

GREEK GRAMMAR I

Practice Identifying Deponent Verbs

In order to understand when you are looking at a verb that Mounce calls “deponent” (middle-passive in *form*, but active in *meaning*), you need to be able to use the “principal parts” information in the Mounce Grammar (3rd ed.). Mounce provides this information in two places: [1] in the Lexicon at the back of the book (pp. 394–414) for the verb entries; [2] in the Appendix of the book, where you’ll find a section called “Tense Forms of Verbs Occurring Fifty Times or More in the New Testament” (pp. 370–380). For the purposes of this handout, you will need to open your copy of BBG and look at the appendix, starting on p. 372.

Up to this point in our Greek studies, we have only learned the Present Active and Middle-Passive Indicative, and the Future Active and Middle Indicative (the Future Passive comes later!). The Verb-list in the appendix provides six “principal parts” for each verb (the six are laid out in six columns); each “principal part” is the 1s indicative forms in the following tenses (in this order):

Present Active
Future Active
Aorist Active
Perfect Active
Perfect Passive
Aorist Passive

Given what we’ve learned so far, only the first two columns are relevant *today*. (Don’t worry—you’ll get to fret over these other four columns later.)

Here’s the *MOST IMPORTANT* thing you need to know about the forms in the Verb-list (for right now!). Notice that the first four columns are all *ACTIVE* forms: Present *Active*, Future *Active*, Aorist *Active*, and Perfect *Active*. That means that whenever you’re looking at one of these forms, you should expect to see the *ACTIVE FIRST PERS. SING.* form, which is usually going to end with omega $-\omega$ for the PAI and the FAI (first 2 columns).

So what does it mean if you look in the first two columns and, instead of the expected 1s primary active ending $-\omega$, you see the 1s primary middle-passive ending $-\mu\alpha\iota$? Whenever you see this, then for that particular tense that the column represents, that verb is deponent in that tense.

One more thing about the principal parts. Each form in each column for an individual verb gives you the STEM that the verb uses for that particular tense. For the PAI 1s (column 1)

and FAI 1s (column 2), in order to determine the stem, you have to drop the connecting vowel + personal ending and the tense formative—if it has one (Future does, Present does not). For example, look at πιστεύω on p. 379. The first column form πιστεύω is the PAI 1s; to extract the PRESENT ACT. STEM, drop the –ω at the end: *πιστευ. That is the Present Active stem, and it is this stem that is used to form the PAI, the PMI, and the PPI. [The PAI uses this stem + connecting vowels + prim. act. endings; the PMI and PPI are identical to each other and use this same stem, but with connecting vowels + prim. mid/pas endings.] How would I find the FUTURE ACT. STEM? Go to the second form: πιστεύσω. Drop the future tense formative (–σ) and the connecting vowel + personal ending (–ω). What are you left with? *πιστευ. So, the Future Act. stem is *πιστευ (it just happens to be the same as the Present Act. stem—but this isn't always true of other verbs!), and it's this stem that will be used for the Future Active Indicative (FAI) and the Future Middle Indicative (FMI). [The Future Passive Indicative (FPI), as we'll learn later, uses the Aorist Passive stem, not a Future Passive stem—which does not exist.]

Let's look at one more example from the Verb-list to learn how to identify the stems: See ἐγείρω (I raise) on p. 375. Notice what the first two forms are: ἐγείρω (PAI 1s) and ἐγερῶ (FAI 1s). What is the PRESENT ACT. STEM? It's *ἐγειρ, derived by dropping –ω from ἐγείρω. This is the stem that's used for the PAI and PMI/PPI. What is the FUTURE ACT. STEM? It's *ἐγερ, derived by dropping –ω from ἐγερῶ. This is the stem used for the FAI and the FMI (but not the FPI). So, did you notice that the Present Act. stem is *different from* the Future Act. stem--*ἐγειρ v. *ἐγερ?

PRACTICE:

Let's do some practice parsings, using the Verb-list appendix in BBG to make sure that we can tell the difference between deponent and regular active verbs, and to ensure that we know how to parse these.

1. γινώσκει (see p. 374)

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?

2. γινώσκειται

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?

3. γνώσεται

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?

4. ἀναβαίνετε (see p. 372)

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?

5. ἀναβήσεσθε

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?

6. ἀναβαίνεσθε

Is the form's personal ending prim. act. or a prim. mid./pas.? Which one (pers/#)?

Identify the stem (by dropping any tense formatives and connecting vowels + pers. endings).

Is the stem Present Act. or Future Act.?

According to the Verb-list, does the form for that principal part end with an active or a mid-pass ending?

Could the form be deponent?