

Beginning Greek I – Intro to Nouns and Adjectives

April 11 7-8:30 p.m.

In person at Wai 'ālae Baptist Church

Online via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88485111334?pwd=Um5tS21lV0NKYll2d1duMHZaTDlOQT09>

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What is a noun?

Nouns in English or Greek are basically the same – a word that represents a person, place, or thing. Most people understand person and place. “Thing” is what can be a little more complicated.

Person

Word that represents a type or category of person or people. For example,

Man, woman, boy, girl,

Word that represents a specific person or group of people. For example,

Joe, Sarah, Americans, the boy, the girl

Place

Word that represents a type or category of locations. For example,

park, school, town, country

Word that represents a specific location. For example,

Honolulu, the house, Hawaii

Thing

Word that represents inanimate objects. For example,

Rock, table, ocean

Word that represents non-human animate objects. For example,

Horse, tree, germ

Word that represents a feeling

Love, anger, hatred

Word that represents an abstract idea

Truth, loyalty, love

Word that represents an action

Running, jumping, flying

A pronoun is a special set of nouns. They are short words that take the place of another noun. It is the only set of nouns that has endings indicating case. All Greek nouns and pronouns indicate case.

What is an adjective?

An adjective is a word that gives some further description of a noun or another adjective. Some adjectives can even be used as a noun, and some nouns can be used as adjective.

Subjective pronouns – He, she, I, it, we, you

Objective pronouns – him, her, me, us, it, you

What is an article?

An article is a special adjective. In English, we have two types

Definite – the

Indefinite – a or an

A Greek article does what an English definite article does and much more. The Greek article can even be used as a pronoun.

The case for case systems

Many languages modify nouns and adjectives to indicate how the word is being used. Except for pronouns, English does not do this. English has to rely much on word order.

The boy gave the dog a bone.

A bone gave the dog the boy.

The dog gave the boy a bone.

The dog the boy a bone gave.

In English, the word order changes significantly the meaning of each sentence. The last sentence makes no sense in English. All of these are possible word orders in Greek.

A case system allows more flexibility with word order.

Here are the names of the cases used in a 5-case system and some of the basic uses. Certain cases like genitive have many uses. (Some Greek grammars split the cases into more categories).

Nominative – Subject, complement, predicate nominative

Genitive – Possession, source or origin, indirect object, direct object, object of certain prepositions

Dative – Indirect object, location, means or instrument, object of certain prepositions

Accusative – Direct object, object of certain prepositions

Vocative – Direct address (who is being spoken to)

In the coming weeks, we will come back to look at each of these more closely.

How the Greeks Indicated Cases

In this sentence from 1 John, the nouns are highlighted.

καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾗ πεπληρωμένη.

The word order of the first clause is –

these things write we

Greek gave the nouns different endings so that the reader or listener knew how the words were being used regardless of word order.

ταῦτα – The ending here indicates this is the direct object (what is being written)

ἡμεῖς - The ending here indicates this is the subject (who is writing)

The second clause follows largely an English word order

The joy our may be fulfilled

ἡ χαρὰ - The ending and the article (ἡ) indicate this is the subject.

ἡμῶν – The ending here indicates a possessive (whose joy).

Practice

Go through and circle the verbs. The nouns and adjectives are bold type. We will go back and look at each noun and adjective to familiarize ourselves with them and see if any patterns emerge.

Ὁ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, **ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ**

ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ **αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν** ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ **τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς—**² καὶ ἡ

ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν **ὑμῖν τὴν**

ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη **ἡμῖν—**³ **ὃ ἐωράκαμεν**

καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ **ὑμῖν**, ἵνα καὶ **ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν** ἔχητε μεθ’

ἡμῶν· καὶ ἡ **κοινωνία** δὲ ἡ **ἡμετέρα** μετὰ **τοῦ πατρὸς** καὶ μετὰ **τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ**

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·⁴ καὶ **ταῦτα** γράφομεν **ἡμεῖς** ἵνα ἡ **χαρὰ ἡμῶν ἧ πεπληρωμένη.**

⁵ Καὶ ἔστιν **αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ** καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν **ὑμῖν,**

ὅτι **ὁ θεὸς φῶς** ἐστὶν καὶ **σκοτία** ἐν **αὐτῷ** οὐκ ἔστιν **οὐδεμία.**⁶ ἔὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι

κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ’ **αὐτοῦ** καὶ ἐν τῷ **σκότει** περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ

ποιοῦμεν **τὴν ἀλήθειαν·**⁷ ἔὰν δὲ ἐν **τῷ φωτὶ** περιπατῶμεν ὡς **αὐτός** ἐστὶν ἐν **τῷ**

φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ
καθαρίζει **ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.** ⁸ ἔὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι **ἁμαρτίαν** οὐκ ἔχομεν,
ἐαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ **ἡ ἀλήθεια** οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν **ἡμῖν.** ⁹ ἔὰν ὁμολογῶμεν **τὰς**
ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἔστιν καὶ **δίκαιος** ἵνα ἀφῇ **ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας** καὶ
καθάρσῃ **ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.** ¹⁰ ἔὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν,
ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν **αὐτὸν** καὶ ὁ **λόγος αὐτοῦ** οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν **ἡμῖν.**

The article

I usually do not advocate rote memory to learn language. However, I make an exception for the article. If you can memorize the article, it will help you with Greek immensely. Here's how:

- The same Greek cases have different endings depending on the last letter of the stem. The article is always the same depending on the case, gender, and number of the noun.
- The article chart shows the pattern that Greek usually uses for its endings. It will help you see and remember that pattern.
- The article is sometimes used as a pronoun and is in a sentence by itself.

You don't have to do this now, but next week, I will include the article chart in the handout. If you want to start memorizing early, you can find the chart online.