

Chapter 2 H&Q Unit II

Verbs, verbs, and more verbs: person, number, tense, mood, and voice

Ah, verbs. You knew this was coming, and you knew it had to come sooner than later.

Remember what I said in the last unit about needing to thoroughly and intimately understand the concepts of gender, number, and case before you could really move on? (In fact, right now, right this second, go visit your uncle Bob, the one who never gets up from watching football unless he's run out of beer, and explain to him what gender, number and case are. Once you've successfully gotten him to understand, come back and keep reading. I'll wait.) Well, here's another set of concepts to which you need to apply the process I describe on page 2: the **person**, **number**, **tense**, **mood**, and **voice** as they relate to verbs. These are explained on H&Q pp. 39-44; do not move on to the next paragraph until you know the material backwards and forwards.

Do not lie to me, *<word I can easily justify in a Greek context, because it indicates I'm comparing you to Oedipus>*. Go back and do it again.

You're just cheating yourself, you know. Go back and do it again. Wash, rinse, repeat.

Okay, okay, okay. Let me clarify a few things.

Person and number hopefully aren't causing you too many difficulties; the one thing that may be tricky is that English no longer has a second person plural pronoun unless you live in the South and "y'all" is a legitimate vocabulary word. Even if you're not, uncontracting it to "you all" is an okay way to think about it. It's better than having to constantly write "you (pl.)" on papers.

Tense, on the other hand, might have you scratching your head a little bit. Part of the problem is that we tend to think of the tense of a verb in English as only having to do with time—past, present, and future. If I tell you, "I walked the dog," and then asked you what tense

“walked” was in, you’d say, “Past tense. Duh.” My first Greek teacher asked that question, and when the inevitable “past tense” answer was given, he slammed his fist on the desk and said, “No! There’s no such thing as past tense! The only reason you think there is, is because people think you’re too stupid to understand otherwise.”

Hyperbole aside, in Greek, tense has to do with time, yes, but it also has to do with *aspect*, which you can think about as how the action of the verb is taking place. Did I walk the dog just once? That’s *simple* aspect. Was I walking the dog over and over again? That’s *progressive* or *repeated* aspect (not to mention possibly annoying to the dog). Did I walk the dog so as to finish the task, and then do the dishes? That’s *completed* aspect. The table on H&Q p. 41 is very useful in laying these distinctions out visually. Once you understand the matrix of time and aspect which the Greek verb system uses (and which, really, every language uses, truth be told), it will make the verb system of other Indo-European languages much clearer as well. For my part, I can tell you I never understood what a pluperfect actually was, all the way through German, French, and Italian; the way of explaining it was always something like, “Well, pluperfect expresses a past action taking place before *another* past action...” and then the teacher would draw a timeline. That may very well make sense for some, but until I saw the table on H&Q p.41, I didn’t get it at all.

Mood has to do with the kind of information that is being communicated. Factual information, i.e., something *has* in fact happened, or *is* in fact happening, or *will* in fact happen, uses the **indicative** mood—I *am writing* an answer key for Hansen & Quinn. It’s actually happening; it is a fact. Non-factual information utilizes the **subjunctive** and **optative** moods—conditional statements, wishes, hypotheticals, etc. These don’t have an absolute way of being translated in English; you’ll learn frameworks in which to use them and translation formulas for

expressing them. Commands are in the **imperative** mood—so sit down, shut up, and learn the imperative mood! (Well, okay, not yet.) An **infinitive** is not really a mood, but it sort of behaves like one nonetheless—we'll get to that later. Right now we're talking about **finite** verbs—they conjugated in some manner to express an action in specific way.

Voice expresses the relationship between the subject and the action of the verb. H&Q pp. 43-44 go over this pretty well; I won't repeat what they have to say. If passive and middle voices are confusing for the moment, don't worry—there will be time to be confused about them later on.

I'll wrap up my notes on this section by saying that when you are asked for the syntax of a verb, the answer will consist of the tense, reason for the tense, and then the mood and reason for the mood. For example, in the sentence: ὁ θεὸς παιδεύει τοὺς ἀνθρώπων. The syntax of παιδεύει is that it is in the present tense to show present time and/or progressive or repeated aspect; it is in the indicative mood because it is factual information. (You will almost *never* be asked a syntax question about a verb in the indicative mood.)

Principal parts

The first thing I have to say about principal parts: you have to memorize them. The second thing I have to say about principal parts: No, I'm not kidding around here, you *really* have to memorize them. These all have to go on the index cards (the ones you've started carrying around in your cargo shorts and reading aloud everywhere you go, so that you always look like you're having a very agitated conversation with yourself; them's the breaks of learning a dead language) just like everything else, and if you don't memorize them, you're going to get lost really fast. Just do it. As with gender, don't bother trying to figure out some kind of pattern to explain all principal parts; that will just lead to you not learning the real ones. I'm sorry there are

six when Latin has four; deal with it now, because you're going to have to eventually one way or the other. A good thing to learn now is that there are, by definition, six principal parts for every verb; if a verb is missing one or more, then "blank" is the appropriate placeholder to insert.

Tense endings

I always thought *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had a pretty tense ending. So did *The Godfather*.

Right. Moving on.

Yep, you guessed it, we have here another set of things you just have to repeat over and over and over to yourself, in public, until all of your friends hate you. Welcome to learning Greek.

Two things: one, memorize the nu-moveable as an extra syllable. "oh, eys, ey, ohmen, ehteh, oohsih-un" was what my Greek teacher had us saying for days. It sounds silly, but I'll never forget how the nu-moveable works. Another thing is that that, while on H&Q p. 47 you are told to memorize thematic vowels and person markers together as a unit, at least also learn to identify which part is which. This will eventually be very useful to be able to do.

d. Agreement of subject and verb, questions, infinitives, and synopses

This is a brief overview of points covered very well in the book. First off, you don't need a noun in the nominative case to know the subject of the sentence. Again, with feeling: you don't need a noun in the nominative case to know the subject of the sentence. Because, unlike English, the tense endings (please tell me you haven't already forgotten those) already give you a distinct person and number, if you see παιδεύει, there is already an implied subject of "he"/"she"/"it", which would be determinable from context. No need to pull out your hair looking for a noun in the nominative case before you go any further, in other words.

Questions will be punctuated with a semicolon and *might* be introduced with ἄρα; this occurs infrequently enough that it is inevitable that at some point you'll run across it in a text, not know what it is, look it up, and then slap your forehead at how you should have remembered that since it was in chapter two of your textbook.

It is necessary to be able to identify infinitives. That sentence (and this one) is already designed to help you to do so.

Synopses are only slightly less fun than sex – only slightly. You will nonetheless learn a heck of a lot doing them as frequently H&Q ask. And don't let the short sample synopsis at II.27 get you down – they'll get a lot longer and harder before the book is done, so take heart. There's lots more to come.

Unit II exercises.

- I.**
1. The gods were sending gifts/bribes into the land.
 2. The famous Homer sent five books to the strangers.
 3. Before the war, the men on the island will send six messengers to the friends.
 4. Will you (pl., “you all” or “y'all” if you're south of Chicago) destroy even the friendship of the goddess?
 5. We were dissolving the wars by means of either words or deeds.
 6. You taught the friends at Homer's house the craft of words.
 7. To the strangers, on the one hand, we will send crowns; to the friends, on the other hand, we will send books.
 8. Did the strangers not release the friend in the house?
 9. By a deed, not by a word, I was/they were freeing the friends.

10. Before the battle, y'all commanded the friends to send to the god gifts/bribes out of the house into the island.

11. Stranger, will you not release the friend in the house?

12. The books from the strangers taught the men in the marketplace, (that is) the friends of Homer.

13. The six brothers were sending a crown of gold out of the land to Homer and to the brother of Homer.

14. The famous Homer, on the one hand, will teach the friends in the house well by means of words; the brothers, on the other hand, by means of deeds.

15. We sent the messenger from the strangers away from the marketplace into the island. For we were ordering the men on the island to dissolve the war.

16. Brother, are you sending a female animal to the marketplace or not?

17. Even now the famous Homer teaches the souls of strangers. For the gods were teaching Homer the skill.

18. The gods will order the famous Homer to be sending gold to the friends, on the one hand; to the strangers, on the other hand, the ones in the land, they will order him to send crowns.

19. The deeds of the gods in the land will teach the men well.

20. Will you send the brothers into battle?

21. You were ordering Homer to send books to the islands. For you were teaching the men in the islands.

22. The gods, on the one hand, are dissolving wars; the men, on the other hand, are sending brothers into battles.

23. The goddess will order men in the land to send gold or a crown to the friends.

II. 1. ἐπέμπεες δῶρα ἐκ τῆς ἀγορᾶς τοῖς θεοῖς νήσου.

OR

ἐπέμπεες δῶρα ἐκ τῆς ἀγορᾶς παρὰ τοὺς θεοὺς νήσου.

2. ἄρα ἐκελεύσατε τὸν Ὅμηρον λῦσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἢ οὐ;

3. παιδεύουσιν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς λόγοις καὶ ἔργοις.

4. ἡ θεὸς κελεύει τοὺς ἕξ ἀδελφοὺς πέμψαι/πέμπειν χρῦσόν τοῖς φίλοις ἐν τῇ νήσῳ.

OR

ἡ θεὸς κελεύει τοὺς ἕξ ἀδελφοὺς πέμψαι/πέμπειν χρῦσὸν παρὰ τοὺς φίλους ἐν τῇ νήσῳ.

5. τὰ δῶρα τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἔλῳσεν τοὺς ἕξ ἀνθρώπους.

Comments.

These sentences represent some steps forward in making you rely increasingly on case, as well as showing you how much fun attributive position can make things. My advice to you is, keep track of case, case, case, case, case. Figure out what agrees with what, including articles, then figure out why words are in what case, then go from there. Once you've got that figured out, then figure out what the verb is doing. (What the verb is doing is about to get more complicated, so enjoy the simplicity of the indicative mood while you can.) If you've got a genitive article followed by a whole bunch of stuff not in the genitive case followed by a genitive noun which agrees in number and case with the article, for our purposes right now that's going to be one unit no matter how long it looks. I've rendered the articles merely as articles in English; there are other possibilities which context would indicate. I.9, for example, *could* be "they were freeing *their* friends" (and note that the tense ending here is ambiguous – context again will aid you in

real life), but I'm choosing for now to keep it simple. It is good to be prepared to discuss what the other possibilities would be, however.

Don't forget that plural neuter nouns take a third person *singular* verb ending. This came up a couple of times in these sentences, and it can trick you.

In sentence I.18, note that the infinitive is a *present* infinitive, meaning that it has *progressive and repeated aspect*. This is tough to get across as an infinitive in English; "to be sending" is a clumsy way to render it, but "to send progressively and repeatedly" is even clumsier.

In the English-to-Greek sentences, numbers 1 and 4 can use *παρά* + acc. to express the "to" idea, or simply a dative. Both work, you'll see it both ways, so I'm showing both.

In sentence number 2, the necessary infinitive is clearly an aorist – probably Homer wouldn't need to free the five men in the house progressively and repeatedly. Sentence number 4 could potentially go either way – either they need to send gold just this once, in which case aorist is what you want, or they need to send it over and over, in which case present is what you want. I've shown both. In a real text, context would make this clearer; ask your teacher what they want.