

Dr. Shirley's Greek Courses

Grammar

The First Aorist Indicative Active

The **Aorist** is the tense that implies a completed action, or an act that took place at one point in time (eg: “I did something”). If an action was continuous or repeated (eg. “I used to do something”, “I was doing something”) Greek uses the **Imperfect**.

Greek is like English and German, in that verbs make their past tenses in different ways –
“**Weak**” verbs have endings added to the stem, eg. I call, I called. Greek calls these “**First Aorists**”
“**Strong**” verbs alter the stem, eg. I bring, I brought. Greek calls these **Second Aorists**.

In the case of Verbs with a First Aorist form, the Present and the Aorist stems are usually identical.

NB. - Greek, like most languages, is developing with time, and words and grammar change. Occasionally Greek writers, including some of the Classical authors and NT writers made ‘mistakes’ with their grammar, and used 1st Aorist endings on 2nd Aorist stems. Don’t let this confuse you if/when you meet it - it’s just the equivalent of someone mixing up English grammar and saying “I wanted”.

In forming the First Aorist Indicative, the "augment" ϵ - denoting a past tense, is added to the front of the stem; the personal endings go on the end of the stem, and all begin with a $-\sigma-$

If the verb stem begins with a vowel, the same vowel changes as for the Imperfect take place :

| | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| α becomes η | ϵ becomes η | \omicron becomes ω |
| $\alpha\iota$ becomes η | $\epsilon\iota$ becomes η | $\omicron\iota$ becomes ω |
| $\alpha\upsilon$ becomes $\eta\upsilon$ | $\epsilon\upsilon$ becomes $\eta\upsilon$ or remains $\epsilon\upsilon$ | |

If the verb is a compound (prefix + stem) the augment goes between the stem and the prefix; a preposition other than **περι** or **προ** drops its final vowel; $\epsilon\kappa$ becomes $\epsilon\acute{\xi}$.

| | regular | compound | initial vowel |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | λυω | ἀπολυω | ἀκουω |
| | I loose | I release | I hear |
| Singular | | | |
| 1. I loosed | ἔλυσα | ἀπελυσα | ἤκουσα |
| 2. | ἔλυσας | ἀπελυσας | ἤκουσας |
| 3. | ἔλυσεν | ἀπελυσεν | ἤκουσεν |
| Plural | | | |
| 1. | ἔλυσαμεν | ἀπελυσαμεν | ἤκουσαμεν |
| 2. | ἔλυσατε | ἀπελυσατε | ἤκουσατε |
| 3. | ἔλυσαν | ἀπελυσαν | ἤκουσαν |

If the verb stem is “liquid” (ends in $-\lambda$, $-\mu$, $-\nu$, or $-\rho$) the $-\sigma-$ of the personal ending drops out.

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---|---------------------------|
| σπειρω | κρινω | Other liquid verbs with First Aorists : | |
| I sow | I judge | Present | 1st. Aorist |
| ἔσπειρα | ἔκρινα | αἶρω | ἦρα I lift up |
| ἔσπειρας | ἔκρινας | ἐγειρω | ἦγειρα I raise |
| ἔσπειρεν | ἔκρινεν | ἀποκτεινω | ἀπεκτεινα I kill |
| | | ἀποστελλω | ἀπεστειλα I send |
| ἔσπειραμεν | ἔκριναμεν | ἀγγελω | ἠγγειλα I announce |
| ἔσπειρατε | ἔκριματε | μενω | ἔμεινα I remain |
| ἔσπειραν | ἔκριναν | | |