

## Accents made Simple

To figure out the correct accentuation of an uncontracted<sup>1</sup> Greek word, the various rules always boil down to one litmus test:

| SITUATION  | LITMUS TEST   | ACCENT   |
|--|---|--|
| <i>persistent accent<br/>on 3<sup>rd</sup>-back syllable</i> | <i>Is the final-syllable vowel<br/>short?</i>                     | <i>Yes → acute on 3<sup>rd</sup>-back<br/>No → acute on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back</i>      |
| <i>persistent accent<br/>on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back syllable</i> | <i>Do the last two syllables<br/>have the long-short pattern?</i> | <i>Yes → circumflex on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back<br/>No → acute on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back</i> |
| <i>persistent accent<br/>on final syllable</i>               | <i>Is the form genitive or<br/>dative?</i>                        | <i>Yes → circumflex on final syll.<sup>2</sup><br/>No → acute on final syllable</i>  |
| <i>recessive accent: finite verb<br/>of 3+ syllables</i>     | <i>Is the final-syllable vowel<br/>short?</i>                     | <i>Yes → acute on 3<sup>rd</sup>-back<br/>No → acute on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back</i>      |
| <i>recessive accent: finite verb<br/>of 2 syllables</i>      | <i>Do the last two syllables<br/>have the long-short pattern?</i> | <i>Yes → circumflex on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back<br/>No → acute on 2<sup>nd</sup>-back</i> |

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<sup>1</sup> For contracted forms, uncontract the form before applying the rules. If the contraction gets the accent, there is a further litmus test. *Was the accent on the first or second vowel involved in the contraction?* First → circumflex. Second → acute.

<sup>2</sup> Remember that the circumflex can only go over a long vowel. Right now, all of our genitive & dative endings have long vowels. Later, when we learn short-vowel genitive and dative endings (third group), the accent will have to remain acute.