

Greek Metric Scansion

Greek 3 – The Lukeion Project

Learning Scansion

Pages 148-151 in your book, *A Greek Anthology* by JACT (Cambridge, 2002), include a brief description of Greek scansion.

As you read and practice, learn and understand the definitions of the following terms:

- *dactylic hexameter*
- *dactyl*
- *spondee*
- *anceps*
- *caesura*
- *long by nature vs. long by position*

Principles of Syllabification

1. Each syllable must have a vowel or diphthong
2. Single consonants usually go with the *following* vowel or diphthong
3. Most consonant clusters are divided between the consonants
4. Double consonants (ζ, ξ, ψ) are divided between the sounds (ξ = κ + ζ)
5. Nasal drip consonant clusters (ending with a liquid or nasal) can either be kept together (-πλ-) or be separated (π-λ), whichever best fits the meter

Long and Short Syllables

Syllables are long if:

1. They end with a consonant
2. They end with a long vowel or diphthong
3. They come at the end of the line

Syllables are short if:

1. They end with a short vowel
2. A naturally long vowel or diphthong occurs at the end of a word and the next word begins with a vowel (*correption*)

Scansion Practice for Homer's Odyssey

Practice scanning the first 8 lines of our translation on the next page.

1. First, divide the line into syllables. (I recommend using a pencil)
2. Next, mark each syllable as either a dactyl (∪), spondee (—) or anceps (×).

The text is printed on the next page with expanded space for practicing...

- 1 ἔνθα στὰς θηεῖτο διάκτορος ἀργεῖφόντης.
- 2 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα ἐῶ θηήσατο θυμῶ,
- 3 αὐτίκ' ἄρ' εἰς εὐρὺ σπέος ἦλυθεν. οὐδέ μιν ἄντην
- 4 ἠγνοίησεν ἰδοῦσα Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων:
- 5 οὐ γάρ τ' ἀγνώτες θεοὶ ἀλλήλοισι πέλονται
- 6 ἀθάνατοι, οὐδ' εἴ τις ἀπόπροθι δώματα ναίει.
- 7 οὐδ' ἄρ' Ὀδυσσῆα μεγαλήτορα ἔνδον ἔτετμεν,
- 8 ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἔνθα πάρος περ,
- 9 δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων.