

The Twenty-Four Letters of the Greek Alphabet

<i>lowercase</i>	<i>uppercase</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>Greek word</i>	<i>English meaning</i>
α	A	alpha	<i>αριθμος</i>	number
β	B	beta	<i>βιβλιον</i>	book
γ	Γ	gamma	<i>γη</i>	earth
δ	Δ	delta	<i>δια</i>	across
ϵ, ε	E	epsilon	<i>ελλειψις</i>	deficiency
ζ	Z	zeta	<i>ζωον</i>	animal
η	H	eta	<i>ηλεκτρον</i>	amber
θ, ϑ	Θ	theta	<i>θεωρημα</i>	spectacle
ι	I	iota	<i>ισος</i>	equal
κ	K	kappa	<i>κυκλος</i>	circle
λ	Λ	lambda	<i>λημμα</i>	subsidiary proposition
μ	M	mu	<i>μαθηματικος</i>	what this book teaches!
ν	N	nu	<i>νεος</i>	new
ξ	Ξ	xi	<i>ξηρος</i>	dry
\omicron	O	omicron	<i>οικονομος</i>	steward
π, ϖ	Π	pi	<i>παραλληλος</i>	side by side
ρ	P	rho	<i>ρυθμος</i>	time
σ, ς	Σ	sigma	<i>σφαιρα</i>	ball
τ	T	tau	<i>τηλε</i>	afar
υ	Υ	upsilon	<i>υδωρ</i>	water
ϕ, φ	Φ	phi	<i>φυσις</i>	nature
χ	χ	chi	<i>χρωμα</i>	color
ψ	Ψ	psi	<i>ψυχη</i>	soul
ω	Ω	omega	<i>ωρα</i>	time of day

Notes: (1) Many thanks to Chara Tzanetaki for sharing her native expertise in the Greek language, both classical and modern, as well as her familiarity with relevant English terminology in mathematical economics. (2) ς is an alternative form of σ (sigma) that is used at the end of a word. Four other letters have alternative forms as shown. (3) Every Greek word included in the table can be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. What English word could you look up to find each of them? (4) For simplicity, the accents and diacritical marks of the original (classical) Greek have been omitted.

Some of the Possible Answers to the Question Posed in Note (2)

αριθμος – arithmetic

βιβλιον – bible or bibliography

γη – geology or geography

δια – diameter or dialogue

ελλειψις – ellipse or ellipsis

ζωον – zoology or zoo

ηλεκτρον – electric, electron

θεωρημα – theorem

ισος – isosceles or isoquant

κυκλος – cycle

λημμα – lemma

μαθηματικος – mathematics

νεος – neologism or neophyte

ξηρος – xerography or xerox

οικονομος – economics

παραλληλος – parallel

ρυθμος – rhythm

σφαιρα – sphere

τηλε – telephone or television

υδωρ – hydro- (prefix)

φυσικ – physics

χρωμα – chromatic or chrome

ψυχη – psyche or psychology

ωρα – hour