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THE GREEK ALPHABET ΤΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟ

THERE ARE 24 LETTERS IN THE GREEK ALPHABET

Capital	Lower case	Pronunciation	Name
A	α	a	άλφα (alpha)
B	β	v	βήτα (vita)
Γ	γ	gh	γάμα (ghama)
Δ	δ	this	δέλτα (thelta)
E	ε	e	έψιλον (epsilon)
Z	ζ	z	ζήτα (zita)
H	η	i	ήτα (ita)
Θ	θ	thunder	θήτα (thita)
I	ι	i	γiota (yota)
K	κ	k	κάπα (kapa)
Λ	λ	l	λάμδα (lamtha)
M	μ	m	μι (mi)
N	ν	n	νι (ni)
Ξ	ξ	x	ξι (ksi)
O	ο	o	όμικρον (omikron)
Π	π	p	πι (pi)
P	ρ	r	ρο (ro)
Σ	σ	s	σίγμα (sigma)
T	τ	t	ταφ (taf)
Υ	υ	i	ύψιλον (ipsilon)
Φ	φ	f	φι (fi)
X	χ	h	χι (hi)
Ψ	ψ	ps	ψι (psi)
Ω	ω	o	ωμέγα (omegha)

Division of the Alphabet

The following capital letters (though some of their lower case symbols are unfamiliar) are the same as the English ones and are pronounced more or less in the same way.

A α, E ε, Z ζ, I ι, K κ, M μ, N ν, O ο, T τ

The letter		sounds like		
A α			a	in f ather
E ε			e	in p et
Z ζ			z	in z ero
I ι			i	in p it
K κ			k	in k ept
M μ			m	in m an
N ν			n	in n ot
O ο			o	in o ften
T τ			t	in t rain

EXAMPLES

O ο (o) *the* (masculine article)

ENA ένα (ena) *one*

TO το (to) *the* (neuter article)

NEA νέα (nea) *news*

TA τα (ta) *the* (neuter pl. article)

MAMA μαμά (mama) *mother*

TI τι (ti) *what*

EKATO εκατό (ekato) *hundred*

The letters that follow appear in English as well, but in Greek are pronounced differently

B β, H η, P ρ, Y υ, X χ

The letter		sounds like	
B β			v in v ase
H η			i in s it
P ρ			r in r un
Y υ			i in s it
X χ			h in h ot (in front of the letters α, ο)
			ch as in Scottish l och (in front of the letters ι, ε)

EXAMPLES

BAZO βάζο (vaso) *vase*

METPIO μέτριο (metrio) *medium*

KYPIA (κυρία) (kiria) *Mrs, madam*

TABEPNA ταβέρνα (taverna) *tavern*

KPHTH Κρήτη (Kriti) *Crete*

XEPI χέρι (hier) *hand*

The following letters are new

Γ γ, Δ δ, Θ θ, Λ λ, Ξ ξ, Π π, Σ σ ς, Φ φ, Ψ ψ, Ω ω

The letter	Γ γ	sounds like	y	as in y et before the vowels ι, ε
		or	gh	(a throaty sound) before the letters α, ο, ρ
	Δ δ		th	as in th is
	Θ θ		th	th in
	Λ λ		π	l etter
	Ξ ξ		κς	lock sm ith
	Π π		ρ	p et
	Σ σ		ς	s it
	ς			s (at the end of a word only) river s
	Φ φ		φ	f ine
	Ψ ψ		ψς	l ip s
	Ω ω		ο	s pot

EXAMPLES

ΓΕΛΩ γελώ (yelo) *I laugh*

ΓΑΤΑ γάτα (ghata) *cat*

ΓΡΑΜΜΑ γράμμα (gramma) *letter*

ΔΙΝΩ δίνω (thino) *I give*

ΘΕΑ θέα (thea) *view*

ΛΕΜΟΝΙ λεμόνι (lemoni) *lemon*

ΞΥΛΟ ξύλο (ksilo) *wood*

ΠΑΤΕΡΑΣ πατέρας (pateras) *father*

ΣΩΜΑ σώμα (soma) *body*

ΦΩΤΙΑ φωτιά (fotia) *fire*

ΨΗΛΟΣ ψηλός (psilos) *tall*

ΩΡΑ ώρα (ora) *hour*

CAPITAL LETTERS ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΑ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ

They are used in:

1. Titles of books, stories, chapters

- ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΚΗ *Greek Grammar*
- ΤΟ ΠΛΑΤΥ ΠΟΤΑΜΙ *The wide river*

2. The first letter of a word in a sentence

- Άρχισαν τα μαθήματα *The lessons have started*
- Τα Ελληνικά μ' αρέσουν *I like the Greek language*

3. Names of persons, countries, cities, villages, mountains, rivers, islands, seas

- Νίκος *Nick*
- Ελένη *Helen*
- Ελλάδα *Greece*
- Αθήνα *Athens*
- Στρατονίκη *Stratoniki* (a village)
- Όλυμπος *Mount Olimbos*
- Αξιός *River Axios*
- Κρήτη *Crete*
- Αιγαίον Πέλαγος *Aegean Sea*

4. Names of societies or organisations

- ΟΤΕ *Telephone company* (in Greece)
- Δ.Ε.Η. *Electricity company*
- ΕΤ *National Bank of Greece*

5. Adjectives of nationality

- Αγγλίδα *an English woman*
- Ελληνίδα *a Greek woman*
- Άγγλος *an English man*
- Έλληνας *a Greek man*

6. Names of languages

- Ελληνικά *Greek language*
- Αγγλικά *English language*
- Γαλλικά *French language*

7. Names of days and months

- Κυριακή *Sunday*
- Τρίτη *Tuesday*
- Μάρτιος *March*
- Απρίλιος *April*

8. Religions and religious names

- Χριστός *Christ*
- Παναγία *Holy Mother of God*
- Πάσχα *Easter*
- Διαμαρτυρώμενοι *Protestants*
- Βουδισμός *Buddhism*

DOUBLE LETTERS ΔΙΠΛΑ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ

DIPHTHONGS ΔΙΦΘΟΓΓΟΙ: are two vowels together producing one single sound

αι sounds like	ε as in	egg	ναι (ne) <i>yes</i>	και (ke) and
αυ	αβ	love	αύριο (avrio) <i>tomorrow</i>	μαύρος (mavros) <i>black</i>
	αφ	after	αυτός (aftos) <i>he</i>	ναύτης (naftis) <i>sailor</i>
ευ	εβ	never	Ευρώπη (Evropi) <i>Europe</i>	ευγενής (evyenis) <i>gentle</i>
	εφ	left	εύκολο (efkolo) <i>easy</i>	ευτυχία (eftihia) <i>happiness</i>
ει	ι	is	κλείνει (klini) <i>it closes</i>	
οι	ι	it	οίκος (ikos) <i>house</i>	πλοίο (plio) <i>ship</i>
ου	ου	shoot	όπου (opou) <i>wherever</i>	του (tu) <i>his</i>
υι	ι	it	υιοθετώ (iotheto) <i>I adopt</i>	

The diphthongs **αυ** and **ευ**:

1. sound as *av* or *ev* when followed by the letters γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ, ω

- **Αύγουστος** (Avghustos) *August*
- **Ευγενία** (Evyenia) *Eugene*
- **ευδιάθετος** (evthiathetos) *somebody in good mood*
- **ευζωία** (evzoia) *prosperity*
- **αυλή** (avli) *yard*
- **ναυμαχία** (navmahia) *naval battle*
- **ευλαβής** (evlavis) *devotional*
- **ευμενής** (evmenis) *benevolent*
- **εύνοια** (evnia) *favour*
- **αύριο** (avrio) *tomorrow*
- **εύρωστος** (evrostos) *robust*
- **ευωδία** (evothia) *fragrance*

2. sound as *af* or *ef* when followed by the consonants θ, κ, ξ, π, σ, τ, φ, χ, ψ

- **αυθάδης** (afthathis) *insolent*
- **εύθυμος** (efthimos) *cheerful*
- **εύκολος** (efkolos) *easy*
- **αυξάνω** (afksano) *I increase something*
- **εύπιστος** (efpistos) *credulous*
- **αυστηρός** (afstiros) *severe*
- **ευσεβής** (efsevis) *pious*
- **αυτί** (afti) *ear*
- **ευτυχία** (eftihia) *happiness*
- **αυχέννας** (afhenas) *nape*
- **ευχαριστώ** (efharisto) *I thank*
- **ευψυχία** (efpsihia) *courage*

NOTE If a word is stressed on a diphthong, then the accent is on the second letter of the diphthong.

- αύριο (**avrio**) *tomorrow*
- είναι (**ine**) *is*

DOUBLE AND COMPOUND CONSONANTS ΔΙΠΛΑ ΣΥΜΦΩΝΑ

Some consonants are double in certain words but they are pronounced as one

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| • Σάββατο | (savato) | <i>Saturday</i> |
| • άλλος | (alos) | <i>other</i> |
| • γράμμα | (ghrama) | <i>letter</i> |
| • θάλασσα | (thalassa) | <i>sea</i> |

The compound consonants

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| A. μπ | sound like: | |
| 1. b | at the beginning of a word | |
| • μπύρα | (bira) | <i>beer</i> |
| 2. mb | in the middle of a word | |
| • λάμπα | (lamba) | <i>lamp</i> |

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| B. γκ and γγ | sound like: | |
| 1. gh | at the beginning of a word | |
| • γκέμι | (gemi) | <i>rein</i> |
| • γκάφα | (gafa) | <i>blunder</i> |
| 2. ng | at the middle of a word: | |
| • εγγονός | (engonos) | <i>grand child</i> |
| • Αγγλία | (Anglia) | <i>England</i> |

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| C. ντ | sound like: | |
| 1. d | at the beginning of a word | |
| • ντροπή | (dropi) | <i>shame</i> |
| • ντουβάρι | (duvari) | <i>wall</i> |
| 2. nd | in the middle of a word: | |
| • πέντε | (pende) | <i>five</i> |
| • ποντίκι | (pondiki) | <i>mouse</i> |

D. τσ

- τσάντα
- κατσίκι

sound like ts:

(tsanda) *handbag*
(katsiki) *goat*

E. τζ

- τζάμι
- τζάκι

sound like dz:

(dzami) *pane of glass*
(dzaki) *fireplace*

F. μπτ

- Πέμπτη
- άκαμπτos

sound like mt:

(penti) *Thursday*
(akamtos) *unbending*