Chapter 29

The Imperfect Indicative Active
Compound Verbs

29.1 So far we have used verbs in the Present and the Future tenses. Now we come to one of the Past tenses of the verb - the Imperfect. The Imperfect is built upon the Present stem of the verb. It has the name "Imperfect" because it does not indicate that an action has been completed in the past. It is used to express "I was doing something" or "I used to do something" - over a period of time, or repeatedly, rather than just once.

Note that, particularly when conversations are reported, Greek may use the present, rather than a past tense. This is not bad Greek grammar - it is known as the "Historical Present", and is done on purpose, to make the action seem more immediate to the reader.

There is no Imperfect Subjunctive, Optative, Imperative, Infinitive, or Participle.

Besides the Imperfect, there are some other past tenses in Greek, which we will meet later, but most of them have several things in common.

1. A past tense usually has an ε- in front of the verb stem.
   This is called an "augment" (it is added to the stem, making it longer).
   The Augment is equivalent to the English "-ed" at the end of a verb - I walk, I walked.

2. Sets of personal endings are used, which are very similar to the endings we have already learned.

29.2 The basic pattern for the Imperfect Indicative Active is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Imperfect Indicative Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>ἐStanov, ἐStaniemov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (singular)</td>
<td>ἐStanov, ἐStaniemov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>ἐStanov, ἐStaniemov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For λέγω, this becomes

| I was saying          | ἔλεγον, ἔλεγομεν         |
| you were saying       | ἔλεγες, ἔλεγετε         |
| he/she/it was saying  | ἔλεγεν, ἔλεγον           |

We already know the endings for the First and Second Persons Plural. The Second Person Singular is very similar to that for the Present tense. We only have two endings to learn and practice. Note that there is possible confusion between the First Person Singular and the Third Person Plural - they both end in -ον. A Greek sentence will usually resolve this problem by using a pronoun if the sense is not clear.

Chant the endings -ov, -ez, -en, -omenv, -ete, -ov until you know them by heart.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐδίδασκεν τοὺς μαθητὰς. The presbyter/elder was teaching the disciples.
2. οἱ ἁγιοὶ ἐδίδασκον τὰ τέκνα; Were the saints teaching the children?
3. ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐδίδασκον τὸ παιδίον. I was not teaching the child.
4. ἔβλεπομεν τὰ πρόβατα. We were looking at the sheep.
5. ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἔβλεπετε τοὺς δούλους. You were not looking at the slaves.
6. σὺ ἔγραφες ἐπιστολὰς τοῖς ἁγίοις. You were writing letters to the saints.
7. τὰ παιδία ἐβάλλον λίθους εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. The children were throwing stones into the sea.
8. οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ἐδίωκον τοὺς ἀδελφούς. The Romans were persecuting the brothers.
9. ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔθεράπευεν τοὺς τυφλούς. Jesus was healing the blind (men, people).
10. ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἔμενον ἐν τῷ οίκῳ. His mother and father remained in the house.
29.3 Contract verbs follow the usual rules of contraction.

The movable ν on the third person singular drops off.

\[ \alpha + ε = \alpha \quad α + o = o \quad ε + ε = ει \quad ε + o = ου \quad o + ε = ου \quad o + o = ου \]

- Τιμάω - I honor
- Ποιέω - I do, make
- Σταυρόω - I crucify

\[ \alpha + ε = \alpha \quad \epsilon + ε = \epsilonι \quad \epsilon + o = ου \quad o + ε = ου \quad o + o = ου \]

**Practice** - until you can read and translate easily

1. οἱ ὑποκριταὶ ἐπλάνων τὸν λαόν. The hypocrites were leading the people astray.
2. τὸ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἐποίει τὰ καλά. The demon was not doing (the) good things.
3. οἱ στρατιῶται ἐσταύρουν τὸν Ἰησοῦν. The soldiers were crucifying Jesus.
4. ἐποιεῖτε τὸ ἔργον καλόν; Were you doing the good deed?
5. ἐγὼ ἐτίμων τοὺς διδάσκαλους. I respected the teachers.
6. πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐζήτει τὰ ἴδια. Each man was seeking his own (things).
7. οἱ υἱοὶ ἐκάλουν τὰς ἀδελφὰς αὐτῶν. The sons were calling their sisters.
8. οὗτος ἐτήρει τὰς ἐντολάς. He (this one) was keeping the commandments.
9. ἡµεῖς ἐζητοῦµεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. We were seeking the truth.
10. ἐκεῖνοι οἱ λῃσταὶ οὐκ ἐτήρουν τὸν νόµον. Those robbers were not keeping the law.

29.4 If the verb stem begins with a vowel - the augment and the vowel combine to give a long vowel. If the stem begins with a iota the augment is often omitted.

\[ ε + α = η \quad ε + ε = η \quad ε + o = ω \quad ε + 1 = ει or ι \]
\[ ε + αι = η \quad ε + ει = η \quad ε + οι = οι \]
\[ ε + αυ = ηυ \quad ε + ευ = ευ or ιυ \]

For ἄκοου ἤ, this becomes

- I was hearing: Ἦκουον, Ἦκουομεν - we were hearing
- you were hearing: Ἦκουος, Ἦκουετε - y'all were hearing
- he/she/it was hearing: Ἦκουεν, Ἦκουον - they were hearing

For ἄγαπάω and similar verbs, there are changes both at the front and at the end of the stem

- I was loving: Ἦγάπων, Ἦγαπάμεν - we were loving
- you were loving: Ἦγάπας, Ἦγαπάτε - y'all were loving
- he/she/it was loving: Ἦγάπα, Ἦγάπων - they were loving

ǣχω (I have) is slightly irregular. Its stem changes to ἕι- for the Imperfect.

**NOTE**: If, when reading a Greek text, you meet a verb starting with "η", and you do not find it in the dictionary entries for "η", remember that it is most probably a past tense of a verb beginning with α- or ε-.

**Practice** - until you can read and translate easily

1. ηµεῖς οὐκ ἠγάπων τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πονηροῦ. We were not loving the works of the evil one.
2. αὐτὴ ἠκολούθε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις. She was following the elders.
3. οὗτοι ἠρώτων τὸν διδάσκαλον περὶ τοῦ βιβλίου. They (those men) were asking the teacher about the book.
4. ὑμεῖς ἠκολουθεῖτε τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἢ τῷ Ἰωάννῳ; Were you following Jesus, or John?
5. τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ. The Spirit of God dwelt in the prophet.
6. ἐγὼ εἶχον τὰ βιβλία σήμερον ἀλλὰ οὐκ ἔξω αὐτὰ αὐρίον. I had the books today but I won't have them tomorrow.
7. εἶχεν ὁ δοῦλος τὸ ἀργύριον τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ; Did the slave have his master's money?
8. ὅταν τὰ πρόβατα ἤκουε τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ κυρίου. These sheep were listening to the voice of the Lord.
9. ἔψαμεν τὰ πρὸς τὴν φυλακὴν. "If God were your Father, you would have loved me." (John 8:42)

29.5 Compound Verbs

Compound verbs are built by adding a prefix to the stem of the verb. The meaning of the verb may change either slightly (e.g. to show direction or emphasis) or (more rarely) completely.

e.g. βάλλω - I throw ἐκβάλλω - I cast out ἀρχῖ - I rule ὑπάρχω - I am

The prefix is not regarded as part of the stem of the verb, so, for past tenses of compound verbs:

the augment is normally inserted between the main stem and the prefix.

The addition of the augment may cause slight changes to the letters on either side of it.

If the prefix ends with a vowel, the vowel usually drops out and is replaced by the augment.

περι- and προ- usually keep their vowels.

ἀνα- may become ἀνη- and κατα- may become κατη-.

Compound verbs with εὑ- often do not have an augment, but just use the personal endings for the tense.

If the prefix ends in a -κ, the -κ changes to a -ξ before the augment.

NOTE: In the New Testament there are variant spellings for the imperfect of ἀνοίγω - I open (up). The root is οἴγω - I open. By the rules above, the imperfect should have the form ἀνα- in -ξ, and the iota drops down to become a iota-subscript. However, some writers occasionally use a "double augment" ἀνα- or even a "triple augment" ἀνα-.

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐξέβαλλον τὰ δαιµόνια. The apostles were casting the demons out.
2. ὁ μαθητὴς ἀπήγγελε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς. The disciple was announcing the Gospel in their synagogues.
3. ἡ µήτηρ τοῦ Ἰωάννου περιεπάτειν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. John's mother was walking in the temple.
4. ὁ ἄγγελος ἔξεχεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ γῇ. The angel was pouring out his bowl onto the earth. (see Rev. 16:2)
5. ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐµὲ. "If God were your Father, you would have loved me." (John 8:42)
6. ἄρχω - I rule ὑπάρχω - I am

If the prefix ends in a -κ, the -κ changes to a -ξ before the augment.

οἱ δέσµιοι ἀπῆγες τοὺς στρατιώτας ἀρτον. The prisoners were asking the soldiers for bread.
7. ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατῴκουν ἐν τῇ κώµῃ. Joseph and the mother of Jesus were dwelling in the village.
8. ὁ Ἰωάννης ἀπεκαλύπτεν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. John was revealing the works of God to the Churches.
9. ἔπετρέπομεν τὰ παιδία ψάλλειν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. We were allowing the children to sing in the synagogue.
10. ὁ Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἡ µήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κατῴκουν ἐν τῇ κώµῃ. Joseph and the mother of Jesus were dwelling in the village.
29.6 Sentences for reading and translation
1. οἱ τελῶναι μετενόουν καὶ ἠκολούθουν τῷ Ἰωάννῳ.
2. αἱ ἁµαρτίαι ἡµῶν κατήργουν τὰς προσευχὰς ἡµῶν.
3. ὁ µαθητὴς κατείχεν τὴν διδαχὴν τοῦ διδάσκαλου.
4. οἱ προφῆται προέλεγον ἡµῖν ὅτι οἱ θεοὶ µέλλει κρίνειν τὸν κόσµον.
5. ὁ πατὴρ προῆγεν τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.
6. καὶ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παιδία.
7. ἡ µήτηρ προσδόκεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς;
8. ἐξεβάλλετε τὰ δαιµόνια;
9. ἀπήγγελες τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ταῖς παρθένοις;
10. ἠκούοµεν τοὺς λόγους οὓς ἐλάλουν οἱ προφῆται.

29.7 Writing Practice: Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud (Matt. 5:4)

µακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύµατι,

Happy (are) the poor in spirit,

ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

for theirs is the Kingdom of the Heavens.

µακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες,

Happy are the ones mourning,


In your Greek New Testament, read the passages aloud several times until you can read them without long pauses or stumbling. Then use the helps to translate them.
ἦλθεν (it) came
ὁ κατακλυσμὸς flood, deluge
ἄπώλεσεν (it) destroyed  ( simple past of ἀπόλλυμι - I destroy)
πάντας everything, all  ( Masculine Accusative plural of πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν - each, every)
Λώτ Lot (Abraham’s nephew)
ἡ in the  (ἡ used for τῇ)
ἐβρεξεν (it) rained, watered  ( simple past of βρέχω - I wet, rain)
τὸ θεῖον sulfur  ( hence the chemical prefix theio- for sulfur compounds)

29.9 Vocabulary to learn

ἀπάγω I lead away
ἀποκαλύπτω I reveal, unveil
γαμέω I marry
γαμίζω I give (a bride) in marriage
ἐκτείνω I stretch out
ἐκχέω I pour out
ἐπιμένω I remain, abide, persevere
ἐπιτρέπω I allow, permit
καλύπτω I cover, hide, veil
καταλύω (transitive) I tear down, destroy  (intransitive) I stay with (as a guest)
κατανοέω I consider, notice, am aware of
καταργέω I cancel, make ineffective, destroy
κατηγορέω I accuse, bring charges against
καταχέω I pour down, pour onto
κατέχω I hold down, hold fast, head for (ship)
κατοικέω I dwell, settle, inhabit
οἰκέω I dwell, live (in)
παράγω I pass by, pass on, pass away
παρατηρέω I watch closely, keep an eye on
παρέχω I cause, bring about, offer
περιβάλλω I put on, dress  ( one dressed by throwing a toga or cloak around oneself)
περιβλέπω I look around at
προάγω I go before, ahead of
προφέρω I offer, bring before, present
ὑπάρχω I am, exist
ξηραίνω I dry up  Passive - I am withered
φυτεύω I plant  ( hence scientific words starting with phyto- for plant sciences)
ξηρὸς, -ά, -όν dry  ( hence xeriscape and Xerox - dry copying)
ἡ κιβωτός ark, ship
ἡ φιάλη vial, bowl, flask
ἄχρι up until  ( either as a conjunction, or as a preposition with Genitive)
εὐθύς immediately
ὁμοίως similarly, likewise  ( adverb, from the adjective ὁμοίος, -α, -ον - like)
ὅπως that, in order that
tὸ κάλυμμα veil (Don’t attempt to use cases other than the Nominative singular yet)
tὰ ὑπάρχοντα possessions (Don’t attempt to use cases other than the Nom. singular)
tὸ πῦρ fire  ( hence the scientific prefix pyr- for fever, burning, heat)
( the pyramids were so called because when the sun shone on them they looked to be on fire)
ἡ χείρ hand  ( hence chiropractor, chiropodist, etc.)