

NEW TESTAMENT (COMMON) GREEK PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

| | | | | |
|---|-----|---------|----|-----------------|
| A | α | alpha | a | f <u>a</u> ther |
| B | β | beta | b | |
| Γ | γ | gamma | g | |
| Δ | δ | delta | d | |
| E | ε | epsilon | e | <u>e</u> nd |
| Z | ζ | zeta | z | |
| H | η | eta | ê | h <u>e</u> y |
| Θ | θ | theta | th | <u>th</u> ick |
| I | ι | iota | i | <u>i</u> t |
| K | κ | kappa | k | |
| Λ | λ | lambda | l | |
| M | μ | mu | m | |
| N | ν | nu | n | |
| Ξ | ξ | xi | ks | bo <u>x</u> |
| O | ο | omicron | o | <u>o</u> ff |
| Π | π | pi | p | |
| P | ρ | rho | r | |
| Σ | σ/ς | sigma | s | |
| T | τ | tau | t | |
| Υ | υ | upsilon | u | <u>u</u> t |
| Φ | φ | phi | f | |
| X | χ | chi | ch | Ba <u>ch</u> |
| Ψ | ψ | psi | ps | |
| Ω | ω | omega | ô | gro <u>w</u> |

✓ **Xi (χ):** This is the same sound as “ch” in “Bach,” *not* the sound like “ch” in “chair.” The same sound occurs in the Scottish “Loch,” as in “Loch Ness,” or the German “ach!”

✓ **Diphthongs:** When two vowels combine to make one sound, it is called a diphthong. There are seven diphthongs in Greek:

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| αι | <u>A</u> isle |
| ει | F <u>r</u> eight |
| οι | <u>O</u> il |
| αυ | <u>C</u> ow |
| ευ | eh-oo as in Edward without the “d” |
| ου | <u>F</u> ood |
| υι | <u>Q</u> ueen |

The “ευ” combination is probably the hardest to learn for most people. It may help to take the “ow” sound and say it slowly; if you notice, there are actually two sounds in “ow.” It starts out with “ah,” then glides to an “oo” sound, “ah-oo.” Try doing the same with “e” (as in “Edward”) and “oo” – “e-oo.” This is a little like the “e-w” in Edward—if you remove the “d.”

Breathings

The rough breathing is pronounced like an “h,” and looks like a backwards comma written over a vowel. The smooth breathing is not pronounced at all, and looks like a regular comma written over a vowel. Note the difference between “en” and “hen:”

| <u>smooth</u> | <u>rough</u> |
|---------------|--------------|
| ἔν | έν |
| “en” | “hen” |

In *older* New Testament manuscripts, the text is written in all capital letters (Uncial).

ΛΟΓΟΣ = λογος = logos = “word”
PHMA = ρημα = rayma = “word”

Notes

- ✓ **Sigma (σ, ς):** There are two forms for the letter sigma. When written at the end of a word, it is written like this: ς. If it occurs anywhere else, it is written like this: σ.
- ✓ **Upsilon (υ):** In the above table, pronounce this letter like “u” in “put.” The preferred pronunciation is actually more like the German “ü” as in “Brücke,” or like the French “u” as in “tu.” If you speak neither German or French, worry not; just pronounce it the way the table suggests.