

## Absolute Beginner S1

Your Greek Family is Calling

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## Greek

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Έλλη	Ναι;
Έλλη	Α μαμά, ναι...
Έλλη	Ναι, εδώ είμαι...
Έλλη	Ναι, όλα είναι εντάξει.
Έλλη	Μαμά, όχι τώρα. Δεν είμαι ακόμα στο ξενοδοχείο.
Έλλη	Ευχαριστώ. Γεια!

## Romanization

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Έλλι	Nai?
Έλλι	A mamá, nai...
Έλλι	Nai, edó eímai...
Έλλι	Nai, óla eínai entáxei.
Έλλι	Mamá, óchi tóra. Den eímai akóma sto xenodocheío.
Έλλι	Evcharistó. Geiá!

## English

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Elli	Hello?
Elli	Ah, mom! Yes...
Elli	Yes, I'm here...
Elli	Yes, everything is alright...
Elli	Mom, not now. I'm not at the hotel yet...
Elli	Thank you. Bye!

## Vocabulary

Greek	Romanization	English
ναι	nai	yes
μαμά	mamá	mom
εδώ	edó	here
είμαι	eímai	I am
όλα	óla	everything
εντάξει	entáxei	OK
όχι	óchi	no
τήρα	tóra	now
δεν	den	not, don't
ακόμα	akóma	still, yet
στο	sto	at, in
ευχαριστώ	efcharisto	thank you
γεια	geiá	hi, bye
ξενοδοχείο	xenodocheío	hotel

## Vocabulary Sample Sentences

*Ναι, είμαι Έλληνας.*

*"Καλά Χριστούγεννα μαμά!"*

*Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ.*

*Έλα εδώ!*

*Είμαι τόσο κοντά, αλλά τόσο μακριά.*

*Είμαι μηχανικός.*

*Είμαι η Μαρία.*

*Δεν είμαι Έλληνας.*

*Είμαι από την Αμερική.*

*Είμαι εντάξει.*

*Όχι, δε θα έρθω.*

*Όχι δεν έχω ψιλά.*

*Τώρα μιλάω στο τηλέφωνο.*

*Έφαγα πάρα πολύ και τώρα με πονάει το στομάχι μου.*

*Δεν κρυώνεις?*

*Δεν πεινάει.*

*Δεν είμαι Έλληνας.*

*Ακόμα ψάχνω το νόημα της ζωής.*

*Είμασταν στην θάλασσα όλη μέρα.*

"Yes, I am Greek."

"Merry Christmas mommy!"

"The beach is far from here."

"Come here!"

"I'm so close, and yet so far."

I am an engineer.

"I'm Maria."

"I'm not Greek."

"I am from America."

"I'm OK."

"No, I won't come."

"No, I don't have change."

"I'm talking on the phone now."

"I ate too much, and now my stomach hurts."

"Aren't you cold?"

"He's not hungry."

"I'm not Greek."

"I am still searching for the meaning of life."

"We were at the sea all day."

Ευχαριστώ για το δώρο.  
ευχαριστώ πολύ.  
Γεια σου, Μιχάλη!  
Γεια σου, Έλενα!

"Thank you for the gift."  
"Thank you very much."  
"Good-bye, Michael!"  
"Hello, Elena!"

## 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 Points

**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 Ipsilon. 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,

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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.