

Dr. Shirley's Greek Courses

Grammar

Nouns - Introduction

A **Noun** is a name for something.

1. A **Proper Noun** is the name of a particular person, place, or thing. eg. Philip, Athens
2. A **Common Noun** is the name common to a group of things, eg. dog, cat, book
3. A **Collective Noun** is the name for a group of things, eg. flock, crowd, herd
4. An **Abstract Noun** is the name of some quality, action, or state of being eg. truth

A sentence consists of a Verb (action word) and usually one or more nouns and/or other words.

The Subject of the sentence tells us who or what is doing the action

(or receiving the action, in the case of a Passive verb).

eg. The **dog** bites.

The Object of the sentence tells us who or what receives the action

eg. The dog bites the **man**.

The Indirect Object tells us something about the way the action is carried out.

eg. The dog bites the man on the **leg**.

The dog bites the man with his **teeth**.

The dog in the **street** bites the man.

English no longer has a complete system of "**Cases**", but Greek, Latin, German, Russian, and several other Indo-European Languages still retain a system for showing the grammatical function of nouns in a sentence by a series of "**Case Endings**" - endings which are added to the "**stem**" of a noun. The stem gives the meaning of the noun, eg. dog, cat, man, and the ending shows how it functions in the sentence - if it is the subject, the object, or some other part of the sentence.

Greek has 5 cases :

1. **The Nominative** - shows that the noun is the subject of the verb. The Nominative is the form listed first in a dictionary. (Latin *nominare* - to name)
2. **The Vocative** - shows that the person or thing is being addressed. (Latin *vocare* - to call).
eg. **O God**, please help. In Greek, the Vocative often has the same endings as the Nominative, and is not always shown in the list of case endings.
3. **The Accusative** - shows that the noun is the object of the sentence. (Latin *accusare* - to accuse)
4. **The Genitive** - shows possession. (Latin *generare* - to beget, produce) English still has the remnant of the early English inflected form eg. the **dog's** bone (originally **dogges**)
5. **The Dative** - shows the indirect object, and can often be translated by some combination with "**to, for, by, with, from**" (Latin *dare* - to give)

NOTE - there is some variation in the order in which the cases are listed -

The English sequence is Nominative, Vocative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative.

The German sequence is Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Vocative

In the USA, some text-books use the English sequence (eg. Dobson's "Learn NT Greek", Wenham's

"Elements of NT Greek"), some the German (eg. Smith's Greek Grammar, McDonald's "Greek

Enchiridion", Wheelock's Latin). This sounds as if it might be confusing. However, the main purpose of learning grammar tables is to be able to recognize the endings and use them for analyzing a sentence, and either sequence will work equally well for this.

Greek, like English, distinguishes between the "**Number**" of a noun, with different forms for **Singular** (one thing) and **Plural** (more than one). Compare **dog, dogs; man, men**.

The Greek of Homer's time also used a "**Dual**" form, for dealing with a pair of things (eg. eyes, ears, or even two men who were fighting each other). This had dropped out of Greek centuries before the writing of the New Testament. Hebrew still retains use of the Dual.

Usually the first set of noun endings one learns in Greek are for Masculine Nouns ending in **—ΟΣ**

A typical table of endings might look like this :

	Singular		Plural	
Nominative	— ος	a	— οι	(some)
Accusative	— ον	a	— ους	(some)
Genitive	— ου	of	— ων	of
Dative	— ω	to, for, by, with, from	— οις	to, for, by, with, from

When listed as a noun paradigm (example), it might look like this :

Nom.	λογος	a word	λογοι	words
Acc.	λογον	a word	λογους	words
Gen.	λογου	of a word	λογων	of words
Dat.	λογω	to, for, by, with, from a word	λογοις	to, for, by, with, from words

Or it might be listed along with the Definite Article ("the") :

N.	ὁ λογος	the word	οἱ λογοι	the words
A.	τον λογον	the word	τους λογους	the words
G.	του λογου	of the word	των λογων	of the words
D.	τω λογω	to, for, by, with, from the word	τοις λογοις	to, for, by, with, from the words

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