

12.3.2 The simple past / Αόριστος

The simple past is used to describe an action, an event or condition that occurred in the past without being interested in its duration. The action or the event described was completed at some point. Duration or habit is expressed in Greek by the Imperfect tense.

Χθες πήγα στο πάρκο. I went to the park yesterday.
Χθες είδα τη Μαρία. I saw Maria yesterday.

12.3.2.1 Formation of the simple past of the active voice

Characteristics of the past tense of the active voice

The personal endings of the “Αόριστος” of the active voice are: **-α, -εξ, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν.**

The letters **σ, ξ (κ+σ), ψ (π+σ)** before the endings are typical letters of the “Αόριστος”. However, there are verbs that form the “Αόριστος” without these letters, as you will see below.

In the “Αόριστος” the verbs are in principle stressed on the third-to-last syllable.

Group A, 1st conjugation

The augment (prefix) “έ-”

Two-syllable verbs take in the “Αόριστος” the augment “έ-” with the stress mark on it. By taking the augment these verbs bear the stress mark on the third-to-last syllable. The augment disappears if the stress mark is not to be found on the “έ-” as in the first and second person plural. When two-syllable verbs have a preposition as a prefix, the augment is placed after the preposition and before the verb. If the preposition ends in a vowel, then this vowel disappears. **Notice** that the vowel in the preposition “περί” remains and that the preposition “εκ” changes into “εξ”, for example:

εισπράττω (collect) - εισέπραξα
ενδίδω (give way) - ενέδωσα
επιτρέπω (allow) - επέτρεψα
υπογράφω (sign) - υπέγραψα
περιγράφω (describe) - περιέγραψα
εκφράζω (express) - εξέφρασα

Attention: There are verbs that do not take the augment “έ-” (see the list with the irregular verbs):

θέλω (want) – ήθελα (Imperfect tense)
ξέρω (know) - ήξερα
πίνω (drink) – ήπια
αίρω (raise, revoke) -ήρα

Formation steps

The verbs διαβάζω (read) and γράφω (write) are used as examples:

1. Find the present stem of the verb (omit -ω)

διαβάζω – διαβαζ-	γράφω – γραφ-
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2. Change the last letter of the present stem into **σ, ξ** of **ψ** by applying the following rules: If the stem of the present tense ends in:

a vowel or ν	–	σ	
κ, γ, χ, χν	–	ξ	
π, β, φ, πτ, φτ, αυ, ευ	–	ψ	(exception: πέφτω-έπεσα)
τ, δ, θ, σ, ζ	–	σ or ξ	

Notice that certain verbs (often ancient Greek verbs), whose present stem ends in **-μ, -ν, -λ, -ρ**, retain these letters in the “Αόριστος”, sometimes with modifications in the stem, for example μένω (stay) – έμεινα, σφάλω (err, make a mistake) – έσφαλα (see the list with the irregular verbs).

διαβαζ – διαβασ-	γραφ – γραψ-
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This is the past stem of the verb.

3. Place the personal endings of the “Αόριστος” (-α, -ες, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν) after the past stem and put the stress mark on the third-to-last syllable. If the verb has two syllables, place the augment “έ-” (before the past stem with the stress mark on it). Do not forget to omit the augment in the first and second person plural.

διάβασ- α διάβασ-ες διάβασ-ε	έ-γραψ-α έ-γραψ-ες έ-γραψ-ε
διαβάσ-αμε διαβάσ-ατε διάβασ-αν	γράψ-αμε γράψ-ατε έ-γραψ-αν

The verbs used above are conjugated in the following table:

διάβασα	I read (simple past)	έγραψα	I wrote
διάβασες	you read	έγραψες	you wrote
διάβασε	...	έγραψε	...
διαβάσαμε		γράψαμε	
διαβάσατε		γράψατε	
διάβασαν		έγραψαν	

Group B, 2nd conjugation

Characteristics

Verbs of the 2nd conjugation take before the endings the letters “-ησ-” or sometimes -εσ-, -ασ-, -υσ-, -αξ-, -ηξ-, -εψ-. These verbs in principle do not need the augment “έ-”. **Notice**, however, that the verb “ζω” (live) takes the augment (ζω - έζησα).

Formation steps

The verbs αγαπώ (love), γελώ (laugh) and τηλεφωνώ (telephone) are used as example:

1. Find the present stem of the verb (omit -ω)

B1	B2
αγαπώ – αγαπ-	γελώ – γελ-
	τηλεφωνώ – τηλεφων-

2. Place the letters “-ησ-” (or sometimes -ασ-, -εσ-, -υσ-, -αξ-, -ηξ-, -εψ-) after the stem. This is the past stem of the verb.

B1	B2
αγαπ-ησ-	γελ-ασ-
	τηλεφων-ησ-

3. Place the personal endings of the “Αόριστος” (-α, -ες, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν) in the end and put the stress mark on the third-to-last syllable.

B1	B2
αγάπ-ησ-α	γέλ-ασ-α
αγάπ-ησ-ες	γέλ-ασ-ες
αγάπ-ησ-ε	γέλ-ασ-ε
αγαπ-ήσ-αμε	γελ-άσ-αμε
αγαπ-ήσ-ατε	γελ-άσ-ατε
αγάπ-ησ-αν	γέλ-ασ-αν
	τηλεφών-ησ-α
	τηλεφών-ησ-ες
	τηλεφών-ησ-ε
	τηλεφων-ήσ-αμε
	τηλεφων-ήσ-ατε
	τηλεφών-ησ-αν

The verbs used above are conjugated in the following table:

B1		B2	
αγάπησα	I loved	γέλασα	I laughed
αγάπησες	you ...	γέλασες	you ...
αγάπησε	...	γέλασε	...
αγαπήσαμε		γελάσαμε	
αγαπήσατε		γελάσατε	
αγάπησαν		γέλασαν	
		τηλεφώνησα	I telephoned
		τηλεφώνησες	you ...
		τηλεφώνησε	...
		τηλεφωνήσαμε	
		τηλεφωνήσατε	
		τηλεφώνησαν	

12.3.2.2 Formation of the past tense of the medio-passive voice

Characteristics

The endings of the “Αόριστος” of the medio-passive voice are the same as in the active voice:

-α, -εξ, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν.

The verbs in the “Αόριστος” of the medio-passive voice are also stressed on the third-to-last syllable.

Group A, 1st conjugation

Characteristics

The lettercombinations **-θηκ-** and **-στηκ-** before the endings are typical of the “Αόριστος” of the medio-passive voice of the A verbs (the following lettercombinations as well but less often: **-φθηκ-, -χθηκ-, -φθηκ-, -νθηκ-, -(αυ)τηκ-, -(ευ)τηκ-**).

Formation steps

The verbs *πληρώνομαι* (get paid) and *αγοράζομαι* (be bought) are used as example:

1. Find the present stem of the verb (omit -ω, -ομαι)

<i>πληρώνω-πληρώνομαι</i> - πληρων-	<i>αγοράζω-αγοράζομαι</i> - αγοραζ-
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2. Change the last letter of the stem of the present tense into **θ**, of **στ** (or sometimes into -φτ-, -χτ-, -φθ-, -νθ-, -(αυ)τ-, -(ευ)τ-), this is the past stem of the medio-passive voice of the verb. The following rules may in principle be applied:

If the past tense of the active voice ends in:

-σα - θ or στ

-ξα - χτ

-ψα - φτ/φθ

<i>πληρωγ</i> - <i>πληρωθ-</i>	<i>αγοράζ</i> - <i>αγοραστ-</i>
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3. Place the lettercombination **-ηκ-** after the past tense stem of the medio-passive voice:

<i>πληρωθ-ηκ-</i>	<i>αγοραστ-ηκ-</i>
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4. Place the personal endings of the “Αόριστος” (**-α, -εξ, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν**) in the end and put the stress mark on the third-to-last syllable.

<i>πληρώθ-ηκ-α</i>	<i>αγοράστ-ηκ-α</i>
<i>πληρώθ-ηκ-εξ</i>	<i>αγοράστ-ηκ-εξ</i>
...	...

The verbs used above are conjugated in the table below:

πληρώθηκα	I was (or got) paid	αγοράστηκα	I was bought
πληρώθηκες	you were paid	αγοράστηκες	you were bought
πληρώθηκε	...	αγοράστηκε	...
πληρωθήκαμε		αγοραστήκαμε	
πληρωθήκατε		αγοραστήκατε	
πληρώθηκαν		αγοράστηκαν	

Groep B, 2nd conjugation and verbs with the archaic conjugation

Characteristics

The lettercombination **-ήθηκ-** before the endings is typical of the “Αόριστος” of the medio-passive voice of the B verbs (the following lettercombinations as well but less often: **-έθηκ-, -έστηκ-, -άστηκ-, -άχτηκ-, -ήχτηκ-**).

Formation steps

The verbs αγαπιέμαι (be loved), βαριέμαι (be bored), κοιμάμαι (sleep) εν διηγούμαι (narrate) are used as example:

1. Find the present stem of the verb (omit -ώ, -ιέμαι, -άμαι, -ούμαι)

B1	B2	Archaic conjugation
αγαπώ-αγαπιέμαι – αγαπ- βαριέμαι – βαρ-	κοιμάμαι (κοιμούμαι) – κοιμ-	διηγούμαι – διηγ-

2. Place after the present stem the lettercombination **-ηθ-** (or one of the following lettercombinations: **-εθ-, -εστ-, -αστ-, -αχτ-, -ηχτ-**), this is the past stem of the medio-passive voice of the verb

B1	B2	Archaic conjugation
αγαπ- ηθ- βαρ- εθ-	κοιμ- ηθ-	διηγ- ηθ-

3. Place the letters **-ηκ-** after the past stem of the medio-passive voice

B1	B2	Archaic conjugation
αγαπ- ηθ-ηκ- βαρ- εθ-ηκ-	κοιμ- ηθ-ηκ-	διηγ- ηθ-ηκ

4. Place the personal endings of the “Αόριστος” (**-α, -ες, -ε, -αμε, -ατε, -αν**) in the end and put the stress mark on the third-to-last syllable

B1	B2	Archaic conjugation
αγαπ- ήθ-ηκ-α βαρ- έθ-ηκ-α αγαπ- ήθ-ηκ-ες βαρ- έθ-ηκ-ες ...	κοιμ- ήθ-ηκ-α κοιμ- ήθ-ηκ-ες ...	διηγ- ήθ-ηκ-α διηγ- ήθ-ηκ-ες ...

One verb of each group is conjugated in the table below:

B1	B2	Archaic conjugation
αγαπήθηκα I was loved αγαπήθηκες you were loved αγαπήθηκε ...	κοιμήθηκα I slept κοιμήθηκες you slept κοιμήθηκε ...	διηγήθηκα I narrated διηγήθηκες you narrated διηγήθηκε ...
αγαπηθήκαμε αγαπηθήκατε αγαπήθηκαν	κοιμηθήκαμε κοιμηθήκατε κοιμήθηκαν	διηγηθήκαμε διηγηθήκατε διηγήθηκαν