

The Greek alphabet

Greek letters are commonly used as variable names in mathematics and statistics. The purpose of this assignment is to give you some familiarity with the Greek alphabet so that you become more comfortable with use of Greek letters.

Note that the pronunciation given below is one commonly used by mathematicians and statisticians.

Lower case	Upper case	Latin equivalent	Name	Pronunciation
α	A	a	alpha	AL-fuh
β	B	b	beta	BAY-tuh
γ	Γ	g	gamma	GAM-uh
δ	Δ	d	delta	DEL-tuh
ϵ or ε	E	e	epsilon	EP-sil-on
ζ	Z	z	zeta	ZAY-tuh
η	H	ê	eta	AY-tuh
θ	Θ	th	theta	THAY-tuh
ι	I	i	iota	eye-OH-tuh
κ	K	k	kappa	KAP-uh
λ	Λ	l	lambda	LAM-duh
μ	M	m	mu	MYOO
ν	N	n	nu	NOO
ξ	Ξ	ks	xi	KS-EYE
\omicron	O	o	omicron	OM-i-KRON
π	Π	p	pi	PIE
ρ or ϱ	P	r	rho	ROW
σ or ς	Σ	s	sigma	SIG-muh
τ	T	t	tau	TAU
υ	Y	u	upsilon	OOP-si-LON
ϕ or φ	Φ	f	phi	FEE
χ	X	ch	chi	K-EYE
ψ	Ψ	ps	psi	SIGH
ω	Ω	ô	omega	oh-MAY-guh

Exercise 1: Write out the lower case Greek alphabet. Pronounce the name of each letter aloud as you write it.

Exercise 2: Many words in English have a Greek origin. Below is a list of Greek words. Try to translate each into English by transliterating Greek letters to Latin equivalents and then sounding out the result. A few notes: The form ς is commonly used for a sigma at the end of a word. The font below is typical of what would be used for printed Greek. The font in the table above is typical of what would be used for Greek letters in mathematics and statistics. Most accents are omitted below with the exception of the last two in which the initial accent indicates the word begins with an “h” sound.

αποστροφή	ασθμα	δραμα	χαρακτηρ
μητροπολις	γενεσις	πανθηρ	ιπποποταμος
ισοσκελης	κρατηρ	ασβεστος	υποθεσις