A1 Beginner

Reading Greek Without Guessing Το αλφάβητο και η προφορά

Free printable worksheet · Look-alike letters, two-letter sounds (digraphs), the stress mark, and 5 reading exercises with answer key.

> Learning to read Greek takes one afternoon, not months. Many Greek letters look familiar from English or maths, while six capital letters play tricks on your eyes. Once you know those six traps, the common two-letter teams, and the stress mark (ο τόνος), you can read any street sign, café menu, or bus timetable in Cyprus.

1. The 24 Greek Letters capital, small, sound and an everyday word

Letter	Name	Sound	Example
Α α	άλφα	a as in *father*	αντίο *(andío)* bye
Β β	βήτα	**v** as in *vine* (not b)	βιβλίο *(vivlío)* book
Γ γ	γάμμα	soft gh / y before e, i	γάλα *(ghála)* milk
Δ δ	δέλτα	**th** as in *this*	δρόμος *(dhrómos)* road
Ε ε	έψιλον	e as in *pet*	εδώ *(edhó)* here
Ζ ζ	ζήτα	z as in *zoo*	ζεστός *(zestós)* hot
Η η	ήτα	**ee** as in *see* (not h)	ήλιος *(ílios)* sun
Θ θ	θήτα	**th** as in *think*	θάλασσα *(thálasa)* sea
Ι ι	ιώτα	ee as in *see*	ιστορία *(istoría)* story
Κ κ	κάππα	k (no puff of air)	καφές *(kafés)* coffee
Λ λ	λάμδα	l as in *lemon*	λεμόνι *(lemóni)* lemon
Μ μ	μι	m as in *map*	μαμά *(mamá)* mum

Letter	Name	Sound	Example
Ν ν	νι	n as in *no*	νερό *(neró)* water
Ξ ξ	ξι	**x / ks** as in *taxi*	ξένος *(xsénos)* foreign
Ο ο	όμικρον	o as in *pot*	όνομα *(ónoma)* name
Π π	πι	p (no puff of air)	πόρτα *(pórta)* door
Ρ ρ	ρο	**r** rolled/ tapped (not p)	ρόδα *(ródha)* wheel
Σ σ ς	σίγμα	s (use **ς** at word end)	σπίτι *(spíti)* house
Τ τ	ταυ	t (no puff of air)	τραπέζι *(trapézi)* table
Υ υ	ύψιλον	ee as in *see*	ύπνος *(ípnos)* sleep
Φ φ	φι	f as in *photo*	φίλος *(fílos)* friend
Χ χ	χι	rough **h** as in Scottish *loch*	χαρά *(hará)* joy
Ψ ψ	ψι	ps as in *lips*	ψωμί *(psomí)* bread
Ω ω	ωμέγα	o as in *pot* (same as o)	ώρα *(óra)* hour

Watch out: 6 false friends in capital and small print

Β β = **v** (never b) · **Η η** = **ee** (never h or n) · **Ν ν** = **n** (capital looks like N, small ν looks like English v) · **Ρ ρ** = **r** (never p) · **Χ χ** = throaty **h** (never ks) · **Π π** = **p** (not n).

2. Two-Letter Teams & the Stress Mark digraphs and ο τόνος

Vowel pairs (two letters, one sound)		
αι	*e (as in pet)*	ναι (yes), παίζω
ει / οι / υι	*ee (as in see)*	είναι (is), οικογένεια
ου	*oo (as in food)*	πού; (where?), μου
αυ	*af or av*	αυτοκίνητο (afto-), αύριο (av-)
ευ	*ef or ev*	ευχαριστώ (ef-), Παρασκευή (ev-)

Consonant teams (for b, d, g, ts, dz)		
μπ	*b (start) / mb (mid)*	μπύρα (beer), λαμπάδα
ντ	*d (start) / nd (mid)*	ντομάτα (tomato), πέντε
γκ / γγ	*g (start) / ng (mid)*	γκρι (grey), Αγγλικά
τσ	*ts (as in cats)*	τσάι (tea), πίτσα
τζ	*dz (as in adze)*	τζατζίκι (tzatziki)

Two quick reading rules: stress mark & Greek question mark

1. The stress mark (ο τόνος): Every word of two or more syllables has one accent over a vowel (ά, έ, ή, ί, ό, ύ, ώ). Stress that syllable strongly: καφ**έ**ς (ka-FES), θ**ά**λασσα (THA-la-sa). Moving the accent can change the meaning: π**ό**τε (when?) vs ποτ**έ** (never).

2. Greek question mark: Greek uses a semicolon (**;**) at the end of a question, not "?" — for example, Τι κάνεις**;** (How are you?).

3. Practice Exercises read aloud, then complete A–E

Exercise A · Spot the false-friend sound

Write the English sound of the underlined letter in each Greek word.

1. β**β**ιβλίο _____ **2.** ρ**ρ**ύζι _____ **3.** η**η**μέρα _____

4. χ**χ**άρτης _____ **5.** ν**ν**ερό _____ **6.** π**π**όλη _____

Exercise B · Sort the six ways to write the "ee" sound

Greek has six spellings for "ee" (ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι). Read each word aloud and write which "ee" spelling it uses.

1. σπίτι _____ **2.** είμαι _____ **3.** οικογένεια _____

4. φίλη _____ **5.** ύπνος _____ **6.** τυρί _____

Exercise C · Read real Cyprus street signs

Sound out each sign aloud, then match it (a–f) to its English meaning.

ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΙΟ **ΤΑΒΕΡΝΑ** **ΜΠΑΡ** **ΣΟΥΠΕΡ ΜΑΡΚΕΤ** **ΛΕΩΦΟΡΕΙΟ** **ΠΑΡΚΙΝΓΚ**

1. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΙΟ _____ a. Bar

2. ΤΑΒΕΡΝΑ _____ b. Bus

3. ΜΠΑΡ _____ c. Pharmacy

4. ΣΟΥΠΕΡ ΜΑΡΚΕΤ _____ d. Car park

5. ΛΕΩΦΟΡΕΙΟ _____ e. Supermarket

6. ΠΑΡΚΙΝΓΚ _____ f. Taverna (traditional restaurant)

4. Reading Ladder & Final Checks sound out real words before D and E

Cover the grey hints and read each box aloud smoothly — syllable, word, then short Cyprus phrase.

μα · ρι · α *ma-ri-a*	**λε · με · σός** *le-me-SÓS*	**κα · λη · μέ · ρα** *ka-li-MÉ-ra*	**πα · ρα · κα · λώ** *pa-ra-ka-LÓ*
καφές και νερό *ka-FÉS ke ne-RÓ*	**μένω στην Πάφο** *MÉ-no stin PÁ-fo*	**πόσο κάνει;** *PÓ-so KÁ-ni*	**καλό τριήμερο!** *ka-LÓ tri-Í-me-ro*

Exercise D · Write the Greek word using consonant & vowel teams

Use μπ, ντ, γκ, τσ, ου to spell these everyday words in Greek.

1. bank (*bángka*) _____

2. tomato (*domáta*) _____

3. tea (*tsái*) _____

4. bus stop (*stási* — start with στ) _____

Exercise E · Choose the right stress mark or punctuation

Underline the correct version in each pair.

1. “When do you arrive?” a) Πότε φτάνεις; b) Ποτέ φτάνεις?
2. “I never drink tea.” a) Δεν πίνω πότε τσάι. b) Δεν πίνω ποτέ τσάι.
3. “Good morning!” a) Καλημέρα! b) Καλήμερα!

Watch & Practise on the Greek in Cyprus YouTube Channel

Channel: GreekinCyprus (https://www.youtube.com/@greekincy) · **Free A1 Playlist (30 lessons):** https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFtp88G3rRig

- **The Greek Alphabet for Beginners: All 24 Letters | Greek A1 Lesson 1** — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lv0lv91Tt4o
- **How to Read Greek: Letter Pairs, Accents & the Greek Question Mark | Greek A1 Lesson 2** — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bzH89MEMGI
- **100 Greek Words You Already Know** — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGKqBpQ4btg

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Answer Key Λύσεις

Exercise A · False-friend sounds

1. **v** *(β is always v, like vivlío).*
2. **r** *(ρ is a tapped r, never p: rízi = rice).*
3. **ee** *(η is pronounced ee: iméra = day).*
4. **h (rough)** *(χ is a breathy/throaty h: hártis = map).*
5. **n** *(small ν sounds like n, even though it looks like v: neró = water).*
6. **p** *(π is p: póli = city).*

Exercise B · The “ee” spellings

1. **ι** (twice: σπ**ίτι**) · 2. **ει** (**εί**μαι) · 3. **οι** and **ει** (**οι**κογέν**ει**α) · 4. **ι** and **η** (φ**ίλη**) · 5. **υ** (**ύ**πνος) · 6. **υ** and **ι** (τ**υρί**)

Exercise C · Street signs

1. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΙΟ = **c (Pharmacy)** · 2. ΤΑΒΕΡΝΑ = **f (Taverna)** · 3. ΜΠΑΡ = **a (Bar)** · 4. ΣΟΥΠΕΡ ΜΑΡΚΕΤ = **e (Supermarket)** · 5. ΛΕΩΦΟΡΕΙΟ = **b (Bus)** · 6. ΠΑΡΚΙΝΓΚ = **d (Car park)**

Exercise D · Spelling with letter teams

1. **μπάνκα** (or τράπεζα for the standard Greek word) · 2. **ντομάτα** · 3. **τσάι** · 4. **στάση**

Exercise E · Stress & punctuation

1. **a) Πότε φτάνεις;** · 2. **b) Δεν πίνω ποτέ τσάι.** · 3. **a) Καλημέρα!**