **are eating**. Addition of “to be” verb and present participle of verb.

Present perfect – We **have eaten**. Addition of “have” and past participle of verb.

Present progressive – We **have been eating**. Addition of “have been” and present participle of verb.

Simple past – We **ate**. Stem changed.

Past progressive – We **were eating**. Addition of “to be” verb and present participle of verb.

Past perfect – We **had eaten**. Addition of “had” and past participle of verb.

Past progressive – We **had been eating**. Addition of “had been” and present participle of verb.

Simple future – We **will eat**. “Will” added.

Future progressive – We **will be eating**. Addition of “will be” and present participle of verb.

Past perfect – We **will have eaten**. Addition of “will have” and past participle of verb.

Past progressive – We **will have been eating**. Addition of “will have been” and present participle of verb.

Greek verbs

Present (ongoing action in present time)

lu/omen

We loosen – No change to verb

Future (action in the future)

lu/somen

We will loosen – Sigma (s) added to stem.

Aorist (completed action in the past)

e)lu/samen

We loosened – Sigma and alpha (sa) added to stem. Augment added for indicative mood to indicate past time. Some verbs showed this tense with stem changes.

Imperfect (ongoing action in past time)

e)lu/omen

We loosened. Augment added to indicate past time.

Perfect (completed action with ongoing effect into the present)

lelu/kamen

We have loosened. Reduplication on the front of the stem and kappa and alpha (**ka**) on the end.

Pluperfect (completed action with ongoing effect into the past)

e)lelu/keimen

We had loosened. Reduplication on the front of the stem and kappa, epsilon, iota (**kei**) on the end.

We have kept things simple so that we can understand the way the Greek verb system worked. We will look at some of the complexities in a moment. Before we do, let's make sure we have the basics. Next to the patterns below, write the tense that is best represented by it.

Stem + connecting vowel + ending

Augment + stem + connecting vowel + ending

Reduplication + stem + k + connecting vowel + ending

Stem + s + connecting vowel + ending

Augment + stem + s + connecting vowel + ending

Augment + reduplication + stem + k + connecting vowel + ending

Augment + stem change + connecting vowel + ending

Let's look again at the verbs from chapter 1. See if you can figure out the tenses for each.

γράφομεν

ἦν

ἀκηκόαμεν

ἐωράκαμεν

ἐθεασάμεθα

ἐψηλάφησαν

ἐφανερώθη

μαρτυροῦμεν

ἀπαγγέλλομεν

ἔχητε

πεπληρωμένη

ἐστίν

ἔχομεν

περιπατῶμεν

ψευδόμεθα

ποιοῦμεν

καθαρίζει

εἵπωμεν

πλανῶμεν

ὁμολογῶμεν

ἡμαρτήκαμεν

We have looked at the basic system using only the first person active plural ending – which is always the same. What complicates the Greek is the variation of endings to indicate different persons, voice, number. The endings also help us have some idea of tense. In general, present, future, and perfect have the same endings (primary) and aorist, imperfect, and pluperfect have the same endings (secondary). Don't worry about memorizing them all now, but it is good to see them and become more familiar with them. The primary endings are listed below.

Active voice

- Lu – **W** I loosen. Note how the connecting vowel and ending have contracted.
Lu – **eiv** You loosen. Note how the connecting vowel and ending have contracted.
Lu – **ei** He/she/it loosens. Note how the connecting vowel and ending have contracted.
Lu – o – **men** We loosen.
Lu – e – **te** You (plural) loosen.
Lu – **ousi** They loosen. Note how the connecting vowel and ending have contracted.

Middle/passive voice

- Lu – o – **mai** I am loosened.
Lu – **h** You are loosened. Note connecting vowel and ending have contracted.
Lu – e – **tai** He/she/it are loosened.
Lu – o – **meqa** We are loosened.
Lu – e – **sqe** You (plural) are loosened.
Lu – o – **ntai** They are loosened.

It is difficult to learn every verb stem or to know when the stems change. It is simpler to become familiar with the endings, which help us see the stems and the vowels. How would the future of “loosen” be formed?