

## *Learning Greek Passage by Passage* Syntax Summary for Basic Greek

### CLAUSES

#### General Clause Types (§§5.208-09)

- **Independent clauses** can stand on their own as complete sentences with their own subject and verb and no signals like a conjunction subordinating them to other clauses.
- **Coordinate clauses** are two or more independent clauses joined together, usually by conjunctions meaning *and* or *but*. Such conjunctions signal a coordinate relationship.
- **Subordinate clauses** usually begin with a conjunction that connects them to another clause, providing information about the other clause such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *how*, or *why*. Since the subordinate clause gives us more information about something in the main clause it is dependent on the main clause and thus subordinate.

#### The Core Elements in a Clause (§§2.2-3)

- The core of a clause is the verb which refers to an action, a state, or makes an assertion, that something “is” or “becomes.”
- In addition the core also includes the subject, and may include a direct object and an indirect object.

#### The Four Basic Clause Combinations of Elements (§5.207)

- Type 1     subject – intransitive verb
- Type 2     subject – equative verb – subject complement
- Type 3     subject – transitive verb – direct object
- Type 4     subject – transitive verb – direct object – indirect object

#### Specific Clause Types

- A **temporal clause** (ὅτε) says when something happens, while an **indefinite temporal clause** (ὅταν) is used when the time of the event is uncertain, “whenever” (§§5.229, 231a-b). Indefinite temporal clauses often use the subjunctive with ὅταν.
- **Relative clauses** (ὅς, ἣ, ὅ) can function like an **adjective** (§5.214).
  - ~ The number and gender of the relative pronoun match the antecedent.
  - ~ The case of the relative pronoun is in keeping with its function within the relative clause.
- A **relative clause** can function as a **noun**. It has this function when there is no antecedent for it to modify like an adjective (§5.217).
- An **indefinite relative clause** does not refer to a definite person or thing but to a general class, “whoever,” not “who.” Such clauses often have ὅς and use a subjunctive, though at times an indicative is used instead (§5.219).
- **Direct discourse** quotes a statement and is put in quotation marks in English. **Indirect discourse** (ὅτι) reports what was said and is usually introduced by “that” in English (§5.220).
  - ~ There is no clear signal in Greek. Both forms may be introduced by ὅτι (§5.221c).
  - ~ At times a shift in person and number will indicate direct discourse (§5.221a).

- **Causal clauses** (ὅτι) indicate the cause or reason something takes place and are often introduced by ὅτι, *because* (§5.233).
- **Purpose clauses** (ἵνα) indicate the purpose of the action given in the main clause and are often introduced by ἵνα, *that, in order that* (§5.137).
- **Result clauses** (ἵνα) indicate the result of the action given in the main clause and are often introduced by ἵνα, *that, with the result that* (§5.138).
- **Content clauses** (ὅτι) may be in apposition to a form of οὗτος (§5.228). Infinitives can also serve as content clauses indicating what was said, thought, felt, etc.
- **Conditional clauses** (εἰ, ἐάν, §§5.237-44) may take five different forms, of which we are focusing on the three most common ones.

<b>Type 1</b> (Indefinite)	if: εἰ with the indicative then: any finite verb	There is no suggestion of whether or not the writer thinks the condition is or will be fulfilled.
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Type 1 simply states what the writer thinks will happen if the condition is met. This form is used when the writer thinks the condition is or will be met. But sometimes it has the sense of assuming something is true for the sake of argument, even though the author does not think it is. For example, this is the form Paul uses when he says, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty and your faith is empty” (1 Cor 15:14).

<b>Type 3</b> (Future More Likely)	if: ἐάν with subjunctive then: usually a future, imperative, or subjunctive	The writer thinks it is possible or perhaps probable that the condition is or will be fulfilled.
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<b>Type 5</b> (General)	if: ἐάν with subjunctive then: present indicative	This form is used for a general truth. The writer thinks that if the condition is fulfilled then here is what always happens.
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### Predicate Position (§5.5)

- In the predicate position the noun or other substantive has an article and the adjective does not. In this position something is being predicated of the subject, that is, it is said to be true of the subject. The subject is \_\_\_\_\_. The verb “to be” is left out in Greek.

~ adj. – [art. – subst.]	A [TS]	– ἀγαθός ὁ λόγος. <i>The word is good.</i>
~ [art. – subst.] – adj.	[TS] A	– ὁ λόγος ἀγαθός. <i>The word is good.</i>

### Asyndeton

- Asyndeton refers to a sentence or clause lacking a connector (§5.248). Most sentences and clauses begin with a connector so its absence produces a striking, punchy effect.

### Emphasis

- Moving items earlier or later than usual in a clause or sentence signals emphasis (§§5.260-61).

**Omission**

- Items are often omitted and have to be supplied from the context (§5.256).

**NOMINAL ITEMS AND CLUSTERS WITHIN CLAUSES****Agreement** (§2.30)

- When an adjective modifies a noun it agrees with it by having an ending in the same gender, case, and number as the noun.

**Apposition** (§2.31)

- A noun can modify another noun when it is in agreement with it in case and number. They may not agree in gender since each noun has its own gender. The second noun explains the first noun. For example, Παῦλος ὁ ἀπόστολος, *Paul the apostle*; τοῦ Παύλου τοῦ ἀποστόλου, *of Paul the apostle*.

**Attributive Position** (§5.4)

- When an adjective has an article the adjective usually modifies the substantive, identifying an attribute of the substantive.

~ [art. – adj.] – subst.	[TA] S	–	ὁ ἀγαθὸς λόγος	<i>the good word</i>
~ [art. – subst.] – [art. – adj.]	[TS] [TA]	–	ὁ λόγος ὁ ἀγαθός	<i>the good word</i>

**The Most Common Uses of the Five Cases**

- Nominative – subject (§§2.27; 5.26)  
subject complement (with the verb “to be” or “to become”) (§§2.27; 5.27)
- Genitive – description (“of”) (§§2.27; 5.34)
- Dative – indirect object (“to/for”) (§§2.27; 5.59)
- Accusative – direct object (§§2.27; 5.75)
- Vocative – direct address (§2.27)

**Nominatives**

- Instead of the usual nominative, the subject complement with an equative verb may be a genitive, a prepositional phrase, or some other expression (§5.27b).
- Neuter plural subjects can take singular verbs (§5.26a).
- The nominative can be used for **personal address** like a vocative even for words that have a distinct vocative form (§5.28).

**Genitives**

- A genitive modifier may simply **describe** (§§2.27; 5.34), or more specifically signal **possession** (§5.35), or **relationship** (§5.39), among many other possibilities. Notice that all of these uses can usually be translated with “of”—a very flexible pronoun in English!
- Some verbs take a genitive for their **complement**, rather than an accusative direct object (§5.36). These genitives are not translated with “of.”

- The genitive is used with verbs referring filling for the **content** with which something is filled (§5.45).
- Genitive modifiers usually come after the word they modify. When they come before there is often a bit of emphasis on the modifier (§§5.253, 262).

### Datives

- In addition to signaling an **indirect object** (“to/for,” §§2.27; 5.59), datives may signal **location** (“in/at/on,” §§2.27c; 5.64), or **means/instrument/agency** (“by/with,” §§2.27c; 5.67).
- Some verbs take a dative for their **complement** instead of an accusative direct object (§5.72).
- A dative of **advantage** indicates the one for whose benefit or advantage something is done. The dative can also be used for **disadvantage** (§5.60).
- The dative can be used for **degree/measure**, for example in the common expression πολλῷ μᾶλλον, “by much more,” or more smoothly in English, “how much more” (§5.73).

### Accusatives

- In addition to the accusative for **direct object** (§§2.27; 5.75), we have also met the **double accusative of person and thing** (§5.76) and the **double accusative of object and complement** (§5.77). These constructions also occur in English so they are not difficult to translate, as you can see from the examples in §§5.76-77.
- When the **subject of an infinitive** is expressed it is in the accusative (§5.79).
- The accusative is often used as an adverb, referred to as an accusative of **manner** or adverbial accusative (§5.80).

### Definite Articles

- An article can substantize virtually any word, that is, cause it to function as a noun (§5.15).
- In particular, we have seen the article used with prepositional phrases (§5.4b) and with participles (§§5.183-85) to signal they are functioning as nouns or adjectives.
- The bracketing force of the article enables it to form a cluster, with a modifier sandwiched between the article and the substantive it goes with (§5.9).
- When a word is used more than once in a passage as part of the development of a topic or theme, the first instance often lacks an article and the later use(s) includes the article. This **anaphoric** use of the article helps make connections within a passage (§5.12b).
- The article can be used like a **possessive** pronoun (§5.18).
- The **generic** use of the article indicates that a word is referring to the group or class to which something or someone belongs (§5.13).
- Certain words may be definite even if there is no article, including monadic nouns, proper names, abstract nouns, generic nouns, objects of prepositions, and ordinal numbers (§5.20). For now just be aware of this general feature and learn the details as you meet examples. The main example you have seen is with a prepositional phrase, as in ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ in Matthew 6:13.

## VERBAL DETAILS

### Tense, Aspect, and *Aktionsart*

- **Aspect** refers to the author's viewpoint (§§2.11; 5.87).
- ***Aktionsart*** refers to the kind of action depicted, that is, what the author is saying about the actual nature of the action, event, or situation (§5.88).
- The three aspects include (§§2.11; 5.87, 114):
  - Durative:** viewing the action from within, as in progress
  - Aoristic:** viewing the action from outside, as a whole
  - Resultative:** viewing a completed action from within the situation that has come about as a result of the action.
- *Aktionsart* is signaled by a verb's aspect, meaning, and clues in the context (§5.88):
- Aspect and *Aktionsart* occur in all forms of a tense-form, not just the indicative (§5.87g).
- The aspect and *Aktionsarten* of some verbs have little if any exegetical significance (§5.89f).

### Present

- The aspect of the present is **durative** (imperfective) viewing the action from within as it is in progress (§§2.11a; 5.87a, 97).
- The present indicative is usually translated either as a simple present, *I study*, or present progressive, *I am studying* (§2.12).
- The most common *Aktionsart* for the present is the **progressive** (§5.98), for action that is on-going.

### Imperfect

- The aspect of the imperfect is **durative** (imperfective) viewing a past action from within as it is in progress (§§2.11a; 5.87a, 118).
- The imperfect is only used in the indicative. It is usually translated as a past progressive, *I was studying*, but in some contexts the simple past fits English idiom better (§2.12).
- The most common *Aktionsart* for the imperfect is the **progressive** (§5.119), for action that is on-going.

### Future

- The future does not have aspect; it is usually simply temporal (§§2.11d; 5.107).

### Aorist

- The aspect of the aorist is **aoristic** (perfective). The author views the action/event/state as though standing apart from it and seeing it as a whole (§§2.11b; 5.87b, 124).
- The aorist indicative is usually translated as a simple past, *I studied*, or at times with an English perfect, "have/has," *I have studied* (§§2.12; 5.125b).
- *Outside the indicative* an aorist is often translated with a present or a perfect.
- The most common *Aktionsart* of the aorist is **global** (constative, §5.125), that is, the action or state is viewed as one whole, no matter how complex the actual event may have been. This *Aktionsart* closely matches the aoristic aspect.
- The aorist may also be used in a **gnomic** sense (§5.129) for a general truth, like a wisdom saying. English uses a present for this kind of expression.

**Perfect**

- The perfect has the **resultative** (stative) aspect, viewing the action as a completed state that has come about as the result of prior action (§§2.11c; 5.114).
- The perfect indicative is often translated with “have/has,” but may also be translated as a present tense in English, especially when there is an intensive emphasis on being in a present state. *I have believed, I believe* (§2.12).
- A perfect tense-form may suggest that the **emphasis** is more on either the past action (extensive) or on the present state (intensive), though often there is no particular emphasis on one or the other (§5.115).
- In addition to the possible emphases the perfect may play one of two **roles** in the context, either providing a bit of background information, or referring to something that has ongoing relevance in the context (§5.116).

**Voice**

- As in English, the **active** voice indicates the subject is doing the action or is experiencing the state indicated by the verb (§2.6a-b).
- Unlike English, Greek has a **middle** voice that indicates the subject is the agent of the action but is also itself somehow affected by the action, often as the one experiencing or benefitting from it. Since English does not have a middle voice, a Greek middle will often be translated as an active (§2.6).
- At times the subject is not the agent, but rather is acted on by someone or something else. In these cases the middle has the sense of an English **passive** and is translated that way (§2.6c).
- The future and the aorist have two forms of middle/passive. The **mp1** usually has a middle sense and is translated as an active, though a number of verbs have a distinct meaning in the middle compared to the active. The **mp2** usually has a passive sense, but in the aorist a middle sense is not uncommon (§5.94).

mp1 = middle sense ~ often translated as an active or with a distinct meaning  
 mp2 = passive sense ~ except in the aorist where it may have a middle sense

- **Middle-only verbs** do not have an active form (§§2.6f).
  - ~ These verbs often have lexical forms that end in -μαι.
  - ~ For example, κάθημαι, *sit*, is middle-only, and this form is translated as an active, *I sit*. Middle-only makes sense here since sitting is obviously subject-affected.
  - ~ Some verbs are middle-only in one tense but not in another. For example ὀράω has an active form in the present, but is middle-only in the future: ὄψομαι.
  - ~ Often a middle-only will be translated as an active in English, but occasionally it will have a passive sense of the middle and be translated as a passive in English.

**Mood** (§§2.8-9)

- **Indicative** - statements and questions
- **Subjunctive** - various forms of expression often characterized by an element of uncertainty (§5.136)
- **Imperative** - commands, requests, and suggestions (§5.154)
- **Optative** - wishes and requests (§5.151)

### Subjunctives

- **ἵνα** clauses often signal purpose or result (§§5.137-38)
- A **hortatory subjunctive** (§5.140) is in the first person with no signals indicating some other use of the subjunctive, such as ἵνα. It exhorts or encourages action, “let us.”
- **οὐ μή** with a subjunctive signals a **strong negative** clause (§5.139).
- **μή** with the aorist subjunctive signals a **prohibition**, which can have the idea of not starting an activity (§5.144).

### Imperatives

- There are two main types of commands: (1) a **general command** or principle, and (2) a **specific command** for a particular situation (§§5.154-55).
- The present imperative is often used for general commands and the aorist imperative for specific commands, but there are many exceptions (§§5.154-55).
- **μή** with the present imperative signals a **prohibition**, which can have the idea of stopping an activity already in progress (§5.160a).
- When using a **third person** imperative an author is telling one person what another person must or should do. Often the third-person imperative is translated using the word “let,” but sometimes “must,” “is to/are to,” or “should” conveys the idea better (§5.157).
- When addressing God or someone considered to be superior in some way the imperative expresses a **request**. The aorist is the tense-form most often used in prayers (§5.159).

### Infinitives

- An infinitive is not a mood, but rather a verbal noun (§§2.10; 5.163).
- A **complementary infinitive** (§5.166) completes the meaning of a main verb such as “begin.” They began to study.
- The infinitive may be used to express **purpose** (§5.164).
- The infinitive can function as a **direct object**, often as a **content** clause supplying what is said, thought, felt, etc. (§5.169).
- **καὶ ἐγένετο/ἐγένετο δέ** is often followed by a construction that sets the scene, that is then followed by the subject of ἐγένετο (§5.95c). καὶ ἐγένετο/ἐγένετο δέ can be translated, “and it came to pass,” but modern translations use more idiomatic renderings.
- The impersonal verb **δεῖ**, *it is necessary*, is used with an infinitive, the subject of which is in the accusative (§5.167b). For example, δεῖ κηρύσσειν με, “It is necessary for me to preach” or “I must preach.”
- When an articular infinitive is used in a **prepositional phrase** its subject is in the accusative and it is translated in English with a finite verb. The preposition indicates the kind of clause, temporal, causal, and so forth (§§5.174-80).

## Participles

- A participle is not a mood, but rather a verbal adjective (§§2.10; 5.181).
- Participles usually have a **temporal sense** relative to the action of the main verb, with a present referring to action at the same times as that of the main verb and an aorist to action that took place prior to that of the main verb (§5.182).
- When a participle has an article it will function as a **noun or adjective**, and is often translated with a relative clause in English (§§5.183-185).
  - ~ Noun: ὁ πιστεύων, *the one who believes, the one believing, or the believer.*
  - ~ Adjective: ὁ πιστεύων ἀπόστολος or ὁ ἀπόστολος ὁ πιστεύων, *the believing apostle, or the apostle who believes.*
- The **circumstantial** (adverbial) use of the participle functions something like a dependent clause, supplying additional information about the action or point of discussion in the main clause (§§2.10b; 5.181e, 189). It can usually be translated with “-ing,” πιστεύων, *believing*.
- There are **eight possible nuances** of a circumstantial participle to learn as you meet them (§5.190). Those we have met in this course are the **temporal** (§5.191) and **means/instrument** (§5.195).
- A **genitive absolute** is a form of circumstantial participle composed of a genitive participle and a genitive noun or pronoun functioning as the subject of the participle. A regular circumstantial participle gives further information about the subject of the main verb, but a genitive absolute tells us what someone or something else is doing (§§5.37, 200).
- The **pleonastic** use of the participle introduces what follows in the text, usually introducing a statement (§5.202).
- The **attendant circumstance** use of the participle is parallel to the main verb and shares its mood. Usually the participle and the main verb are connected by “and” (§5.201).
- A **periphrastic participle** (§§5.187-88) joins with a form of εἰμί to form a verb tense. The indicative πιστεύω can be translated either “I believe,” or “I am believing.” In Greek εἰμι πιστεύων is the equivalent of “I am believing.” As you see from this example, such periphrastics are very common in English.



## OTHER ITEMS

**Postpositive conjunctions** such as γάρ and δέ do not come first in their clause (§5.246b).

### αὐτός, αὐτή, αὐτό (§5.7)

Sign	Use	
article	same	ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος, <i>the same word</i> τοῦ αὐτοῦ λόγου, <i>of the same word</i> οἱ αὐτοὶ λόγοι, <i>the same words</i> τοῖς αὐτοῖς λόγοις, <i>to/for the same words</i>
nom. or in agreement	-self	αὐτῷ τῷ λόγῳ, <i>to/for the word itself</i> ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔρχεται ἡμῖν. αὐτὸς διδάξει ἡμᾶς. <i>Jesus comes to us. He Himself will teach us.</i>
none of the above	3rd person pron.	ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔρχεται αὐτῷ. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔρχεται αὐτῇ. <i>Jesus comes to him. Jesus comes to her.</i>

### πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν (§5.8)

When πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν (*each, every, any, all, (the) whole*) is in predicate position (anarthrous) it may be in the singular with a focus on the individual members of a whole group (*each, every, any, all*) or in the plural, viewing a group collectively (*all*). In the attributive position (arthrous), on the other hand, in both the singular and plural a group is being viewed as a whole (*all, (the) whole*).

without an article:	singular:	<i>each, every, any, all</i>
	plural:	<i>all</i>
with an article:	singular and plural:	<i>all, (the) whole</i>

The same number of people/items are involved either way, but the focus is different.

### καί

In addition to simply joining items, *and*, καί has several other functions (§5.264b).

- **Adjunctive**, bringing in an additional point: *and, also, too, likewise*.
- **Ascensive**, adding a final or climactic point: *even, indeed, in fact*.
- **Explicative**, signaling an explanation of what has just been said: *and so, that is, namely*.

### μέν

The particle μέν signals something is being distinguished or contrasted from other elements in the context. It is often used with a following δέ (§5.246d).

### Preparatory There/It

Preparatory *There/It* (§5.96). English sometimes prefers to use “There” or “It” to introduce clauses that contain a form of the verb “to be.”