

Mastering New Testament Greek Textbook

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CHAPTER 5

First Declension Nouns

You will be able to—

1. understand the English syntax of nouns in sentences (subject, object, number, gender, etc.),
2. understand the Greek noun system (gender, number, case),
3. write out and chant the first declension paradigm for feminine nouns, and
4. master ten more high-frequency vocabulary words.

Introduction

There are three noun declensions in Greek. We have learned the second declension with its masculine and neuter nouns and its characteristic o endings. Now we will focus on the first declension. First declension nouns are largely feminine, as indicated by placing the feminine article ἡ (“the”) after the nominative singular form. Each noun should be learned with its definite article, which indicates its gender. The stem of first declension nouns ends with an alpha or eta. Learn to chant through this eta first declension of γραφή. Learn to recognize the variations on the other two forms (alpha and masculine form).

Feminine First Declension Forms (Stem Ending in η)

γραφή, ἡ = writing, Scripture

	Singular	Plural	Inflectional Endings	
Nom./Voc.	γραφή	γραφαί	η	αι
Gen.	γραφῆς	γραφῶν	ης	ων
Dat.	γραφῇ	γραφαῖς	η	αις
Acc.	γραφὴν	γραφάς	ην	ας

Meanings: Translation of Inflectional Forms

	Singular		Plural		
Nom.	γραφή	A writing	γραφαί	writings	(subject of sentence)
Gen.	γραφῆς	of a writing	γραφῶν	of writings	(possessive/description)
Dat.	γραφῇ	to a writing	γραφαῖς	to writings	(indirect object/agency)
Acc.	γραφὴν	A writing	γραφάς	writings	(direct object)
Voc.	γραφή	O writing	γραφαί	O writings	(direct address)

- **Nominative** = subject of the sentence, predicate nom., apposition
- **Genitive** = possessive/description/origin usually translated with “of”
- **Dative** = indirect object, usually translated with “to,” “for,” “by,” “at,” or “with” (2 by 4 ate [at] with)
- **Accusative** = direct object of a sentence, double accusative
- **Vocative** = direct address (e.g., “O writings, show us . . .”)

CHAPTER 5 First Declension Nouns

The nominative can be used as in an appositional use. Apposition is when this form restates or specifies a noun.

For example: “Paul, a servant, an apostle writes,”
where “a servant” and “an apostle” are appositional renaming or specifying Paul.

Feminine First Declension Forms (Stem Ending in α)

ώρα, ἡ = hour

	Singular		Plural		
Nom./Voc.	ώρα	hour	ώραι	hours	(subject of sentence)
Gen.	ώρας	of an hour	ώρων	of hours	(possessive/descrip.)
Dat.	ώρᾳ	for an hour	ώραις	for hours	(indirect object/ag.)
Acc.	ώραν	hour	ώρας	hours	(direct object)

Note that the nominative and vocative have the same form. The ώρα and γραφή forms are largely the same except for the simple shift of the eta to an alpha in the singular.

Masculine First Declension Forms (Stem Ending in η)

προφήτης, ὁ = prophet

	Singular		Plural		
Nom.	προφήτης	prophet	προφῆται	prophets	(subject)
Gen.	προφήτου	of a prophet	προφητῶν	of prophets	(possessive)
Dat.	προφήτῃ	to a prophet	προφήταις	to prophets	(indirect object)
Acc.	προφήτην	prophet	προφήτας	prophets	(direct object)
Voc.	προφῆτα	O prophet	προφῆται	O prophets	(direct address)

Note that the only major variation here is the genitive singular, which takes an -ou ending. Beyond that, it is much the same as γραφή. Vocatives are rare.

Nouns ending in a consonantal blend (ψ, ξ, or ζ) or double

consonant δόξα, -ης, ἡ = glory

	Singular		Plural		
Nom.	δόξα	glory	δόξαι	glories	(subject)
Gen.	δόξης	of glory	δοξῶν	of glories	(possessive)
Dat.	δόξῃ	to glory	δόξαις	to glories	(indirect object)
Acc.	δόξαν	glory	δόξας	glories	(direct object)
Voc.	δόξα	O glory	δόξαι	O glories	(direct address)

The Article

CHAPTER 5 First Declension Nouns

While Greek has no indefinite article like the English “a” (e.g., a book), the Greek article, usually translated “the,” occurs throughout the New Testament although it often can be used as a substitute for a personal pronoun, demonstrative pronoun (this/that) or a relative pronoun (who/which). The article is inflected for gender, number, and case. Indeed, the article must match its noun in gender, number, and case. The article marks the gender of a noun, whether it is a first, second, or third declension noun. The article can sometimes function as a pronoun (he, she, it . . .) and at root has a nominalizing impact on the words it goes with. Sometimes it is not translated at all especially with proper nouns (“Jesus” not “the Jesus”) or abstracts (“grace” not “the grace”).

Examples:

λόγος	“word” or “a word”	Nom. sg. masc. (Acts 13:15)
ὁ λόγος	“the word”	Nom. sg. masc. (Jn. 1:1)
λόγον	“word” or “a word”	Acc. sg. masc. (Jn. 8:51)
τὸν λόγον	“the word”	Acc. sg. masc. (Jn. 4:39)

Article Forms

	Singular			Plural		
	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
Nom.	ὁ	ἡ	τό	οἱ	αἱ	τά
Gen.	τοῦ	τῆς	τοῦ	τῶν	τῶν	τῶν
Dat.	τῷ	τῇ	τῷ	τοῖς	ταῖς	τοῖς
Acc.	τόν	τήν	τό	τούς	τάς	τά

Note that ὁ, οἱ, ἡ, and αἱ are proclitics, each bearing no accent because it is associated so closely with (leans on) the following word. Being able to recognize the case of the article is handy, since that will also tell you the case of the accompanying noun. Thus, it is a good way to double-check whether or not you are declining a noun properly.

The 2-1-2 Noun Chant (recite this so it becomes automatic)

2-Declension	1-Declension	2-Declension
λόγος (word: Subject)	γραφὴ (writing: Subject)	ἱερόν (temple: Subject)
λόγου (of a word)	γραφῆς (of a writing)	ἱεροῦ (of a temple)
λόγῳ (to/by/for a word)	γραφῇ (to/by/for a writing)	ἱερῷ (to/by/for a temple)
λόγον (word: Object)	γραφὴν (writing: Object)	ἱερόν (temple: Object)
λόγοι (words: Subject)	γραφαί (writings: Subject)	ἱερά (temples: Subject)
λόγων (of words)	γραφῶν (of writings)	ἱερῶν (of temples)
λόγοις (to/by/for words)	γραφαῖς (to/by/for writings)	ἱεροῖς (to/by/for temples)
λόγους (words: Object)	γραφάς (writings: Object)	ἱερά (temples: Object)

CHAPTER 5 First Declension Nouns

Vocabulary

ἀγάπη, -ης, ἡ	love (116)
ἀλήθεια, -ας, ἡ	truth (109)
ἁμαρτία, -ας, ἡ	sin (173)
βασιλεία, -ας, ἡ	kingdom (162)
γραφή, -ῆς, ἡ	writing, Scripture (50)
ἐγείρω	I raise up (144)
ἐκκλησία, -ας, ἡ	assembly, church (114)
ἔργον, -ου, τό	work (169)
μαθητής, -οῦ, ὁ	disciple (261)
ὥρα, -ας, ἡ	hour (106)