

## How to Keep At It

Congratulations! We are almost done with your first semester of Greek! You have learned Greek the way no other Nyack College students have ever learned it – by learning it first as a living language, and then working backwards to reading. If you have been keeping up with the Duolingo work *and* the Memrise work, you should be able to start reading from your Greek New Testament and actually understanding what you read.

If you're not quite there yet, don't worry! That's what second semester is for. For the last month of class, we'll be continuing to work on vocabulary and on Duolingo, and I'll continue to feed you as much supporting material as I can. Keep in mind, though, that learning a language online is particularly difficult. I can't guide you from a distance as much as I'd like to!

In second semester, we are going to turn to a more focused reading of the Greek New Testament. I'll assign you written homework every week, and I'll be posting readings on E360. This week, I want to show you how your homework will look every week next semester, because I think it's a really helpful way to "get into" the Greek text. Before I do, though, I'll explain the method.

We'll be using two techniques: chunking and layered reading.

### Chunking:

1. You start by taking a larger unit of text (like one chapter) and breaking it down into chunks (phrases) of 2-4 words at a time.
2. Within those "chunks" you isolate the words that you don't know, and look them up.
3. Translate each "chunk" as best as you can.
4. Put the whole thing together!

Let me give you an example. Let's say I wanted to work through the first ten verses of Romans 1. I would start by going to a website like [www.parabible.com](http://www.parabible.com) and downloading the text and pasting it into a Word document.

**Rom 1:1** Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, <sup>2</sup> ὃ προεπηγγέιλαι διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἀγίαις <sup>3</sup> περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, <sup>4</sup> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, <sup>5</sup> δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, <sup>6</sup> ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, <sup>7</sup> πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἀγίοις, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

**Rom 1:8** Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. <sup>9</sup> μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνησίαν ὑμῶν ποιῶμαι <sup>10</sup> πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου δεόμενος εἶ πως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

This all seems very daunting at first. But, if you take it 2-3 words at a time, it becomes manageable. You would do it something like this.

1. Read the English through carefully, in a couple of versions, so that you get the sense of the passage.
2. Try to divide the Greek according to units of meaning.
3. Translate each of those units.
4. Once you have translated everything this way, put it all together.

Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus

κλητὸς ἀπόστολος

Called “apostle”

ἀφορισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ,

Set apart for the good news of God.

And so on. The other big advantage of this method is that you start to learn words in context. You’ll constantly be running across words you haven’t met yet, and learning them in phrases is going to make them stick in your memory much better.

I’ll be assigning you lengthy passages to work out this way. They’ll help you read large chunks of the text.

### **Layered Reading**

The other method we’ll be working on is one that has been around in Jewish circles for a long time – centuries, most likely. I like to call it “layered reading.” Here’s a step-by-step method.

1. Go to a website like [www.parabible.com](http://www.parabible.com) or [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org).
2. Find the passage you want to read in the Greek, and set it up with a parallel English translation such as NIV or ESV.
3. Read one verse in Greek, out loud, and then read the same verse in English, out loud.
4. Go back to the Greek, and see if you can translate the verse “off the cuff” *out loud* without looking at the English. Make sure you know what each word means and how the sentence fits together. DO NOT move on until you can translate the whole verse without checking a single word.
5. Go to the next verse and do the same thing (read it out loud once in Greek and once in English, and then work up until you can translate it “off the cuff” out loud. Only move to step 6 once you have mastered this step.
6. Go back to the first verse, read it out loud, and then translate it from memory (without looking at the English).
7. Go to the second verse, read it out loud, and then translate it from memory.
8. Go to the third verse, start with step three, and work all the way through to step six. This time, review *all* the verses you have covered.

I’ll be posting recordings for how to do this. The main idea, though, is this: you’re reading a translation along with the Greek to help you. You are not “decoding” the text but trying to

swallow big bites of it. You don't need to know lots of grammatical terminology; you just need to be able to look up words that you don't understand.

Anyway, that's what we'll be doing next semester. Between now and then, you can use these two methods to get an even stronger foundation in Greek. Good luck!