

The transliteration of Greek into English is sometimes confusing, because it is variable. For most letters the equivalence is easy:

alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = **a**  
 beta ( $\beta$ ) = **b**  
 gamma ( $\gamma$ ) = **g**  
 theta ( $\theta$ ) = **th**  
 phi ( $\phi$ ) = **ph**  
 psi ( $\psi$ ) = **ps**, and so forth.

But because Greek words have come into English by direct coinage (scientific terms) and also by historical inheritance, from Latin via French or/or English, there are areas where alternatives exist.

Diphthong **ai** ( $\alpha\iota$ ) is usually **ae** (via Latin) or **e** (via late Latin) (*archaeology*, *archeology*). Double **gamma** ( $\gamma\gamma$ ) is usually transliterated as **ng** (via Latin), because this is closer to the original pronunciation (*angel*).

**Eta** ( $\eta$ ) is sometimes shown as **e** (same as epsilon ( $\epsilon$ )), but for precision it may also be rendered as **ê** or e with a long mark over it (eta is a long vowel, epsilon a short one) (*psyche*, *psychê*).

**Kappa** ( $\kappa$ ) is sometimes **k** (*Sophokles*, *Phaiakia*), but very often **c** (via Latin, where c originally had only a hard pronunciation; but in English the c will often be pronounced soft) (*Sophocles*, *Phaeacia*).

**Xi** ( $\xi$ ) is usually **x** (*axiom*), but sometimes rendered as **ks**.

Diphthong **oi** ( $\omicron\iota$ ) is sometimes **oi** (*Koine*), more commonly **oe** (via Latin) or **e** (via late Latin) (*oenology/enology*, *oestrus/estrus*).

**Rho** ( $\rho$ ) is usually just **r** (*arthritis*), but when it begins a word is it rendered **rh** (*rhythm*) and when doubled it is **rrh** (*pyrrhic victory*, *diarrhea*).

**Upsilon** ( $\upsilon$ ) by itself is usually **y** (via Latin and French) (*psyche*, *sympathetic*, *Dionysos*), but sometimes **u** (*Dionusos*).

Diphthongs **au** ( $\alpha\upsilon$ ) and **eu** ( $\epsilon\upsilon$ ) are rendered with both letters (*nautical*, *euphemism*), but diphthong **ou** ( $\omicron\upsilon$ ) is commonly rendered with **u** alone (if y is being used for upsilon), via Latin (*Epicurus*, *Thucydides*); but sometimes by **ou** (*kouros*)

**Chi** ( $\chi$ ) is most often transliterated as **ch** (*psychology*), but occasionally as **kh** (*Akhilleus*).

**Omega** ( $\omega$ ) is sometimes shown as **o** (same as omicron ( $\omicron$ )), but for precision it may also be rendered as **ô** or o with a long mark over it (omega is a long vowel, omicron is a short one) (*sôphrôsynê*/ *sophrosyne*).

Many proper names have been Latinized before conversion into English, and therefore the ending of the names is adjusted to Latin scheme. Greek nouns ending in -os usually become Latin nouns in -us; Greek nouns in -on become Latin -um; Greek nouns in -ê often become nouns in -a. Hence, you will see variations like the following:

Dionysos, Dionusos, Dionysus  
 Hêra, Hêrê  
 Athêna, Athênê  
 Cyprus, Cypros, Kypros, Kupros  
 symposium, symposion