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Contract Verbs

You will be able to—

1. identify contract verb formations,
2. implement the rules of vowel contraction,
3. recognize and write the paradigms of key contract verbs,
4. translate contract verb forms,
5. gain more practice in translating and working with Greek,
6. master ten more high-frequency vocabulary words, and
7. memorize Mat. 6:12b in Greek.

Introduction

Verbs with stems ending in α, ε, or ο are known as contract verbs. For example, in the verb ἀγαπάω the stem ends with alpha. When pronominal endings are added to the verb, the final vowel of the stem and the connecting vowel of the ending contract according to five rules.

Contractions take place in the *present* and *imperfect* tenses.

$$\mathrm{ἀγαπ + ά + ο + μεν = ἀγαπῶμεν}$$

In the *aorist* and *future,* where the suffix σ is used, the final stem vowel lengthens.

$$\mathrm{ἀγαπ + ά + \sigma + ομεν = ἀγαπήσομεν}$$

Rules of Contraction (FOLDS)

Rule 1: Likes go long. Two like vowels combine into their common long vowel.

α + α = α   ε + η = η   ο + ω = ω
Example: πληρο + ω = πληρῶ

Two exceptions:
ε + ε = ει   ο + ο = ου
Example: ποιε + ετε = ποιεῖτε

Rule 2: O overcomes. An o or ω will overcome an α, ε, or η, becoming ω.

o + α = ω   ε + ω = ω
   Example: ἀγαπά + ω = ἀγαπῶ

   Exception:
ε + o = ου   o + ε = ου
   Example: ποιέ + ομεν = ποιοῦμεν

Rule 3: First overcomes. When an α, ε, or η come together, whichever comes first becomes its own matching long vowel.

α + ε or α + η = long α   ε + α = η
   Example: ἀγαπά + ετε = ἀγαπᾶτε

Rule 4: Same vowel with diphthong drops. A vowel similar to the first vowel of a diphthong drops out.

o + ου = ου   ε + ει = ει
   Example: ποιε + εις = ποιεῖς

Rule 5: Dissimilar vowel with diphthong contracts. A vowel dissimilar to the diphthong that follows it will contract, using the preceding rules—

   a. unless the third vowel is an upsilon, in which case the upsilon drops out.
   b. unless the third vowel is an iota, in which case the iota becomes an iota subscript.

   Exceptions:
o + ει = οι   ε + οι = οι   o + η = οι

Contraction Charts (for reference only)

   When a vowel in the left row is combined with a vowel or dipthong in the top line, the resulting contraction appears where the coordinates meet.

Vowel and Vowel Contraction

	α	ε	η	ι	υ	o	ω
α	α	α	α	αι	αυ	ω	ω
ε	η	ει	η	ει	ευ	ου	ω
o	ω	ου	ω	οι	ου	ου	ω

Vowel and Diphthong Contraction

	ει	η	ου	οι
α	ᾳ	ᾳ	ω	ῳ
ε	ει	η	ου	οι
o	οι	οι	ου	οι

Paradigms

Three typical contract verb paradigms will be presented. These represent α, ε, and o type verbs. As you look through the paradigms, you should reflect on the contract rules that are being used in the contraction process. Do not memorize these. Learn to figure them out by using the rules.

Present Active Indicative of ἀγαπάω

	Singular		Plural	
1.	ἀγαπῶ (αω)	I love	ἀγαπῶμεν (αομεν)	We love
2.	ἀγαπᾷς (αεις)	You love	ἀγαπᾶτε (αετε)	You love
3.	ἀγαπᾷ (αει)	He/she/it loves	ἀγαπῶσι(ν) (αουσι)	They love

Present Active Indicative of ποιέω

	Singular		Plural	
1.	ποιῶ (εω)	I do	ποιοῦμεν (εομεν)	We do
2.	ποιεῖς (εεις)	You do	ποιεῖτε (εετε)	You do
3.	ποιεῖ (εει)	He/she/it does	ποιοῦσι(ν) (εουσι)	They do

Present Active Indicative of πληρόω

	Singular		Plural	
1.	πληρῶ (οω)	I fill	πληροῦμεν (οομεν)	We fill
2.	πληροῖς (οεις)	You fill	πληροῦτε (οετε)	You fill
3.	πληροῖ (οει)	He/she/it fills	πληροῦσι(ν) (οουσι)	They fill

Liquid/Nasal Verbs

Liquid verbs have stems ending in λ, μ, ν, or ρ (Lemoners). λ and ρ are liquids, and ν and μ are nasals, but verbs ending in any of these four consonants are grouped together because they form their futures in the same way. In the future active and middle indicative, the tense suffix σ is replaced with an ε, which contracts according to the normal contraction rules. Thus the future of κρίνω becomes κρινῶ (εω contraction) instead of κρίνσω.

Translation Examples

Τί δέ με καλεῖτε, Κύριε κύριε, καὶ οὐ ποιεῖτε ἅ λέγω;
And why do you call me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say? (Lk. 6:46).

καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτόν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα.
And my father will love him, and we will come to him (Jn. 14:23).

ἀλλὰ λαλοῦμεν θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ
But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery (1 Cor. 2:7).

Vocabulary

εἰ	if, that (504)
ἐσθίω	I eat (158)
ζάω	I live (140)
ζητέω	I seek (117)
ἤ	or, either (343)
καλέω	I call (148)
λαλέω	I speak, say (296)
παρακαλέω	I urge, exhort (109)
πληρόω	I complete, fill (86)
ποιέω	I do, make (568)

Review

Mat. 6:9:   **Π**άτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς·
ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·

Mat. 6:10:   ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·
γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου,
ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς·

Mat. 6:11:   τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον
δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·

Mat. 6:12a: καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,

Memory Verse: Mat. 6:12b

ὡς	καὶ	ἡμεῖς	ἀφήκαμεν	τοῖς	ὀφειλέταις	ἡμῶν·
as	also	we	we forgave	the	debtors	our;