

[Little Greek 101:](#)

The Greek Alphabet

This table gives the Greek letters, their names, equivalent English letters, and tips for pronouncing those letters which are pronounced differently from the equivalent English letters. (There are actually several acceptable ways to pronounce New Testament Greek. For the gory details, look [here](#).)

A	α	alpha	a	“father”
B	β	beta	b	
Γ	γ	gamma	g	
Δ	δ	delta	d	
E	ε	epsilon	e	“end”
Z	ζ	zêta	z	
H	η	êta	ê	“hey”
Θ	θ	thêta	th	“thick”
I	ι	iota	i	“it”
K	κ	kappa	k	
Λ	λ	lamda	l	
M	μ	mu	m	
N	ν	nu	n	
Ξ	ξ	xi	ks	“box”
Ο	ο	omikron	o	“off”
Π	π	pi	p	
Ρ	ρ	rho	r	
Σ	σ, ς	sigma	s	“say”
T	τ	tau	t	
Υ	υ	upsilon	u	“put”
Φ	φ	phi	f	
Χ	χ	chi	ch	“Bach”
Ψ	ψ	psi	ps	
Ω	ω	omega	ô	“grow”

Sigma (σ, ς): There are two forms for the letter Sigma. When written at the end of a word, it is written like this: ς. If it occurs anywhere else, it is written like this: σ.

Upsilon (υ): In the above table, we suggest that you pronounce this letter like "u" in "put". The preferred pronunciation is actually more like the German "ü" as in "Brücke", or like the French "u" as in "tu". If you do not speak German or French, don't worry about it, just pronounce it the way the table suggests.

Xi (χ): This is the same sound as "ch" in "Bach", which does not sound like "ch" in "chair". The same sound occurs in the Scottish "Loch", as in "Loch Lomond", or the German "ach!".

Diphthongs When two vowels combine to make one sound, it is called a diphthong. There are seven diphthongs in Greek:

αι	Like "ai" in "aisle"
ει	Like "ei" in "freight"
οι	Like "oi" in "oil"
ου	Like "ow" in "cow"
ευ	Like "e-w" in "Edward"
ου	Like "oo" in "food"
υι	Like "uee" in "queen"

The "eu" combination is probably the hardest to learn for most people. It may help to take the "ow" sound and say it slowly: if you notice, there are actually two sounds in "ow" - it starts out with "ah", then glides to an "oo" sound, "ah-oo". Try doing the same with "e" (as in "edward") and "oo" - "e-oo". This is a little like the "e-w" in Edward, if you remove the "d".

Clip and save! You may want to print out this table and glue it to the inside cover of your Greek dictionary. If you are ever in doubt about alphabetic order, this will help you look up words. If you have difficulty with pronunciation, you could also print it out and glue it to the inside of your Greek New Testament.

Accents

Accents tell you which syllable is stressed when the word is pronounced. There are three different accents, but by the time of the New Testament, they were all pronounced the same. Here are the three kinds of accents, with a Greek word to illustrate each:

acute	circumflex	grave
λόγος	ἀρχή	θεός
lo gos	ar chē	the os

Breathings

The rough breathing is pronounced like an "h", and looks like a backwards comma written over a vowel. The smooth breathing is not pronounced at all, and looks like a regular comma written over a vowel. Note the difference between "en" and "hen":

smooth	rough
έν	ἔν
en	hen

There are two marks over the epsilon in "hen"; the first is the rough breathing, the second is the accent.

Iota subscripts

A vowel at the end of a word will sometimes have an "iota subscript" underneath it; here is an alpha with an iota subscript:

α̣