

LANGUAGE: ANCIENT GREEK

- An extinct language spoken by the people of Ancient Greece.
- It is the oldest recorded written language.
- Like Latin, it influenced many new languages and lots of Ancient Greek words are still used today.

Ancient Greek was the language spoken by the people of Ancient Greece thousands of years ago. Ancient Greek and Latin are the most important extinct languages (languages which are no longer spoken) for speakers of English today. This is because an exceptionally large number of English words come from Greek and Latin.

THE ANCIENT GREEK ALPHABET

Αα	Alpha	Νν	Nu
Ββ	Beta	Ξξ	Xi
Γγ	Gamma	Οο	Omicron
Δδ	Delta	Ππ	Pi
Εε	Epsilon	Ρρ	Rho
Ζζ	Zeta	Σσς	Sigma
Ηη	Eta	Ττ	Tau
Θθ	Theta	Υυ	Upsilon
Ιι	Iota	Φφ	Phi
Κκ	Kappa	Χχ	Chi
Λλ	Lambda	Ψψ	Psi
Μμ	Mu	Ωω	Omega

The Greek alphabet is thought to be where all important European alphabets came from but it looks very different from our Latin alphabet. It has 24 letters. The letter 'a' is 'alpha' and the letter 'b' is 'beta': that's where the word alphabet came from!

THE ANCIENT GREEK DIALECTS

A dialect is how a language sounds a little different depending on where you live. For example, in America, they have some different words to in England (such as trash and vacation), but both countries still speak English. It is not to be confused with an area's accent.

The Greek language had many different dialects. "Attic Greek", which was spoken by the people of Athens (the capital city of Greece), is thought to be the purest of the forms. Since the Greeks became very powerful in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, their language spread very quickly. Alexander the Great even took it into Asia. Later, in the Roman world, children were taught Greek as a second language in the same way that many non-English speakers today learn English as their second language.

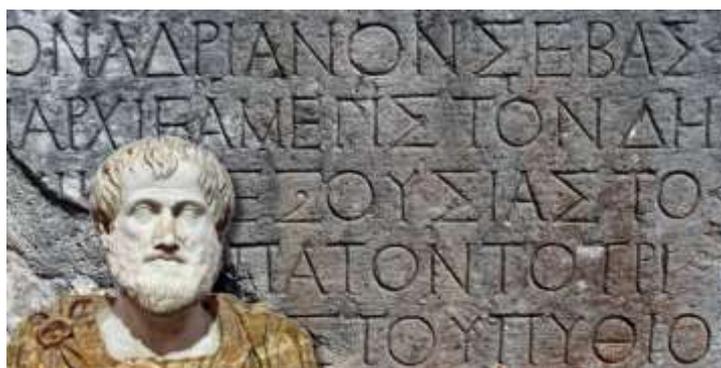
GREEK TODAY

All languages change with time, and Greek has changed a lot over the centuries. Modern Greek is often said to have started in the year 1453 A.D. Unlike Latin, the Ancient Greek language did not split into many languages, but it is still very different to the Modern Greek language, which they speak today in Greece. Pronunciation (how you say words) has changed a lot. For instance, the letter "b" called beta is now pronounced "v" and Greeks now call this letter "vita". Over 13million people speak Modern Greek today and these people still use the same alphabet as the Greeks did all those years ago.

About 80% of the entries in any English dictionary are borrowed from other languages. Over 60% of all English words have Greek or Latin roots. If you include the vocabulary of science and technology, the figure rises to over 90%. The study of where a word comes from is called etymology.



Greek	English	Example Words
thermo	heat	thermometer, thermostat
meter	measure	centimetre, diameter,
cycle	circular, wheel	cyclone, bicycle
hydro	water	hydrate, dehydrate
phono	sound	phonics, telephone
opt	eye	optician,
scop	see	telescope, microscope



FIND OUT MORE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3ALeLjQ1TE>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. True or false? Ancient Greek is still spoken today.
2. How do you say the letter 'b' in Ancient Greek?
3. How do you say the letter 'b' in Modern Greek?
4. What language is spoken in Greece today?
5. How many people speak Greek today?
6. How many letters are in the Greek alphabet?
7. What percentage of everyday English language comes from Latin or Greek roots?
8. What does the Greek 'thermo' mean in English?
9. 'Hydrate' comes from the Greek root 'hydro' but what does this mean?
10. Write down an English word with the Greek root 'meter'.