Dictionaries and grammars are an absolute beginner’s best friend. Sometimes, though, they are simply not enough. I will start with the following sentence:

(1) Έχω έναν αδερφό, αλλά δεν τον βλέπω συχνά.

“I have a brother, but I don’t see him often.”

In order to get the meaning of the word αδερφό you must use a dictionary and a grammar (see Unit 3.4 on page 47). You will find out there it is a form of the noun “brother”. In order to get the meaning of the word τον, you certainly need a grammar or a dictionary. You will find out there it means “him”. But this is not enough: In order to get the actual meaning of this word, you must look in the context. You will find out there that τον refers to the word αδερφό.

Words like τον or him are typical pronouns. They always need a point of reference outside them in order for one to get their actual meaning. This point of reference may be inside the text like in sentence 1, or outside it. The blue “I” in the second line of this page (no, it’s not a misprint) and the black “I” inside sentence 1 refer to two different persons: The first one is me, the second one is this hypothetical person who produced a statement such as 1.

Pronouns are used instead of nouns, either because there are no nouns for some things (which noun can replace “I”? ) or because nouns sometimes are too much. Imagine what life would be like if there were no pronouns to help. We would have to repeat the same noun again and again: “I have a dog. I love the dog very much. I take the dog out every day…”

Let’s turn now to Modern Greek pronouns, and check the following examples:

(2a) Έχω έναν αδερφό, αλλά δεν τον βλέπω συχνά.

“I have a brother, but I don’t see him often.”

(2b) Έχω μια αδερφή, αλλά δεν την βλέπω συχνά.

“I have a sister, but I don’t see her often.”

Pronouns are noun-dependent words in the sense that they need a noun as a reference point in order to reveal their actual meaning. In this respect they behave like noun-dependent words. First, they have gender, number and case (τον and την in the example are masculine accusative singular and feminine accusative singular). Secondly, they must agree with the reference noun like ordinary adjectives (τον refers to a masculine noun; την refers to a feminine noun).

Modern Greek pronouns usually extend their role as noun-dependent words to become real
adjectives (compare to English, where there is significant difference between the pronominal and adjectival forms in examples like the following).

(3a) Κάποιος χτυπάει το κουδούνι.
“Someone is ringing the bell.”

(3b) Κάποιος γείτονάς χτυπάει το κουδούνι.
“Some neighbour / A neighbour is ringing the bell.”

In the following units I will introduce basic groups of Modern Greek pronouns. Sometimes it is hard to follow the terminology, so I will make life easier with an English example in each title.

6.1 Personal Pronouns (I, you)

Personal pronouns are structured in the first, second and third person to form the following group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGULAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>εγώ</td>
<td>εσύ</td>
<td>αυτός / αυτή / αυτό</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>• με</td>
<td>• σε</td>
<td>• τον / την / το</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• εμένα</td>
<td>• εσένα</td>
<td>• αυτόν / αυτήν / αυτό</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLURAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>εμείς</td>
<td>εσείς</td>
<td>αυτοί / αυτές / αυτά</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>• μας</td>
<td>• σας</td>
<td>• τους / τις / τα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• εμάς</td>
<td>• εσάς</td>
<td>• αυτούς / αυτές / αυτά</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: The Personal Pronouns (Nominative and Accusative).
• Unlike the third person, the first and second persons cannot be assigned a gender. In other words, ἐγώ or ἐσύ are gender-free pronouns.
• Some forms of the third person are taken from the demonstrative pronoun (see Unit 6.2 on page 85). In this respect, there is not a genuine he/she/it in Modern Greek, but rather this one (masculine, feminine or neuter).
• Check the third person and focus on the accusative forms τον/την/το, τους/τις/τα. Do they look familiar? The answer is yes. They are identical to the definite article in the accusative. It looks like someone has erased the noun (to avoid repetition) and kept the article to establish a connection with the reference point.
• Remember that the use of such pronouns in the subject position is optional (see Unit 2.2.1 on page 26).

Modern Greek personal pronouns have two forms for the accusative. One is short, while the other one is longer (compare σε to εσένα). The use of each pronoun is not random but depends on syntax:

(4a) Σε αγαπάω πολύ.
    “I love you very much.”

(4b) Αυτό το δώρο είναι για (ε)σένα.
    “This present is for you.”

I believe it is clear that the short form is used in the object position and the long form is used inside a prepositional phrase (but there is much more to be said at Levels B1-B2).

Sequences of vowels (either inside words or across word boundaries) are not always welcome in Modern Greek. This is why the word-initial (and unstressed) vowel of some personal pronouns is usually dropped after a word-final (and stressed) vowel (από σένα).

Unlike English (and very much like Spanish or French), Modern Greek personal pronouns in the accusative must be positioned right before the verb. But which part of the verb?

(5a) Σε θέλω.
    “I want you.”

(5b) Δεν σε θέλω.
    “I don’t want you.”
Chapter 6 | Instead of Nouns: Pronouns

Pronouns are placed right before the “real” verb, this part of the verbal construction that bears grammatical information. The negation particle δεν does not have such grammar inside it, so the pronoun goes right before θέλω.

Note that the accusative of personal pronouns replaces basically definite expressions. Indefinite expressions cannot be replaced by personal pronouns:

(Ia) A: Θέλεις τον καφέ σου; B: Ναι, τον θέλω.
(Ib) A: Θέλεις καφέ; B: Ναι, (-) θέλω.

Likes and Dislikes
In Modern Greek, coffee is not something you may or may not like, but rather something that pleases (or doesn’t please) you. Check the following sentences:

(IIa) Μου αρέσει ο καφές.
"I like coffee."
(IIb) Μου αρέσουν οι μπανάνες.
"I like bananas."

The subject of the verb is clearly coffee or bananas (this is why their case is nominative and this is why the verb turns from singular to plural).

The person who likes something is represented by this short word preceding the verb.

(IIIa) Μου αρέσει ο καφές.
"I like coffee."
(IIIb) Του / Της αρέσει ο καφές.
"He/She likes coffee."

These short words belong to another group of personal pronouns, about which you will learn more at levels B1-B2. For the moment you need to know these forms only to express likes and dislikes (a very basic need after all): μου (1st, sing.) σου (2nd, sing.), του/της/του (3rd, sing.), μας (1st, pl.), σας (2nd, pl.), τους (3rd, pl.).

And don’t forget: The subject of αρέσει must be preceded by the definite article (see Unit 5.2 on page 70).

6.2 Demonstrative Pronouns (this, that)
Modern Greek has two demonstrative pronouns for short (“here”) and long (“there”) distance respectively: αυτός (“this”) and εκείνος (“that”). Both are formed like ordinary adjectives (but
notice the final -ν in αυτόν/αυτήν).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>MASCULINE</th>
<th>FEMININE</th>
<th>NEUTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>αυτός</td>
<td>αυτή</td>
<td>αυτό</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>αυτών</td>
<td>αυτή(ν)</td>
<td>αυτό</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: The Demonstrative Pronoun αυτός (Nominative and Accusative).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>MASCULINE</th>
<th>FEMININE</th>
<th>NEUTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>εκείνος</td>
<td>εκείνη</td>
<td>εκείνο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>εκείνο</td>
<td>εκείνη</td>
<td>εκείνο</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: The Demonstrative Pronoun εκείνος (Nominative and Accusative).

The demonstrative αυτός (but also εκείνος) are basically used like personal pronouns of the third person, whenever necessary (remember that in subject position they are optional).

(6) Αυτός θέλει παγωτό, εκείνος θέλει μπίρα.
   “This one wants ice cream, that one wants beer.”

Both pronouns can also be used like adjectives, with an obligatory definite article (see Unit 5.2 on page 70) and no considerable change in meaning:

(7a) Θέλω αυτόν τον αναπτήρα.
   “I want this lighter.”

(7b) Θέλω εκείνο τον αναπτήρα.
   “I want that lighter.”
(7c) Θέλω αυτόν τον ακριβό αναπτήρα.
    “I want this expensive lighter.”

6.3 Interrogative Pronouns (who?, what?)
There are three basic interrogative pronouns, one for persons (ποιος, “who”), one for things (τι, “what”), and one for quantification (πόσος, for its meaning see below).

(8a) Ποιος θέλει παγωτό;
    “Who wants ice cream?”

(8b) Τι θέλεις;
    “What do you want?”

Ποιος goes like an ordinary adjective (but notice the final -ν in ποιον):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>MASCULINE</strong></th>
<th><strong>FEMININE</strong></th>
<th><strong>NEUTER</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SINGULAR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>ποιος</td>
<td>ποια</td>
<td>ποιο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>ποιον</td>
<td>ποια</td>
<td>ποιο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLURAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM.</td>
<td>ποιοι</td>
<td>ποιες</td>
<td>ποια</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC.</td>
<td>ποιοις</td>
<td>ποιες</td>
<td>ποια</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4: The Interrogative Pronoun ποιος (Nominative and Accusative).

Unlike ποιος, τι has the same form everywhere, so no need for another table.

All these vowels and no accent mark. Why? Check the pronounciation of any form of ποιος. What you really hear is only one syllable (see Unit 1.6.2 on page 13). This is why the accent mark is absent.

The interrogative pronoun that focuses on quantification is πόσος, -η, -ο (for its endings see Table 5.7). In the singular it is equal to “how much” (Πόση ζάχαρη θέλεις; = “How much sugar do you need?”). In the plural it is equal to “how many” (Πόσες μπανάνες θέλεις; = “How many bananas do you need?”).
Note that in questions involving a preposition, the preposition comes first and the pronoun comes second (compare to English):

(IVa) Ποιο ποιον είναι το δώρο;  
       “Who is the present for?”
(IVb) Ποια τι μιλάς;  
       “What are you talking about?”

Suppose now that someone knocks on the door. What I will say is Ποιος είναι; and not Ποια είναι; If I am talking to a group of 10 females and 1 male, what I will ask is again Ποιος θέλει καφέ; and not Ποια θέλει καφέ; Obviously the masculine prevails in grammar. But grammar is different from life anyway.

Interrogative pronouns are also used like ordinary adjectives. Check the following sentences:

(9a) Ποιο βιβλίο προτιμάς;  
       “Which book do you prefer?”
(9b) Τι βιβλίο προτιμάς;  
       “What sort of book do you prefer?”

Now the difference between person-reference (ποιος) and thing-reference (τι) is gone. But there is still some considerable difference of meaning between the two.

Considering that asking questions is important for everyday life, let me give you a list with the basic interrogative words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ποιος</td>
<td>“who”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Τι</td>
<td>“what”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πότε / κάθε πότε</td>
<td>“when” / “how often”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πού</td>
<td>“where”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πός</td>
<td>“how”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πόσο</td>
<td>“how much”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γιατί</td>
<td>“why”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5: Basic Interrogative Words.
6.4 Indefinite Pronouns (someone, anyone)
The basic indefinite pronouns are κάποιος ("someone") / κάτι ("something") and κανένας ("anyone") / τίποτα ("anything"). Κάποιος and κανένας refer to persons, while κάτι and τίποτα refer to things.

A few words now about their form: Κάποιος and κάτι are compound words, consisting of κα- (some-) and -ποιος or -τι. Therefore you can go back to Table 6.4 on page 87 and form the pronoun κάποιος by yourselves (don’t forget the form κάποιον). Κάτι has the same form everywhere, so it should be a piece of cake for you.

Κανένας is again a compound word, consisting of καν- (any-) plus the indefinite article. Go back to Table 5.2 on page 68 and you can form the entire pronoun by yourselves (remember, it has no plural). Τίποτα keeps the same form everywhere, so it is as easy as κάτι.

What is important here is not form, but use. The choice of indefinite pronouns depends on sentence type: Κάποιος / κάτι are used in affirmative sentences, while κανένας / τίποτα are used in non-affirmative sentences (such as interrogative and negative sentences).

(10a) Βλέπω κάποιον / κάτι.
“I see someone / something.”

(10b) Βλέπεις κανέναν / τίποτα;
“Do you see anyone / anything?”

(10c) Δεν βλέπω κανέναν / τίποτα.
“I don’t see anyone / anything.”

I believe that the analogy with English is clear. Κάποιος is someone, and κανένας is anyone. What about no one? No one (and other related words like nowhere) simply do not exist in Modern Greek. In negative sentences κανένας always needs external negation (such as δεν) to exist, so it has no internal negative meaning like no one. So, in order to say “I see no one” in Modern Greek, you must again say “I don’t see anyone”.

What about elliptical sentences like the following?
(V) A: Τι θέλεις;
B: Τίποτα.
The negation particle is not present but still presumed, so again the indefinite τίποτα is anything, not nothing.

Indefinite pronouns are also used like adjectives, with no change in form and no considerable
change in meaning. Here again indefinite adjectives are related to sentence type like before.

(11a) Περιμένω κάποιον. / Περιμένω κάποιον πελάτη.
    “I am waiting for someone.” / “I am waiting for a customer.”

(11b) Περιμένεις κανέναν; / Περιμένεις κανέναν πελάτη;
    “Are you waiting for anyone?” / “Are you waiting for any customer?”

(11c) Δεν περιμένω κανέναν. / Δεν περιμένω κανέναν πελάτη.
    “I am not waiting for anyone.” / “I am not waiting for any customer.”

**Κάποιος / κανένας and ένας**

Indefinite pronouns share the same area as the indefinite article. The issue is rather complicated, so I will save your time and my energy with the following points:

- In interrogative and negative sentences, the indefinite κανένας stands alone; I mean it cannot be replaced by the indefinite ένας. In a sentence like Δεν περιμένω έναν πελάτη αλλά δύο, the indefinite article should be taken as a numeral, because the meaning is “I am not waiting for one customer but two”.
- In affirmative sentences the indefinite ένας and the indefinite κάποιος in principle can replace each other, like here: Περιμένω έναν πελάτη / Περιμένω κάποιον πελάτη.

Let me now give you some basic indefinite words from both sides:

| κάποιος | “someone” | κανένας | “anyone” |
| κάτι   | “something”| τίποτα  | “anything” |
| κάπου  | “somewhere”| πουθενά| “anywhere” |
| κάποτε | “some time”| ποτέ    | “ever” |
| κάπως | “somehow”, “some way”| καθόλου | “any” (quantity) |

**Table 6.6: Basic Indefinite Words.**

### 6.5 Relative Pronouns (who, which, where)

Relative pronouns are both good and bad news for absolute beginners. But let me start with the bad news. Check the following sentences:
Relative pronouns in Modern Greek are not identical to interrogative pronouns (compare to English). So you cannot go back to Unit 6.3 on page 87 and get some help. In fact, Modern Greek has a wide range of relative pronouns, but (this is where the good news starts) for levels A1-A2 only one is necessary: που.

που is a general relative pronoun (it corresponds to who, that, which, where), and an obligatory part of every relative clause (compare to English):

(13) Να ο χάρτης που θέλω.
    "Here is the map (-) / that / which I want."

More good news now: που is not inflected, so it stays the same everywhere, regardless of gender (14a), number (14b) or case (14c) and regardless of its syntactic role inside the relative clause (14d):

(14a) Να ο χάρτης που θέλω. / Να η ομπρέλα που θέλω.
    "Here is the map I want." / "Here is the umbrella I want."

(14b) Να ο χάρτης που θέλω. / Να οι χάρτες που θέλω.
    "Here is the map I want." / "Here are the maps I want."

(14c) Να ο χάρτης που θέλω. / Θέλω τον χάρτη που έχεις.
    "Here is the map I want." / "I want the map you have."

(14d) Θέλω τον χάρτη που (OBJ.) έχεις. / Θέλω τον χάρτη που (SUB.) είναι στο τραπέζι.
    "I want the map you have." / "I want the map which is on the table."

Note that when που is equal to where it can be replaced by the relative adverb όπου.

(15) Να το σπίτι που / όπου μένω.
    "Here is the house where I live."

The interrogative πού bears an accent mark in order to look different in writing from the relative που.
6.6 Where Are the Possessive Pronouns (my, your)?
Unlike the pronouns from Units 6.1-6.5, possessive pronouns do not appear on the left side of the “head” noun, but on its right:

(16) το σπίτι μου
    “my house”

Considering that words positioned after the noun differ in several important respects from words that come before the noun, possessive pronouns are examined in Chapter 10, along with relevant structures. Nevertheless, you can go to Unit 10.2.3 on page 144 and study these pronouns right now.
Chapter 6 | Instead of Nouns: Pronouns

Being polite

Let’s start with the following scenario: You are waiting for the bus. Someone next to you is carrying some books which are too heavy for her/him while at the same time trying to find her/his ticket. If you offer to help, you might say “Do you need help?” or something like that.

In Modern Greek your offer for help would depend on the person you are addressing. If this person is someone familiar to you (such as a friend of yours or your grandfather) or any unknown person of your age, what you would say is this:

\[(VI) \ Θέλεις \ βοήθεια;\]

If this person is an elderly unknown person, or a “status person” (such as your professor), what you would say instead is this:

\[(VII) \ Θέλετε \ βοήθεια;\]

In this context \(θέλετε\) is not used as a real plural. It is used as a singular, to show respect. So, apart from its ordinary meaning, the second person plural (\(εσείς\)) may be used instead of the second person singular (\(εσύ\)) in order to express politeness. In this sense, Modern Greek is very close to French and less close to German or Spanish (both languages use the third person for politeness).

Like elsewhere, what was said here is meant to develop your politeness awareness and help you avoid misunderstandings in everyday situations (if you are addressed as \(εσείς\), don’t look around you. Perhaps the speaker only tried to be polite). It is obvious you are learning the language, and nobody expects you to be a master of politeness. So relax and keep in mind the following:

- The polite \(εσείς\) is only one of the means to express politeness. Politeness starts from topics of conversation (you cannot discuss personal matters with your professor) and single words like \(κύριος\) (“Sir”, “Mr”) for men and \(κυρία\) (“Madam”, “Ms”) for women. But even facial expressions and body language are involved.
- Politeness is not a clear-cut area. There are several circumstances where people have to choose between the polite path and the familiar path, and sometimes the choice is not easy.
- In the Modern Greek culture, people tend to start with the polite way and shift quickly to the familiar way (usually the “status person” suggests the shift). Using the polite way in the beginning sounds OK, but insisting on it would mean that you want to remain distant, which does not sound OK at all.
SUMMARY
Pronouns are a special case of noun-dependent words, since they are related to a noun as a point of reference in order to get their actual meaning. In this sense they behave like other noun-dependent words regarding agreement. Chapter 6 introduces basic groups of Modern Greek pronouns. The focus this time is not on form (most pronouns are inflected like typical adjectives) but on use and meaning shifts between real pronouns and their use like adjectives.

KEY WORDS
pronouns, reference noun, sentence type (affirmative, interrogative, negative)

EXERCISES
1. Choose the correct answer.

1. Φοβάσαι τα αεροπλάνα;
   a. Όχι, δεν τα φοβάμαι. b. Όχι, δεν τους φοβάμαι.

2. Ξέρεις τον Πέτρο και την Κατερίνα;
   a. Ναι, τις ξέρω. b. Ναι, τους ξέρω.

3. Πίνεις καφέ;
   a. Ναι, τον πίνω. b. Ναι, πίνω.

4. Ξέρεις τα παιδιά;
   a. Εγώ τα ξέρω. b. Τα ξέρω.

5. Ποιος ξέρει τα παιδιά;
   a. Εγώ τα ξέρω. b. Τα ξέρω.

6. Ξέρεις ελληνικά;
   a. Όχι, δεν τα ξέρω. b. Όχι, δεν ξέρω.

2. There is one mistake in each sentence. Can you find it?

1. Ξέρω κανέναν φοιτητή από την Πολωνία. Τον λένε Πιοτρ.
2. Μου αρέσει πολύ αυτό βιβλίο.
3. Ο Πέτρος είναι φίλος μου, αλλά δεν τους βλέπω συχνά.
4. Να το κορίτσι όπου μένει δίπλα.
5. Ποιοι θέλει παγωτό;
6. Για ποιος είναι το δώρο;

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 6 press here www.moderngreek.eu