

# 22. The Personal Endings

## Lesson in a Nutshell

The personal endings give us four pieces of information about the verb.

1. The person
2. The number
3. The voice
4. The time of the action

They are very important to learn to recognize!

Obviously, if we set out to study 270 forms of every Greek verb we would soon lose our minds. Instead, we will learn clues to identify the tense, voice, mood, person and number. In most cases, these clues will tell us everything we need to know.

### How To Identify Person and Number

Greek (and many other languages) have a very slick way of indicating changes of person and number. Rather than using personal pronouns as we do in English, the ending of the verb is modified in such a way that the person and number are made clear in the verb itself.

Beginning with a simple verb like λύω (I loose), observe how the person and number change as the personal endings change:

Person	Ending	Verb + Ending	Translation
<b>(1s)</b> I	<b>ω</b>	λύω	I loose
<b>(2s)</b> you	<b>εις</b>	λύεις	You loose
<b>(3s)</b> he/she/it	<b>ει</b>	λύει	He/She/It looses
<b>(1p)</b> we	<b>ομεν</b>	λύομεν	We loose
<b>(2p)</b> you (all)	<b>ετε</b>	λύετε	You (all) loose
<b>(3p)</b> they	<b>ουσι(ν)</b>	λύουσιν	They loose

The key to identifying the person and number is to know the personal endings. There are four sets of endings.

Personal Endings			
		Active (do the action)	Middle/Passive (receive the action)
Primary (present & future time)	(1s) I	ω	ομαι
	(2s) you	εις	η
	(3s) he/she/it	ει	εται
	(1p) we	ομεν	ομεθα
	(2p) you (all)	ετε	εσθε
	(3p) they	ουσι(ν)	ονται
Secondary (past time)	(1s) I	ον	ομην
	(2s) you	ες	ου
	(3s) he/she/it	ε(ν)	ετο
	(1p) we	ομεν	ομεθα
	(2p) you (all)	ετε	εσθε
	(3p) they	ον	οντο

Why four? Because these endings do more than tell you person and number. They also give you information about:

1. The **voice** of the verb

**Active:** The subject does the action of the verb.

**Middle:** The subject does the action of the verb and it comes back to affect the subject.

**Passive:** The subject receives the action of the verb.

Notice the two columns: “Active” and “Middle/Passive.”

2. The **time** of the action

The **primary** endings are used for present and future time.

The **secondary** endings are used for past time.

Notice the two rows: “Primary” and “Secondary.”

In English, the table would be translated like this

Personal Endings			Active (do the action)	Middle/Passive (receive the action)
<b>Primary</b> (present & future time)	(1s) I		I ____ (I jump)  I do the action in present time.	I am ____ (I am jumped)  The action is done to me in present time.
	(2s) you			
	(3s) he/she/it			
	(1p) we			
	(2p) you (all)			
	(3p) they			
<b>Secondary</b> (past time)	(1s) I		I ____ (I jumped)  I did the action in past time.	I was ____ (I was jumped)  The action was done to me in past time.
	(2s) you			
	(3s) he/she/it			
	(1p) we			
	(2p) you (all)			
	(3p) they			

The chart below shows the way the endings are applied to λύω and gives the translations.

Personal Endings			Active (do the action)	Middle/Passive (receive the action)
<b>Primary</b> (present & future time)	(1s) I		λύω I loose ω	λύομαι I am loosed ομαι
	(2s) you		λύεις you loose εις	λύῃ you are loosed η
	(3s) he/she/it		λύει he/she/it looses ει	λύεται he/she/it is loosed εται
	(1p) we		λύομεν we loose ομεν	λύομεθα we are loosed ομεθα
	(2p) you (all)		λύετε you (all) loose ετε	λύεσθε you (all) are loosed εσθε
	(3p) they		λύουσιν they loose ουσι(ν)	λύονται they are loosed ονται
<b>Secondary</b> (past time)	(1s) I		ἔλυον I was loosing ον	ἔλυόμην I was being loosed ομην
	(2s) you		ἔλυες you were loosing ες	ἔλύου you were being loosed ου
	(3s) he/she/it		ἔλυεν he/she/it was loosing ε(ν)	ἔλύετο he/she/it was being loosed ετο
	(1p) we		ἔλύομεν we were loosing ομεν	ἔλύομεθα we were being loosed ομεθα
	(2p) you (all)		ἔλύετε you (all) were loosing ετε	ἔλύεσθε you (all) were being loosed εσθε
	(3p) they		ἔλυον they were loosing ον	ἔλύοντο they were being loosed οντο

You may notice something else going on here.

In the secondary row, all of the verbs begin with an ε. Why is that? Because in Greek, when a verb goes into past time, it **augments**. It does this by adding an ε to the front of the verb.

It might help you to think of the way that English puts a verb into the past time.

Jump  
becomes  
Jump**ed**

The “**ed**” on the end of the word makes it past time. Think of the ε added to the front of a Greek verb in the same way.

*If the Greek verb has an augment on the front, it is in the past time.*

So you get two clues you are in the past: the augment and the secondary endings.

Let’s experiment with a few examples.

βλέπω means “I see.” What would the following forms of βλέπω mean? Cover the answers on the right and see if you can figure out the translations. I will translate them all using the continuous aspect.<sup>1</sup>

βλέπεις	You are seeing
βλέπετε	You (all) are seeing
βλέπομαι	I am being seen
βλέπεσθε	You (all) are being seen
ἔβλεπον	I (or they) were seeing
ἐβλέπομεν	We were seeing
ἐβλέπετο	He/She/It was being seen
ἐβλέποντο	They were being seen

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<sup>1</sup> The primary forms in these examples are all present tense, which can be undefined or continuous aspect. The secondary forms are all imperfect tense, which can only be continuous aspect. More about this soon.

The hardest part of this **by far** is figuring out the English. Compare the nice compact Greek verbs with the complicated English translations.

Aren't you glad you are learning Greek?

And if you are feeling blown away by all this new information, don't give up! We will be seeing this again and again and again and again...



You **will** get it!