

The Article & Adjective

Chapter 5

The Article

The Article

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Identification

The article is used to distinguish one individual or object from another.

ποῦ ἐστὶν **ὁ** τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων;

Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?
(Matt 2:2).

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Par Excellence

The article identifies one who is in a class by himself.

ὁ προφήτης εἶ σύ;

Are you **the** prophet?
(John 1:21).

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Monadic

The article points to someone or something that is unique or one-of-a-kind.

οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε
τὸν υἱὸν **τὸν** μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν

For God so loved the world, that he gave **his**
only Son (John 3:16 ESV).

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With Abstract Nouns

The article was often employed in Greek with abstract terms where English would not use one.

ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν

Salvation is from the Jews
(John 4:22).

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Previous Reference (anaphoric)

The article points back to a substantive that was previously mentioned (usually translated as “this” or “that”).

πόθεν οὖν ἔχεις **τὸ** ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν;

So where do You get **this** “living water”?
(John 4:11).

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Generic

An article may be used with a noun that is typical of a class or group (cf. “**the** man on the street”).

ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ

the worker is worthy of his wages
(Luke 10:7).

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As a Pronoun

The article functions as a (1) personal, (2) relative, (3) possessive, (4), demonstrative, or (5) alternate pronoun.

Personal
Pronoun

οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ

They told him (Matt 2:5).

Relative
Pronoun

τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν **τὸν** ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

your Father **who is** in heaven (Matt 5:16 ESV).

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Possessive
Pronoun

ὁ δὲ διεῖλεν...**τὸν** βίον

And he divided...**his** property (Luke 15:12 ESV)

Demonstrative
Pronoun

οἱ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ

those in the boat worshiped Him (Matt 14:33).

Alternative
Pronoun

αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν **τούς** μὲν ἀποστόλους

He gave **some** as apostles (Eph 4:11 NASB).

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Substantiver

The article may turn adverbs, adjectives, participles, infinitives, prepositional phrases, particles, and even entire clauses, statements, or quotations into substantives.

τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

the things in the world
(1 John 2:15).

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With Indeclinable Nouns

The article may be included with indeclinable proper names or places so as to better indicate its function.

Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς **τοῦ** Ἰσραὴλ

Blessed be the Lord God **of** Israel
(Luke 1:68).

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Objects of Prepositions

An anarthrous noun used with some prepositions may still be definite.

χαίρετε ἐν **κυρίῳ** πάντοτε

Rejoice in **the Lord** always
(Phil 4:4).

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Granville Sharp Rule

One article linked with two **singular**, personal, non-proper nouns (excluding personal names) suggests that they both refer to the same person or object.

τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ

our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ
(Titus 2:13).

The Article

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Granville Sharp Rule

Two articles suggest that two people or objects are referenced.

ὁ ἀρνούμενος **τὸν** πατέρα καὶ **τὸν** υἱόν

The one who denies **the Father** and **the Son**
(1 John 2:22).

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Colwell's Canon

A definite predicate nominative does not usually take the article when preceding a copulative (linking) verb.

1) If the noun **follows** the copulative verb (**εἰμί**) the article is usually expressed (**ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ** φῶς τοῦ κόσμου; John 8:12).

2) If the noun **precedes** the copulative verb (**εἰμί**) the article is usually unexpressed (**φῶς εἰμι** τοῦ κόσμου; John 9:5).

θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

The word was **God** (John 1:1).

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Apollonius' Canon

When two nouns are in a genitive construction, both the head noun and the noun in the genitive case either have or lack the article.

ὁ λόγος **τοῦ** θεοῦ (John 10:34)

λόγος θεοῦ (1 Pet 1:23)

the Word of God

Adjectives

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Four uses of adjectives

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| The man [is] good | Predicate |
| The good man | Attributive |
| The good [man] | Substantival |
| The man ate first | Adverbial |

Adjectives

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Predicate Adjectives

An adjective that predicates a certain quality to the subject, frequently by way of a copulative (linking) verb. The article is **never** directly in front of the adjective.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| πιστὸς ὁ θεός | God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9) |
| πιστὸς ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος | the Lord is faithful (2 Thess 3:3) |

Adjectives

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Attributive Adjectives

An adjective that ascribes a particular quality to a noun or substantive. The article, when present, occurs **directly in front** of the adjective.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός | the true God (1 John 5:20) |
| τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν | the true light (John 1:9) |

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Substantival Adjectives

The adjective functions as a noun or substantive in a given phrase. The article, when present, occurs **directly in front** of the adjective.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| εἶ ὁ ἅγιος | You are the Holy [One] (John 6:69) |
| οἱ ἅγιοι | the saints (=holy ones) (1 Cor 6:2) |

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Adverbial Adjectives

Use of an adjective (usually in the neuter accusative singular) to modify a verb rather than noun.

καὶ προελθὼν **μικρόν** ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ

Going **a little farther**, he fell facedown
(Matt 26:39).

Adjectives

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Other Forms

Participles, adverbs, nouns, and prepositional phrases can function as adjectives.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι | The grace given to me (Rom 12:3) |
| τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως | The upward call (Phil 3:14ESV) |
| ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ | in the Jordan river (Matt 3:6) |

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Degree Forms

There are three degrees of adjectives:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Positive | σοφός, wise |
| Comparative | σοφώτερος, wiser |
| Superlative | σοφώτατος, wisest |

Adjectives

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Two ways of forming the **comparative degree**

1) Third declension ending on comparative noun.

| | |
|----------|---------|
| μείζων | greater |
| πλέον | more |
| χείρων | worse |
| κρείσσον | better |
| κρείττων | |

Adjectives

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν
ὁ λόγος

Two ways of forming the **comparative degree**

2) **-τερος, -τερα, -τερον** to the positive degree form.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| ἀσθενής, weak | ἀσθενέστερος, weaker |
| ισχυρός, strong | ισχυρότερος, stronger |
| μικρός, small | μικρότερος, smaller |
| πρεσβύς, old | πρεσβύτερος, older |

Adjectives

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Two ways to make a **comparison**

1) Use of the term **ἢ** ("than")

μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν **ἢ** ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ

Greater is He who is in you **than** he who is in the world (1 John 4:4 NASB).

Adjectives

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Two ways to make a **comparison**

2) Use of the genitive case

ὁ πατὴρ μείζων **μου** ἐστίν

the Father is greater **than I**
(John 14:28).

Adjectives

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Two ways of forming the **superlative degree**

1) **-ιστος** ending.

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| μέγας, great | μέγιστος, greatest |
| πολύς, much | πλεῖστος, most |
| μικρός, small | ἐλάχιστος, smallest |
| | ὑψιστος, highest |

Adjectives

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Two ways of forming the **superlative degree**

2) **-τατος** ending.

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| ἅγιος, holy | ἁγιώ τατος , holiest |
| τίμιος, valuable | τιμιώ τατος , most valuable |
| ἀκριβής, strict | ἀκριβέσ τατος , strictest |

Adjectives

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Degree Forms

Some of the most common comparative and superlative adjectives use alternate forms (cf. good → better → best).

μικρός, small → ἐλάχιστος, **smallest**

κακός, bad → χείρων, **worse**

καλός, good → κάλλιον, **better** → κράτιστος, **best**

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Elativ Sense

Adjectives of the comparative and superlative degrees regularly conveyed an “elative” sense. E.g., **μέγιστος** could mean “greatest” or “very great” (elative).

συνάγεται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλος **πλείστος**

a **very large crowd** gathered around Him
(Mark 4:1).

Adjectives

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Degree Changes

Adjectives of one degree were frequently adapted to communicate another degree. A positive adjective could function like a comparative or superlative and a comparative could function like a superlative.

πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη ... **μείζων** δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη

faith, hope, and love...but the **greatest**
of these is love (1 Cor 13:13).