

Introduction to Greek Accentuation

Preliminaries:

- a. A Greek word has as many syllables as it has vowels and diphthongs.
- b. A syllable is considered long if it contains a long vowel (\bar{a} , \bar{i} , \bar{u} , η, ω, *not* α, ι, υ, ε, ο) or diphthong (αι, αυ, ει, ευ, ηυ, οι, ου, υι) **but:**
- c. The diphthongs αι and οι are considered short for the purposes of accentuation when (and only when) they occur at the end of a word.

Acute ($\acute{\ }$) : over any vowel or diphthong on any of the last three syllables. If the last syllable is long, the acute can fall only on the last two syllables. Examples: καλός, δαίμων, ἄνθρωπος.

Circumflex (\sim) : only over long vowels and diphthongs, and only on the last two syllables. If the final syllable is long, a circumflex cannot be used on the preceding syllable (λέων, δαίμων). A circumflex is required for the long syllable of words ending in the sequence long – short (νήσος ταῦτα). Examples: γῆ, θεοῦ, δῶρον, τοῦτο.

Grave ($\grave{\ }$) : on the last syllable only, over any vowel or diphthong. The grave always replaces the acute on the final syllable, except when the word is the last word of a clause or sentence, or when the word is followed by an enclitic. Examples: τὸν ἄνδρα, τὴν τύχην, οἱ θεοὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

Note that the final Greek accent is influenced **by the quantity of the final syllable**.

1. *Verbs*

The accent of *verbs* is in general *recessive*, that is, *the accent is thrown as far back as the quantity of the last syllable permits*.

Thus:	λύω	λύεις	λύει
	λύομεν	λύετε	λύουσι
	ἐλυόμην	σπεῦδε	

Contracted verbs are only apparent exceptions, for the circumflex is used where possible to show, in effect, the fact of contraction.

Thus:	φιλέ – ω > φιλῶ	φιλέ – ομεν > φιλοῦμεν
	φιλέ – εις > φιλεῖς	φιλέ – ετε > φιλεῖτε
	φιλέ – ει > φιλεῖ	φιλέ – ουσι > φιλοῦσι

An important **exception** is the enclitic εἰμι, which shows unusual accentuation. (If you're curious about enclitics, look at the reference grammar, p. 285 of your *Athenaze* text.) Another important exception is the odd imperative ἐλθέ (which you'll later come to recognize as the aorist imperative).

Worksheet:
Accentuation of verbs

ἐκβαίνει

λέγει

φέρει

αἶρει

σπεύδω

ἐλαύνω

λαμβάνει

λαμβάνε

φέρει

φερε

σπεύδει

σπεύδε

ἐλκετε

ἀροτρευετε

πονεί (contract verb!)

καλεί (contract verb!)

φιλεί (contract verb!)