

Wermuth's "Famous Quotes & Memory Joggers"

When teaching Beginning Greek, I have found it helpful for students to keep a "running list" of clear, concise statements about study methodologies or translation observations that will keep them on track by steering their thinking in the right direction. Below is a listing of those "Famous Quotes and Memory Joggers" that I utilize as I am teaching.

1. Before completing translation exercises, **always study vocabulary and structures** (paradigms) *first!*
2. The **primary "force"** (function) of a Greek tense is **"kind of action,"** not "time." "Time" is a consideration occurring and governed via "Indicative Mode" verbs. In all other modes, the focus is "kind of action."
3. All Greek *neuter* nouns repeat their "Nominative" endings in the "Accusative" (sing. and plural, respectively).
4. The *Locative, Instrumental, and Dative* (L.I.D.) cases can be easily recognized by the "iota" that appears in the ending—for the most part (except with 3rd declension nouns) either an "iota subscript" or an "iota sandwich" (i.e., *-οις* or *-αις*). Even the "L.I.D." case acronym is helpful, since it is also spelled with an "I." So remember, **"I = L.I.D."**
5. When a Greek verb form can be either *Middle* or *Passive*, **"always try Passive first!"**
6. **"Stick to your cases!"**
7. Because of its consistency in appearance and designation of "gender," the Greek *"Definite article"* (*ὁ, ἡ, τὸ*) is your **"friend."**
8. When a Greek pronoun (1st, 2nd, or 3rd personal) appears in the "Nominative" case—singular *or* plural—it always indicates **emphasis.**
9. The **only** mode that has **"augments"** (indicator of *past time*) is the *Indicative Mode*. (For this and more, see the "Signal Flags" chart image from the **side bar** of this blog site.)
10. When you observe a Greek word that looks (in part) like a *verb* (at the beginning) and that word occurs with a "definite article," that word *must be* a **participle.**

11. The only two (2) tenses in Greek that utilize a “**present stem**” (1st principal part) are the *Present* tense and the *Imperfect* tense (all voices).
12. When identifying verb tenses (via their personal endings’ thematic vowel), remember “**α** means **A**orist!” (For this and more, see the “Signal Flags” chart image from the **side bar** of this blog site.)
13. When observing *Greek Subjunctive* verbs in context, it’s important to ask yourself the following question: “*What’s the ‘use’?*” (no kidding). In order to translate a subjunctive word or phrase, you must know what “use” of the Subjunctive governs that word or phrase. Some examples: Is it a “*purpose clause*” (with *ἵνα*)? Is it an “*if*” clause (with *εἰάν*) is it a *1st person plural “exhortation”* (= “*we should . . .*”? Is it a “*question of doubt as to what the speaker (1st person sing. or plural) should say or do?*” So, when things apparently seem difficult, remember to ask yourself, “*What’s the ‘use’?!?*”
14. **Remember:** *Aorist Passives* (any mood/mode) always utilize endings that are “**Active**” in **appearance**.
15. The “**tense sign**” indicator (“flag”) for *1st Aorist Passive Indicative* verb forms is -**θη-**. (For this and more, see the “Signal Flags” chart image from the **side bar** of this blog site.)
16. *1st Aorist Passive Subjunctives* can be readily identified by observing the “signal flag” (characteristics) of either a -**θῆ-** or -**θῶ-**. (Notice the “circumflex” accents, resulting from the collision of stem vowels with thematic vowels on the endings. For more, including similar qualities for *2nd Aorist Passive Subjunctives*, see the “Signal Flags” chart image from the **side bar** of this blog site.
17. *1st Aorist Passive Participles* are probably the most “outstanding” Greek forms. Apart from a scant number of verbs (like *ἀκολουθεῖν*), whose lexical vocabulary forms have a -**θε-** incorporated within the stem, these participles may be easily observed and identified by noticing the consistent “signal flag” (characteristics) of that same -**θε-** quality within the construction of *Aorist Passive Participles*. For more, including similar qualities for *2nd Aorist Passive Participles*, see the “Signal Flags” chart image from the **side bar** of this blog site.
18. **Remember:** “*Eleanor hates sigmas*” (**σ** added to the stem). Yes, your

hypothetical cousin “**Eleanor**”—whose name trans-literally has those smooth, “liquid” Greek letters: **λ**, **ν** or **ρ**—does not like any contact whatsoever with a Greek **σ**, which, of course, is normally added to *Future* and *1st Aorist* verbs, and which may also find proximity to liquid letters in noun declension scenarios. Other rules apply when these “liquid” letters collide with Greek “sigmas.” So, beware: **“Eleanor (λ, ν, ρ) hates sigmas!”**

19. When a “**Yes**” answer is expected to a Greek question, the Greek negative **οὐ** is used. Example: (Matt. 7:22) οὐ τῷ ὀνόματι ἐπροφητεύσαμεν; = *We prophesied by Thy name, didn’t we?* (Ans.: “Yes.”) The best way to translate the question appropriately, is to **“put the answer in the hearer’s mind” through an affirmative statement at the beginning of the question**. Also, in the above example, one can almost visualize the questioner affirmatively nodding his head up and down. Conversely, using **μή + Indicative mode in direct questions expects a “No” answer**. Example: (John 6:67) εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῖς δώδεκα μή καὶ ὑμεῖς θέλετε ὑπάγειν; = *Then Jesus said to the Twelve, “You do not wish to go away also, do you?”* Here one can visualize the questioner shaking his head (“No”) from side to side.
20. Since the only two (2) tenses in Greek that utilize a “**present stem**” (1st “principal part”) are the **Present tense** and the **Imperfect tense** (see point 10, above), these are also only two (2) tenses of “**Contract Verbs**” — verbs whose stems end with either an **α**, **ε**, or **ο** — that are impacted by the collision of vowels that occurs with these types of verbs (i.e. the ending stem vowel + the thematic initial vowel of the personal endings). Of course, the **main indicator** (“flag”) of this resultant collision of vowels is the Greek “circumflex” accent (~).