

The Greek Noun

Declensions

In linguistic terms, *declension* refers to the way nouns, pronouns, and adjectives in languages, particularly inflected ones like Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, change their form to express different grammatical categories such as case (nominative, genitive, etc.), number (singular, plural), and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter). In Greek and Hebrew, declensions are crucial because they help to indicate the function of a word in a sentence, such as whether it is the subject, object, or shows possession, among other roles.

First Declension: The first declension is characterized by long vowel endings like *-η* and *-α* in the nominative singular. Typically includes nouns that are mostly feminine but also some masculine nouns.

Second Declension: The second declension is categorized by *ο* class vowels. Masculine nouns generally have endings in *-ος* (e.g., *λόγος*) in the nominative singular, while neuter nouns end in *-ον*.

Third Declension: This declension is more irregular and diverse, containing nouns of all three genders (masculine, feminine, and neuter). The nouns in the third declension can have various stem endings and exhibit more complex case endings, such as *-ς* (e.g., *βασιλεύς*).

Gender refers to a system of noun classification that affects how nouns and related words (such as adjectives, pronouns, and verbs) are inflected in a language. In languages with grammatical gender, nouns are categorized into specific gender classes, which often determine the form of associated words (e.g., adjectives and pronouns) and can sometimes affect the verb conjugation.

In **Koine Greek**, there are three grammatical genders:

1. **Masculine:** This gender is often used for nouns referring to males but also includes many inanimate objects and abstract concepts. For example, *ἀδελφός* (*adelphos*) means "brother" and is masculine, while *λόγος* (*logos*) meaning "word" is also masculine, despite referring to an inanimate concept.
2. **Feminine:** This gender is generally used for nouns referring to females but also includes many non-personal and abstract nouns. For example, *μήτηρ* (*mētēr*) means "mother" and is feminine, as is *γλῶσσα* (*glōssa*) meaning "tongue" or "language."
3. **Neuter:** This gender is used for many inanimate objects or abstract concepts. For example, *παῖδιον* (*paidion*) meaning "child" and *δῶρον* (*dōron*) meaning "gift" are both neuter.

Grammatically, adjectives and articles must agree in gender with the noun they modify, and pronouns will take the same gender as the noun they replace.

Second Declension Vocabulary

The Nominative Singular ending is the lexicon form of the word.

ἄνθρωπος (*anthrōpos*) – man, human being

δοῦλος (*doulos*) – servant, slave

θάνατος (*thanatos*) – death

οὐρανός (*ouranos*) – heaven

υἱός (*huios*) – son

ἀδελφός (*adelphos*) – brother

καρπός (*karpos*) – fruit

νόμος (*nomos*) – law

κόσμος (*kosmos*) – world, universe, Inhabited world

δῶρον (*dōron*) – gift

παιδίον (*paidion*) – young child

ἄρτος (*artos*) – bread

Declining a noun refers to the process of changing the form of a noun to indicate its grammatical function in a sentence. This involves altering the noun's ending according to its **case**, **number**, and **gender**. In languages like Koine Greek and Latin, nouns are inflected, meaning their endings change based on these grammatical categories.

When declining a noun, it is inflected to show the following:

1. **Case:** This shows the noun's syntactical role in the sentence (subject, object, possession, etc.).
 - **Nominative:** The case of specific designation, the naming case.
 - **Genitive:** The case of definition or description.
 - **Ablative:** The case of separation.
 - **Dative:** The case of personal interest. It expresses the indirect object.
 - **Instrumental:** The case of means or association.
 - **Locative:** The case of position or location.
 - **Accusative:** The case of limitation or extension.
 - **Vocative:** The case of direct address.
2. **Number:** Indicates whether the noun is singular or plural.
3. **Gender:** The noun's grammatical gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter), which affects how it declines.

Case is determined by function, not form. In the Koine Greek language, it is important to understand that the relationship of the noun to the other words in the sentence always governs the case. Hence, although Genitive and Ablative share the same endings, they are clearly distinguished within the context and function of the sentence. There are eight cases in the Greek language: Nominative, Genitive, Ablative, Dative, Locative, Instrumental, Accusative, and Vocative.

Declension of *λόγος* (Masculine Second Declension):

Singular

Nominative: λόγος
Genitive: λόγου
Ablative: λόγου
Dative: λόγῳ
Locative: λόγῳ
Instrumental: λόγῳ
Accusative: λόγον
Vocative: λόγε

Plural

Nominative: λόγοι
Genitive: λόγων
Ablative: λόγων
Dative: λόγοις
Locative: λόγοις
Instrumental: λόγοις
Accusative: λόγους
Vocative: λόγοι

Second Declension Endings

Masculine Endings

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	ος	οι
Genitive/Ablative	ου	ων
Dative/Locative/Instrumental	ῳ	οις
Accusative	ον	ους
Vocative	ε	οι

Neuter Endings

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	ον	α
Genitive/Ablative	ου	ων
Dative/Locative/Instrumental	ῳ	οις
Accusative	ον	α
Vocative	ον	α

Second Declension Nouns in Scripture:

John 1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ **λόγος**. In a quality of a beginning was **the word**.

John 3:16 τὸν **υἱὸν** αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ. the son of him, the one of a kind.

Ephesians 2:10 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν ποιήματα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ **ἔργοις** ἀγαθοῖς. For we are his workmanship (poem), created in Christ Jesus on the basis of good works.