

Chapter 29

The Imperfect Indicative Active Compound Verbs

29.1 So far we have used verbs in the Present and the Future tenses. Now we come to one of the Past tenses of the verb - the **Imperfect**. The Imperfect is built upon the Present stem of the verb. It has the name "Imperfect" because it does not indicate that an action has been completed in the past. It is used to express "I was doing something" or "I used to do something" - over a period of time, or repeatedly, rather than just once.

Note that, particularly when conversations are reported, Greek may use the present, rather than a past tense. This is not bad Greek grammar - it is known as the "**Historical Present**", and is done on purpose, to make the action seem more immediate to the reader.

There is no Imperfect Subjunctive, Optative, Imperative, Infinitive, or Participle.

Besides the Imperfect, there are some other past tenses in Greek, which we will meet later, but most of them have several things in common.

1. A past tense usually has an **ε-** in front of the verb stem.
This is called an "**augment**" (it is added to the stem, making it longer).
The Augment is equivalent to the English "-ed" at the end of a verb - I walk, I walked.
2. Sets of personal endings are used, which are very similar to the endings we have already learned.

29.2 The basic pattern for the **Imperfect Indicative Active** is

I	ἐ-STEM-οῦν	ἐ-STEM-ομεν	we
you (singular)	ἐ-STEM-εῖς	ἐ-STEM-εἰτε	y'all
he/she/it	ἐ-STEM-εν	ἐ-STEM-ον	they

For λέγω, this becomes

I was saying	ἔλεγον	ἐλέγομεν	we were saying
you were saying	ἔλεγες	ἐλέγετε	y'all were saying
he/she/it was saying	ἔλεγον	ἐλεγον	they were saying

We already know the endings for the First and Second Persons Plural. The Second Person Singular is very similar to that for the Present tense. We only have two endings to learn and practice. Note that there is possible confusion between the First Person Singular and the Third Person Plural - they both end in **-OV**. A Greek sentence will usually resolve this problem by using a pronoun if the sense is not clear.

Chant the endings **-OV -ΕΙΣ -ΕΝ -ΟΜΕΝ -ΕΙΤΕ -ΟΝ** until you know them by heart.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐδίδασκεν τοὺς μαθητάς. | The presbyter/elder was teaching the disciples. |
| 2. οἱ ἅγιοι ἐδίδασκον τὰ τέκνα ; | Were the saints teaching the children? |
| 3. ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐδίδασκον τὸ παιδίον. | I was not teaching the child. |
| 4. ἐβλέπομεν τὰ πρόβατα. | We were looking at the sheep. |
| 5. ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἐβλέπετε τοὺς δούλους. | You were not looking at the slaves. |
| 6. σὺ ἔγραφες ἐπιστολάς τοῖς ἁγίοις. | You were writing letters to the saints. |
| 7. τὰ παιδιά ἔβαλλον λίθους
εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. | The children were throwing stones
into the sea. |
| 8. οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ἐδίωκον τοὺς ἀδελφούς. | The Romans were persecuting the brothers. |
| 9. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθεράπευεν τοὺς τυφλοὺς. | Jesus was healing the blind (men, people). |
| 10. ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ πατήρ
ἔμενον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ. | His mother and father
remained in the house. |

29.3 Contract verbs follow the usual rules of contraction.

The moveable *v* on the third person singular drops off.

$\alpha + \epsilon = \alpha$ $\alpha + \omicron = \omega$ $\epsilon + \epsilon = \epsilon\iota$ $\epsilon + \omicron = \omicron\upsilon$ $\omicron + \epsilon = \omicron\upsilon$ $\omicron + \omicron = \omicron\upsilon$

	τιμάω - I honor	ποιέω - I do, act, make	σταυρόω - I crucify
I	ἐτίμων	ἐποίουν	ἐσταύρουν
you	ἐτίμας	ἐποίεις	ἐσταύρους
he/she/it	ἐτίμα	ἐποίει	ἐσταύρου
we	ἐτιμῶμεν	ἐποιοῦμεν	ἐσταυροῦμεν
y'all	ἐτιμάτε	ἐποιεῖτε	ἐσταυροῦτε
they	ἐτίμων	ἐποίουν	ἐσταύρου

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. οἱ ὑποκριταὶ ἐπλάνων τὸν λαόν. | The hypocrites were leading the people astray. |
| 2. τὸ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἐποίει τὰ καλά. | The demon was not doing (the) good things. |
| 3. οἱ στρατιῶται ἐσταύρουν τὸν Ἰησοῦν. | The soldiers were crucifying Jesus. |
| 4. ἐποιεῖτε τὸ ἔργον καλόν ; | Were you doing the good deed? |
| 5. ἐγὼ ἐτίμων τοὺς διδασκάλους. | I respected the teachers. |
| 6. οὗτος ἐτήρει τὰς ἐντολάς. | He (this one) was keeping the commandments. |
| 7. ἡμεῖς ἐζητοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. | We were seeking the truth. |
| 8. πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐζητεῖ τὰ ἴδια. | Each man was seeking his own (things). |
| 9. οἱ υἱοὶ ἐκάλουν τὰς ἀδελφὰς αὐτῶν. | The sons were calling their sisters. |
| 10. ἐκεῖνοι οἱ λησταὶ οὐκ ἐτήρουν τὸν νόμον. | Those robbers were not keeping the law. |

29.4 If the verb stem begins with a vowel - the augment and the vowel combine to give a long vowel. If the stem begins with a *iota* the augment is often omitted.

$\epsilon + \alpha = \eta$ $\epsilon + \epsilon = \eta$ $\epsilon + \omicron = \omega$ $\epsilon + \iota = \epsilon\iota$ or ι
 $\epsilon + \alpha\iota = \eta$ $\epsilon + \epsilon\iota = \eta$ $\epsilon + \omicron\iota = \omega$
 $\epsilon + \alpha\upsilon = \eta\upsilon$ $\epsilon + \epsilon\upsilon = \epsilon\upsilon$ or $\eta\upsilon$

For ἀκούω this becomes

I was hearing	ἤκουον	ἤκούομεν	we were hearing
you were hearing	ἤκουες	ἤκούετε	y'all were hearing
he/she/it was hearing	ἤκουεν	ἤκουον	they were hearing

For ἀγαπάω and similar verbs, there are changes both at the front and at the end of the stem

I was loving	ἠγάπων	ἠγαπῶμεν	we were loving
you were loving	ἠγάπας	ἠγαπᾶτε	y'all were loving
he/she/it was loving	ἠγάπα	ἠγάπων	they were loving

ἔχω (I have) is slightly irregular. Its stem changes to εἶχ- for the Imperfect.

NOTE : If, when reading a Greek text, you meet a verb starting with *η-*, and you do not find it in the dictionary entries for "*η*", remember that it is most probably a past tense of a verb beginning with *α-* or *ε-*

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠγαπῶμεν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πονηροῦ. | We were not loving the works of the evil one. |
| 2. αὐτὴ ἠκολούθη τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις. | She was following the elders. |
| 3. οὗτοι ἠρώτων τὸν διδάσκαλον περὶ τοῦ βιβλίου. | They (those men) were asking the teacher about the book. |
| 4. ὑμεῖς ἠκολουθεῖτε τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἢ τῷ Ἰωάννῳ ; | Were you following Jesus, or John? |

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| 5. τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ ὄκει ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ. | The Spirit of God dwelt in the prophet. |
| 6. ἐγὼ εἶχον τὰ βιβλία σήμερον
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔξω αὐτὰ αὔριον. | I had the books today
but I won't have them tomorrow. |
| 7. εἶχεν ὁ δοῦλος τὸ ἀργύριον
τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ ; | Did the slave have
his master's money? |
| 8. ὄκειτε ἐν τῇ γῆ Αἰγύπτου ; | Did you (used to) live in the land of Egypt? |
| 9. ταῦτα τὰ πρόβατα ἤκουε
τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ κυρίου. | These sheep were listening
to the voice of the Lord. |
| <i>(Remember, 3rd Person Neuter Plural can take a singular verb)</i> | |
| 10. εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
Εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν,
ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ. | Jesus said to them,
"If God were your Father,
you would have loved me." (John 8:42) |

29.5 Compound Verbs

Compound verbs are built by adding a prefix to the stem of the verb. The meaning of the verb may change either slightly (e.g. to show direction or emphasis) or (more rarely) completely.

e.g. βάλλω - I throw ἐκβάλλω - I cast out ἄρχω - I rule ὑπάρχω - I am

The prefix is not regarded as part of the stem of the verb, so, for past tenses of compound verbs :

the augment is normally inserted between the main stem and the prefix.

The addition of the augment may cause slight changes to the letters on either side of it.

If the prefix ends with a vowel, the vowel usually drops out and is replaced by the augment.

περι- and **προ-** usually keep their vowels.

ἀνα- may become **ἀνη-**, and **κατα-** may become **κατη-**

Compound verbs with **εὐ-** often do not have an augment, but just use the personal endings for the tense.

If the prefix ends in a **-κ**, the **-κ** changes to a **-ξ** before the augment.

NOTE : In the New Testament there are variant spellings for the imperfect of **ἀνοίγω** - I open (up). The root is **ὀίγω** - I open. By the rules above, the imperfect should have the form **ἀνώγων** - the augment broadens the **-ο-** to an **-ω-**, and the **iota** drops down to become a **iota-subscript**. However, some writers occasionally use a "double augment" **ἀνέωγον**, or even a "triple augment" **ἠνέωγον**.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

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| 1. οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐξέβαλλον τὰ δαιμόνια. | The apostles were casting the demons out. |
| 2. ὁ μαθητὴς ἀπήγγελλεν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν. | The disciple was announcing the Gospel
in their synagogues. |
| 3. ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰωάννου περιεπάτειν
ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. | John's mother was walking
in the temple. |
| 4. ὁ ἄγγελος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ
εἰς τὴν γῆν. | The angel was pouring out his bowl
onto the earth. (see Rev. 16:2) |
| 5. ἀπήγεσ τούσ δεσμίουσ πρὸσ τὴν φυλακὴν ; | Were you leading the prisoners
away to the prison? |
| 6. ὁ Ἰωάννης ἀπεκαλύπτειν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ
ταῖς ἐκκλησιαῖς. | John was revealing the works of God
to the Churches. |
| 7. ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἐπέμενε ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ. | His father remained in the house. |
| 8. οἱ δέσμοι ἠτοῦν τούσ στρατιώτασ ἄρτον. | The prisoners were asking the soldiers
for bread. |
| 9. ἐπετρέπομεν τὰ παιδία ψάλλειν
ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. | We were allowing the children to sing
in the synagogue. |
| 10. ὁ Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
κατόκου ἐν τῇ κώμῃ. | Joseph and the mother of Jesus
were dwelling in the village. |

29.6 Sentences for reading and translation

1. οἱ τελῶναι μετενόουν καὶ ἠκολούθουν τῷ Ἰωάννῳ.
2. αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ἡμῶν κατήργουν τὰς προσευχὰς ἡμῶν.
3. ὁ μαθητὴς κατεῖχεν τὴν διδαχὴν τοῦ διδασκάλου.
4. οἱ προφῆται προέλεγον ἡμῖν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς μέλλει κρίνειν τὸν κόσμον.
5. ὁ πατὴρ προῆγεν τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.
6. ἡ μήτηρ προσεδόκεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς ;
7. καὶ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παιδία. (Mark 10:13)
8. ἐξεβάλλετε τὰ δαιμόνια ;
9. ἀπήγγελλες τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ταῖς παρθένοις ;
10. ἠκούομεν τοὺς λόγους οὓς ἐλάλουν οἱ προφῆται.

29.7 Writing Practice : Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud (Matt. 5:4)

μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι,	Happy (are) the poor in spirit,
ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.	for theirs is the Kingdom of the Heavens.
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες,	Happy are the ones mourning,

29.8 New Testament Passages for reading and translation : Mark 3:1-6, Luke 17:26-28

In your Greek New Testament, read the passages aloud several times until you can read them without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the helps to translate them.

ἐξηραμμένην	having been dried up = withered (a past Passive Participle of <i>ξηραίνω</i> - I dry up)
χεῖρα	hand (Accusative of <i>ἡ χεῖρ</i> - hand)
τοῖς σάββασιν	on the Sabbath (the Aramaic for Sabbath is "shabbata", and this gave rise to a neuter plural form <i>σαββατα</i> - but the meaning was still singular)
κατηγορήσωσιν	they might accuse (Aorist Subjunctive of <i>κατηγορέω</i> - I accuse, denounce)
ξηρὰν	dry (Feminine Accusative of <i>ξηρός</i> -α -ον - dry)
ἔχοντι	to the one having (Masculine Dative singular Participle of <i>ἔχω</i> - I have)
ἔγειρε	rise up!, stand up! (2nd person singular Imperative of <i>ἐγείρω</i> - I raise)
εἰς τὸ μέσον	in the center
ποιῆσαι	to do (Aorist Infinitive of <i>ποιέω</i> - I do, act, make)
κακοποιῆσαι	to do evil (Aorist Infinitive of <i>κακοποιέω</i> - I do evil)
σῶσαι	to save (Aorist Infinitive of <i>σῶζω</i> - I save)
ἀποκτεῖναι	to kill (Aorist Infinitive of <i>ἀποκτείνω</i> - I kill)
ἐσιώπων	they remained/kept/were silent (Imperfect of <i>σιωπάω</i> - I remain silent)
περιβλεψάμενος	having looked around at (Aorist Participle of <i>περιβλέπω</i> - I look around at)
συλλυπούμενος	being very grieved/sad (a Participle of <i>συλλυπέω</i> - I am sad with, or very sad)
πωρώσει	hardening, obstinacy (Dative sing. of <i>ἡ πώρωσις</i> - stubbornness, unfeeling)
ἀπε-κατε-στάθη	it was set up again = it was restored (Note the double augment) (a past Passive of <i>ἀποκαθίστημι</i> - I set up again, restore to proper condition)
ἐξελθόντες	having gone out (Masc. Nom. plural Participle, describing <i>οἱ Φαρισαῖοι</i>)
Ἡρωδιανῶν	Herodians' (Genitive plural. The <i>Ἡρωδιάνοι</i> sided with Herod and his family. Normally the Pharisees and the Herodians were at enmity with one another)
τὸ συμβούλιον	plan, council, plot
ἐδίδουν	they were giving (Imperfect of <i>δίδωμι</i> - I give. A Semitic idiom for "make a plot")
κατ' αὐτοῦ	against him
ἀπολέσωσιν	they might destroy (Subjunctive of <i>ἀπόλλυμι</i> - I destroy)
ἐγένετο	it was (simple past of <i>γίνομαι</i> - I happen, am, become)
ἔσται	it will be (Future of <i>εἰμί</i> - I am)
ἧς ἡμέρας	the day (Genitive, <i>ἧς</i> used for <i>τῆς</i>)
εἰσῆλθεν	(he) entered
ἦλθεν	(it) came

ὁ κατακλυσμὸς	flood, deluge	
ἀπώλεσεν	(it) destroyed	(simple past of ἀπόλλυμι - I destroy)
πάντας	everything, all	(Masculine Accusative plural of πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν - each, every)
Λὼτ	Lot (Abraham's nephew)	
ἦ	in the	(ἦ used for τῆ)
ἔβρεξεν	(it) rained, watered	(simple past of βρέχω - I wet, rain)
τὸ θεῖον	sulfur	(hence the chemical prefix theio- for sulfur compounds)

29.9 Vocabulary to learn

ἀπάγω	I lead away	
ἀποκαλύπτω	I reveal, unveil	
γαμέω	I marry	
γαμίζω	I give (a bride) in marriage	
ἐκτείνω	I stretch out	
ἐκχέω	I pour out	
ἐπιμένω	I remain, abide, persevere	
ἐπιτρέπω	I allow, permit	
καλύπτω	I cover, hide, veil	
καταλύω	(transitive) I tear down, destroy	(intransitive) I stay with (as a guest)
κατανοέω	I consider, notice, am aware of	
καταργέω	I cancel, make ineffective, destroy	
κατηγορέω	I accuse, bring charges against	
καταχέω	I pour down, pour onto	
κατέχω	I hold down, hold fast, head for (ship)	
κατοικέω	I dwell, settle, inhabit	
οἰκέω	I dwell, live (in)	
παράγω	I pass by, pass on, pass away	
παρατηρέω	I watch closely, keep an eye on	
παρέχω	I cause, bring about, offer	
περιβάλλω	I put on, dress (one dressed by throwing a toga or cloak around oneself)	
περιβλέπω	I look around at	
προάγω	I go before, ahead of	
προλέγω	I say in advance, warn, predict	
προσδοκάω	I wait for, look for, expect	
προσφέρω	I offer, bring before, present	
ὑπάρχω	I am, exist	
ξηραίνω	I dry up	Passive - I am withered
φυτεύω	I plant	(hence scientific words starting with phyto- for plant sciences)
ξηρός, -α, -ον	dry	(hence xeriscape and Xerox - dry copying)
ἡ κιβωτός	ark, ship	
ἡ φιάλη	vial, bowl, flask	
ἄχρι	up until	(either as a conjunction, or as a preposition with Genitive)
εὐθύς	immediately	
ὁμοίως	similarly, likewise	(adverb, from the adjective ὁμοῖος, -α, -ον - like)
ὅπως	that, in order that	
	(Don't attempt to use cases other than the Nominative singular for the following nouns yet)	
τὸ κάλυμμα	veil	
τὰ ὑπάρχοντα	possessions	
τὸ πῦρ	fire	(hence the scientific prefix pyr- for fever, burning, heat)
	(the pyramids were so called because when the sun shone on them they looked to be on fire)	
ἡ χεῖρ	hand	(hence chiropractor, chiroprapist, etc.)