

Lesson # 5: Picking up on the Greek Noun and some Basic Tools1. Regarding the Greek Noun

A noun is a term used to describe a person, place, or thing. It represents an entity in any proportion. Nouns are the "thing" words in a language while "verbs" are the action words.

The PROPERTIES of the Greek noun

Basically the noun has three properties:

GENDER: Greek nouns are "masculine", "feminine", or "neuter." The gender of the noun tells you nothing about the gender of the entity represented (or practically nothing). It is safe to say that there is often a correspondence but by no means always so and sometimes the diverse is seen. So the wise student stays "alert."

NUMBER: Greek nouns are either singular or plural. There is no dual and no ambiguous state.

CASE: Case describes the serving role of the noun and tells its relationship to other words in a sentence. Depending on which grammarian you prefer, case is determined by function or form. We tend to go with the latter and teach there are five "cases" in Koine Greek. The five cases are:

NOMINATIVE: the subject or initiator of the action

GENITIVE: the relational setting of the word in function...the best known of these relationships is "possessive".

DATIVE: indicative of indirect action and many complementary uses of the noun.

ACCUSATIVE: the relation of the noun as the immediate object of the action thrust of the clause.

VOCATIVE: the noun is seen in a position of direct address.

Of these cases and their fuller significance and special usage...we will speak in a couple of pages.

These cases have special inflections and the inflection of the noun is perhaps more complicated than that of the verb. We will not comment on it largely but will offer some representative declensions (the formal designation for noun development) in our appendix.

SPECIFICATION: The noun may be modified by an article or not. There is no indefinite article in Greek so the noun is either definite (with the article) or indefinite (without it.) Articular and anarthrous are the defining terms!