



# Lesson 2a

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## Grammatical Terminology

**Chapter 5** of Mounce introduces you to nouns and the grammatical terms that are necessary to describe them accurately. It will probably be easiest to browse through this material first, then go back and study it carefully, comparing/supplementing this material with the textbook.

There are several different types of languages in the world. (These probably trace their origin to Babel, Gen. 11.)

- ◆ Some are **analytical languages** in which word **function** is determined by word **order**.  
English is an analytical language.

English: "Tom hit Bill."

Who hit whom?

Who is the "hitter" and the "hittee"?

How do you know?

"Tom hit Bill." ≠ "Bill hit Tom."

- ◆ Others are **inflected languages**: word **function** is indicated by changes in the **form** of the words. (Greek and Latin are inflected languages.)

Word order is not semantic in Greek. That is, the order of the words in a sentence does not affect the *meaning* of the sentence. Let me illustrate with some "goofy Greek."

Tom**os** hit Bill**ov**.  
= Bill**ov** hit Tom**os**.  
= Hit Bill**ov** Tom**os**.  
= Hit Tom**os** Bill**ov**.  
= Bill**ov** Tom**os** hit.  
= Tom**os** Bill**ov** hit.

If these were "real Greek" sentences, all six would say the same thing, despite the fact that the words occur in six different sequences. (Note the **endings** on the words.)

- ✓ The **form** of the words in Greek are thus much more crucial to understanding than the form of words in English.

- ✓ That means you need to understand more clearly the various grammatical categories used in Greek than you do in your own language (assuming that this is English!). The following categories are the key ones that you must know to understand nouns in Greek.

## Gender

This is a tough category to keep straight, especially in a “politically correct” society! The material here contradicts most of what you hear from politicians, the media, as well as popular usage. Just remember that we’re talking grammar here, not politics, ideology, or contemporary usage.

◆ Gender ≠ sex.

- ✓ **Sex** is a physiological category: **male** or **female**.
- ✓ **Gender** is a grammatical category: **masculine**, **feminine**, or **neuter**.
- ✓ Men and women do not belong to a **gender**. They belong to a **sex**.
- ✓ Words do not possess **sex**; they are characterized by **gender**.

✓ When gender and sex coincide it is called **natural gender**.

I.e., if a **feminine** gender word refers to a person (or animal) of the **female** sex, it is natural gender.

✓ Many English words have natural gender, but that is not as true in Greek.

◆ English indicates gender (if at all) one of three ways (and note that in English this also indicates sex—but Greek does it differently):

1. By adding or changing an ending, especially **-ess**:

**actor** > **actress**

**prince** > **princess**

2. By changing the word:

**boy** > **girl**

**uncle** > **aunt**

3. By adding another word:

**friend** > **boy friend**, **girl friend**

**bride** > **bridegroom**

◆ Pronouns: **he, she, it** = masculine, feminine, neuter gender (respectively)

**Ships** are normally referred to as feminine (**she**, ladies names).

**Hurricanes** used to be feminine until the feminist agenda made a deliberate change in our language.

**Man** was formerly either masculine or “generic,” but politically correct usage now restricts it to masculine (a perversion of grammar for ideological purposes).

◆ In Greek every noun has a fixed gender. Some are masculine, some are feminine, some are neuter. These never change.

✓ The gender of some words may sound “natural”—**υιός, son**, e.g., is **masculine**.

✓ Other words do not seem at all natural:

**κορασιον, little girl**, is **neuter**.

**χειρ, hand**, is **feminine**—regardless of whether it is a man’s or a woman’s hand.

# Number

The most common way to indicate **number** in English is to add an **s** to a noun to make it plural: **dog, dogs**.

But English has other ways to do the same thing:

**child, children**

**ox, oxen**

**mouse, mice**

**sheep** [singular], **sheep** [plural]

Greek:

λογος (**word**) is singular

λογοι (**words**) is plural

# Case

- ◆ **Case** identifies the **function** of a noun or pronoun in a sentence. (*Function* refers to whether a word is the subject or direct object or indirect object, etc. in a sentence.)
  - ✓ Nouns do not change form in English to indicate this change in function, but pronouns do.

## Nouns:

The *truck* ran over the dog.

The tank crushed the *truck*.

The word *truck* is spelled the same in both sentences, even though it functions as the subject in the first sentence and the object in the second.

## Pronouns:

In English, *he* and *him* are the same word:

*he* is nominative case (or, to use more common English terminology, it is in the subjective case);

*him* is accusative (or objective) case.

**"He saw George,"** but: **"George saw him."**

◆ To see the difference, try this: substitute a **pronoun** for **X** that refers to a male student; to a female student.

- **X** was late for class this morning.
- **X** was rebuked by the teacher for being late for class.
- The teacher rebuked **X** for being late to class.

◆ Substitute the word **prince** for **X** in the above examples; then change it to refer to the prince and his brothers; to his sister; to several of his sisters.

◆ **English** uses three **cases**: subjective, objective, and possessive.

✓ **Subjective** = the **subject** of a sentence

“**He** borrowed my computer.”

✓ **Objective** = the **direct object**

“He borrowed my **computer**.”



✓ **Possessive** = tells to whom something belongs

“He borrowed **my** computer.”

◆ English words **sometimes** change their spelling when they change case, but most of the time they do not.

◆ Greek words **almost always** change their spelling when they change case.

Once you are comfortable with the terminology discussed above (and in Mounce, ch. 5), move on to ch. 6. (There is no separate quiz for ch. 5.)