

## Introduction to Accenting in Greek

Only one of the final three syllables in a Greek word may be accented. The final syllables are named as follows:

- 1) **ultima** (last syllable)
- 2) **penult**(ima) (next-to-last syllable)
- 3) **antepenult**(ima) (third-to-last syllable)

There are three types of accents that occur on Greek words:

- 1) acute, which may occur on any of the last three syllables: (ἄνθρωπος)
- 2) circumflex, which may occur on either of the last two syllables: (δῶρον)
- 3) grave, which may only occur on the final syllable (πρὸς τὴν βιβλιοθήκην)

Therefore, the syllables and accents may intersect according to this table:

<b>Accent Type</b>	<b>Antepenult</b>	<b>Penult</b>	<b>Ultima</b>	<b>Rule</b>
acute	/	/	/	“three” left hand
circumflex		^	^	“two” left and right
grave			\	“one” right hand

### Rules of Accenting

1. If the ultima is long:
  - a) the antepenult cannot be accented at all.
  - b) the penult, if accented, cannot carry a circumflex, but only an acute: **χαίρει**  
(RULE OF THUMB 1: If the ultima is long, expect an acute on the penult.)
2. If the penult is to be accented:
  - a) if long, it must generally carry a circumflex when the ultima is short: **δῶρον**
  - b) it must carry an acute when the ultima is long: **δώρου, λέγει**  
(RULE OF THUMB 2: If the ultima is short and the penult is to be accented, expect a circumflex.)
3. The antepenult can only be accented when the ultima is short. An acute accent on the antepenult moves to the penult when the ultima is long: **ἐλεύθερος**, but **ἐλευθέρω**; **ἄνθρωπος**, but **ἀνθρώπου**  
(RULE OF THUMB 1: If the ultima is long, expect an acute on the penult.)
4. A grave accent is simply an acute on the ultima that has been transformed because the word in which it occurs is followed immediately by another word with no intervening punctuation.  
No word naturally carries a grave accent: **ὁ βασιλεύς, ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας**

INVARIABLY LONG VOWELS/DIPHTHONGS: η, ω, αι, αυ, ει, ευ, ηυ, οι, ου, υι + α, η, ω.

NOTE: The diphthongs αι and οι, when at the end of a word, count as short.

VERB ACCENT is recessive, i.e., it will go as far back as possible (you can figure it out).

NOUN ACCENT is persistent, i.e., it tends to stay where it is except when basic rules of accenting force a move (you have to memorize the original position and maybe learn certain patterns of change).