

Greek Reading

Diphthongs

A *Diphthong* is when two vowels are together and together have a unique pronunciation.¹

αι	ai as in aisle
ει	ei as in eight
οι	oi as in oil
ου	ou as in group
υι	ui as in suite
αυ	ow as in cow
ευ	eu as in feud

Double Consonants

As noted earlier, when the gamma occurs before certain consonants, its pronunciation changes.

γγ	ng as in anger
γκ	nk as in ink
γξ	nx as in sphinx
γλ	nch as in anchor

Iota Subscript

Sometimes when *iota* is at the end of the word, or after a vowel (typically ω), it is written smaller and under the preceding letter. This is a marker of grammatical meaning change in many words, but it does not change the pronunciation or transliteration. Therefore, the *iota subscript* can be ignored in pronunciation and transliteration.

Χριστω ← *iota subscript*

Accents

Greek uses accents to show which syllable to accent (stress). The different ways of writing the accents used to indicate what pitch of voice was to be used, but in modern pronunciation, all accents are stressed the same.

´	Acute	διά
ˆ	Circumflex	τοῦ
`	Grave	γὰρ

¹ If a word begins with a diphthong, the breathing mark is above the second letter.

Punctuation Marks

It is very important to know that different punctuation marks are used in Greek than in English. Here is a side-by-side comparison.²

<u>Mark</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Greek</u>
θεός,	comma	comma
θεός.	period	period
θεός·	period above line	semicolon
θεός;	semicolon	question mark
θεός!	exclamation mark	command

Apostrophe (contraction)

Similar to contraction in English, some words, when followed by certain sounds will drop their last letter. This is because it is easier to say when speaking quickly, and so it naturally drops out. The missing letter will be indicated by an apostrophe. Once you have learned the vocabulary, it is easy to recognize the full form of the word that has been shortened.

δία + αὐτοῦ = δι' αὐτοῦ

Different Word Forms

Likewise, a few words slightly change their forms depending on the sound at the beginning of the following word.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Followed by</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>Example</u>
ἐκ	consonant	ἐκ	ἐκ θεοῦ
ἐκ	vowel	ἐξ	ἐξ αὐτοῦ
μετα	consonant	μετα	μετα θεοῦ
μετα	vowel (smooth breather)	μετ'	μετ' αὐτοῦ
μετα	vowel (rough breather)	μεθ'	μεθ' ὑμᾶς

Crasis

There are a few examples of two words being used together so often over time that they have combined into a new word.

καί + ἐγώ = καὶγώ

καί + ἔάν = καἶν

Syllabification

Longer Greek words are broken into syllables almost exactly the same as English words. English speakers should have no difficulty in breaking Greek words into syllables once they become familiar with the alphabet. The stressed syllable is marked with the accent marks.

² The punctuation marks are not original but were added by modern editors.