

#### **FOURTH EDITION**

# Basics of Biblical Greek

GRAMMAR

William D.

MOUNCE

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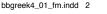
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This text is affectionately dedicated to my wife,

Robin Elaine Mounce,

who loves the Lord with a passion I have rarely seen, is committed to walking with people through the good and the bad, and has walked with me step by step these many years.







ὁ νόμος τοῦ κυρίου ἄμωμος,ἐπιστρέφων ψυχάς

ή μαρτυρία κυρίου πιστή, σοφίζουσα νήπια·

τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου εὐθεῖα, εὐφραίνοντα καρδίαν

ή ἐντολὴ κυρίου τηλαυγής, φωτίζουσα ὀφθαλμούς:

ὁ φόβος κυρίου άγνός,διαμένων εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος.

τὰ κρίματα κυρίου ἀληθινά, δεδικαιωμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

καὶ ἔσονται εἰς εὐδοκίαν
τὰ λόγια τοῦ στόματός μου
καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῆς καρδίας μου
ἐνώπιόν σου διὰ παντός,
κύριε βοηθέ μου καὶ λυτρωτά μου.

ΨALMOI IH 8-10, 15



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## **Preface**

Most existing grammars fall into one of two camps, deductive or inductive. Deductive grammars emphasize charts and rote memorization, while inductive grammars get the student into the text as soon as possible and try to imitate the natural learning process. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. The deductive method helps the student organize the material better but is totally unlike the natural learning process. The inductive method suffers from a lack of structure that for many is confusing. My method attempts to teach Greek using the best of both approaches. It is deductive in how it initially teaches the material, and inductive in how it fine-tunes the learning process. (See the following "Rationale Statement" for more details.)

Most grammars approach learning Greek primarily as an academic discipline; I make every effort to view learning Greek as a tool for ministry. My assumption is that you are learning biblical Greek so you can better understand the Word of God and share that understanding with those around you. If some aspect of language study does not serve this purpose, it is ignored.

I try to include anything that will encourage students. This may not be the normal way textbooks are written, but my purpose is not to write another normal textbook. Learning languages can be enjoyable as well as meaningful. There is much more encouragement on my website (see page xvi–xxvi).

Probably the greatest obstacle to learning, and continuing to use, biblical Greek is the problem of rote memorization, both vocabulary and charts. When I was first learning Greek, I used to ask my father what a certain form meant. He would tell me, and when I asked how he knew he would respond, "I'm not sure, but that's what it is." What was frustrating for me then is true of me now. How many people who have worked in Greek for years are able to recite obscure paradigms, or perhaps all the tense forms of the sixty main verbs? Very few I suspect. Rather, we have learned what indicators to look for when we parse, or what I call "triggers." Wouldn't it be nice if beginning students of the language could get to this point of understanding the forms of the language without going through the excruciating process of memorizing chart after chart? This is the primary distinctive of this textbook. Reduce the essentials to a minimum so the language can be learned and retained as easily as possible, so that the Word of God can be preached and taught in all its power and conviction.

The writing style of BBG is somewhat different from what you might expect. It is not overly concerned with brevity. Rather, I discuss the concepts in some depth and in a "friendly" tone. The goal is to help students enjoy the text and come to class knowing the information. While brevity has its advantages, I felt that it hinders the self-motivated student who wants to learn outside the classroom. For teachers who prefer a more succinct style, the section numbers make

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it easy for them to skip information they feel is unnecessary. For example: "Don't read #13.4–5 and #13.7."

It is possible to ignore all the footnotes in this text and still learn biblical Greek. The information in the footnotes is interesting tidbits for both the teacher and the exceptional student; they will most likely confuse the struggling student.

I follow standard pronunciation of biblical Greek (also called "Erasmian"). There is increasing scholarly interest in a modified pronunciation scheme closer to that of modern Greek, which is why I have included some modern Greek pronunciation on my website. The majority of students still learn the standard pronunciation, and those who learn alternate systems often have difficulty communicating with students from other schools.

There are many people I wish to thank. Without my students' constant questioning and their unfailing patience with all my experiments in teaching methods, this grammar could never have been written. I would like to thank especially Brad Rigney, Ian and Kathy Lopez, Mike De Vries, Bob Ramsey, Jenny (Davis) Riley, Handjarawatano, Dan Newman, Tim Pack, Jason Zahariades, Tim and Jennifer Brown, Lynnette Whitworth, Chori Seraiah, Miles Van Pelt, and the unnamed student who failed the class twice until I totally separated the nouns (chapters 1–14) from the verbs (chapters 15–36), and then received a "B." Thanks also to my students at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and my TA's, Matthew Smith, Jim Critchlow, Jason DeRouchie, Rich Herbster, Juan Hernández, Ryan Jackson, Steven Kirk, David Palmer, Andy Williams, and especially my colleagues and friends, Edward M. Keazirian II, George H. Guthrie, and Paul "Mr." Jackson.

I want to thank those professors who were willing to try out the grammar in its earlier stages, and for those upon whom I have relied for help: William S. LaSor, Daniel B. Wallace, Thomas Schreiner, Nancy Vyhmeister, Keith Reeves, Ron Rushing, George Gunn, Chip Hard, Verlyn Verbrugge, and Craig Keener. A very special thank you must go to Walter W. Wessel, who used the text beginning with its earliest form and who was constant and loving in his corrections, criticisms, and praise. When I thought the text was basically done, my excellent editor, Verlyn Verbrugge, continued to fine-tune my work, not just by finding typos and grammatical errors but by adding substantially to the content and flow of the chapters. (As always, any errors are my fault, and I would appreciate notification of any errors or suggestions. Correspondence may be sent through BillMounce.com.) If it were not for the diligent efforts of Ed van der Maas and Jack Kragt, this grammar may never have been published and marketed as well as it has been.

Much of the work, especially in the exercises, could not have been done without the aid of the software program *Accordance*. Thanks Roy and Helen.

As this is the fourth edition of the textbook, I would also like to thank those who have used BBG over several decades, and also Rick Bennett, Randall Buth, Christine Palmer, Ed Taylor, and Kim Bennett for their help. BBG's acceptance

Preface

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has been gratifying; I trust that you will find the fine-tuning in this edition helpful.

A special thank you to my wife Robin, for her unfailing patience and encouragement through the past thirty-five years, and for believing in the goals we both set for this grammar. And finally I wish to thank the scholars who agreed to write the exegetical insights for each chapter. As you see how a knowledge of biblical Greek has aided them in their studies, I trust you will be encouraged in your own pursuit of learning and using Greek.

Thank you.

Bill Mounce Washougal, WA







# **Abbreviations**

Accordance Roy Brown, Oaktree Software (AccordanceBible.com)

BBG Basics of Biblical Greek, William D. Mounce (Zondervan, 2018)

BDAG A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Chris-

tian Literature, eds. W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gin-

grich, third edition (University of Chicago Press, 2000)

BDF A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian

Literature, eds. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk (University

of Chicago Press, 1961)

Fanning Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek, Buist M. Fanning (Clarendon

Press, 1990)

Klein A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language,

Ernest Klein (Elsevier, 1971), from which I drew heavily for cog-

nates in the vocabulary sections

MBG The Morphology of Biblical Greek, William D. Mounce (Zondervan,

1994)

Smyth Greek Grammar, Herbert Weir Smyth, rev. G. M. Messing (Harvard

University Press, 1956)

Wallace Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New

Testament, Daniel B. Wallace (Zondervan, 1996)



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## Rationale Statement

BBG is not just new to be different, but approaches the instruction of the language from a different perspective that I hope makes learning Greek as easy as possible, as rewarding as possible, and, yes, even enjoyable.

The following explains my approach, why it is different, and why I think it is better. The widespread acceptance of the first three editions has been encouraging.

#### Goals

- To approach learning Greek not as an intellectual exercise but as a tool for ministry.
- To provide constant encouragement for students, showing them not only what they should learn but why.
- To teach only what is necessary at the moment, deferring the more complicated concepts until later.
- To reduce rote memorization to a minimum.
- To utilize current advances in linguistics, not for the purpose of teaching linguistics but to make learning Greek easier.
- To be innovative, not for the sake of newness but always looking for new ways to teach.

#### 1. A Tool for Ministry

Biblical Greek should not be taught simply for the sake of learning Greek. Although there is nothing necessarily wrong with that approach, it is inappropriate for a great number of students in colleges and seminaries. Too often they are taught Greek and told that eventually they will see why it is important to know the material. In my opinion, they should be shown, in the process of learning, why they are learning Greek and why a working knowledge of Greek is essential for their ministry.

#### 2. Encouragement

Most students come to Greek with varying degrees of apprehension. Their enthusiasm often wears down as the semester progresses. BBG, therefore, has built into it different ways of encouraging them.

Most of the exercises are from the Bible, mostly the New Testament, but some from the Septuagint. From day one, the students are translating the biblical text. If an exercise sentence has a word that is taught in a later chapter, it is translated. This gives students the satisfaction of actually

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translating a portion of the Bible. When the Greek in the exercises clarifies an exegetical or theological point, I have usually tried to point it out.

The disadvantage of using the biblical text is that the student may already know the verse in English. But with a little discipline on the student's part, this disadvantage is far outweighed by the advantages. There are also made-up sentences in the exercises.

- The frequency is given for every vocabulary word. It is one thing to learn that καί can mean "and," but to see that it occurs 9,162 times in the New Testament will motivate students to memorize it.
- There are some 5,423 different words in the New Testament that occur a total of 138,148 times.<sup>1</sup> After every vocabulary section, students are told what percentage of the total word count they now know. By the eighth chapter the student will recognize more than one out of every two word occurrences.
- Many chapters end with an "Exegesis" section. This section expands on the basic grammar of the chapter and enables students to see that grammar makes a difference in exegesis. For example, after they learn the present active indicative, I show them examples of the punctiliar, progressive, iterative, customary, gnomic, historical, and futuristic use of the present tense. If this is more information than a student needs, it can be skipped.
- My website (BillMounce.com) is full of additional helps that will encourage students, such as relevant blogs and videos, and you can have fun learning to speak a little Greek.

#### 3. Teaching Only What Is Necessary

Students only learn what is necessary in order to begin reading the biblical text. After they have mastered the basics and have gained some experience in reading, they are taught more of the details. In order to encourage the better student and make the text more usable for more teachers, additional detailed material is put in footnotes or in two sections at the end of the chapter called "Advanced Information" and "Exegesis."

For example, some of the rules for accents are included in the Advanced Information, so it is up to the student or teacher as to whether they should be learned. The adverbial participle provides another example. Students are taught to use the "-ing" form of the verb, prefaced by either a temporal adverb ("while," "after") or "because." In the Advanced Information, students can also read that they may include a personal pronoun identifying the doer of the participle, and that the time of the finite verb used to translate the participle is relative to the main verb.

Rationale Statement

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All word counts are taken from the 28th edition of Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum *Graece*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, using Accordance (not including titles).



#### 4. Memorization

Rote memorization for most people is difficult. It makes language learning a chore, and often results in students forgetting the language. I will do everything I can to keep the amount of memorization to a minimum. For example, in the noun system you will learn only one paradigm and eight rules instead of memorizing dozens of charts. As I often say in my own lectures: "You're welcome."

#### 5. Linguistics

Modern studies in linguistics have much to offer language learning. BBG does not teach linguistics for linguistics's sake, but the basic principles can be taught and applied generally.

For example, you will learn the "Square of Stops" since it explains many of the morphological changes of the verb. Also, a basic set of case endings are learned, and then students are shown how they are modified, only so slightly, in the different declensions. Once it is seen that the same basic endings are used in all three declensions, memorization is simplified. In the lexicon, all words are keyed to my *The Morphology of Biblical Greek*. As the students' knowledge and interest progresses, they will be able to pursue in-depth morphological work in MBG.

#### 6. Innovative

BBG approaches the joyful task of learning Greek from new and innovative angles, not merely for the sake of newness but from the desire to make learning Greek as rewarding as possible. The easier it is to learn the language, the more the language will be used by pastors and others involved in ministry.

- a. Definitions are derived from Prof. Bruce Metzger's Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek (with his permission). This way, when students move into second-year Greek and use Metzger's text for increasing their vocabulary, they will not have to relearn the definitions.
- b. In the appendix there is a lexicon that lists all words occurring ten times or more in the Greek Testament along with the tense forms for all simple verbs. (Any word in the exercises that occurs less than ten times will be identified in the footnote.) This will be needed for the additional and review exercises. There is also a full set of noun and verbal charts.
- c. Instead of switching students back and forth between nouns and verbs, BBG teaches nouns first and then verbs. Because verbs are so important, some have questioned the wisdom of not starting them until chapter 15. Here are my reasons.<sup>1</sup>





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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I have since learned that the US Foreign Service uses the same approach in teaching modern languages.

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- Over the years I found that excessive switching between nouns and verbs was one of the most confusing aspects to teaching Greek.
- Nouns are learned so quickly that you get to chapter 15 sooner than you might expect.
- If you listen to a child learn to speak, you can see that it is more natural to learn nouns first and later move on to the verbal system.

While this approach has proven itself over the years, I wanted to be sensitive to other teachers' preferences. Therefore, in the second edition I added a "Track Two" of exercises. It is an alternate set of exercises that allows you to move from chapter 9 up to chapter 15 and learn about verbs, and after several chapters on verbs come back and finish nouns. This involves switching back and forth between nouns and verbs only once, and in my experience it has shown itself to be effective. My online class at BillMounce.com makes it is easy to follow Track 2.

- d. At the beginning of most chapters there is an "Exegetical Insight" based on a biblical passage. These are written by New Testament scholars and demonstrate the significance of the grammar in the chapter.
- e. Next comes a discussion of English grammar and then a summary of Greek grammar where I make as many comparisons as possible between English and Greek, with an emphasis on the similarities between the two languages.
  - The brain learns by taking new data and looks for existing patterns of knowledge by which to process the new data. I did not know this when I first wrote BBG, but my instincts were that it is always best to move from what you know to what you don't know, the former making it easier to learn the latter. I do this consistently throughout BBG.
- f. Greek grammar is initially taught with English illustrations. When illustrations for new grammatical constructions are given in Greek, students spend much of their concentration on identifying the Greek forms and often do not fully understand the grammar itself. In BBG the grammar is made explicit in English, and only when it is grasped is it illustrated in Greek. For example,

A participle has verbal characteristics. "After eating, my Greek teacher gave us the final." In this example, eating is a participle that tells us something about the verb gave. The teacher gave us the final after he was done eating. (After is an adverb that specifies when the action of the participle occurred.)

g. There are many free resources available at my website, BillMounce.com. Go to the "Classes" menu and select "First Year Greek." Look also at the "Resources" menu. Most importantly, you have access to the online Greek classes that will walk you through the textbook and workbook (see below). Most of the free resources are available within the online class; just go to the appropriate chapter.

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# BillMounce.com

The chapter overviews on the website are 8-10 minute lectures over the main points of the chapter. They are in the online class.

There also are full-length lectures for sale at BillMounce.com. In these lectures I cover everything in the chapter, and I also walk through all the translation exercises from the workbook.





Teachers: I don't take class time lecturing over the textbook anymore; I use these full lectures. This way I am saving valuable class time for the most important thing I can do: work with the exercises. It really works doing it this way.



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As we move into the digital age, there are so many ways that I can help you learn Greek beyond just writing the grammar and workbook. One way is to be able to share my teaching with you.

This is especially for those who need a little extra help. I have recorded my two-semester course in which I go through each chapter in detail. These lectures can be purchased at my website, BillMounce.com. Once purchased, they are available inside the free online class, or you can buy them on a flash drive.

I am more excited about the possibilities of this website than I have been since the creation of the CD-ROM. The possibilities are endless as to how we can create a community to teach and learn biblical Greek. This site is constantly changing, so what follows is what I have right now.

To find these resources, go to the online class by clicking "Classes" on the home page, select "First Year Greek," and go to the appropriate chapter. A general listing of the resources can be found at BillMounce.com/resources.

#### For the Textbook

- The online class walks you chapter by chapter through the textbook.
- "Section Overview." Before each new major section, there is a video lecture giving the grand overview.
- "Monday with Mounce" blogs, which center on translation issues.
- "Chapter Overviews" cover the highlights of the chapter (including study guides).
- Mnemonic devices for learning vocabulary; students can even add their own (page xx).
- Color-coded hints for every parsing and translation exercise.
- Quizzes (and keys) for testing yourself on each chapter.

Resources can be downloaded from the appropriate lesson in the online class.

#### For the Workbook

- Answers for the entire workbook.
- Audio helps for the workbook. These are my discussions of the difficult parsing and sentence exercises; it's like being in class with me. These are in the online class.
- Screencasts over every exercise in the workbook (for purchase). It's like sitting down with me in class.

#### For the Class

- Sample syllabi.
- Overheads for each chapter in Keynote and PowerPoint.

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- Greek Bingo game.
- Fun songs rewritten in Greek.
- FlashWorks (vocabulary-learning software).
- Free Greek and Hebrew fonts.
- Biblical passages to read when you are done with the textbook.

#### Free Online Class

I strongly urge every student to have the online class open as they are working through a chapter in the workbook. Go to BillMounce.com, click on "Classes," and choose the appropriate class. Go to your current chapter. Here are the elements of each lesson.

#### **Encouragement**

Contains the Exegetical Insight from the chapter and relevant blogs.

#### Encouragement

**Exegetical Insight** 

Blog: Can You Not Sin? (1 John 3:6)

Blog: Are You "Saved" or Are You "Being Saved"? (1 Cor 15:2)

Blog: Difference between "have" and "have" (Acts 23:19)

Blog: "He" or "It" is Near (Mk 13:29)

Blog: Are branches burned, or will they be burned? (Matt 3:10)

#### **Downloads**

If there are any downloads relevant to the lesson, they will be here. Downloads for the entire class are in the Orientation lesson.

#### Downloads

Spreadsheet of the tense forms of verbs occurring 50 times or more

#### **Chapter Overview**

The Chapter Overview lectures are free, 8–10 minute lectures over the highlights of the chapter. The "Study Guide" is for note-taking. You can download the audio to your phone or listen online.

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#### Chapter Overview

Study guide Download the Chapter Overview for your iPod/iPad Watch the Chapter Overview

#### **Chapter Material**

The Chapter Material section contains overheads you can download (Keynote and PowerPoint), and you can watch or listen to me lecture through the chapter if you have purchased access. (You can also purchase videos on flash drives from the BillMounce.com store if you don't want to watch them online.) Remember, the online class is free, but the full lectures require payment.

#### Chapter Material

Overheads (Keynote) Lecture (purchase required) — Video | Audio Vocabulary FlashWorks (instructions)

Vocabulary walks you through the words you need to learn for the chapter in question. As you scroll down, you can see all the hints I have come up with to help you learn these words (see next page).

Vocabulary form: ἀκούω

Definition:

I hear, learn, obey, understand

Erasmian:

Modern:

Frequency: 428

GK: 201

Root: ακου

Forms:

άκούσω, ήκουσα, άκήκοα, -, ήκούσθην

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#### Cognates:

Acoustics (ἀκουστικός) is the science of sound.

#### Mnemonics:

I hear there is to be a coup.

#### **Mnemonic Singing:**

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine; now *hear* me while I pray, take all my guilt away, O let me from this day be wholly thine.



#### Notes:

ἀκούω can take a direct object in either the genitive or accusative.

If you scroll down and click on "Add Mnemonic," you can post your own mnemonics. Please do so; let's collect as many of these as we can. (To be able to do this, you will need to create a free account at BillMounce.com and log in.)

#### **Mnemonics**

Submitted by volleyballgirl on Mon, 2014-12-08 13:25

I can hear the baby coo.

**Biblical Concordance**. This shows you all the places this word is used in the Greek Testament, including its inflected form (transliterated and in Greek) and its parsing. This should give you a good feel for the word's semantic range.

#### Biblical Concordance

Matthew 2:3	Now when king Herod heard (akousas   ἀκούσας   aor act ptcp nom sg masc) this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;
Matthew 2:9	And having listened (akousantes $\mid$ ἀκούσαντες $\mid$ aor act ptcp nom pl masc) to the king, they continued their journey, and the star they had seen in its rising went before them until it stopped over the place where the child was.
Matthew 2:18	"A voice was (ἐkousthē   ἡκούσθη   aor pass ind 3 sg) heard (ἐkousthē   ἡκούσθη   aor pass ind 3 sg) in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."

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**FlashWorks**. Under the Chapter Material grouping you will also find "Flash-Works." This is a web version that is different from the desktop version and has some unique testing capabilities. Be sure to read the instructions, as I am constantly adding new features.



#### **Exercises**

Wiki

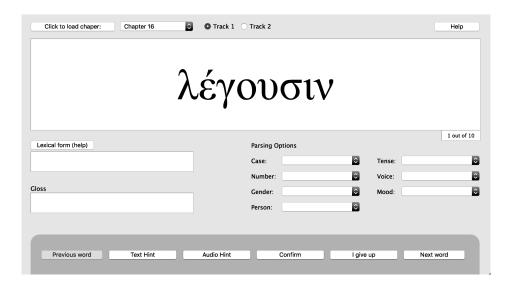
In the Exercises section you can click on **ParseWorks** to work through the parsing section of the workbook and check your answers (see next page).

# Exercises How to use the Exercises. Please read carefully. ParseWorks Warmups Translations Additional translations Screencast over the exercises









You can also work through the **Warmups** and **Translation** exercises.

ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ὄχλος· δαιμόνιον ἔχεις.
▶Text hint
•Audio hint
•Answer

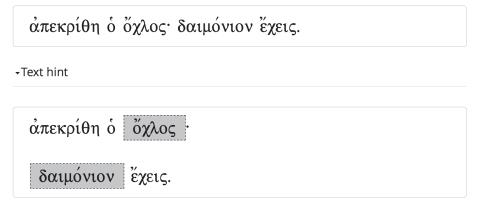
Clicking "Text hint" lays out the exercise in a graphical form and color codes some of the main words (see next page).

- Sentences are broken into phrases.
- Subjects are given a gray background and a blue-dotted border.
- Objects are given a gray background and a red-dotted border.
- The words that you are learning in the current chapter are also color coded into their morphemes (e.g., ἔχεις is color coded in three colors: ἔχ ε ις).

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This is the best way I know to help students without actually giving them the answer.

Click "Audio hint" to hear the kind of hints I give in class (again, without telling you the actual answer).



You can also see the answer to confirm you are right. Please do not abuse these answers. If you do not force yourself to do the homework without peeking, you will never learn the language.

ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ὄχλος· δαιμόνιον ἔχεις.
•Text hint
•Audio hint
-Answer
The crowd answered, "You have a demon."

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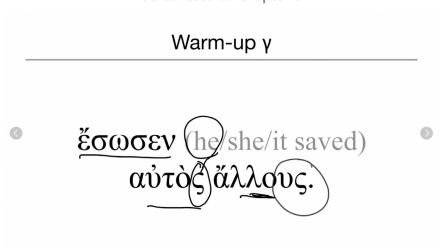




Additional Translations are workbook exercises 11–20.

**Screencasts** over each exercise in the workbook.

Screencast for Chapter 6



**Wiki** gives you the ability to enter your own made-up sentences. I hope you will help other students by submitting your own sentences.

#### **Assessment**

Finally, you can take some sample **quizzes** to prepare for your teacher's quiz. When you are done with the lesson, you can click the button "Click to mark this lesson as completed," just to help you keep track of where you are in the class

Assessment		
Quiz (key)		
Speed Quiz (over personal o	endings)	
Click to mark this lesson a	s completed	
16. Present Active Indicative	How to say, "I believe."	Yes

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# **FlashWorks**

FlashWorks is a vocabulary drilling program for Macintosh and Windows computers. It is available as a free download at BillMounce.com/flashworks.

FlashWorks tags each vocabulary word as to its chapter, category (noun, verb, adjective, preposition, other), and its degree of difficulty (1–5). Then, for example, you can call up all the verbs in chapters 15–20 with a degree of difficulty 3 through 4. The words are then randomly mixed and the fun begins. As you learn the words, you can change the difficulty rating to a lower number, or FlashWorks can watch how you are doing and change the rating automatically.









There is extensive help information at BillMounce.com/FlashWorks.

- An overview of the program
- How to download FlashWorks
- How to install FlashWorks
- The basics of starting and configuring FlashWorks
- How to download and install the sound files so FlashWorks can talk
- Detailed information on how to use FlashWorks, including how to create your own databases.

Because FlashWorks is free, we are not able to provide support. Please use Facebook.com/flashworks to help one another.

#### FlashWorks

Overview

Downloading FlashWorks

Installing FlashWorks

Starting FlashWorks

Sound files

How to use FlashWorks

Support

#### FlashWorks Help

Quick Start

Menu Bar

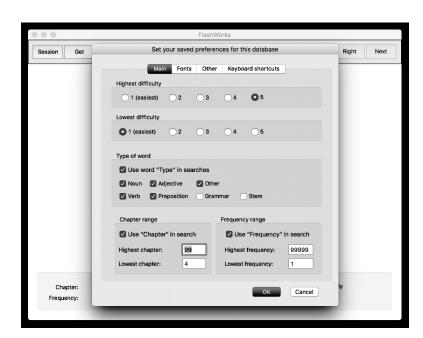
File Menu

Preferences

Build your own database

Forum support

Facebook page







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