

Teaching notes on 10.04a Ancient Greek writing

Slide 1

Learning objective: To learn about the Ancient Greek alphabet and to write our names using it.

Because we're investigating Greek words, mouse-click on this slide will make Lucundus say 'χαίρετε!' ('khai-ray-tay') to the class. This means 'hello!' The pupils can reply by saying 'χαίρε!' ('khai-ray'). The singular/plural endings work exactly the same way as in Latin.

Slide 2

Here, the class are encouraged to take a look at an authentic Roman inscription.



To appreciate how similar the letters that Romans used are to our modern alphabet, on mouse-click we'll ask the students to find some words in the inscription. The first two they will know from previous units, and the third they can make a guess at from its English derivative. Answers are revealed on mouse-click.

Slide 3

In fact, the Romans developed their alphabet from the Greek alphabet, and this is where we get the actual word 'alphabet' from, as illustrated on mouse-click.

Slide 4

Although many of the Greek letters bear a resemblance to our modern letters, some don't. On mouse-click, this slide illustrates some similar and some not-so-similar letters.

Slide 5

The full Greek alphabet. This slide (with annotations) forms the basis of this week's worksheet. Students will need a printed out copy of this to engage in the lesson activities and writing task.



Which letters seem familiar? Which ones are a bit strange?

- gamma - the capital looks a bit like a malformed 'T' and the lower case looks like a 'y'
- eta - looks like an H
- nu - the upper case is fine, but the lower case looks like a 'v'
- rho - looks like a P. Just imagine it as a capital R that's lost one leg.
- chi - looks like an X but is a 'kh' (back of the throat noise) instead
- omega - lower case looks like 'w', but instead makes an 'oh' sound

A note on H - this is represented at the start of a word by a ' above (or just in front of) a vowel. If a word starts with a vowel but no H sound, it has a ' instead. If you have an h in the middle of a modern word or name (e.g. Rihanna), it's probably easiest to leave it out when transliterating (writing English words with Greek characters).

Missing sounds - Ancient Greek did not have...

- soft c, use sigma σ
- qu, use κ kappa (followed by upsilon if necessary)
- v or f, use φ phi
- sh, use χ chi
- y, use υ upsilon (which is a bit y-ish anyway)
- j, use ι iota
- w, use υυ two upsilons (which is what double-u means)

Slide 6

Game - Guess who? The names of three famous people or things are going to appear on the board.

Working in pairs or individually, students use a whiteboard and marker, along with their alphabet sheets, to work out these three names before a picture confirms whether they're right.

- [mouse-click] Ἐλιζαβεθ
- [mouse-click] picture of Queen Elizabeth
- [mouse-click] Ἄρρυ Ποττερ
- [mouse-click] picture of Harry Potter
- [mouse-click] Μανχεστερ Ὑνιτεδ
- [mouse-click] picture of Manchester United

Slide 7

So, we've had a go at decoding Greek, but it's really good fun to write the letters. Let's try our names.

- [mouse-click] Start by copying it out a few times on a whiteboard.
- [mouse-click] When you've got the hang of it, copy your name in Greek onto a name badge or sticker.

Slide 8

The plenary slide:

Question 1 We use the same letters today as which ancient culture? [Rome/Romans] Where did they get their alphabet from? [The Ancient Greeks]

Question 2 What sound does the Greek letter λ make? ['l' – it's a lambda]

Question 3 There are two versions of the letter 'o' in the Greek alphabet. Can you write both of them? [Omicron (small o) Οο and omega (big o) Ωω.] What's the difference between how they sound? [omicron is a short 'o' sound like the 'o' in 'dog' and omega is a long 'o' sound as in 'oh no!']