<http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkindex.htm>

**GREEK NOUNS (Shorter Definitions)**

A noun in the Greek language is viewed just like the English [noun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN). But because Greek is a highly [inflected](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/inflect.htm#INFLECTION) language (i.e. the form of words change to indicate the role each word plays in the sentence), a noun changes forms based upon its relationship to other words and how it functions in the sentence. The stem of the noun contains the basic meaning of the noun, but a suffix is added to indicate the noun’s role in the sentence. The endings are changed according to certain patterns, or ‘declensions’, that indicate what is the number, case, and gender of the noun form. To "decline" a noun means to analyze it and break it down into its basic parts according to **number**, **gender**, and **case**- see below. ('Declension' is a subset of the broader term '[inflection](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/inflect.htm#INFLECTION)', in that it only refers to nouns and pronouns, not to verbs. There are a number of different patterns in which nouns decline; these patterns are referred to as 'paradigms'.)

  **Grammatical Number of Nouns**

Number can either be **singular** or **plural**. A [noun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) that is in a singular form indicates "only one". A noun that is in the plural form indicates "more than one." In English, most nouns change forms depending on whether it is singular or plural. However, some nouns and [pronouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PRONOUN) do not change form for singular or plural; e.g. "you" - singular, and "you" - plural. The Greek language always makes a distinction between singular and plural forms.

**Grammatical Gender of Nouns**

Gender, as it relates to [nouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) and other [substantives](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SUBSTANTIVE) in the Greek language, does not necessarily refer to "male" and "female". It refers to grammatical gender, which is determined purely by grammatical usage and must be learned by observation. Although nouns referring to people or animals that are obviously "male" or "female" would normally (but not always) be classified as masculine or feminine accordingly, the gender of most nouns seems to be somewhat arbitrary. Every noun must fall into one of three categories of gender: **masculine**, **feminine**, or **neuter**. The fact of gender, when considering a word in isolation, is of little importance to the student of the Greek New Testament. But in analyzing a [sentence](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SENTENCE) as a whole, gender may play a key role, especially when considered along with the [adjectives](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADJECTIVE), [pronouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PRONOUN), and relative clauses that may be present. Taking note of the gender may alter altogether what a sentence may seem to be saying in English.
For example: "And receive...the sword of the spirit which is the word of God"( Eph 6:17). The word "sword" in Greek is feminine gender and the word "spirit" is neuter gender. So it is important in this sentence to find out what is the antecedent of the relative pronoun "which". (i.e. What is the "which" referring back to?) The word "which" in this sentence is neuter, therefore it is referring back to the word "spirit" and not "sword." Thus this sentence means: "And receive...the sword of the spirit which (spirit) is the word of God."

**Noun Cases**

The term "case" relates to [substantives](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SUBSTANTIVE) ([nouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) and [pronouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PRONOUN)) and [adjectives](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#ADJECTIVE) (including [participles](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#PARTICIPLE)). It classifies their relationship to other elements in the [sentence](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SENTENCE). Noun cases are formed by putting the ‘stem’ of the noun with an ‘ending’. The case form is shown by the ending of the word. There are four different case forms in Greek. The four cases are [Nominative](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/nouns1.htm#NOMINATIVE), [Genitive](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/nouns1.htm#GENITIVE), [Dative](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/nouns1.htm#DATIVE), and [Accusative](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/nouns1.htm#ACCUSATIVE). Following is a discussion of these four different cases. There is another case not included in the four main noun cases because it is so closely related to the nominative: the [Vocative](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/nouns1.htm#VOCATIVE). (Note that in the following definition of each noun case, it only refers to nouns which are not in [prepositional phrases](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PREPOSITION). When a noun is the object of a preposition, the preposition usually dictates the case of the noun).

**Nominative Case**
A [noun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) or [pronoun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PRONOUN) that is the [subject](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SUBJECT) of the [sentence](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#SENTENCE) is always in the nominative case. Likewise a noun that is in the [predicate](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#PREDICATE) part of a sentence containing a [linking verb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#LINKING)should also be in the nominative case.
For example: "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Eph 5:25). The word "Christ" is in the nominative case in Greek and is therefore the subject of this sentence.
Galatians 5:22 says: "But the *fruit* of the spirit is *love, joy, peace, longsuffering*, ..." As the subject of the sentence, the Greek word for "fruit" is in the nominative case. Likewise the words in the predicate part of the sentence, that are equated to "fruit" by the [copulative verb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#LINKING) "is", are also in the nominative case in Greek.

**Genitive Case**
For the most part, the genitive is often viewed as the case of possession. In more technical terms one noun in the genitive case helps to qualify another [noun](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN) by showing its "class" or "kind". The genitive case has more uses than most other cases, but in general a noun in the genitive case helps to limit the scope of another noun by indicating its "kind" or "class". It is generally translated into English with a [prepositional phrase](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/grkmisc.htm#PREPOSITION) starting with the word "of". The most common use of the genitive is to show possession (although it does not necessarily indicate actual, literal ownership).
For instance: "the servant *of the high priest*" (Mark 14:47). The words "of the high priest" are in the genitive case in Greek and modify the word "servant". (In Greek the word "of" is not present, but it is supplied in English in the translation of the genitive case). Here the genitive helps to qualify "which" servant the writer is referring to. It is helping to limit the sphere of all servants to a particular one.
And: "But you have received a spirit *of sonship*..." (Rom 8:15). Again the word "sonship" is in the genitive case, telling what kind of spirit we have received.
(Please be sure to see the list of '[Reference Sheets](http://ntgreek.org/pdf/reference-pdfs.htm)' where the genitive and other uses and classifications can be printed out for quick reference.)

**Dative Case**
The dative is the case of the [indirect object](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#IO), or may also indicate the *means* by which something is done. The dative case also has a wide variety of uses, with the root idea being that of "personal interest" or "reference". It is used most often in one of three general categories: *Indirect object*, *Instrument* (means), or *Location*. Most commonly it is used as the indirect object of a sentence. It may also indicate the means by which something is done or accomplished. Used as a dative of location, it can show the "place", "time", or "sphere" in which something may happen.
For example: (*Indirect object*): "Jesus said *to them*", or "he will give the Holy Spirit *to those* who ask" (Luke 11:13).

(*Instrument* or *Means*): "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by (*by means of*) prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). In this sentence, there is a single Greek word translated into the phrase "by prayer" showing the means by which to let our requests be made known to God.
(Location): "... and *on the third day* He will be raised up" (Matt 20:19). The phrase "the third day" is in the dative case, showing the time in which Jesus will be raised. In this sentence, there is no Greek word present that is translated into the English word "on"; it is added to show the meaning of the dative of location.

**Accusative Case**
The accusative case is the case of the [direct object](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#DO), receiving the action of the [verb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#VERB). Like the other cases, the accusative has a wide variety of uses, but its main function is as the direct object of a [transitive verb](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#TRANSITIVE). The direct object will most often be in the accusative case.
For example: "As newborn babes, long for the guiless *milk*of the word" (1 Peter 2:2). The word "milk" is in the accusative case and is functioning as the direct object of the transitive verb "long for" (or "desire").

**Vocative Case**
The vocative is the case of direct address. It is used when one person is speaking to another, calling out or saying their name, or generally addressing them. With many [nouns](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/terms.htm#NOUN), the case form of the vocative is the same as the nominative, but the context and function leave no question as to whether the person is being addressed or, contrariwise, spoken about. (Note that, obviously, the vocative is used most often in conjunction with the "[second person](http://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#PERSON)" form of the verb).
For example: "... *Lord Jesus*, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). Here Stephen is directly addressing the Lord, so the form of "Lord Jesus" is in the vocative case. (Note that the verb "receive" is also in the second person, as would be expected).