



*Altar of Zeus Ombrios, ca. 100 A.D. Athenian Agora Excavations.*

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions in Greek work much as they do in English. Greek, however, uses them far more often, and frequently in more subtle ways, than formal written English does. This is in part because Greek has a strong tendency to link clauses and sentences together. While consecutive sentences in English are most often separated by a pause (period), many consecutive sentences in Greek are instead marked or offset by coordinating conjunctions, such as *and*, *but*, and *therefore* (S 2163).

## AND

- **καί**: As a conjunction, **καί** is used to connect words, clauses, and sentences. If used as an adverb, **καί** means *even*, *also*.
- **τε** (enclitic): Like **καί**, **τε** is used to link clauses and sentences. However, **τε** rarely links individual words in Greek prose. **τε...καί** in a sentence is a slightly weaker version of **καί...καί**, *both...and*. As a monosyllabic enclitic, **τε** rarely has an accent.
- **δέ**: This little word is used most often to delineate, and slightly contrast, a clause or sentence from the one that precedes it. How

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- **μέν...δέ:** When used together, these two words mark a contrast between one word or clause, marked by **μέν**, and another, marked by **δέ**. Sometimes the pair can be translated *on the one hand (μέν)...on the other hand (δέ)*. In other contexts, the **μέν** is best left untranslated, and the **δέ** translated as *and* or *but*. Often, however, **μέν...δέ** is not translated in English (S 2904).

## POSTPOSITIVE POSITION

In Greek, some conjunctions always follow the word that they link. Such conjunctions are called POSTPOSITIVE. All the *and* words in Greek are postpositive except for **καί**. As a result of the frequency of postpositive conjunctions, it is often the case that the second word – or third, if it follows a noun with a definite article – in a clause or sentence is a conjunction. A postpositive conjunction can never be the first word in a sentence.

Consider the following examples:

- **χρήματα καί ὑπάρχοντα δίδομεν.**
  - *We give money and property.*
- **δίδομεν τὰ σπέρματα καί δίδοτε τὸ ὕδωρ.**
  - *We give the seeds and you give the water.*
- **τὰ σπέρματα δίδομεν, ὑπάρχοντα δέ δίδοτε.**
  - *We give the seeds and you give property.*
- **τὰ σπέρματα μέν δίδομεν, ὕδωρ δέ δίδοτε.**
  - *We give the seeds and you give water.*

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## AND...NOT

- οὔτε/μήτε: *and...not*
  - οὔτε is used with indicative verbs.
  - μήτε is used with infinitives.
  - Note that they are simply combinations of οὐ and μή with τε.

## BUT

- ἀλλά: This conjunction expresses an opposition (*but, yet*) to a previous clause or sentence. It represents a stronger contrast than δέ.
- δέ: Depending on the context, this postpositive word can be translated as *but*. See discussion, above.
- μέν...δέ: Depending on the context, the postpositive μέν is left untranslated, and the δέ translated as *but*. See discussion, above.

## OR

- ἢ: Note the breathing mark and accent, which distinguishes this little word from ἡ, the feminine definite article.
- εἴτε... εἴτε: *either...or*
- μήτε... μήτε: *neither...nor* (with infinitives)
- οὔτε... οὔτε: *neither...nor* (with indicative verbs)

## BECAUSE

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- ὅτι

## THEREFORE

- ἄρα
- διό
- οὖν (postpositive)
- τοίνυν (postpositive)

## OTHER IMPORTANT CONJUNCTIONS:

- εἰ, εἴπερ *if*
- ἐπεὶ *after, since, when*
- ἕως *until, while*
- ἵνα *where*
- μέχρι *until*
- ὅθεν *from where*
- ὅτε *when*
- πρίν *until* (w/indicative verbs); *before* (w/ infinitive verbs)
- ὡς *as*

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**ELISION!**

It is common for the final vowel of a conjunction to be ELIDED before a word that begins with a vowel. This process is called ELISION. Note, for example, the elisions in the second sentence of each of the following pairs of sentences.

- εἶτε τὰ χρήματα οὐ δίδομεν, εἶτε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα οὐ δίδετε.
- εἴτ' οὐ δίδομεν τὰ χρήματα, εἴτ' οὐ δίδετε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα.
  - *Either we don't give the money or you don't give the property.*
- οὐκ ἀποδίδετε, ἄρα χρήματα οὐ δίδομεν.
- οὐκ ἀποδίδετε, ἄρ' οὐ δίδομεν χρήματα.
  - *You do not give (it) back, so/therefore we do not give money.*
- ὅτε χρήματα ἀποδίδετε, ὑπάρχοντα δίδομεν.
- ὅτ' ἀποδίδετε χρήματα, ὑπάρχοντα δίδομεν.
  - *When you give money back, we give property.*

NOTE: ὅτι never elides, so ὅτ' always = ὅτε.

– τὸ τέλος –

- CONJUNCTIONS
- POSTPOSITIVE POSITION
- ELISION

### Vocabulary

#### AND

- καί
- δέ (postpositive)
- μέν...δέ (postpositive)
- τε (enclitic)

#### AND NOT

- μήτε (with infinitives)
- οὔτε (with indicatives)

#### BUT

- ἀλλά
- δέ (postpositive)
- μέν...δέ (postpositive)

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- ἢ
- εἴτε... εἴτε either...or
- μήτε... μήτε neither...nor (with infinitives)
- οὔτε... οὔτε neither...nor (with indicative)

### **BECAUSE**

- γάρ (postpositive)
- ὅτι

### **THEREFORE**

- ἄρα
- διό
- οὖν (postpositive)
- τοίνυν (postpositive)

### **OTHER CONJUNCTIONS**

- εἰ, εἴπερ if
- ἐπεὶ after, since, when
- ἕως until, while
- ἵνα where
- μέχρι until

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- πρὶν (w/indicative verbs) until; (w/infinite verbs) before
- ὡς as

### Exercises

I. Memorize the vocabulary for this lesson. Make careful note of whether the conjunctions are postpositive or enclitic.

II. Translate the following sentences.

1. δίδομεν τὰ σπέρματα ἀλλὰ δίδοτε τὸ ὕδωρ.
2. τὰ σπέρματα δίδομεν, ὕδωρ δὲ δίδοτε.
3. χρήματα ὑπάρχοντά τ' ἀποδίδομεν.
4. δίδομεν τὰ χρήματα ἢ δίδοτε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα.
5. οὐ δίδομεν χρήματα, οὐ γὰρ ἀποδίδοτε.
6. δίδομεν μὲν τὰ σπέρματα, δίδοτε δ' ὕδωρ.
7. ἐπεὶ ἀποδίδομεν χρήματά τε καὶ ὑπάρχοντα;
8. δίδομεν τὰ σπέρματα οὔτε δίδοτε τὸ ὕδωρ.
9. οὐκ ἀποδίδοτε, διὸ χρήματα οὐ δίδομεν.
10. οὐκ ἀποδίδοτε, χρήματα οὖν οὐ δίδομεν.
11. δίδομεν τὰ σπέρματα οὐτ' ὕδωρ δίδοτε.

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14. οὐ δίδομεν, ὅτι χρήματα οὐκ ἀποδίδοτε.

15. δίδομεν τὰ σπέρματα ἀλλ' οὐ δίδοτε τὸ ὕδωρ.

### Readings

Biblical sentences: [AGE Ch. 10a](#).

Classical sentences: [AGE Ch. 10b](#).

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