19. Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

Lesson in a Nutshell

Interrogative and indefinite pronouns follow the 3-3 pattern and are identical except that the interrogative pronoun always has an accent on the first syllable.

The relative and interrogative pronouns can be confusing because of overlapping forms in Greek and English.

	Relative	**Interrogative**	**Indefinite**
English	who, which	who? which? what?	someone something anyone anything
Greek	ὅς, ἥ, ὅ	τίς, τί	τις, τι

Be Brave!

Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

Interrogative Pronoun				
		M / F (3)		**N (3)**
Singular	Nom	τίς — who? what?	τί — which? what?	
	Gen	τίνος — of whom? of what?	τίνος — of which? of what?	
	Dat	τίνι — to whom? to what?	τίνι — to which? to what?	
	Acc	τίνα — whom? what?	τί — which? what?	
Plural	Nom	τίνες — who? what?	τίνα — which? what?	
	Gen	τίνων — of whom? of what?	τίνων — of which? of what?	
	Dat	τίσιν — to whom? to what?	τίσιν — to which? to what?	
	Acc	τίνας — whom? what?	τίνα — which? what?	

Indefinite Pronoun				
		M / F (3)		**N (3)**
Singular	Nom	τις — someone something	τι — something	
	Gen	τινός — of someone of something	τινός — of something	
	Dat	τινί — to someone to something	τινί — to something	
	Acc	τινά — someone something	τι — something	
Plural	Nom	τινές — someone something	τινά — something	
	Gen	τινῶν — of someone of something	τινῶν — of something	
	Dat	τισίν — to someone to something	τισίν — to something	
	Acc	τινάς — someone something	τινά — something	

The interrogative pronoun interrogates. It asks questions. Who? What? Which? Here are a couple of examples in English.

>   Who is enjoying learning Greek?

>   What would you rather be doing right now?

>   Which is your favorite football team?

As we have seen, one obnoxious coincidence of English is that "who" serves as both the relative pronoun (which we studied in the previous lesson) and the interrogative pronoun. Do not let this confuse you.

>   Interrogative: Who is working hard?

>   Relative: The students, *who are working hard*, will do well.

The indefinite pronoun does not interrogate. It refers to some undefined subject. Here are a couple of English examples:

>   Someone will get tired of this lesson before it is over.

>   Hand me something to wipe up this mess!

As you can see, these pronouns look very much alike, even though their meaning is quite different. Can you spot the difference between the two forms?

The difference is that

The interrogative pronoun <u>always</u> has an accent on the first syllable.

The indefinite pronoun <u>never</u> has an accent on the first syllable.

I find it helpful to think of the accent on the first syllable as a question mark.

The Grand Confusion

It is easy to see why there is confusion with these pronouns. In English, there is overlap in form between the forms of the relative and interrogative pronouns. In Greek, there is overlap in form between the interrogative and indefinite pronouns.

	Relative	Interrogative	Indefinite
English	who, which	who? which? what?	someone something anyone anything
Greek	ὅς, ἥ, ὅ	τίς, τί	τις, τι

Please remember that Greek *does* give you a clue to distinguish the interrogative pronoun from the indefinite pronoun. I'll say it again:

The interrogative pronoun <u>always</u> has an accent on the first syllable.

The indefinite pronoun <u>never</u> has an accent on the first syllable.

What pattern of declension do these two pronouns follow? Hopefully you can guess!

turn the page for the exciting answer

3-3

Interrogative Pronoun				
		M / F (3)		**N (3)**
Singular	**Nom**	τίς — who? what?	τί — which? what?
	Gen	τίνος — of whom? of what?	τίνος — of which? of what?
	Dat	τίνι — to whom? to what?	τίνι — to which? to what?
	Acc	τίνα — whom? what?	τί — which? what?
Plural	**Nom**	τίνες — who? what?	τίνα — which? what?
	Gen	τίνων — of whom? of what?	τίνων — of which? of what?
	Dat	τίσιν — to whom? to what?	τίσιν — to which? to what?
	Acc	τίνας — whom? what?	τίνα — which? what?

Indefinite Pronoun				
		M / F (3)		**N (3)**
Singular	**Nom**	τις — someone something	τι — something
	Gen	τινός — of someone of something	τινός — of something
	Dat	τινί — to someone to something	τινί — to something
	Acc	τινά — someone something	τι — something
Plural	**Nom**	τινές — someone something	τινά — something
	Gen	τινῶν — of someone of something	τινῶν — of something
	Dat	τισίν — to someone to something	τισίν — to something
	Acc	τινάς — someone something	τινά — something

Masc / Fem 3	Neuter 3
ς	–
ος	ος
ι	ι
α	–
ες	α
ων	ων
σιν	σιν
ας	α

Just in case you have forgotten, this means that they follow

> **third** declension in the masculine <u>and</u> feminine, and
> **third** declension in the neuter.

This looks exactly like the third declension portion of our noun endings chart (in yellow).

Study the charts above until you can see how the third declension endings are being added to show you the case, number, and gender of the pronouns.

Notice that the English forms change a little bit to give you information about their case, number and gender. But the Greek forms do it regularly, consistently, and beautifully.

Yay Greek!