Inflection: How Greek Nouns Do Their Job

¶ 2.1

English: Word Order

Subject Position + Verb + Object Position = Meaning

The dog bites the man ≠ The man bites the dog



Greek: Inflection

Word Stem + Ending = Meaning

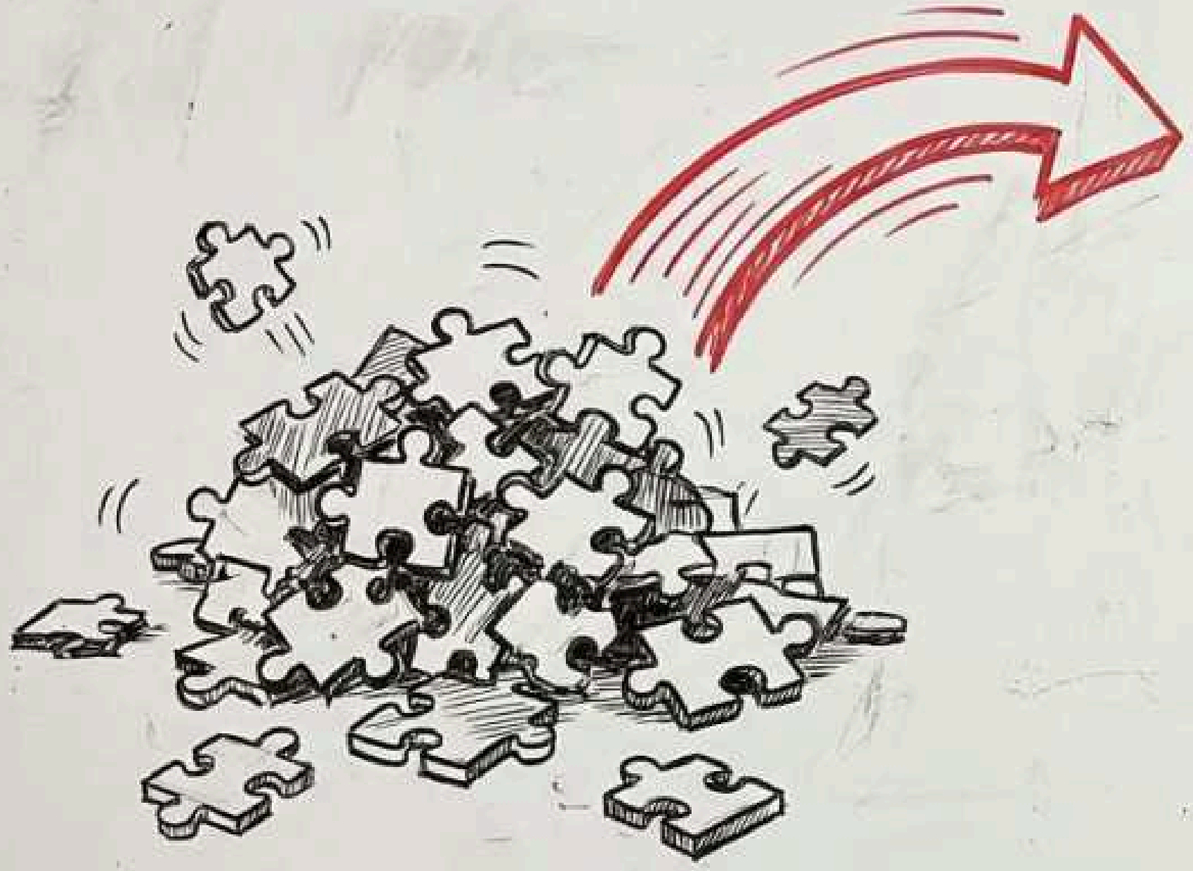
Greek changes endings to show a noun's job. Words can move for emphasis, but the endings dictate who bites whom. The roles remain unchanged regardless of order.

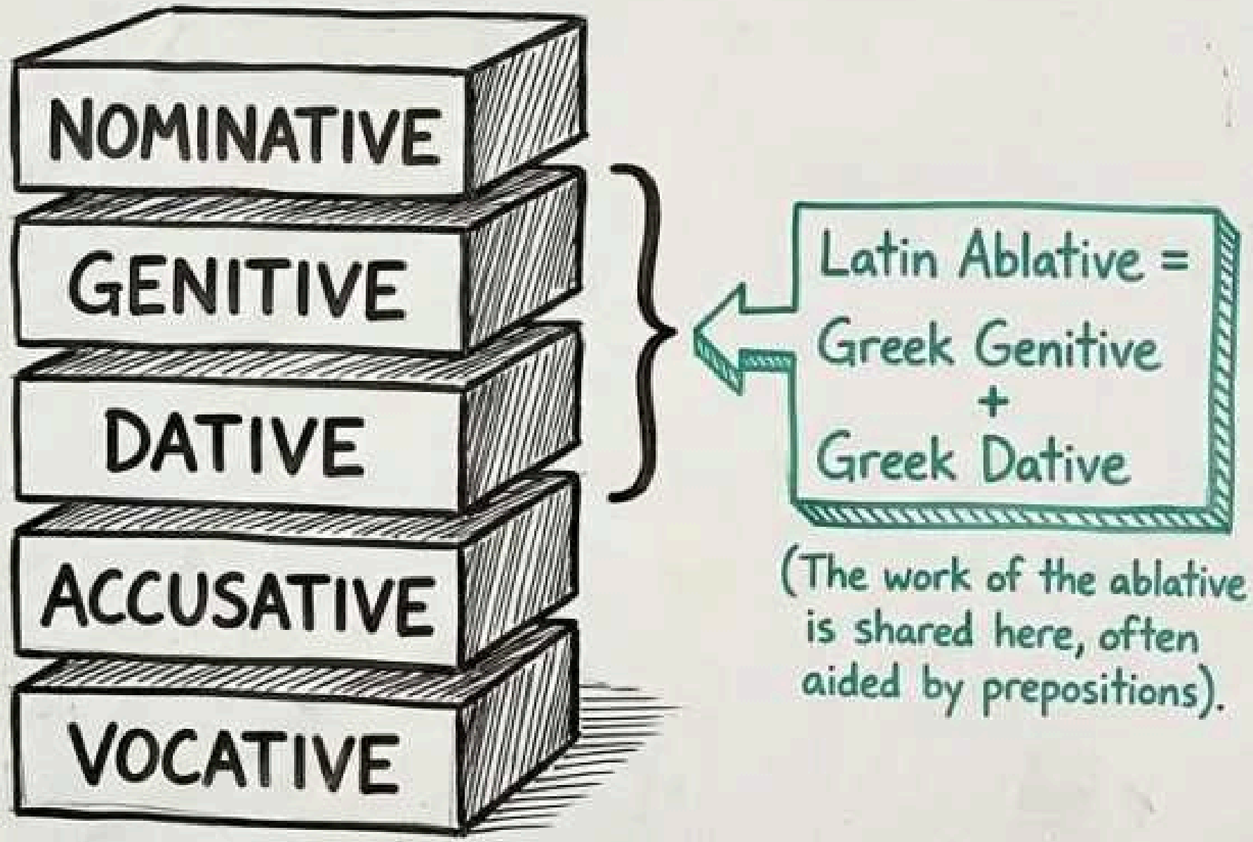


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¶ 2.2

The Five Cases: Sentence Roles





* Sentences are <u>not</u> puzzles; they are sets of labeled parts.

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¶2.3

Nominative & Genitive

Nominative (The Actor)

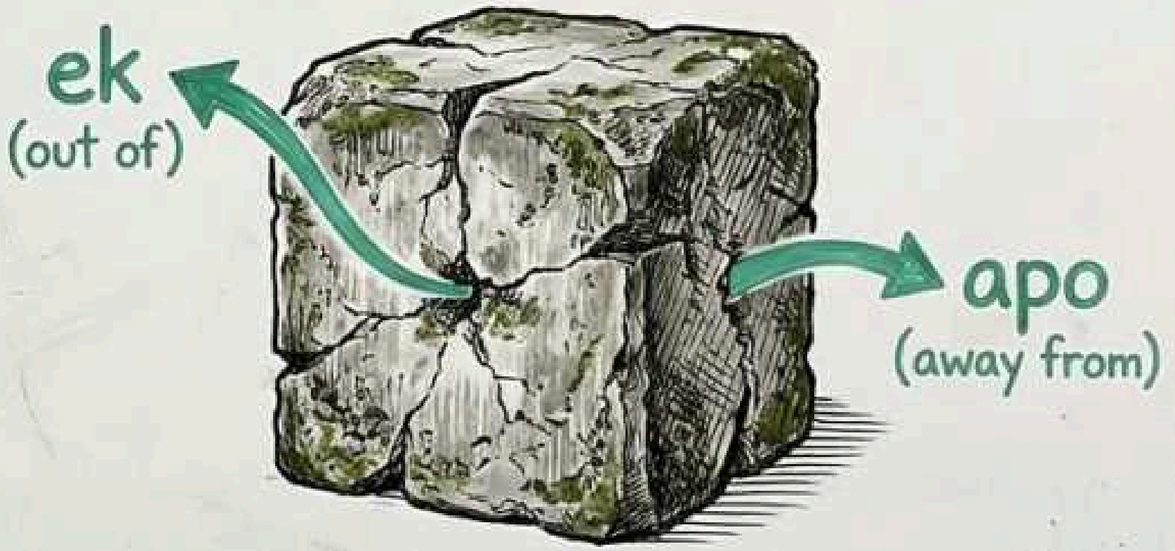
- Role: The Subject (performs the action).
- Role: Renames the subject (after the verb to be).

In "The human being is a god",

Human Being = Nominative and
God = Nominative.

Genitive (Possession & Origin)

- Role: "Of" (possession or belonging)
  → e.g., "The word <u>of</u> god"
- Role: Object of origin prepositions.



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¶2.4

Dative, Accusative, & Vocative

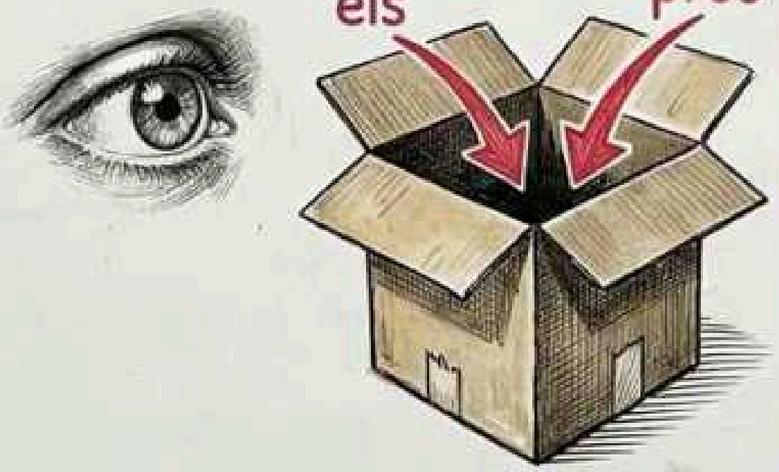
Dative
(Reception, Means, Location)

- 'To' or 'For' (Indirect Object).
- Means ('By' / 'With').
- Location ('In' / en).



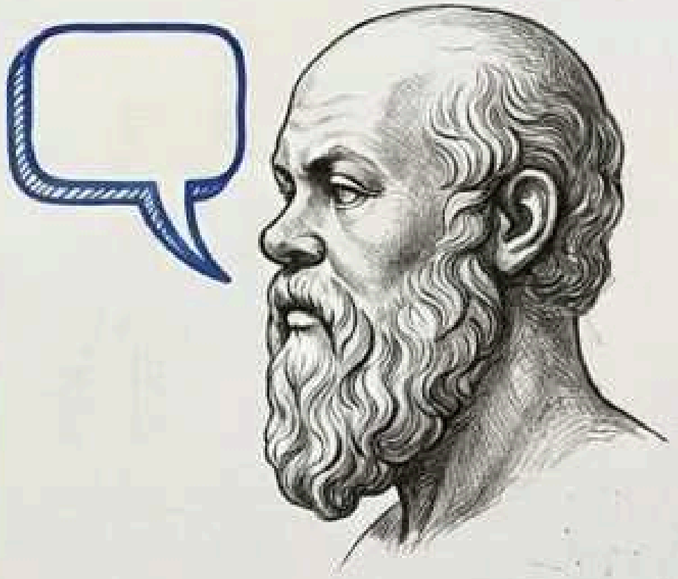
Accusative
(The Target)

- Direct Object (Receives the action).
- Motion Towards: <u>eis</u> (into), <u>pros</u> (towards).



Vocative
(Direct Address)

- Speaking directly to someone ('O friend', 'O Socrates').



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¶2.5

Gender & Number

Gender (Grammatical, not just Natural)

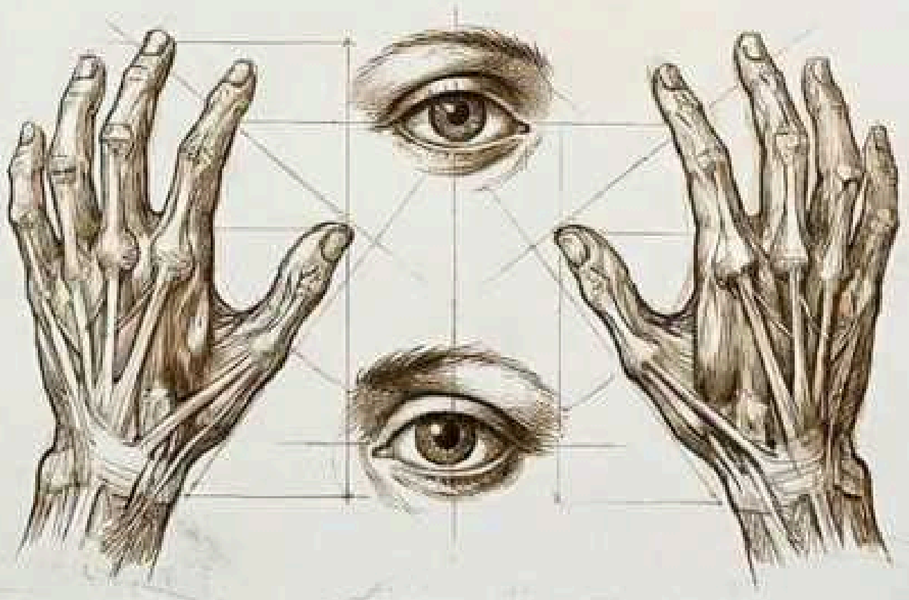
- Masculine: Usually men, but also things like logos (word).
- Feminine: Usually women, but also things like hēmera (day).
- Neuter: Things, like dōron (gift).

Always learn a noun with its article!

Number (Singular, Plural, Dual)

Forms: Singular & Plural.

The Dual: Used for natural pairs.
(Absent in Koine, fading in Classical Athens; keep in mind for Homer or Plato).



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¶2.6

The Definite Article ('The')

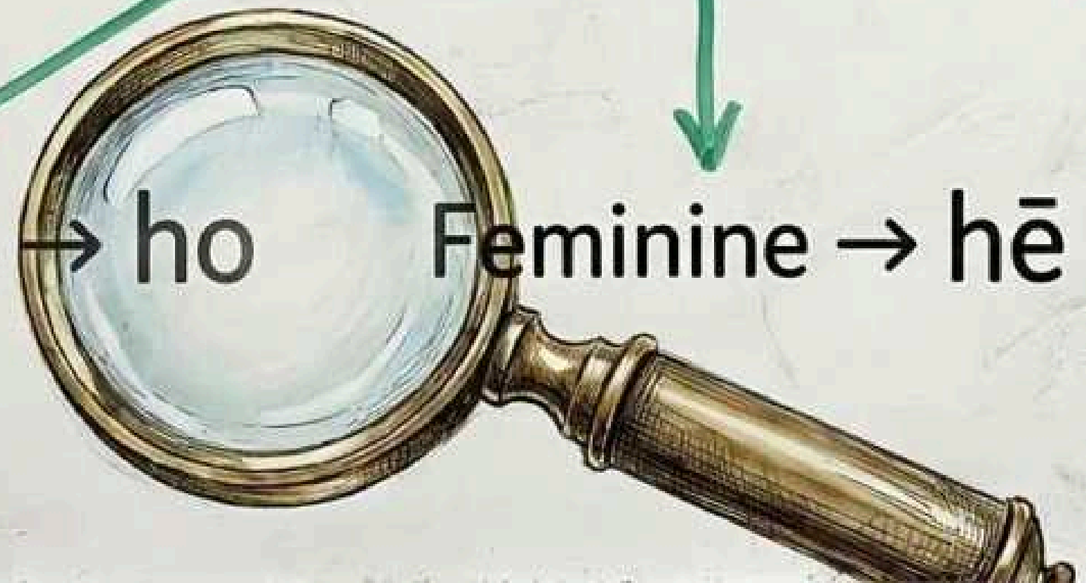
Latin lacks it; Greek relies on it. It is the reader's best friend: even if a noun's ending is unfamiliar, the article decodes it. Greek has no indefinite article ('a').

Article = Noun's (Case + Number + Gender)

Masculine → ho

Feminine → hē

Neuter → tó



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¶2.7

The Article Matrix

	Singular	Plural
M	ho, tou, tōi, ton	hoi, tōn, tois, tous
F	hē, tēs, tēi, tēn	hai, tōn, tais, tas
N	tó, tou, tōi, tó	ta, tōn, tois, ta

→ Notice: tōn for EVERY gender.

→ Notice: Exact same form in Nom and Acc.

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The Three Declensions

¶ 2.8

Nouns fall into three families (Declensions).

The Starting Point: The 2nd Declension. Its endings are highly regular.

Mostly Masculine (ending in -os, like logos).

Mostly Neuter (ending in -on, like dōron).

The Latin Connection

logos (-os) ≈ dominus (-us)

dōron (-on) ≈ bellum (-um)

* This parallel makes Latin students feel at home.

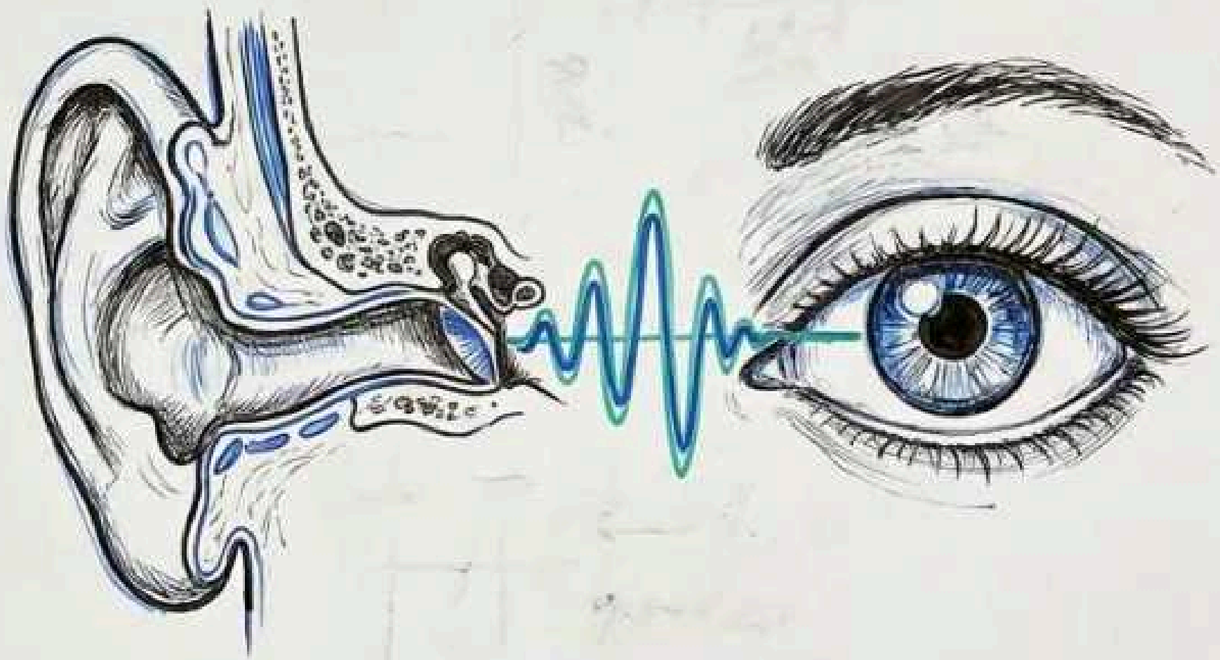
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Logos: The Singular Form

¶2.9

Stem (log-) + Changing Ending

Nom:	log**os**	(a word)
Gen:	log**ou**	(of a word)
Dat:	log**ōi**	(to/for a word)
Acc:	log**on**	(a word as object)
Voc:	log**e**	(O word)



Say the five forms aloud:
The ear starts to expect
what the eye then confirms.

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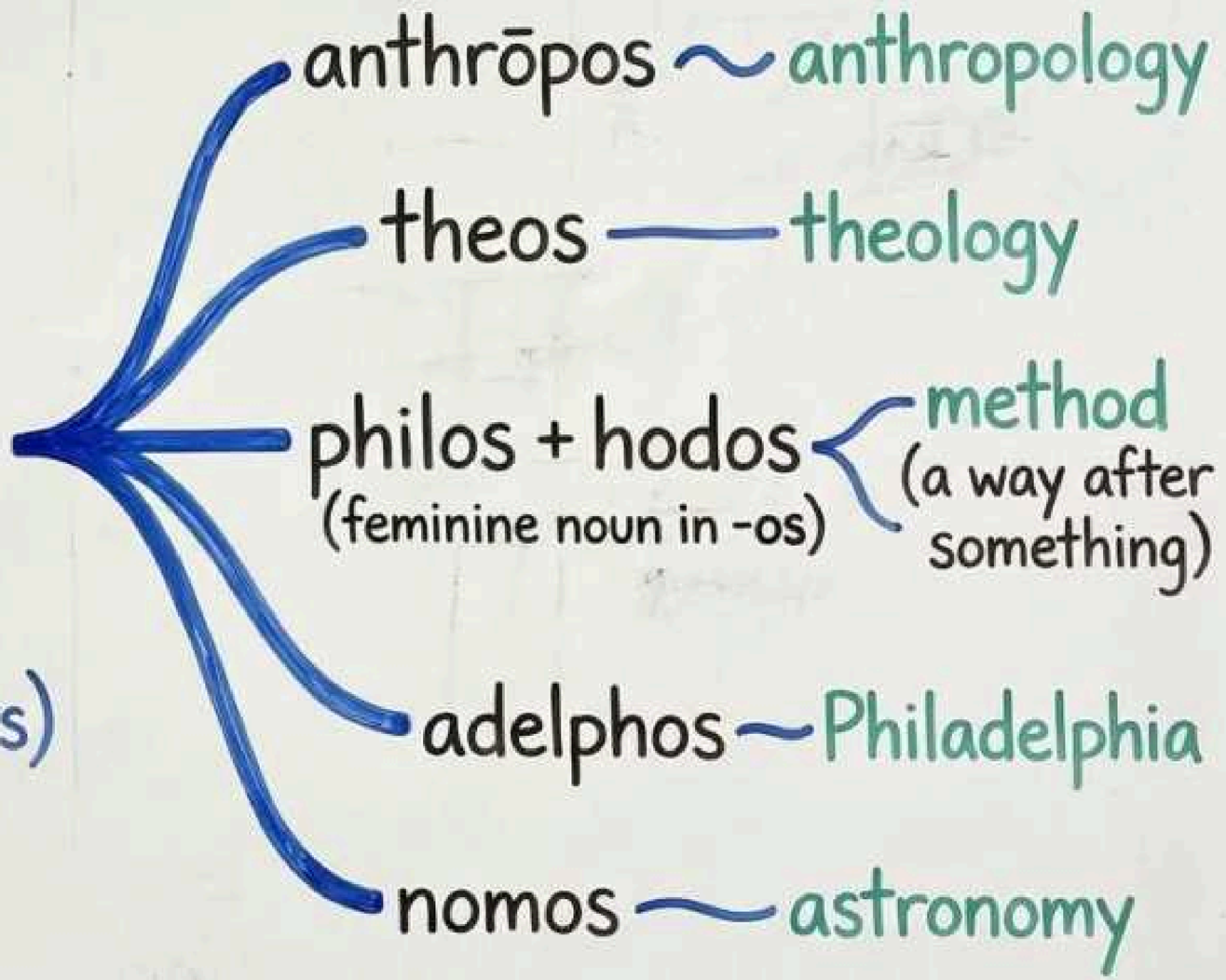
Logos: Plural Forms & Family Tree

¶ 2.10

The Plural Forms

- Nom/Voc: log**oi** (words)
- Gen: log**ōn** (of words)
  - ↳ Note: long 'o' ōn is the same in every declension!
- Dat: log**ois** (to/for words)
- Acc: log**ous** (words as objects)

* This parallel makes Latin students feel at home.



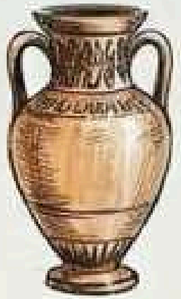
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Dōron (Gift) & The Neuter Rule

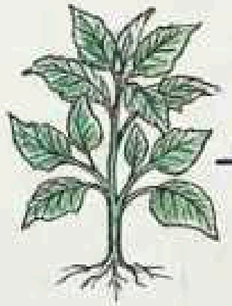
¶ 2.11

	Singular:	Plural:
Nom:	dōr**on** (a gift)	dōr**a** (gifts)
Gen:	dōr**ou** (of a gift)	dōr**ōn** (of gifts)
Dat:	dōr**ōi** (to/for a gift)	dōr**ois** (to/for gifts)
Acc:	dōr**on** (a gift)	dōr**a** (gifts)

Rule: Nom = Acc in both singular and plural. Plural ends in 'a'.



dōron



phyton → phytology



metron → metre

Also: ergon, biblion, zōon, theatron.

⚠ The Surprising Rule

Neuter Plural Subject + Singular Verb

"The gifts is good" (felt as a single mass).

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The System at Work

¶2.12

Ho anthrōpos logon legei (The human being speaks a word).

= Subject (Nom) = Object (Acc) = Verb

logon ho anthrōpos legei

Insight: Meaning is identical. Emphasis shifts to the word (logon).

The depth of logos: Word, speech, reason (Heraclitus), divine Word (John), logic, -ology.

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Committing to Memory

¶2.13

The Task: Write the article and the endings of logos and dōron on this card. Say them aloud each day for a week.

The Equation of Reading

Article + Ending + Sentence Sense = Reading (Not Decoding)

- When the article tells you the case, the ending confirms it, and the sense checks your guess—you are truly reading.

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Endings, Not Order, Carry Meaning

¶2.14

Testing the Flexibility

Ton theon ho anthrōpos blepei (The human being sees the god)

Object is completely first!

Hoi adelphoi **dōra** echousi (The brothers have gifts)

Masc. Plural subject

Neuter Plural object

Next Up: The Verb

Recast these sentences in different orders to feel the freedom the cases provide the writer. Keep your index card handy—these forms must be in the ear for the rest of the course.

(It uses the exact same logic of endings that the has just taught).

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