

Beginner S1

This Is Greek Athens—Or Is It?

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Greek

Πέτρα Γκόρντον Κοπέλα στο γκισέ πληροφοριών	Δηλαδή, αυτό δεν είναι το Αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας;
Πέτρα Γκόρντον Κοπέλα στο γκισέ πληροφοριών	Αυτό είναι το αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας, όμως η περιοχή αυτή δεν είναι Αθήνα!
	Και το κέντρο είναι πολύ μακριά από εδώ;
	Περισσότερο από μια ώρα. Εδώ είναι Ελλάδα!

Romanization

Petra Gordon Kopela sto gkise pliroforion	Diladi auto den einai to aerodromio tis Athinas?
Petra Gordon Kopela sto gkise pliroforion	Auto einai to aerodromio tis Athinas, omos i periohi auti den einai Athina!
	Kai to kentro einai poly makria apo edo?
	Perissotero apo mia ora. Edw einai Ellada!

English

Petra Gordon Airport information desk girl	So this is not Athens' airport? This is Athens' airport, but this area is not Athens.
Petra Gordon Airport information desk girl	So downtown is very far from here? More than an hour. This is Greece!

Vocabulary

Greek	Romanization	English
κέντρο	kentro	downtown (literally, "center")
είναι	einai	is
μακριά	makriá	far
από	apó	from
εδώ	edó	here
περισσότερο	perissotero	more
μια ώρα	mia ora	one hour
κοπέλα	kopéla	young woman
Αυτό δεν είναι	Auto den einai	this is not
τήρα	tóra	now

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

Θα πάω στο κέντρο.

Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Είμαι από την Αμερική.

Είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Η παραλία είναι μακριά από εδώ.

Έλα εδώ!

Χρειάζομαι περισσότερο χρόνο.

Θα έρθει σε μια ώρα.

Είδα μια ξανθιά κοπέλα.

Η κοπέλα ακούει μουσική με ακουστικά.

Αυτό δεν είναι τασάκι.

Τώρα μιλάω στο τηλέφωνο.

Έφαγα πάρα πολύ και τώρα με πονάει το στομάχι μου.

"I will go downtown."

"The beach is far from here."

"The beach is far from here."

"It's far from here."

"The beach is far from here."

"I am from America."

"It's far from here."

"The beach is far from here."

"Come here!"

"I need more time."

"He will come in an hour."

"I saw a blonde girl."

"The girl is listening to music with headphones."

"This is not an ashtray."

"I'm talking on the phone now."

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

Vocabulary Phrase Usage

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- The first sentence, *diladi, auto den einai to aerodromio tis Athinas*, starts with the particle *diladi*, which roughly translates to the English "so" or "that is to say." This means that the conversation has already started before this sentence and that the speaker (in this case, the main character) asks for some clarification or further explanation. *Diladi* is a very useful Greek word, and it is good to remember it.
- In the last sentence, the airport clerk replies to the main character's question "how far is the airport" by using time, not distance (*perissotero apo mia ora*, "more than an hour"). This is rather common in Greece; for some reason, most people think of distances in terms of the time it takes to cover them than of the actual kilometers involved). Hence, a very common idiom is *X ora/ores dromos*, which literally means "X hour/hours street" but actually means "it takes X hour/hours to get there."
- A characteristic of the Greek language that might confuse English speakers is that many parts of speech are gendered and numbered. Since both the subject of genders and the subject of numbers are quite broad, we will examine them in detail in future lessons; for the moment, it would be better to focus on the masculine gender and the singular number: all our sample sentences are in the first person singular, and in our dialogue, we have three cases of neuter/singular:

1. *Auto einai/den einai to aerodromio tis Athinas*
"This is/is not Athens' airport."
2. *To kentro einai poly makria apo edo?*
"(Is) downtown is very far from here?"
3. *Edo einai Ellada.*
"This is Greece."

and one case of feminine/singular:

1. *I periohi auti den einai Athina.*
"This area is not Athens."

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Verb "to Be" in Modern Greek.

Αυτό είναι το αεροδρόμιο

Auto einai to aerodromio.

"This is the airport."

In this lesson, we will focus on the use of the verb "to be" in Modern Greek. As is the case with most languages, the verb "to be" is one of the most commonly used verbs in Modern Greek. Contrary to English, though, we do not use the verb "to be" as an auxiliary verb (i.e., to form different types of verbs); we mostly use it in its "official capacity" to show the existence or the presence of a thing or a situation.

Since the conjugation of verbs can be quite tricky in Greek, in this lesson we will present only the first person singular of the verb "to be" in the present affirmative, negative, and interrogative form.

Present - Affirmative (Singular)

Greek	Romanization	"English"
Εγώ είμαι	Ego eimai	"I am"

Present - Negative (Singular)

Greek	Romanization	"English"
Εγώ δεν είμαι	Ego then eimai	"I am not"

Present - Interrogative (Singular)

Greek	Romanization	"English"
Εγώ είμαι;	<i>Ego eimai?</i>	"Am I?"

Sample Sentences

Greek	Romanization	"English"
Εγώ είμαι άντρας	<i>Ego eimai antras.</i>	"I am a man."
Εγώ είμαι γιατρός	<i>Ego eimai giatros.</i>	"I am a doctor."
Εγώ είμαι Έλληνας	<i>Ego eimai Ellinas.</i>	"I am Greek."
Εγώ είμαι πεινασμένος	<i>Ego eimai peinasmenos.</i>	"I am hungry."
Εγώ δεν είμαι κουρασμένος	<i>Ego den eimai kourasmenos.</i>	"I am not tired."
Εγώ είμαι μόνος στο σπίτι	<i>Ego eimai monos sto spiti.</i>	"I am home alone."
Εγώ δεν είμαι στην Αμερική	<i>Ego den eimai stin Ameriki.</i>	"I am not in America."
Εγώ είμαι στην Αθήνα	<i>Ego eimai stin Athina.</i>	"I am in Athens."
Εγώ είμαι μακριά από το σπίτι μου	<i>Ego eimai makria apo to spiti mou.</i>	"I am far from home."
Εγώ είμαι στο γραφείο	<i>Ego eimai sto grafeio.</i>	"I am at the office."

Cultural Insight

Speaking English in Greece

While Greek is one of the oldest languages in the world and has been the basis of

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all European languages, the small size of Greece and its eventful history haven't allowed for the use of Greek much outside the borders of the country. This means that most Greeks need to learn at least one more language. For the last forty years or so, this language has been almost exclusively English. Depending on where you are in Greece or whom you are talking to, the level of English will vary from basic understanding to almost native-level proficiency. (Many Greeks study in English-speaking countries, so their English can surprise you!) So chances are that if you get stranded anywhere in the country with no knowledge of Greek whatsoever, you will manage to get by with your English. Having said that, Greeks generally have a tremendous respect for foreigners who know even a little bit of their language, and they will do their best to understand even the most broken and mispronounced Greek.