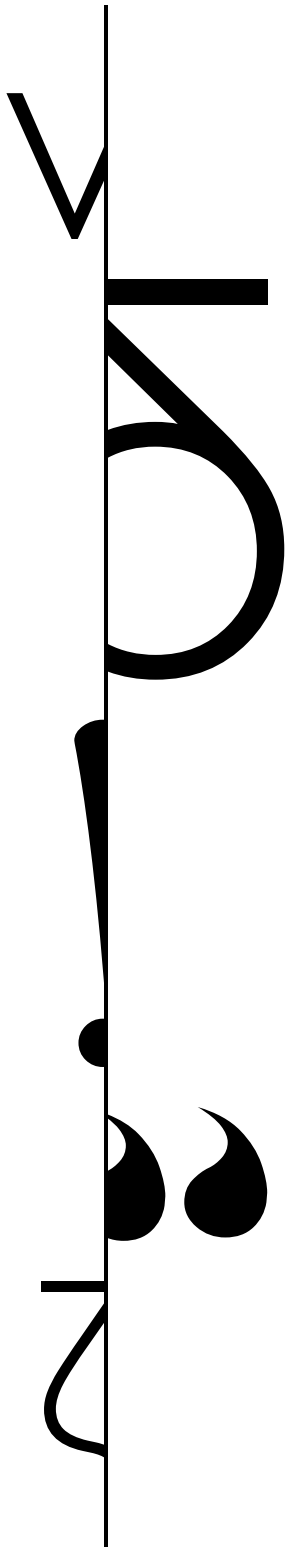


Greek Language Basics:

Your Essential Guide to Mastering the Fundamentals

Irene J. Karageorgou

Everything You Need to Discover the Heart and Soul of Greece through Language Learning!



**TO ALL FOREIGN VISITORS WHO
REALLY WANT TO GET TO KNOW**

**MY COUNTRY,
GREECE.**



IRENE J. KARAGEORGOY

GREEK LANGUAGE BASICS

TRANSLATION: **TINA KARAGIANNI**

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BOOK DESCRIPTION

The book you are holding is a starting point for those who want to gain command of the Greek language, understand the Greek soul and be initiated into the Greek culture. It is a groundbreaking travel guide to Greece and at the same time it is a communication and pronunciation guide, an understanding-the-Greek-culture guide and a guide that offers practical tips for every chaday life in Greece.

It is a **communication guide** because it includes useful words and phrases as well as extra Greek vocabulary that can be used by foreign language speaking visitors in Greece to cover basic communication needs such as speaking and understanding Greek. This will help them deal with everyday language challenges successfully and with confidence while in Greece.

It is a **pronunciation guide** as all words are presented in both their written form and pronunciation. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)*symbols are used so that words are pronounced as accurately as possible. This will help speakers be precise and avoid misunderstandings due to errors in pronunciation. Anyothertranscriptionofphoneticsymbolsisarbitrary.

It is a **guide in the Greek culture** because it provides information about the customs and traditions, the mentality and everyday life routines of modern Greeks helping visitors to get accustomed to, understand and decode the Greek way of life and behaviour.

Finally, it is a **practical guide** as it offers a wide array of additional useful tips about everyday life that complete what one needs to know before and during their visit to Greece, in order to experience a pleasant stay.

Learners can also find extra practice exercises for every Unit in order to test themselves and see what they have learned.

** The IPA is a system of phonetic notation. It was devised by the International Phonetic Association as a standardized system of speech sounds and is based mainly on Latin and partially Greek script. The IPA symbols can be used to present the pronunciation of each word in any language. In this book the IPA symbols are used to explain the pronunciation ofGreek words with accuracy.The IPA symbols that you will learn in Units 1, 2 and 3 of the book are a one-to-one correspondence between the symbols and the sounds found in the Greek language.*

THEMATIC UNITS

| |
|--------------------------|
| Greetings & Goodbyes |
| Addressing people |
| Common Words & Phrases |
| Numbers |
| Time |
| Time words & expressions |
| Dates |
| Days |
| Months |
| Zodiac signs |
| Seasons |
| Weather |
| Question words |

| |
|----------------------|
| Common questions |
| Directions |
| It's all Greek to me |
| In an emergency |
| Wishes |

BOOK STRUCTURE

There are 17 units in the book with helpful vocabulary and tips that cover 14 different situations in which you may find yourself during your stay in Greece. In the **first part** you can find useful words and phrases, information about the Greek culture and practical tips that follow the theme of each unit. The **second part** offers extra vocabulary while in the **third part** you can find practice exercises to check your knowledge.

UNIT STRUCTURE

Each unit is independent; it is not connected with the previous or the following unit and can be studied separately. At the beginning of each unit (orange board) you can find a **summary** of the unit which is then followed by a **detailed presentation** (vocabulary, phrases, sentences). At the end of the unit (purple board) you can find comprehensive **examples**. Rich cultural **information** and useful **tips** along with relevant icons complete the theme of each unit.

HOW TO READ THE BOOK

The bold blue IPA symbols in brackets represent the pronunciation of the Greek words, modified to suit the needs of the book.

e.g. **[kaliméra]**

The bold red italics are used for the English words, phrases and sentences that are translated into Greek and the Greek pronunciation is given.

e.g. ***Good morning.*** **[kaliméra]**

The black fonts are used for the translated words, phrases and sentences into Greek.

e.g. ***Good morning.*** **[kaliméra]** Καλημέρα.

Notes

- For borrowed words, the pronunciation closest to the original was selected.
e.g. For the word **champagne** the transcription is **[sɑmpáña]**
- For English words used with the original pronunciation, the spelling used in brackets is also in English.
e.g. ***What is your e-mail address?*** **[pɔ́ ó íne to e-mail su?]**
- The parentheses in italic black font inside the brackets include:
 - The number symbol of the preceding number word.
e.g. ***every 5 minutes:*** **[káθe pénde (5) leptá]**
 - Symbols with different pronunciation from the written word.
e.g. ***"I don't know."*** is written «Δεν ξέρω.» in Greek but pronounced: **[ðé(n)gzéro]**

Accent mark

The accent mark is placed over the stressed vowel. One-syllable words which do not carry an accent mark according to Greek grammar rules, are transcribed with an accent mark when the vowel is stressed in pronunciation.

e.g. Τι είπατε; [tí ípes]











Abbreviations

| <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Meaning</i> | <i>Abbreviation</i> | <i>Meaning</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>sing.</i> | singular | <i>informal, sing.</i> | informal, singular |
| <i>pl.</i> | plural | <i>n.</i> | neutral |
| <i>sing. form</i> | singular form | <i>m.</i> | male |
| <i>pl. form</i> | plural form | <i>f.</i> | female |

WHO IS THE BOOK FOR

This book is for those who love Greece and want to become acquainted with the country itself, as well as its language, history and culture. For those who want to live the experience of travelling around Greece and enjoy a cultural “adventure”. For those who want to be able to have satisfactory day-to-day communication during their stay in Greece. For those who want to communicate more effectively with their Greek friends, relatives or business associates.

ICONS USED IN THE BOOK

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | extra vocabulary |
|  | useful information |
|  | useful tips |
|  | word origin, word etymology, meaning |
|  | traditions and customs |
|  | idioms |
|  | grammar and pronunciation rules |
|  | see glossary |
|  | emergency phone numbers |
|  | unit change |

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Irene Karageorgou is considered an expert in teaching Greek as a foreign language. Her educational courses “**Greek for Begginers. The Complete Method. Level 1 Part 1,2,3**” are bestsellers and have been bought by thousands of learners. She has been teaching Greek to fooreign and native speakers for more than 15 years. She is married and she has a son.

Greek pronunciation guide Part 1 (vowels, diphthongs, combinations)

Vowels: Α α, Ε ε, Η η, Ι ι, Υ υ, Ο ο, Ω ω

Vowel digraphs: ΟΥ ου, ΑΙ αι, ΕΙ ει, ΟΙ οι, ΥΙ υι

Diphthongs: Αϊ αι, ΑΗ αη, ΟΗ οη, Όι όι

Combinations: ΑΥ αυ, ΕΥ ευ

Vowels: Α α, Ε ε, Η η, Ι ι, Υ υ, Ο ο, Ω ω

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|--|--|------------------|--|---|--|
| A | α | [a] | <i>almond</i> | ⇒ | αλάτι | [aláti] | <i>salt</i> |
| E | ε | [e]* | <i>ten</i> | ⇒ | τέσσερα | [tésera] | <i>four</i> |
| H | η | [i]* | <i>hit</i> | ⇒ | μήλο | [mílo] | <i>apple</i> |
| I | ι | 1. [i]* 2. [j] 3. [x̣] 4. [ñ] | <i>hit</i> <i>yes</i> <i>humor</i> <i>new</i> | ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ | 1. ιδέα 2. καρδιά 3. μάτια 4. μια** | [iḏéa] [karðjá] [mát̪xa] [mñá] | <i>idea</i> <i>heart</i> <i>eyes</i> <i>one</i> |
| Y | υ | [i]* | <i>hit</i> | ⇒ | κύμα | [kíma] | <i>wave</i> |
| O | ο | [o]* | <i>on</i> | ⇒ | όνομα | [ónoma] | <i>name</i> |
| Ω | ω | [o]* | <i>on</i> | ⇒ | ώρα | [óra] | <i>time</i> |



**The cardinal number one (1) has three genders in Greek. In this case the word «μία» is the female gender.

Vowel digraphs (two vowels pronounced as one): ΟΥ ου, ΑΙ αι, ΕΙ ει, ΟΙ οι, ΥΙ υι

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| OY | ου | [u] | <i>put</i> | ⇒ | κούπα | [kúpa] | <i>cup</i> |
| AI | αι | [e]* | <i>ten</i> | ⇒ | και | [ké] | <i>and</i> |
| EI | ει | [i]* | <i>hit</i> | ⇒ | είκοσι | [íkosi] | <i>twenty</i> |
| OI | οι | [i]* | <i>hit</i> | ⇒ | οικονομία | [ikonomía] | <i>economy</i> |
| YI | υι | [i]* | <i>hit</i> | ⇒ | υιός | [iós] | <i>son</i> |



- ✓ ***[e]** is represented by two Greek graphemes: ε, αι
- ✓ ***[i]** is represented by six Greek graphemes: η, ι, υ, ει, οι, υι
- ✓ ***[o]** is represented by two Greek graphemes: ο, ω

Diphthongs (two vowels pronounced as one syllable): Αϊ αι, ΑΗ αη, ΟΗ οη, Όι όι

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Aï | αϊ | [ai] | <i>ice</i> | ⇒ | γάιδαρος | [gáidaros] | <i>donkey</i> |
| AH | αη | [ai] | <i>ice</i> | ⇒ | αηδόνι | [aidóni] | <i>nightingale</i> |
| OH | οη | [oi] | <i>oil</i> | ⇒ | βόηθα | [vóitha] | <i>help</i> |
| Όι | όι | [oi] | <i>oil</i> | ⇒ | ρόιδι | [róidi] | <i>pomegranate</i> |

Combinations: ΑΥ αυ, ΕΥ ευ (are pronounced in two different ways)

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AY | αυ | 1. [av] 2. [af] | <i>avant-garde</i> <i>after</i> | ⇒ ⇒ | αύριο αυτή | [ávrio] [aftí] | <i>tomorrow</i> <i>she</i> |
| EY | ευ | 1. [ev] 2. [ef] | <i>ever</i> <i>effect</i> | ⇒ ⇒ | Ευρώπη ευχαριστώ | [evrópi] [efxaristó] | <i>Europe</i> <i>thanks</i> |



In the next unit you will learn the **GREEK CONSONANTS** and **HOW TO ACCENT GREEK WORDS**.

Greek pronunciation guide Part 2 (Consonants, How to accent Greek words)

Consonants: Β β, Γ γ, Δ δ, Ζ ζ, Θ θ, Κ κ, Λ λ, Μ μ, Ν ν, Ξ ξ, Π π, Ρ ρ, Σ σ ς, Τ τ, Φ φ, Χ χ, Ψ ψ
How to accent Greek words

Consonants: Β β, Γ γ, Δ δ, Ζ ζ, Θ θ, Κ κ, Λ λ, Μ μ, Ν ν, Ξ ξ, Π π, Ρ ρ, Σ σ ς, Τ τ, Φ φ, Χ χ, Ψ ψ

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| B | β | [v] | <u>v</u> ase | ⇒ | βάζο | [vázɔ] | vase |
| Γ | γ | 1. [ɣ] 2. [j] | <u>a</u> miga (Spanish) <u>y</u> es | ⇒ | γάλα γέρος | [gála] [jéros] | milk old man |
| Δ | δ | [ð] | <u>t</u> his | ⇒ | δίνω | [ðino] | give |
| Ζ | ζ | [z] | <u>z</u> one | ⇒ | ζώνη | [zóni] | belt |
| Θ | θ | [θ] | <u>t</u> heater | ⇒ | θέατρο | [théatro] | theater |
| Κ | κ | 1. [k] 2. [k̃] | <u>c</u> ar <u>c</u> ute | ⇒ | καλός και | [kalós] [ké] | good and |
| Λ | λ | 1. [l] 2. [l̃] | <u>l</u> ogic <u>t</u> agliatelle | ⇒ | λογική ελιά | [lojiki] [elía] | logic olive |
| Μ | μ | [m] | <u>m</u> um | ⇒ | μαμά | [mamá] | mum |
| Ν | ν | 1. [n] 2. [ñ] 3. [ŋ] | <u>n</u> ext <u>n</u> ew <u>a</u> nger | ⇒ | ναι πανιά άγχος | [né] [pañá] [áŋchos] | yes sails anxiety |
| Ξ | ξ | [ks] | <u>T</u> exas | ⇒ | έξι | [éksi] | six |
| Π | π | [p] | <u>p</u> an | ⇒ | πόδι | [póði] | foot |
| Ρ | ρ | [r] | <u>r</u> ed | ⇒ | Ρώμη | [rómi] | Rome |
| Σ* | σ ς | 1. [s] 2. [s] 3. [z] | <u>s</u> un <u>s</u> un <u>b</u> ismuth | ⇒ | σήμερα καλός κόσμος | [símera] [kalós] [kózmos] | today good world |
| Τ | τ | [t] | <u>t</u> ea | ⇒ | τιμή | [timí] | price |
| Φ | φ | [f] | <u>f</u> ast | ⇒ | φως | [fós] | light |
| Χ | χ | 1. [x] 2. [x̃] | <u>l</u> och (Scottish) <u>h</u> uge | ⇒ | χορός όχι | [xorós] [óxi] | dance no |
| Ψ | ψ | [ps] | <u>l</u> ips | ⇒ | ψωμί | [psomí] | bread |



*The letter «Σ, σ» has three different forms compared to the rest of the letters of the Greek alphabet which have two. These forms are:

1. «Σ» (upper case)
2. «σ» (lower case – inside a word)
3. «ς» (lower case – at the end of a word)



The Greek letter «Β, β» is pronounced [v] NOT [b]

The Greek letter «Ρ, ρ» is pronounced [r] NOT [p]

The Greek letter «Χ, χ» is pronounced [x], [x̃] NOT [ks]

How to accent Greek words

When you see a letter carrying this mark (´), you should pronounce this letter louder. This mark is called **[tónos]** in Greek and “accent mark” in English. Stressing Greek words is very important. If you stress a word in a wrong way its meaning will change.

For example, the Greek word «πότε» **[póte]**:

- ✓ If you stress the letter [o] «πότε» **[póte]** it means “when” **BUT**
- ✓ If you stress the letter [e] «ποτέ» **[poté]** it means “never”.



In the next unit you will learn the **CONSONANT DIGRAPHS** and the **DOUBLE CONSONANTS**.

Greek pronunciation guide Part 3 (Consonant Digraphs, double Consonants)

Consonant digraphs: ΜΠ μπ, ΝΤ ντ, ΓΚ γκ, ΓΓ γγ, ΓΧ γχ, ΤΖ τζ, ΤΣ τσ

Double consonants: ΒΒ ββ, ΚΚ κκ, ΛΛ λλ, ΜΜ μμ, ΝΝ νν, ΠΠ ππ, ΡΡ ρρ, ΣΣ σσ, ΤΤ ττ

Consonant digraphs (*two consonants pronounced as one*): ΜΠ μπ, ΝΤ ντ, ΓΚ γκ, ΓΓ γγ, ΓΧ γχ, ΤΖ τζ, ΤΣ τσ

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| ΜΠ | μπ | 1. [b] | <u>b</u> ox | ⇒ | μπάλα | [bála] | ball |
| | | 2. [mb] | mem <u>b</u> er | ⇒ | κολυμπώ | [kolimbó] | swim |
| | | 3. [mp] | im <u>p</u> erium | ⇒ | σαμπάνια | [sampáña] | champagne |
| ΝΤ | ντ | 1. [d] | <u>d</u> ay | ⇒ | ντομάτα | [domáta] | tomato |
| | | 2. [nd] | e <u>n</u> d | ⇒ | πέντε | [pénde] | five |
| | | 3. [nt] | re <u>n</u> t | ⇒ | μέντα | [ménta] | mint |
| ΓΚ | γκ | 1. [g] | <u>g</u> o | ⇒ | γκολφ | [gólf] | golf |
| | | 2. [ǰ] | ge <u>t</u> | ⇒ | γκέμι | [ǰémi] | bridle |
| | | 3. [nǰ] | an <u>g</u> er | ⇒ | έγκυος | [éǰgios] | pregnant |
| ΓΓ | γγ | 1. [ŋg] | <u>English</u> | ⇒ | Αγγλία | [anǰlía] | England |
| | | 2. [ŋv] | <u>unused</u> | ⇒ | συγγραφέας | [siŋvraféas] | author |
| | | 3. [ŋj] | un <u>h</u> oped | ⇒ | εγγενής | [enǰenís] | inherent |
| ΓΧ | γχ | 1. [ŋx] | un <u>h</u> oped | ⇒ | άγχος | [áŋxos] | anxiety |
| | | 2. [nǰ] | un <u>h</u> ealthy | ⇒ | εγχείριση | [enǰírisi] | operation |
| ΤΖ | τζ | [dz] | <u>jeep</u> | ⇒ | τζάκι | [dzáki] | fireplace |
| ΤΣ | τσ | [ts] | <u>pizza</u> | ⇒ | τσάι | [tsái] | tea |

Double consonants (*one consonant used written twice and pronounced as one with the exception of «γγ»*): ΒΒ ββ, ΚΚ κκ, ΛΛ λλ, ΜΜ μμ, ΝΝ νν, ΠΠ ππ, ΡΡ ρρ, ΣΣ σσ, ΤΤ ττ

| Upper case | Lower case | Phonetic symbol (IPA) | Pronunciation | | Greek word example | Phonetic spelling | Translation |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| ΒΒ | ββ | [v] | <u>v</u> ase | ⇒ | Σάββατο | [sávato] | Saturday |
| ΚΚ | κκ | [k], [k̄] | <u>car</u> | ⇒ | κόκκινο | [kók̄ino] | red |
| ΛΛ | λλ | [l] | <u>logic</u> | ⇒ | Ελλάδα | [eláda] | Greece |
| ΜΜ | μμ | [m] | <u>map</u> | ⇒ | άμμος | [ámos] | sand |
| ΝΝ | νν | [n] | <u>next</u> | ⇒ | Άννα | [ána] | Ann |
| ΠΠ | ππ | [p] | <u>pan</u> | ⇒ | παππούς | [papús] | grandfather |
| ΡΡ | ρρ | [r] | <u>red</u> | ⇒ | άρρωστος | [árostos] | sick |
| ΣΣ | σσ | [s] | <u>sun</u> | ⇒ | τέσσερα | [tésera] | four |
| ΤΤ | ττ | [t] | <u>tea</u> | ⇒ | περιττός | [peritós] | unnecessary |



When you study and understand the correspondence of IPA spelling to the pronunciation of Greek letters fully, you will be able to study this book, learn to pronounce Greek words correctly and speak Greek fluently.



You can find the letters of the Greek alphabet and their names in the Glossary, page 50.



In the next unit you will learn **GREETINGS AND GOODBYES**.

If you want to say:

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| - Hello! | - Fine, thank you. | - Have a nice day. |
| - Good morning. | - Not so good. | - Have a nice afternoon. |
| - Good evening. | - How about you? | - Have a nice evening. |
| - How are you? | - Goodbye. | - Good night. |

Greetings and Responses

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Hello! | [já sas] (honorific plural) | Γεια σας! |
| | [já su] (informal, sing.) | Γεια σου! |

 The word **[já]** which means “hello” derives from the Greek word «υγεία» **[ijía]** which means “health”. There are four other meanings of the word **[já]**:



1. **[já]** which means “goodbye” (when leaving)
2. **[me já]** (when buying something new)
3. **[stin ijá mas]** which means “cheers” (when drinking)
4. **[jítses]** which means “bless you” (when sneezing)

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Good morning. (morning hours) | [kaliméra] | Καλημέρα. |
| Good evening. (afternoon and evening) | [kalispéra] | Καλησπέρα. |
| How are you? | [tí kánete?] (honorific plural) [tí kánis?] (informal, sing.) | Τι κάνετε; Τι κάνεις; |
| Fine, thank you. | [kalá efxaristó] | Καλά, ευχαριστώ. |
| Not so good. | [óxi polí kalá] | Όχι πολύ καλά. |
| How about you? | [esís?] (honorific plural) [esí?] (informal, sing.) | Εσείς; Εσύ; |



The word **[já]** can be used for both “hello” and “goodbye” any time during the day.

Farewells

| | | |
|--|------------------------|----------------|
| Goodbye. | [adíó] | Αντίο. |
| Have a nice day. (from dawn till 12 noon) | [kaliméra] | Καλημέρα. |
| Have a nice afternoon. (from 12 noon till 15.00) | [kaló mesiméri] | Καλό μεσημέρι. |
| Have a nice afternoon. (from 15.00 till sunset) | [kaló apójevma] | Καλό απόγευμα. |
| Have a nice evening. (from sunset till midnight) | [kaló vráði] | Καλό βράδυ. |
| Good night. | [kaliníxta] | Καληνύχτα. |

EXAMPLES

| | |
|---|--|
| Hi, how are you today? | [já pós íse símera?] |
| I have a bad cold and I haven't been feeling well at all. | [éxo éna ásximo kríoma ke ðén esthánome καθόλου καλά] |
| What have you been up to? | [tí kánis aftó ton geró?] |
| Working a lot. | [ðulévo polí] |
| Long time no see... | [xroña ke zamáña] |
| Goodnight! Sweet dreams! | [kaliníxta] [ónira yliká] |



You can find more words and phrases on **Greetings and Goodbyes** in the Glossary, on page 51 through 52. In the next unit you will learn **HOW TO ADDRESS PEOPLE IN GREEK**.