

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #1

Your Greek Family is Calling

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#1

DIALOGUE - GREEK

MAIN

1. Έλλη : Ναι;
2. Έλλη : Α μαμά, ναι...
3. Έλλη : Ναι, εδώ είμαι...
4. Έλλη : Ναι, όλα είναι εντάξει.
5. Έλλη : Μαμά, όχι τώρα. Δεν είμαι ακόμα στο ξενοδοχείο.
6. Έλλη : Ευχαριστώ. Γεια!

ENGLISH

1. Elli : Hello?
2. Elli : Ah, mom! Yes...
3. Elli : Yes, I'm here...
4. Elli : Yes, everything is alright...
5. Elli : Mom, not now. I'm not at the hotel yet...
6. Elli : Thank you. Bye!

ROMANIZATION

1. Έλι : Νε?
2. Έλι : Α mamá, ne...
3. Έλι : Νε, edó íme...
4. Έλι : Νε, όλα íne endáxi.
5. Έλι : Mamá, óhi tóra. Den íme akóma sto xenodohío.
6. Έλι : Efharistó. Ya!

VOCABULARY

Greek	Romanization	English	Class	Gender
ναι	ne	yes	adverb	
όχι	óhi	no	phrase	
ακόμα	akóma	still, yet	adverb	
ξενοδοχείο	xenodohío	hotel	noun	neutral
τώρα	tóra	now	adverb	
εντάξει	entáxei	OK	adverb, expression	
ευχαριστώ	efharistó	thank you	expression, verb	
μαμά	mamá	mom	noun	feminine
είμαι	íme	I am	verb	
εδώ	edó	here	pronoun	
δεν	den	not, don't	conjunction, adverb	
γεια	ya	hi, bye	interjection, expression	
στο	sto	at, in, to	prepositional article	neuter
όλα	óla	everything	adjective	neutral

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Ναι, είμαι Έλληνας. <i>Ne, íme Élinas.</i> "Yes, I am Greek."</p>	<p>Όχι, δεν άκουσα τι μου είπες. <i>Óhi, den ákusa ti mu ípes.</i> "No, I didn't hear what you said."</p>
<p>Όχι, δεν θα έρθω. <i>Óhi, den tha érho.</i> "No, I won't come."</p>	<p>Όχι, δεν έχω ψιλά. <i>Óhi, den ého psilá.</i> "No, I don't have change."</p>
<p>Ακόμα ψάχνω το νόημα της ζωής. <i>Akóma psáchno to nóima tis zoís.</i> "I am still searching for the meaning of life."</p>	<p>Όταν είσαι σε κρουαζιέρα, το πλοίο είναι το ξενοδοχείο σου. <i>Ótan íse se kruaziéra, to ploío íne to xenodohío su.</i> "When you are on a cruise, the ship is your hotel."</p>
<p>Το ξενοδοχείο έκανε τριάντα ευρώ τη νύχτα. <i>To xenodohío ékane triándá evró ti níhta.</i> "The hotel was thirty euros per night."</p>	<p>Είμαι πολύ απασχολημένη τώρα. <i>Íme polí apascholiméni tóra.</i> "I am very busy now."</p>
<p>Τώρα άκουσέ με, σε παρακαλώ. <i>Tóra ákusé me, se parakaló.</i> "Now, please listen to me."</p>	<p>Τώρα μιλάω στο τηλέφωνο. <i>Tora milao sto tilefono.</i> "I'm talking on the phone now."</p>

<p>Έφαγα πάρα πολύ και τώρα με πονάει το στομάχι μου. <i>Éfaga pára polí ke tóra me ponái to stomáhi mu.</i> "I ate too much, and now my stomach hurts."</p>	<p>Εντάξει, θα φύγω. <i>Endáxi, tha fígo.</i> "OK, I'll go."</p>
<p>Είμαι εντάξει. <i>Eimai entakseí.</i> "I'm OK."</p>	<p>Ευχαριστώ για τη βοήθειά σας! <i>Efharistó ya ti voíthiá sas!</i> "Thank you for your help!"</p>
<p>Ευχαριστώ για το δώρο. <i>Efharistó ya to dóro.</i> "Thank you for the gift."</p>	<p>Ευχαριστώ πολύ. <i>Efharistó polí.</i> "Thank you very much."</p>
<p>Καλά Χριστούγεννα, μαμά! <i>Kalá Hristúyena, mamá!</i> "Merry Christmas mommy!"</p>	<p>Είμαι μηχανικός. <i>Íme mihanikós.</i> "I am an engineer."</p>
<p>Δεν είμαι Έλληνας. <i>Den íme Élinas.</i> "I'm not Greek."</p>	<p>Είμαι η Μαρία. <i>Íme i María.</i> "I'm Maria."</p>
<p>Είμαι τόσο κοντά, αλλά τόσο μακριά. <i>Íme τόσο kondá, alá τόσο makriá.</i> "I'm so close, and yet so far."</p>	<p>Είμαι από την Αμερική. <i>Íme από tin Amerikí.</i> "I am from America."</p>
<p>Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ. <i>I paralía íne makriá από edó.</i> "The beach is far from here."</p>	<p>Έλα εδώ! <i>Éla edó!</i> "Come here!"</p>
<p>Δεν κρυώνεις? <i>Den kryóneis?</i> "Aren't you cold?"</p>	<p>Δεν πεινάει. <i>Den peináei.</i> "He's not hungry."</p>
<p>Δεν είμαι Έλληνας. <i>Den íme Élinas.</i> "I'm not Greek."</p>	<p>Γεια σου, Μιχάλη! <i>Ya su, Miháhi!</i> "Good-bye, Michael!"</p>
<p>Γεια σου, Έλενα! <i>Ya su Élena!</i> "Hello, Elenal!"</p>	<p>Ήμασταν στη θάλασσα όλη μέρα. <i>Ímastan sti thálasa óli méra.</i> "We were at the beach all day."</p>
<p>Η γάτα στο καπέλο. <i>I gáta sto kapélo.</i> "The cat in the hat."</p>	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

1. When learning a Greek verb, something like "to go", "to be", "to have" or the like, you will always learn the I-form instead, "I go", "I am", "I have". This is also the form that you will find in dictionaries. The reason for this is that there is no direct equivalent of the infinitive in Greek.
2. In this lesson, we've seen "είμαι" (I am). It's the base form of the irregular verb "to be", which we'll study in the next lesson. For now, all we've seen is "είμαι" (I am) and "είναι" (he/she/it is).
3. Note that Greek verbs do not require a pronoun. That is, Elli can say "εδώ είμαι", literally "here am", and the "I" is understood. The pronouns are only used when we want to emphasize something. This is the same as in Italian or Spanish.

GRAMMAR

The focus of this lesson is pronunciation

Δεν είμαι ακόμα στο ξενοδοχείο.

"I'm not at the hotel yet."

Greek pronunciation is pretty straightforward and the spelling is almost phonetic. Even the word stress is easy, since it is indicated with a little accent mark above the vowel. Still, there are a few difficulties in the form of letters that don't sound as you'd expect.

- Beta (βήτα) does not sound like B but like V. In fact, there is no /b/ sound in Greek except as /mb/, and even then it's mostly used for foreign words. The /mb/ sound is spelled MP (μι πι).
- By the same token, Delta (δέλτα) does not sound like D; it sounds like the TH in "that". The /d/ sound pretty much only appears in the combination /nd/, spelled as NT (νι ταυ).
- Gamma (γάμα), the Greek equivalent of G, has two pronunciations. If Gamma is followed by a front vowel like /e/ or /i/, it sounds approximately like Y in "year". If Gamma is followed by an /a/, /o/ or /u/ sound however, it sounds like a throaty R. By contrast, the actual Greek R (ρο) is rolled at the front of the mouth.
- Chi (χι) also has two pronunciations. If you studied German, this will be easy for you, because the two pronunciations are exactly the same as the German CH sound. When combined with a back vowel like /a/, /o/ or /u/, Chi is throaty, as in the name of the composer "Bach". When combined with a front vowel like /e/ or /i/, Chi is pronounced as in the German word for I, "ich". If you can't produce this sound yet, try saying Y as in "year", draw it out "yyyyyy" and then keep this mouth position and exhale instead.
- Finally, I should warn you about the Greek letter Ypsilon. Most of the time, it is just another way of writing the "eee" sound, just like the letters Ita and Iota. However, in the combination with Omikron it sounds like "oo", and in combination with Alpha or Epsilon it sounds like /f/ or /v/ ... as in Ευχαριστώ!

CULTURAL INSIGHT

- Family is very important for the Greeks, as for most Southern Europeans. There is a very special bond between family members, which sometimes seems strange to people from other cultures.
- Young people usually live with their parents until they get married. Even if they go to another city or country for their studies, they go back to live with their parents when they finish their studies.
- Greek parents are very supportive of their children. Because the benefits provided by the Greek government are not sufficient to cover people's essential expenses, they get financial support from their parents when they study in another city or country, or if they are unemployed. Parents don't give loans to their children because for them it is an obligation to support their children.
- Sometimes, Greek parents financially support their children even if they work because salaries are low compared to those in the US.
- However, they can also be very intrusive sometimes, and have constant arguments with their children if they don't approve of their lifestyle or of the way they raise their children. Some issues like homosexuality are still taboo in Greek families, even in big cities.
- Even when the parents are not wealthy, they support their children and their children's family in other ways, such as by babysitting their grandchildren or cooking for them.
- Family members are very close to even more distant relations (grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, and so forth). They spend Easter and Christmas together, and in the past it was very common to spend Sundays together as well, but nowadays this tradition is becoming less widespread.
- Greek women are usually overprotective and proud of their sons. They often show favoritism by preparing special meals for them or by boasting about their scores at school.