

Introduction to English Nouns (Roughly based on Mounce Ch. 5)

Intro: Important to understand *basic English grammar* in order to learn Greek grammatical concepts.

Inflection: *changes to the word form (usually the ending, sometimes the vowels) to mark the word for various grammatical functions in the sentence.* Words can be inflected to mark their case (function), number, and gender.

For ex.:

1. *book* v. *books* (the inflectional ending *-s* marks number, the plural compared to sing.)
2. *foot* v. *feet* (the inflectional vowel change *-oo-* to *-ee-* marks number, the plural compared to sing.) cf. also *man* v. *men*.
3. *child* v. *child's* (the inflectional ending *-s* marks the function of possession)

Note: English is not a highly inflected language. Greek is—almost every single Greek word is marked with some inflectional ending to signal important grammatical information.

Inflection: Case

Case marks the noun's function within the sentence. English has only 3 cases: subjective, possessive, and objective. *Most* English nouns do not change their form to distinguish the subject from object, but pronouns do.

Case	English Nouns (little change)	English Pronouns (lots of change)	
Subjective	<i>Harry</i> loves Sally.	<i>I</i> love Sally.	<i>They</i> love Sally.
Objective	Mom loves <i>Harry</i> .	Mom loves <i>me</i> .	Mom loves <i>them</i> .
Possessive	Mom loves <i>Harry's</i> hairdo.	Mom loves <i>my</i> hairdo.	Mom loves <i>their</i> hairdo.

Inflection: Number

English nouns are either singular (sing.) or plural (pl.). Again, note the following exx.:

book v. *books*

foot v. *feet*

child v. *children*

Greek nouns are also marked for number: ἄγγελος v. ἄγγελοι

Inflection: Gender

English nouns are either masculine (masc.), feminine (fem.), or neuter (neut.). Note, for ex.:

man = masc.

woman = fem.

bicycle = neut.

English nouns tend to follow *natural gender*. Greek nouns sometimes follow natural gender, but often they simply have *grammatical gender* (with no hint that the noun in question is masc., fem., or neut. in *quality*).