

Appendix 7: GENERAL RULES OF ACCENTING GREEK WORDS¹

	ANTEPENULT	PENULT	ULTIMA
ACUTE	ᾶ (only w. short ultima)	ᾶ (changes to a grave if followed by another word)	ᾶ
CIRCUMFLEX	(only on long syllables)	ᾷ (only when ultima is short)	ᾷ
GRAVE	(only when words follow without intervening punctuation)		ὰ

Notes:

1. **The principle of accenting verbs is recessive, i.e., the accent mark moves as far away from the ultima as possible.**
2. **Consequently, the concern for where to accent the verb will usually focus on the placing of the acute accent over the penult or over the antepenult since more often than not the verb accent mark will be the acute.** Here the presence of a long or a short ultima is the decisive factor.

ἀκούω

ἀκούομεν

3. **The principle of accenting substantives (nouns and related words such as pronouns etc.) is to keep the accent mark on the syllable showing up in the lexical form (that is, to keep it 'at home.').**
4. **If the lexical form of the noun is accented on the antepenult, then the issue becomes a matter of the acute accent shifting back and forth between the antepenult and penult.** The accent mark will not change forms, just change syllables.

ἄγγελος

ἀγγέλου

5. ***If the lexical form of the noun is accented on the penult, the issue becomes a matter of changing form while remaining on the penult.*** It will normally shift back and forth between circumflex and acute. Here the length of both the penult and ultima are crucial.

γλῶσσα	γλῶσσης	λόγος	λόγου
δῶρον	δώρου	καρδία	καρδίας

6. ***If the lexical form of the noun is accented on the ultima, two issues come into play.***

First, the acute accent will show up on the first and fourth inflectional forms (i.e., Nom and Acc cases). The second and third inflectional forms (Gen/Abl and Loc/Ins/Dat) will change to a circumflex accent. The 1 2 2 1 pattern. This applies to both the singular and plural forms.

μαθητής μαθητοῦ

Second, where the ultima accent is the acute, it will change to the grave accent when no punctuation mark stands between this word and the next one.

ὁ **μαθητής** ἀκούει **τὴν** φωνήν, ἀλλ' οὐ γινώσκει τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

RULES FOR ACCENTING ENCLITICS²

1. An enclitic that is the first word of a sentence cannot lean on a word preceding it and must be supplied an accent of its own.

Enclitic WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW

Accent it!

ἐστὲ μαθηταί.

2. An enclitic or a proclitic is supplied an accent if it precedes an enclitic.

ENCLITIC ENCLITIC WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW

Accent the first one!

οἱ εἰσὶν μαθηταί.

3. If the word preceding an enclitic has an acute accent on the ultima, do not change it to grave.³



| A | P | U | ENCLITIC WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW

Don't change that acute accent mark!

οἱ **μαθηταί** εἰσὶν τοῦ κυρίου.

4. If the word preceding an enclitic has an acute on the antepenult or a circumflex on the penult, an additional acute is given the word on its ultima.



‘ ~ ‘
 | A | P | U | ENCLITIC WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW
 Add **acute** over ultima!

οἱ **ἀπόστολλοί** εἰσὶν τοῦ κυρίου.

5. If the word preceding an enclitic has an acute on the penult or a circumflex on the ultima, enough accent remains to cover a one-syllable enclitic which follows.



‘ ~ ‘
 | A | P | U | ENCLITIC WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW
 Don't mess with accenting enclitic!⁴

γινώσκω σε
 but
 γινώσκουσιν σέ.

6. If the word preceding an enclitic has an acute on the penult or a circumflex on the ultima, a two-syllable enclitic would be supplied its own accent to provide for its last syllable.



‘ ~ ‘ ‘
 | A | P | U | EN | CLITIC WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW
 Accent the enclitic!⁵

οἱ ἀπόστολλοί **εἰσὶν** τοῦ κυρίου.

Endnotes:

¹Chart adapted from Walter Mueller, *Grammatical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 13.

²By definition an enclitic is a word which depends on the preceding word for its accent mark. Functionally it becomes a one or two syllable extension of the preceding word and is pronounced as such.

³A = Antepenult; P = Penult; U = Ultima.

⁴Functionally the following one-syllable enclitic becomes the ultima of the word it follows.

⁵Mostly the accute accent will be added which then becomes a grave when followed by words with no punctuation marks inbetween.