

Guide to Parsing

Throughout this grammar and the accompanying workbook, we emphasize the importance of being able to parse word forms. Parsing is the exercise by which one identifies the particular form of a given word. In learning Greek, it is important not simply to learn how to give a rough translation of a sentence but to learn how to identify all the specific formal features of each word. This is particularly true for Greek verbs, some of which can have in the hundreds of different forms!

We can identify words in a number of different ways. One is *by lexeme*, or “dictionary form,” a single form that, by convention, encompasses all the other forms of a word (e.g., the English word form “eats” belongs to the lexeme EAT, which also includes “eat,” “ate,” etc.). Another is *by word class*, such as noun, verb, and the like (e.g., “eats” is a verb). The most detailed is *by features* of the various word classes — that is, *by parsing*, or identifying and labeling all the specific formal features of a given word form (e.g., “eats” is the third person singular of the present tense-form of the verb EAT). The following list shows the parsing abbreviations we use in the grammar and the workbook.

In the grammar you will learn how to parse, or fully identify, the various specific forms of the over 950 lexemes introduced throughout the thirty chapters. This knowledge will enable you to parse any word that you encounter in Greek. The ability to make such an identification will have incredible benefits in your understanding and reading of Greek. You will, with increasing accuracy and speed, be able to recognize the different lexemes, the class of word being used, and the specific features of each word, all of which you will be able to use in explaining the use of the various word forms in their given contexts.

The parsing abbreviations used in this grammar and in the workbook distinguish between *word classes* (written in all capitals) and *features* (written with lower case or with initial capital only) of the various word classes.

Word classes

ADJ	adjective
ART	article
NON	noun
PAR	particle (i.e., an adverb, conjunction, or preposition)
PRO	pronoun
VRB	verb

Features of the word classes

ADJ. On the basis of their endings, adjectives are identified as belonging to one of four declension patterns. Also, they have forms that express the comparative (“bigger”) and superlative (“biggest”) degrees.

comparison		declension patterns	
c	comparative	1/2	first and second declension (the most common pattern)
s	superlative	1/3	first and third declension
		2	second declension only
		3	third declension only

In addition, adjectives are identified with respect to gender, case, and number, using the following abbreviations:

gender		case		number	
M	masculine	N	nominative	S	singular
F	feminine	V	vocative	P	plural
N	neuter	G	genitive		
M/F	masc. or fem.	D	dative		
		A	accusative		
		N/V	nom. or voc.		

For example, **πάντες** [1/3ADJ-MNP], “all,” is the masculine nominative plural form of the adjective **πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν**, which takes endings of the first and third declensions. And **ἀξιότατε** [s1/2ADJ-MVS], “O most worthy (one)!” is the masculine vocative singular form of the adjective **ἄξιος, ἄξια, ἄξιον**, which takes endings of the first and second declensions, here in the superlative.

ART. Like adjectives, articles are declined for gender, case, and number. For example, **τῆς** [ART-FGS] is the feminine genitive singular form of the article, **ὁ, ἡ, τό**.

NON. Nouns belong to one (rarely two) of the three declensions and, like adjectives, are inflected for gender, case, and number. For example, **λόγους** [2NON-MAP], “words (object),” is the masculine accusative plural form of the second declension noun **λόγος**.

PAR. Particles — which include adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions — are words that are *not* inflected for gender, case, number, or any of the features of verbs.

PRO. In this grammar and workbook we distinguish nine types of Greek pronouns. Three are declined for person (pers, poss, rflx), one is *not* declined for gender (pers), and all are declined for case and number (though rcp, by its very nature, is only plural). For possessive

pronouns, we indicate whether the pronoun is lexically singular (s) or plural (p); for example, **ἐμαί** [possPRO-1sFNP] vs. **ἡμέτεροι** [possPRO-1pFNP]

types of pronouns		examples, with abbreviations	
dem	demonstrative	οὗτος	[demPRO-MNS], “this (masc.)”
indf	indefinite	τινάς	[indfPRO-M/FAP], “some people”
intg	interrogative	τίνας	[intgPRO-M/FAP], “which people?”
intn	intensive	αὐτῇ	[intnPRO-FDS], “to her, to herself”
pers	personal	σοῦ, σου	[persPRO-2GS], “of you”
poss	possessive	ἡμέτεροι	[possPRO-1pFNP], “our”
rcp	reciprocal	ἀλλήλους	[rcpPRO-MAP], “each other”
rel	relative	αἷς	[relPRO-FDP], “for whom (pl.)”
rflx	reflexive	ἑαυτά	[rflxPRO-3NAP], “themselves”

VRB. *Finite* verbs, or forms of verbs that express grammatical person, appear in Greek in one of four moods: indicative, subjunctive, optative, or imperative. Such verbs typically convey five kinds of grammatical information, which we always cite in the following order:

tense		voice		mood		person		number	
Pr	present	A	active	Ind	indicative	1	first	S	singular
Im	imperfect	M	middle	Sub	subjunctive	2	second	P	plural
Ao	aorist	P	passive	Opt	optative	3	third		
1Ao	1st aorist	M/P	middle or	Imp	imperative				
2Ao	2nd aorist		passive						
Pf	perfect								
Pp	pluperfect								
Fu	future								

For example, the finite verb form **ἐδέξαντο** [VRB-1AoMInd3P], “they are/were involved in receiving,” is first aorist middle indicative third person plural of the verb **δέχομαι**; the finite verb form **λυέσθω** [VRB-PrM/Plmp3S], (mid.) “he/she/it is to be involved in loosing” or (pass.) “he/she/it is to be loosed,” is present middle or passive imperative third person singular of the verb **λύω**. (Given the very large number of verb forms in Greek, we normally omit “VRB” from the parsing of specific verbal forms. Mentioning the mood, or the fact that a verbal form is an infinitive or a participle, will be sufficient.)

Greek *nonfinite* verbs — infinitives and participles — are those that do *not* express grammatical person. Infinitives typically convey tense and voice. Participles typically convey more information than any other type of verb form: like finite verbs, they express tense, voice, and number; in addition, like nouns and adjectives, they convey gender, case, and number.

In parsing the nonfinite verb forms, we cite the grammatical information in the following order:

tense	voice	verbal form (sometimes “mood”)		gender	case	number
[as above]	[as above]	Inf	infinitive	[as above]	[as above]	[as above]
		Par	participle			

For example, in the phrase **εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι** [AοPInf], “to/for being crucified,” the article plus the aorist passive infinitive could be rendered “the being crucified,” highlighting the nounlike form of the infinitive. In the phrase **τοῦ δίδόντος** [PrAPar-MGS] **θεοῦ**, “the giving God; the God who gives,” the present active participle, like any adjectival form, agrees with the noun it modifies — here, in being masculine genitive singular.

Besides the grammatical information outlined here, which applies to all verbs, the parsing codes further identify four subclasses of verbs that have distinctive endings or verb formulas:

verb subclasses

-lq	liquid verbs (in future and first aorist tense-forms only)
-μι	μι -verbs (in present and second aorist tense-forms only)
-ι	ι -type optatives
-ιη	ιη -type optatives

For example, the verb form **μενοῦμεν** [FuAIInd1P-lq], “we will remain,” a form of the verb **μένω**, has a future active stem that ends in the liquid consonant **ν**. The subclass of liquid verbs forms its future and aorist tense-forms differently from other verbs, hence the suffix “-lq” in the parsing. Similarly, **διδῶ** [PrASub3S-μι], “he/she/it may give,” from **δίδωμι**, illustrates the parsing of a verb whose present stem ends in **-μι**. The verb form **φονεύσαιμι** [1AοAOpt1S-ι], “I might murder,” from **φονεύω**, is first aorist (**ι**-type) active optative, and **θείην** [2AοAOpt1S-ιη], “I might place,” from **τίθημι**, is an example of the second aorist (**ιη**-type) active optative.

Verbal aspect, not time, is the fundamental meaning expressed by the Greek tense-forms. Speakers and writers of Greek express aspect by using the various tense-forms as follows:

aspect	expressed by
perfective	aorist tense-form
imperfective	present and imperfect tense-forms
stative	perfect and pluperfect tense-forms

The future tense conveys a sense of expectation but does not clearly convey any of the verbal aspects (see 8.4.3).

A small number of Greek verbs lack enough tense-forms to give speakers a choice in expressing aspect and hence are called aspectually vague. They also lack the forms needed to express any choice of voice. For these verbs, best illustrated by εἰμί, “I am,” the several options listed here of tense and voice are reduced to only three:

replacing tense and voice:

u unaugmented

a augmented

Fu future

Thus, for example, we have the following forms of εἰμί:

the augmented indicative ἦμην [aInd1S], “I was”

the unaugmented subjunctive ὦμεν [uSub1P], “we may be”

the unaugmented optative εἴη [uOpt3S], “he might be”

the unaugmented imperative ἴσθι [uImp2S], “(you sg.) be!”

the unaugmented and future infinitives εἶναι [uInf] and ἕσεσθαι [FuInf], “to be”

the unaugmented participle οὔσα [uPar-FNS], “being.”