## Ch. 6, Nominative and accusative cases

Browse through this section first, then come back and study it more carefully. Some things that aren't clear at first will "fit together" better once you get the big picture. You goal on the next page or so of material is not to memorize specific "Greek things" but to understand how the system works. I'll tell you when you hit the material that you must memorize.

◆ **Case:**

   ἀποστολο = *apostle* (This is just the *stem*,* not a complete word.)

   ἀποστολος = *apostle,* but the ς specifies that the word functions as the subject.

   ἀποστολον = *apostle,* but the ν specifies that the word functions as an object.

In Greek, the case endings, **not** the word order, determine the word's function in the sentence.

   ***Stem*** = word with the case ending removed (ἀποστολο)

◆ **Gender:**
- Greek nouns always have gender
- The same word always has the same gender; it never changes.

◆ **Number:**
ἀποστολο**ς** = singular
ἀποστολο**ι** = plural (Both **ς** and **ι** also indicate nominative case as well as plural number.)

◆ **Declension:**

*Declensions* are different ways to change the ending of a word to indicate its function in the sentence. Or, *declension* can refer to  a set of endings in a fixed pattern used to indicate case. Let me illustrate this concept with "goofy English":

e.g., there are three "pseudo-English" declensions to indicate plurality:

**The *s*-declension: cat > cat*s***
   **e.g., cat, dog, truck, car, mother, book, window, computer, knob, pencil**

The *en*-declension: ox > ox*en*
   **e.g.,** ox, oxen; child, children; brother, brethren (also: brothers)

The **_zero declension_**: sheep > sheep
**e.g.,** fish, series, deer, corps, bellows, species

Greek also has 3 patterns or declensions—with profound names:
- first declension
- second declension
- third declension

That means there are **_3 sets of endings_** that we will use on Greek nouns to indicate gender, number, & case.

# Meet the Cases:

(on the next page!)

Papa Case   Mama Case   Baby Case

OK, back to business! Just remember that if you are a farm boy (like me), "case" has a different meaning in Greek than that to which you may be accustomed.

◆ **_Nominative_** case: indicates that a word is either the subject or the predicate nominative of the sentence. This ending often looks like this: **οϛ**.

◆ **_Accusative_** case: indicates that a word is the direct object. This ending often looks like this: **ον**.

θεὸς ἀγάπει τὸν κόσμον.     (*God loves the world.*)
θεὸς ἐστιν κύριος.          (*God is lord.*)
θεὸς ἀγάπει Χριστόν.        (*God loves Christ.*)

Greek word order does **not** determine the function of a word in the sentence. Function is determined by case.

All these sentences say the exact same thing (*God loves the world*):

θεὸς ἀγάπει τὸν κόσμον.

ἀγάπει τὸν κόσμον θεὸς.

τὸν κόσμον θεὸς ἀγάπει.

ἀγάπει θεὸς τὸν κόσμον.

A term you need to remember: ***lexical form*** = the way a word is spelled in the dictionary/lexicon*; for nouns, this is always the nominative singular form.

[*These words are essentially synonymous; we use *dictionary* more often in English, *lexicon* is the more common term in Greek.]

## ◆ Noun Endings

The following chart must be memorized **_exactly!_**
(Use/memorize this chart, which is the same as the chart on p. 454 instead of pp. 35 or 48; I do things a bit differently than Mounce here, partly by listing all four cases rather than just the two that Mounce includes in ch. 6. I think you will find it easier to memorize one chart that is a bit larger one time rather than learning a smaller one now and then having to relearn it with four new rows added in the middle for the next chapter.)

| Declension: | 2 | 1 | 2 |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| _usual_ gender: | Masc | Fem | Neut |
| Nom Sg | ος | α or η | ον |
| Gen Sg | ου | ας or ης | ου |
| Dat Sg | ω | α or η | ω |
| Acc Sg | ον | αν or ην | ον |
| Nom Pl | οι | αι | α |
| Gen Pl | ων | ων | ων |
| Dat Pl | οις | αις | οις |
| Acc Pl | ους | ας | α |

You read these kind of charts like this: Second (**2**) declension nouns (which are usually **masculine**) use a set of <span style="color:blue">eight endings</span> to indicate the **case/number** indicated in the left column; first declension nouns (which are usually feminine) …. Notice a couple of things:

- You can abbreviate the headings even more once you know what they mean; see the next chart below for my standard format.

- Second declension can be either masculine or neuter (cols. 1 and 3); the endings are almost identical (more on this later).

- Don't worry about third declension nouns now; you'll meet them in chapter 10).

This chart gives actual words rather than just the endings as in the previous chart.

| | 2 | | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M** | | **F** | **N** |
| **N S** | λογος | ὡρα | γραφη | ἐργον |
| **G S** | λογου | ὡρας | γραφης | ἐργου |
| **D S** | λογῳ | ὡρᾳ | γραφῃ | ἐργῳ |
| **A S** | λογον | ὡραν | γραφην | ἐργον |
| **N P** | λογοι | ὡραι | γραφαι | ἐργα* |
| **G P** | λογων | ὡρων | γραφων | ἐργων |
| **D P** | λογοις | ὡραις | γραφαις | ἐργοις |
| **A P** | λογους | ὡρας | γραφας | ἐργα* |

*Just in case you wondered (most of you probably didn't!), ἐργο + α = ἐργα.

**Note:** Technically the vowel on the front of the ending is part of the *stem*, not the ending.

It is easier to memorize the ending with the vowel because you can pronounce it as a syllable. (You will discover that the textbook charts omit this vowel.) The actual endings are as follows (you do **not** have to learn this chart):

|       | M   | F   | N   |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| **N S** | ς   | –   | ν   |
| **G S** | υ   | ς   | υ   |
| **D S** | ι   | ι   | ι   |
| **A S** | ν   | ν   | ν   |
| **N P** | ι   | ι   | α   |
| **G P** | ων  | ων  | ων  |
| **D P** | ις  | ις  | ις  |
| **A P** | υς  | ς   | α   |

● To **parse** a Greek noun means to describe it grammatically. We use this formula for consistency and completeness: Gender, Number, Case > Lexical form, translation gloss.

For example, if I were to ask you to parse **λογους**, you would tell me: *Masc. Pl. Acc. >* **λογος**, *word*
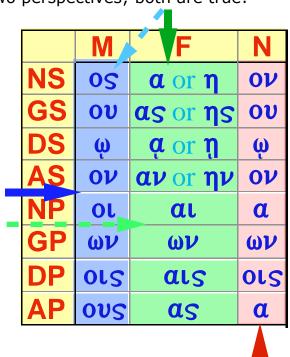
## ● Declension and Gender

We can describe this relationship from one of two perspectives; both are true:

- ■ First declension nouns are usually **feminine,** but sometimes **masculine.**

- ■ Second declension nouns are usually **masculine** or **neuter,** sometimes **feminine.**

Or (watch the color-coded arrows for this perspective):

▼ **Feminine** nouns are *usually* **1st** declension, *sometimes* **2d**

▼ **Masculine** nouns are *usually* **2d** declension, *sometimes* **1st**

▼ **Neuter** nouns are *always* **2d** declension.

| | M | F | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NS** | ος | α or η | ον |
| **GS** | ου | ας or ης | ου |
| **DS** | ῳ | ᾳ or ῃ | ῳ |
| **AS** | ον | αν or ην | ον |
| **NP** | οι | αι | α |
| **GP** | ων | ων | ων |
| **DP** | οις | αις | οις |
| **AP** | ους | ας | α |

(Remember: the M/F/N headings are general guidelines, not invariables; the 2/1/2 heading, however, is *always* true. That is, if a word has one of the endings from the **center column,** it is a first declension word. Always. Wether it is masculine or feminine.)

● **What declension is that noun?**

▼ It depends on the last letter of the *stem;* if the stem ends in:
**α** or **η** = it is a first declension word;
**o** = second declension;
[consonant] = third declension (coming up in ch. 10).

● **The First Three Noun Rules**

(These must be memorized **exactly!** Later you will find that there is some flexibility in how you state these, but at this point you don't know enough about Greek to know what you dare change and what you don't. If you change the wrong word, you create a false "rule" that will result in frustration when the "rule" you learned doesn't work. So play it safe: learn them "letter-perfect." Don't try to "simplify" them or reword them so as to make better sense to you.)

1. Stems ending in alpha or eta are in the first declension, stems ending in omicron are in the second, and consonantal stems are in the third.

2. Every neuter word has the same form in the nominative and accusative.

3. Almost all neuter words end in alpha in the nominative and accusative plural.

# The Article

**English:**

Definite article: *the*  "**the** book"
Indefinite article: *a, an*    "**a** book," "**an** apple"

**Greek:**

Only has a *definite* article; there is no specific word for *a* or *an.*

• The article *must* agree with the noun it modifies in gender, number, & case.

• This chart must be memorized exactly. Be sure to include the rough breathing marks where needed and the iota subscripts. (*If either is missing, it is wrong.*)

• You will see this chart on most quizzes in the near future and on every exam all year. It is very important and it will help you figure out more sentences than you can count. The article occurs almost 20,000 times in the NT. You have to know it. Well. Backwards and forwards. ('Nuff said!)

**Complete Article Chart**

|     |     | M    | F    | N    |
| --- | --- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| Sg  | N   | ὁ    | ἡ    | το   |
|     | G   | του  | της  | του  |
|     | D   | τῳ   | τη   | τῳ   |
|     | A   | τον  | την  | το   |
| Pl  | N   | οἱ   | αἱ   | τα   |
|     | G   | των  | των  | των  |
|     | D   | τοις | ταις | τοις |
|     | A   | τους | τας  | τα   |

The **article** listed with a Greek noun in the lexicon is important! It is the *only way* to find the gender of a noun. Get out your lexicon and look up some of the nouns (most of the vocabulary words on pp. 18–19 are nouns). Look for the consistent format; note how the article is listed.

There are two ways that you will find nouns listed. BAGD[1] uses the standard system, but your little "beginner's lexicon" (Newman) uses a non-standard system. Compare the entries below; you need to understand both systems. (Don't worry about other things in the entry that you don't understand yet (esp. in BAGD); we'll get to the other information in due time.)
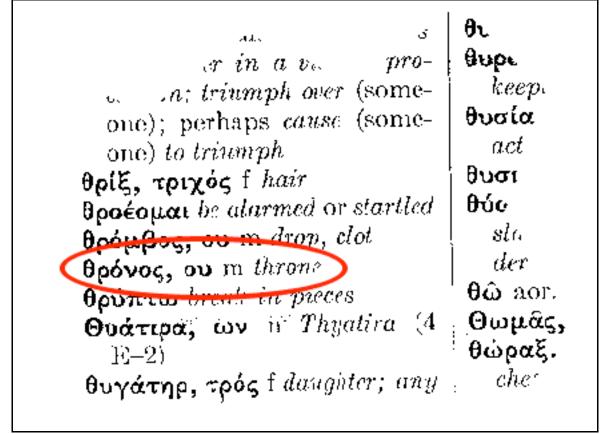
| **Standard form** (BAGD, etc.): | | **Non-standard** (Newman; L&N): |
|---|---|---|
| θρονος, -ου ὁ  *throne* | [= masc.] | θρονος, -ου **m** |
| ἁμαρτια, -ας, ἡ  *sin* | [= fem.] | ἁμαρτια, -ας **f** |
| εὐαγγελιον, ου, το  *good news* | [= neut.] | εὐαγγελιον, ου **n** |

**The following page show you what the entry in BAGD looks like (p. 364):**

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[1]"BAGD" is the regular abbreviation for the standard Greek lexicon. You will need to purchase one for second year Greek. As of summer 1998 the current edition is the 2d; a new, revised, 3d edition is due soon. Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. 2d ed. Revised and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

σρόμβος, ου, ὁ (trag. . . . . . .ατος
Choëph. 533; 546; Pla. . . . . . . 120a; med.
[Hobart 82f]) *small amoun. . .of* (flowing) *blood, c.*
*blood* Lk 22: 44.—WSurbled-Sleumer, D. Moral in ih.
Beziehungen z. Medizin u. Hygiene II² '19, 183ff. M-M.

θρόνος, ου, ὁ (Hom.+; inscr., pap., LXX, En.; Jos., Ant.
7, 353; 8, 399; Test. Levi; loanw. in rabb.).
1. *throne*—a. of human kings and rulers (Hdt. 1, 14;
X., Cyr. 6, 1, 6; Herodian 1, 8, 4) καθελεῖν ἀπὸ θρόνων
*dethrone* Lk 1: 52. The throne of David (2 Km 3: 10), the
ancestor of the Messiah 1: 32; Ac 2: 30.
2. of God (Soph., Ant. 1041; inscr. of Antiochus of
Commagene [Dit., Or. 383] 42 πρὸς οὐρανίους Διὸς
θρόνους; Ps 46: 9; Ezek. Trag. in Euseb., Pr. Ev. 9, 29, 5)
Hb 12: 2; Rv 7: 15; 12: 5; 22: 1, 3; cf. 1: 4; 3: 21b; 4: 2ff
9; 5: 1, 6f, 11, 13 al.—ὁ θρόνος τ. χάριτος Hb ⁴
μεγαλωσύνης 8: 1.—Of heaven as the thro·
(after Is 66: 1) Mt 5: 34 23: 22; Ac 7: 49; B ᵗ
last pass. are dire·       ᵗ 66: 1.—C¹

th.
dedica.
et ChB:
Ac 16:
6.32ff;
M-M

θυγ
Phi
·

**Newman's *Dictionary,* p. 84, looks like this (look it up in your own copy):**

.. in a v.. pro-
..n; *triumph over* (some-
one); perhaps *cause* (some-
one) *to triumph*
θρίξ, τριχός f *hair*
θροέομαι *be alarmed or startled*
θρόμβος, ου m *drop, clot*
θρόνος, ου m *throne*
θρύπτω *break in pieces*
Θυάτιρα, ων n *Thyatira* (4
E–2)
θυγάτηρ, τρός f *daughter; any*

θι
θυρι
keep.
θυσία
act
θυσι
θύω
sla
der
θῶ aor.
Θωμᾶς,
θώραξ.
che

**Louw & Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains,* 1:67 (# 6.112) is the only other reference tool that uses this type of entry for nouns:**

**6.ı**

χαθέι.    ιιωλ.    , περιι.

έστρεφε  ..e overturneα che chairs oı who were selling doves' Mk 11.15.

**6.112** θρόνος, ου *m:* a relatively large and elaborate seat upon which a ruler sits on official occasions – 'throne.' εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ χαθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον 'I saw a book in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne' Re 5.1. In some languages 'throne' is rendered as 'the seat of judging' or 'the seat of decision-making for a ruler.'

## ◆ Use of the article

• **Personal names** may or may not have the article in Greek; the article is omitted in English translation.

Ἰησους *or* ὁ Ἰησους, both = *Jesus*

We would not say, "The Jesus died"—any more than we would say, "The Robert died." Translation must communicate in proper grammar in the receptor language or it is not accurate translation.

• **Abstract nouns** often have the article in Greek but usually do not have an article in English. (*Abstract nouns* are those which refer to intangible, abstract entities or concepts.)

| | |
|---|---|
| love | ἡ ἀγαπη |
| truth | ἡ ἀληθεια |
| holiness | ὁ ἁγιασμος |
| guilt | το αἰτιον |