

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, **"ι = 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 **-θη̃-** 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 *ἀκολουθεω*), 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 (\sim).