

# **Guide to Basic Greek**

## **Diagramming**

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## **Introduction**

This is a basic guide to diagramming Greek sentences. Some of these different constructions may be unfamiliar to you (i.e., those of you who are in your first or second semester), though many will have been introduced to you through either your beginning grammar, class discussion, class handout or syntax book. Little attempt is made in the following to explain the meaning of the different constructions. If you do not understand a construction, either ask a tutor, a professor, a local Koine-speaking inhabitant or live in denial.

This document has since its original creation been expanded and included in KoineWorks Diagramming by Lexel Software. For more information visit [www.lexelsoftware.com](http://www.lexelsoftware.com).

## Subject and Verb

The most basic elements of a Greek sentence are the subject and the verb. These two elements will be contained in every Greek sentence (though the subject may be imbedded in the verb, and thus unexpressed). The subject and the verb are put in the following places on the diagram:



or, for an example in Greek,

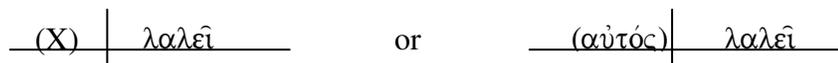


The horizontal line that the subject and verb are sitting on is called the **base line**. In this example, you can also see that the subject is separated by a vertical line that runs through the base line. This line is called a **predicate marker**. This marker is used to clearly separate the subject from the verb.

All of the other elements of the Greek sentence are built around this basic nucleus. Even when the subject of the verb is left unexpressed (which is quite often), it is generally best to include it on the diagram for clarity's sake. The diagrammer can either check the context and find the subject, or can simply put an "X" on the diagram in the place of where the subject would be. In either case, the supplied subject should be put in parentheses. For example:

λαλεῖ.

He is speaking



In both cases it is clear that the subject is implicit in the verb. This should make your diagram look neater and should help cut down on possible confusion.

## Objects and Complements

There are two other elements that will be placed on the base line along with the subject and verb. These elements are the **object** and the **complement**.

The object, or more precisely, the direct object, is placed after the verb on the base line and is separated from the verb with a vertical line that runs to the base line but not through it. This line is called the **object marker**.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος λαλεῖ τὸν λόγον.  
The man is speaking the word.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος | λαλεῖ | τὸν λόγον

The predicate nominative, one type of complement, is placed after a linking verb and is separated from it by a line that slants backward towards the beginning of the sentence. This line also does not run through the base line. This line is called the **complement marker**. In this example, the verb is followed by a predicate adjective, one type of complement (the predicate nominative would also be diagrammed in this manner).

ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν μακάριος.  
The man is blessed.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος | ἐστὶν \ μακάριος

Two other constructions that occur fairly frequently need to be noted. These constructions are the double accusatives of object-complement and the double accusatives of person-thing (see Wallace, *GGBB*, 181-9).

The object-complement construction uses both the object marker and complement marker from above. The object comes first after the verb and is separated from it by the object marker. The complement comes after the object and is separated from it by the complement marker.

οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους (John 15:15)  
no longer do I call you [obj] servants [comp]

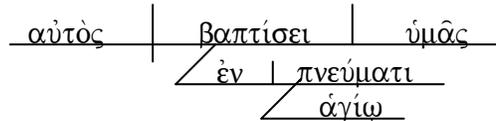
(X) | λέγω | ὑμᾶς \ δούλους  
οὐκέτι

(Adverbs like οὐκέτι are diagrammed under the element they modify. This will be discussed below)



Prepositional phrases are diagrammed with similar characteristics, though with one significant change. On the line below the base line, the preposition and its object are separated by an object marker (like direct objects above).

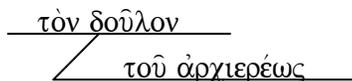
αὐτός...βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. (Mark 1:8)  
 he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.



## Genitives and Datives

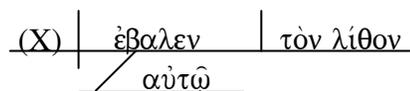
Most genitives and datives<sup>1</sup> are diagrammed like adverbs and attributive adjectives. They are on a shelf below the base line and connected to it with a line that slants upwards from the left to the right. For example:

τὸν δούλον τοῦ ἀρχιερέως (Matt 26:51)  
 the slave of the high priest.



Dative indirect objects are also diagrammed under the base line; more specifically, they are diagrammed directly under the verbal element. It is diagrammed like the genitive above, though the horizontal line is extended slightly beyond the line that connects it with the base line. For example:

ἔβαλεν τὸν λίθον αὐτῷ.  
 He threw the stone to him.

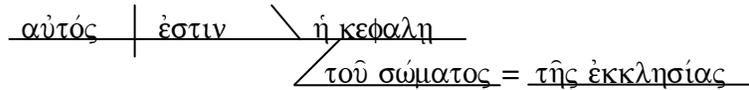


## Appositional Constructions

<sup>1</sup> The main exceptions would be genitives and datives that are in simple apposition (see next section).

When a word is in simple apposition, it is connected to the word to which it is in apposition by an equal sign (=). This signifies that the appositional noun is making some assertion about the noun it modifies. All cases occur in appositional constructions.

αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας (Col 1:18)  
 he is the head of the body, the church.



Sometimes whole phrases are set in apposition to a word. In this case the whole phrase is put in brackets and connected to the word to which it is in apposition by an equal sign.

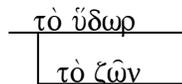
The above example shows how to diagram words that are in simple apposition to other words. However, the genitive in apposition (as opposed to the genitive in simple apposition) is diagrammed differently, being diagrammed as most genitives, under the element that it modifies.

## Participles

The participle, being a very versatile part of speech, is diagrammed a number of different ways.

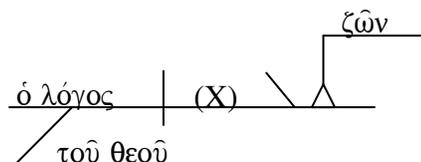
Adjectival participles in the attributive position are diagrammed below the base line under the substantive that they modify. The participle's line is connected to the base line by a vertical line.

τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν (John 4:11)  
 the living water



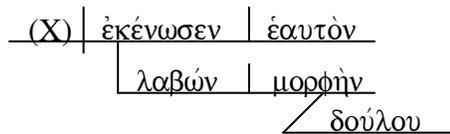
Adjectival participles that are in the predicate position are diagrammed on a standard on the base line in the position that a regular adjective in the predicate position would normally be placed.

ζῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (Heb 4:12)  
 the word of God is living



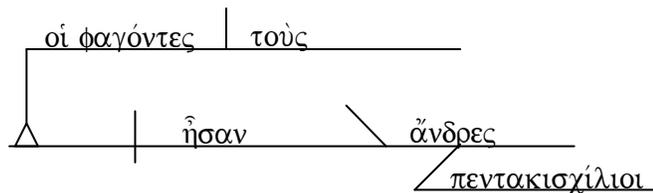
Adverbial participles are diagrammed like the attributive adjectival participle above, except that they will be connected to a verb.

ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν (Phil 2:7)  
 he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant.



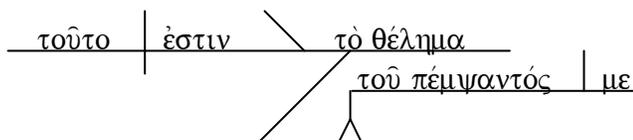
Though adverbial and adjectival participles are diagrammed in a similar way, substantival participles are diagrammed somewhat differently. Substantival participles and all their modifiers are put on a standard above the place that the participle would stand on the base line. For example, when the substantival participle is functioning as the subject of the sentence, it is put on a standard above the subject position on the base line. For example:

ἦσαν οἱ φαγόντες τοὺς ἄρτους πεντακισχίλιοι ἄνδρες (Mark 6:44)  
 those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.



However, if the substantival participle is functioning as a regular genitive or dative substantive, then it is diagrammed on a standard above the place where any typical genitive would be found. For example:

τοῦτο...ἐστὶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με (John 6:39)  
 this is the will of the one who sent me.

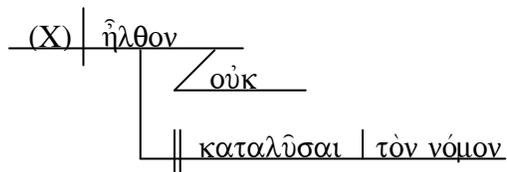


If the substantival participle is functioning as the object of a preposition, then the standard will stand in the place where a normal object of a preposition would stand. If the substantival participle is functioning as the direct object, the standard would stand after the object marker on the base line.

## Infinitives

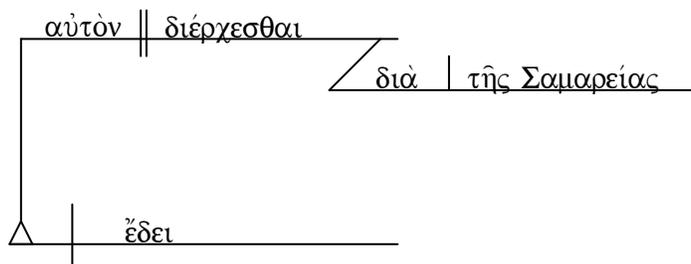
Infinitives can function both in an adverbial fashion and as substantives. Infinitives that function adverbially are diagrammed like adverbial participles, under the verb they modify and connected by a vertical line. However, before the infinitive, two vertical lines run through the line it sits on. This is the **infinitive marker**. For example:

...οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον (Matt 5:17)  
I did not come to destroy the law.



The substantival infinitive is diagrammed like a substantival participle, except that it has an infinitive marker. For example:

ἔδει...αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας (John 4:4)  
For him to pass through Samaria was necessary



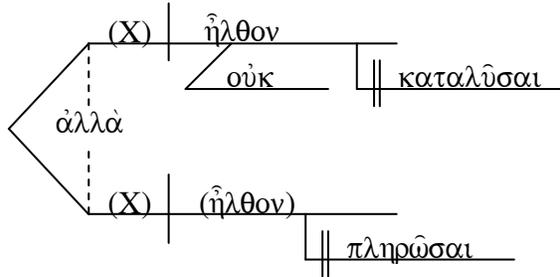
## Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used to connect words. Conjunctions serve a variety of different functions and many of these are diagrammed differently.

Some conjunctions coordinate nouns, verbs, participles, whole clauses and other things. There are a number of conjunctions used in this way, such as καὶ and δέ. Other

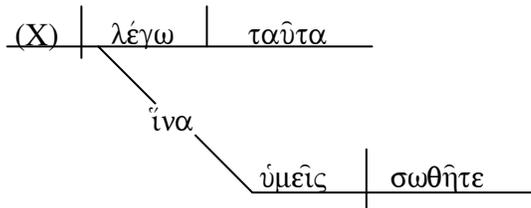
conjunctions contrast two clauses, nouns, verbs, etc. For example, δέ and ἀλλά are used in this manner. When two items are connected, they are joined by a dotted line with the conjunction being placed on that line.

οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι, ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι (Matt 5:17)  
I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill [the Law]



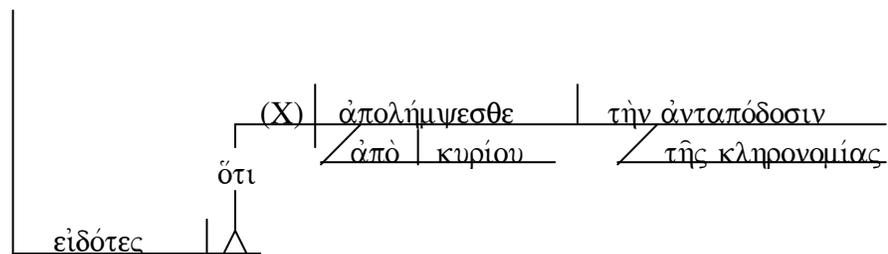
Some conjunctions function adverbially and usually introduce subordinate clauses. Examples of conjunctions that function in this way are ἵνα, ὅπως and ὥστε.

ταῦτα λέγω ἵνα ὑμεῖς σωθῆτε (John 5:34)  
I say these things in order that you might be saved.



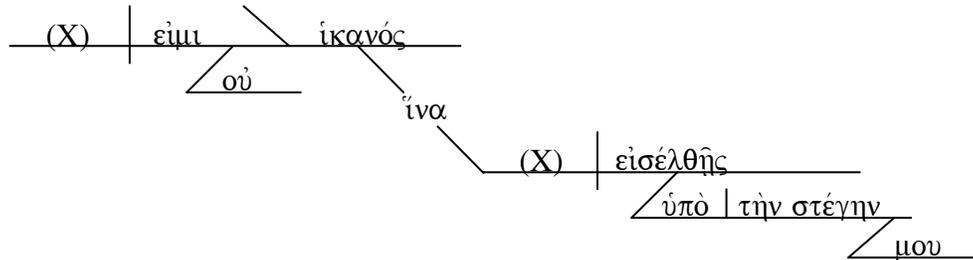
Other conjunctions can function substantively. Both ὅτι and ἵνα are used commonly in this manner. In the cases where the conjunction is functioning as a content conjunction, the clause will take the place of a substantive somewhere in the sentence.

εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήμψετε τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας.  
(Col 3:24)  
knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.



Sometimes these conjunctions can function epexegetically (adjectivally). In such cases the conjunction and clause that follows is diagrammed directly below the noun or adjective that is being modified.

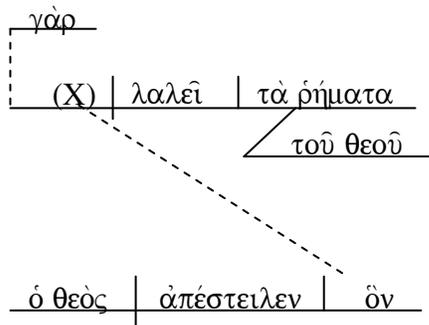
οὐ ἰκανός εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθῃς (Luke 7:6)  
 I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.



## Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are diagrammed according to the same rules that govern the diagramming of any independent or dependent clause. Subjects, verbs, direct objects, etc., go in the same place as they do in regular clauses. What differentiates the diagramming of the relative clause is that it contains a relative pronoun that will have its own function as a subject or object, etc., in its clause. It is connected to its antecedent in the main clause by a dotted line.

ὃν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ. (John 3:34)  
 For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God.

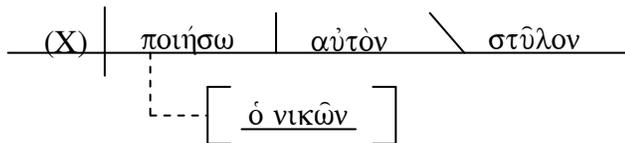


## Grammatically Independent and Other Constructions

Grammatically independent constructions are those that do not have any direct syntactical connection to the rest of the sentence. They are semantically connected to the idea of the clause though grammatically they have no connection. There are several different kinds of grammatically independent constructions.

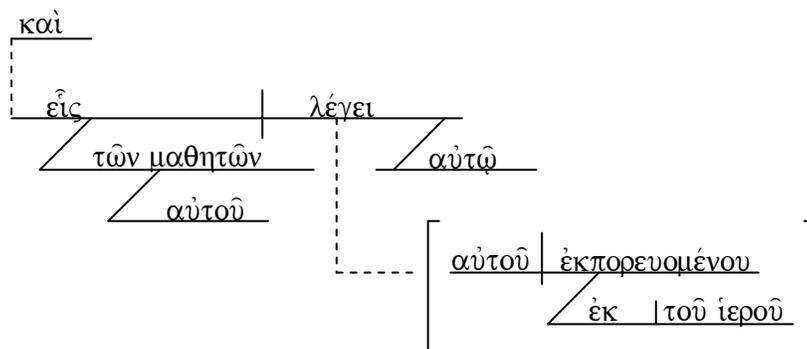
The pendent nominative is one of these. Since the pendent nominative construction is not syntactically related to the rest of its sentence, it is separated from the sentence in which it occurs and is put in brackets. This bracketed construction is then connected to the main verb by a dotted line. The parenthetic nominative is diagrammed in a similar way.

ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον (Rev 3:12)  
 the one who overcomes, I will make him a pillar



Genitive absolute constructions, which contain a genitive participle, are diagrammed similar to the construction above.<sup>2</sup> When the construction contains other words, like a subject (which will be in the genitive case as well) or an object, they are coupled with the participle and not with the rest of the sentence.

Καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ λέγει αὐτῷ εἷς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ...  
 (Mark 13:1)  
 And while he was coming out of the temple, one of His disciples said to him...



Vocatives are diagrammed above the sentence in which they occur, generally above the verb, and are connected to the verb with a dotted line.

<sup>2</sup> Nominative, dative and accusative absolute constructions are diagrammed in a similar manner.

Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας  
You, Lord, established the earth in the beginning.

