

## Coptic Language – Level 2

- ❖ Learn Coptic Alphabet and rules of different sounds and rules of Greek words
- ❖ Learn and memorize family members
- ❖ Learn using the indefinite and definite articles in Coptic nouns
- ❖ Learn using the demonstrative articles
- ❖ Learn and memorize how to pray the Lord's prayer in Coptic

Coptic Vowels		
Α, α	Alpha	• a as in Animal
Ε, ε	Eyy	• e as in 'ten' e.g. εθοϣαβ = Holy
Ι, ι	Yota	• Pronounced i as in 'machine' e.g. ιιϥι = give birth • or y as in 'yet' e.g. ιωτ = father
Η, η	Eeta	• Pronounced ee as in 'feet' e.g. ϣη = Sun.
Ϝ, ϝ	Epsilon	• Pronounced 'v' if preceded by a or e e.g. εϣα = Eva • ou pronounced 'ou' as in 'soup' if it comes after o e.g. ε̅ϥοοϣ = day, μετοϣρο = kingdom. • 'ee' as in 'deep' e.g. ηϣη = now.
Ο, ο	o	• O as in oh.
Ω, ω	oo	• Long "O" e.g. ϣωμι = man

Coptic Consonants		
Β, β	Veeta	• B in names (e.g. Βαϥιλι) or end of words (e.g. εθοϣαβ = Holy) • V if followed by a vowel (e.g. βαλ = eye)
Γ, γ	Gamma	• G if followed by ε, ι, η, ϣ e.g. γη = earth, αϥιοϥ = Holy/Saint • Gh (ξ) if followed by α, ο, ω or consonants e.g. Γαβρηλ • N if followed by γ, κ, χ, e.g. αϥελοϥ
Δ, δ	Delta	• D in proper names (e.g. Δινα, Δαηηηλ, Δαϣιδ) • Th in other words (e.g. Διακον = deacon, δωρον = present)
Ϟ	So-oo	• The number 6 i.e. not a letter
Ζ, ζ	Zeeta	• Pronounced Z
Θ, θ	Theeta	• Th (generally) e.g. θεοτοκοϥ = mother of God. • T if preceded by ϥ, τ, ϣ, e.g. ϥθοινοϥι = incense
Κ, κ	Kappa	• Pronounced K. e.g. καϣ = pen.
Λ, λ	Lavla	• Pronounced L. e.g. λαϥ = tongue.
Μ, μ	Mey	• M as in Μαρια

Ⲣ, ⲛ	Ney	• N as in ⲛⲉⲙ = and
Ⲫ, ⲫ	Eksee	• Pronounced "ex" e.g. ⲫⲟⲣⲡ = ring.
Ⲑ, ⲟ	O	• O as in ⲟⲛⲃ = live
Ⲡ, ⲡ	Pee	• P as in Ⲡⲁⲩⲗⲟⲥ = Paul
Ⲣ, ⲣ	Ro	• R as in ⲣⲟⲙⲁ = Rome
Ⲥ, ⲥ	Seema	• S as in ⲥⲱⲙⲁ = body
Ⲧ, ⲧ	Tav	• T as in Ⲧⲁⲙⲁⲩ = my mother
Ⲙ, ⲙ	Fei	• F as in ⲙⲁⲓ = this
Ⲭ, ⲭ	Key	• "K" in words of Egyptian origin e.g. ⲭⲏⲙⲓ = Egypt • "Sh" or Kh" in words with Greek origin: • Sh if followed by ⲉ, ⲓ, ⲏ, ⲩ as in ⲭⲉⲣⲉ = hail , ⲉⲩⲭⲏ = prayer • Kh if followed by ⲁ, ⲟ, ⲱ or consonants, e.g. ⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ = Christ, ⲭⲟⲣⲟⲥ = choir
Ⲯ, ⲯ	Epsee	• "ps" as in Ⲯⲁⲗⲙⲟⲥ = psalm
Ⲱ, ⲱ	Shai	• "Sh" as in ⲱⲡⲏⲣⲓ = son
Ⲳ, ⲳ	Fai	• "F" as in Ⲳⲧⲟⲩ = four
Ⲵ, ⲵ	Khai	• "Kh" as in Ⲵⲉⲗⲗⲟ = old man
Ⲷ, ⲷ	Hori	• "H" as in Ⲷⲱⲥ = praise
Ⲹ, ⲹ	Genga	• "J" as in "joy" if followed by ⲉ, ⲓ, ⲏ, e.g. Ⲹⲓⲭ = hand. • "G" otherwise. e.g. Ⲹⲱ = say, Ⲹⲟⲙ = power, ⲁⲭⲡ = watch
Ⲻ, ⲻ	Cheema	• "Ch" as in Ⲻⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ = dove.
Ⲽ, ⲽ	Tee	• "Ti" e.g. ⲥⲓⲧ = plant.

Jinkem (̀)

It looks like an accent ` When placed over a consonant letter, it adds the sound e to the letter, like ñ sounds "en". If it is placed over a vowel, it increases its duration and makes it as a separate vowel.

Examples					
Ⲭⲛⲟⲩⲧ	ef-noutee	God	ⲁⲥⲓ	af-ei	He came
ⲡⲱⲏⲣⲓ	ep-sheeri	The Son	ⲁⲛⲟⲕ	a'-nok	I
ⲥⲱⲙⲟⲩ	es-mou	Bless/Praise	ⲉⲱⲟⲩ	e-oo-ou	Donkey

## Pronunciation Rules of Greek Words

The Coptic language has many Greek words. The Greek words have a few more rules of pronunciation. Let us study these rules.

- **First, let us learn how to identify Greek words. We can identify Greek words by observing the following:**
  1. Words end with "αc", "oc", "oN" are usually Greek
  2. Words include "z", "Δ", "ς", "ψ", "ζ", "ϝ" as vowels are usually Greek
  3. Verbs end with "IN", "ειN", "AN", "cθe", "ΓTe", "coN", "ωμεN", "oϝN", "oIN" are usually Greek
  4. Words include any of the specific Coptic letters "ϣ", "ϥ", "ϧ", "Ϩ", "ϩ", "ϫ" are *not* Greek. Note that the Coptic letter "Ϛ" is not included here as it can show in Greek words to indicate a certain sound "rough breathing".

- **Rule of "NT" in Greek words**

When "NT" comes in Greek words, the tav "T" letter is pronounced "d". Examples:

1. ΠΑΝΤOC (pronounced pandos)
2. ONTOC (pronounced ondos)

- **Rule of "cμ" in Greek words**

When "cμ" comes in Greek words, the ceema "c" letter is pronounced "z". Examples:

1. ΔCΠACMOC (pronounced aspazmos)
2. ΠΛACMA (pronounced plazma)

- **Rule of "x" in Greek words**

When "x" is followed by any of "e", "h", "ϝ", "r" in Greek words, it is pronounced "sh".

Examples:

1. xepε (pronounced shere)
2. eϝxh (pronounced evshee)

## Let us learn the names of family members in Coptic:

Coptic Family Member	Translation
ΠΑΙΩΤ	My Father
ΤΑΜΑϝ	My Mother
ΠΑϣΗΡΙ	My Son
ΤΑϣΕΡΙ	My Daughter
ΠΑCON	My Brother
ΤΑCΩNI	My Sister
ΠΑϩAI	My Husband
ΤΑCϩIWI	My Wife

### What are the indefinite articles?

- ❖ These articles are like saying "a" or "an" in English
- ❖ They come before a noun like saying "a book" and "an apple" in English

### What are the definite articles?

- ❖ These articles are like saying "the" in English
- ❖ They come before a noun like saying "the book" in English

### What are the differences between the English and Coptic articles?

1. The English articles do not depend on the gender of the noun, in other words masculine (for boys) and feminine (for girls)
2. The Coptic articles may depend on the gender, masculine or feminine
3. The English articles do not depend on using one or many (singular or plural)
4. The Coptic articles depend on using one or many
5. The only similarity is like an English using the "an" for nouns that start with vowels, the Coptic articles may depend on the first letter of the noun, as we will see later
6. In English, we do not use indefinite article "a" or "an" with many things (plural). The regular plural in English is defined by the "s" letter in the end of the nouns
7. In Coptic, we use an indefinite article with plural, which differentiate the plural from singular
8. In Coptic, the article is always attached to the noun, as we will see later

## Indefinite articles:

1. In Coptic the article is “ⲟⲩ” (pronounced “oo” as in “soup”). It precedes both **masculine singular** or **feminine singular** nouns. It is like the "a" or "an" in English.

### Example:

Singular masculine	ϣⲏⲣⲓ = son	ⲟⲩϣⲏⲣⲓ = a son
	ⲓⲱⲧ = father	ⲟⲩⲓⲱⲧ = a father
Singular Feminine	ϥⲱⲛⲓ = sister	ⲟⲩϥⲱⲛⲓ = a sister
	ⲙⲁⲩ = mother	ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲩ = a mother

2. For plural we use “ϩⲁⲛ” (feminine or masculine)

### Example:

ⲙⲁⲩ = mother	ϩⲁⲛⲙⲁⲩ = mothers
ϫⲱⲙ = book	ϩⲁⲛϫⲱⲙ = books




Now let us apply these indefinite articles on the family members we learned in previous lessons

Father	ⲓⲱⲧ	A father	Ⲑⲓⲱⲧ	Fathers	ⲉⲁⲛⲓⲱⲧ
Mother	ⲙⲁⲓ	A mother	Ⲑⲓⲙⲁⲓ	Mothers	ⲉⲁⲛⲙⲁⲓ
Son	ⲙⲡⲓ	A son	Ⲑⲓⲙⲡⲓ	Sons	ⲉⲁⲛⲙⲡⲓ
Daughter	ⲙⲉⲣⲓ	A daughter	Ⲑⲓⲙⲉⲣⲓ	Daughters	ⲉⲁⲛⲙⲉⲣⲓ
Brother	ⲥⲐⲛ	A son	ⲐⲓⲥⲐⲛ	Brothers	ⲉⲁⲛⲥⲛⲏⲟⲓ
Sister	ⲥⲱⲛⲓ	A sister	Ⲑⲓⲥⲱⲛⲓ	Sisters	ⲉⲁⲛⲥⲱⲛⲓ
Husband	ⲉⲁⲓ	A husband	Ⲑⲓⲉⲁⲓ	Husbands	ⲉⲁⲛⲉⲁⲓ
Wife	ⲉⲁⲓⲱⲓ	A wife	Ⲑⲓⲉⲁⲓ	Wives	ⲉⲁⲛⲉⲁⲓⲱⲓ

Note that not all nouns become plural by adding "ⲉⲁⲛ" in the beginning of it, there are some irregular nouns like man and men in English. You do not have to worry about it.

**Definite articles:**

The Coptic definite article, "the" in English, has different forms for a boy, a girl, and many

Noun	Definite article		
	ⲛⲓ	ⲛ̀	ⲛ̀ⲉ
	ⲧ	ⲧ̀	ⲧ̀ⲉ
	ⲛⲓ	ⲛⲉⲛ	

**Rules of how to use these articles:**

- ⲛ̀ⲉ and ⲛ̀ⲉ are used with nouns that start with **ⲃ-ⲓ-ⲗ-ⲙ-ⲛ-ⲟ-ⲣ**, which can be remembered by "vilmnor" or "vilminor" to make it easy. Examples:
  - ⲛ̀ⲉⲓⲱⲧ = the father
  - ⲛ̀ⲉⲙⲁⲓ = the mother
  - ⲛ̀ⲉⲣⲱⲓ = the man
- ⲛ̀ⲉ and ⲛ̀ⲉ are also used with specific definite noun. For example, God the Father is very specific from the father of my friend.
- ⲛ̀ and ⲛ̀ⲉ, similar to ⲛ̀ⲉ and ⲛ̀ⲉ, are also used with specific definite noun but if the noun does not start with the "vilmnor" rule. For example, Christ the Son is very specific from the son of my friend.
- ⲛⲓ and ⲧ are very general and can be used with any noun. Examples:
  - ⲛⲓⲗⲱⲙ = the book
  - ⲛⲓⲕⲁⲙ = the pen
  - ⲧⲥⲱⲛⲓ = the sister




- d. ⲧⲙⲁⲛ = the mother (Note that it has the "vilminor" rule, but I still can use "ⲧ" if I do not mean a specific definite man, in such a case I should use "Ⲫⲙⲁⲛ" following Rule # 2)
  - e. ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ = the man (Note that it has the "vilminor" rule, but I still can use "ⲡ" if I do not mean a specific definite man, in such a case I should use "Ⲫⲣⲱⲙⲓ" following Rule #2)
5. ⲛⲓ is used for all plural genders and all cases, EXCEPT the case of Rule 6. Examples:
- a. ⲛⲓⲭⲱⲙ = the books
  - b. ⲛⲓⲕⲁⲩⲱ = the pens
  - c. ⲛⲓⲥⲱⲛⲓ = the sisters
  - d. ⲛⲓⲙⲁⲛ = the mothers
  - e. ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ = the men
6. ⲛⲎⲎ is used for plural nouns that belong to another noun. In other words, (noun 1) of (noun 2). Examples:
- a. ⲛⲎⲎⲕⲁⲩⲱ ⲓⲙⲛⲏⲁ = The pens of Mina
  - b. ⲛⲎⲎⲭⲱⲙ ⲛⲥⲁⲣⲁ = The books of Sara

Now, let us apply these rules to our family members






Member	Coptic	Definite English	Definite Coptic (General)	Definite Coptic (Specific)	Plural English	Plural Coptic
Father	ⲓⲱⲧ	The father	ⲡⲓⲱⲧ	Ⲫⲓⲱⲧ	The fathers	ⲛⲓⲱⲧ
Mother	ⲙⲁⲛ	The mother	ⲧⲙⲁⲛ	Ⲫⲙⲁⲛ	The mothers	ⲛⲓⲙⲁⲛ
Son	ⲩⲏⲣⲓ	The son	ⲡⲓⲩⲏⲣⲓ	ⲡⲓⲩⲏⲣⲓ	The sons	ⲛⲓⲩⲏⲣⲓ
Daughter	ⲩⲱⲎⲓ	The daughter	ⲧⲩⲱⲎⲓ	ⲪⲩⲱⲎⲓ	The daughters	ⲛⲓⲩⲱⲎⲓ
Brother	ⲥⲒⲛ	The son	ⲡⲓⲥⲒⲛ	ⲡⲓⲥⲒⲛ	The brothers	ⲛⲓⲥⲓⲛⲏⲟⲛ
Sister	ⲥⲱⲛⲓ	The sister	ⲧⲥⲱⲛⲓ	Ⲫⲥⲱⲛⲓ	The sisters	ⲛⲓⲥⲱⲛⲓ
Husband	ⲉⲁⲓ	The husband	ⲡⲓⲉⲁⲓ	ⲡⲓⲉⲁⲓ	The husbands	ⲛⲓⲉⲁⲓ
Wife	ⲉⲩⲓⲙⲓ	The wife	ⲧⲉⲩⲓⲙⲓ	Ⲫⲉⲩⲓⲙⲓ	The wives	ⲛⲓⲉⲩⲓⲙⲓ

Note that not all nouns become plural by only adding "ⲛⲓ" in the beginning of it, there are some irregular nouns like man and men in English.







## Summary & Exercises

Noun	Definite article			Indefinite article
	π	̀π	ϕ	οϣ
	†	̀†	ϑ	οϣ
	NI	NEN		ϩAN

### Indefinite articles (complete in blanks follow the example)

	Coptic word	Meaning	Gender	Indefinite singular	Indefinite plural
Ex.	Καϣ	Pen		οϣκαϣ	ϩANκαϣ
1	σωμα	Body			
2	ϣερι	Daughter			
3	ματ	Mother			
4	ϣηρι	Son			

### Definite articles (follow the example)

	Coptic word	Meaning	Gender	Definite singular	Definite plural
Ex.	Καϣ	Pen		πικαϣ	νικαϣ
Ex.	ϣοϣρι	Censer		†ϣοϣρη	νιϣοϣρη
1	σωμα	Body			
2	ϣερι	Daughter			
3	ματ	Mother			
4	ρωμ	Man			

## Demonstrative Pronouns

In English, “this”, “that”, “these,” and “those “are demonstrative pronouns. In Coptic, there are demonstrative pronouns, which are written separately and others, which are connected to the referenced noun(s).

Let’s start with the separate ones. Those are summarized in the following table:

Φαι	Is for singular masculine
Θαι	Is for singular feminine
Ψαι	Is for plural (masculine and feminine)

Now let’s learn the structure through an example:

### Structure for indefinite case:

Φαι	οϣ	ρωϣ	πε
Demonstrative pronoun	Indefinite article	Noun	Connector like verb to be

Φαι οϣρωϣ πε means this is a man.

The connector πε is for singular masculine, τε is for singular feminine and νε for plural. Note that the indefinite determiner “οϣ” is replaced with “ϩαν” for plural as we learned earlier.

### Here are some examples:

Φαι οϣρωϣ πε	This is a man
Θαι οϣϣερι τε	This is a girl
Θαι οϣϣαρ τε	This is a mother
Ψαι ϩανρωϣ νε	These are men
Ψαι ϩανϣαρ νε	These are mothers

What about the definite case? Here is an example:

### Structure for definite case:

Φαι	πε	πι	ρωϣ
Demonstrative pronoun	Connector like verb to be	Definite article	Noun



Φαι πε πρωωι means This is the man.

The same rules apply for singular and plural. Try to translate the following sentences (try going in both directions).

Φαι πε ΟΗΝΑ	This is Mina
Θαι τε ϚΩΝΙ	This is the sister
Παι νε ΝΙΤΟΤΟ	These are the chairs
Φαι πε ΠΙΕΖΟΟΥ	This is the day
Θαι τε ΙΔΗΜ	This is Jerusalem

Exercise:

Translate from English to Coptic and vice-versa.

**Hint:** ουδρ = mother, ωνι = sister, Ϛωω = book.

Παι ρανουδρ νεω ρανωνι νε	Those are mothers and sisters
Παι νε ΝΙϚωω	Those are the books

Now we move to the demonstrative articles that are connected to the noun.

Those are:

- παι for singular masculine,
- ται for singular feminine, and
- ναι for plural.

It is best to see their structure in the sentence through examples:

Παιρῶμι πε Ὑηνα	This man is Mina
Παιῶικ	This bread
Ἰαιροῶπι	This year

Try to translate the following sentence:

This man and this girl are Mina and Irini.

Answer: Παιρῶμι νεμ ταιῶερι νε Ὑηνα νεμ Ἰρηνη.

## Lord's Prayer

ΘΕΝ ΦΕΡΑΝ ΑΦΙΩΤ ΝΕΩ ΠΩΗΡΙ ΝΕΩ  
ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΟΥΝΟΥΤ ΝΟΥΩΤ  
ΑΜΗΝ.

ΑΡΙΤΕΝ ΝΕΩ ΠΩΑ ΝΧΟΣ ΘΕΝ ΟΥΩΕΠΖΩΟΤ  
Χε:

ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΕΤΘΕΝ ΝΙΦΗΟΥΙ  
ΜΑΡΕΥΤΟΥΒΟ ΝΧΕ ΠΕΚΡΑΝ  
ΜΑΡΕΣΙ ΝΧΕ ΤΕΚΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ  
ΠΕΤΕΖΝΑΚ ΜΑΡΕΥΩΠΙ  
ΑΦΕΡΗΤ ΘΕΝ ΤΦΕ ΝΕΩ ΖΙΧΕΝ ΠΙΚΑΖΙ  
ΠΕΝΩΙΚ ΝΤΕ ΡΑΣΤ ΜΗΙΩ ΝΑΝ ΑΦΟΟΥ  
ΟΥΟΣ ΧΑ ΝΗΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΝΑΝ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΑΦΕΡΗΤ ΖΩΝ ΝΤΕΝΧΩ ΕΒΟΛ  
ΝΝΗΕΤΕ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΤΑΝ ΕΡΩΟΥ  
ΟΥΟΣ ΑΠΕΡΕΝΤΕΝ ΕΘΟΥΝ ΕΠΙΡΑΧΜΟΣ  
ΑΛΛΑ ΝΑΖΜΕΝ ΕΒΟΛΖΑ ΠΙΠΕΤΖΩΟΥ  
ΘΕΝ ΠΙΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΙΗΟΥΟΣ ΠΕΝΘ ΟΙΣ  
ΧΕ ΘΩΚ ΤΕ  
ΤΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ ΝΕΩ ΤΧΟΜ ΝΕΩ ΠΙΩΟΥ  
ΩΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΑΜΗΝ.

In the name of the Father, the Son,  
the Holy Spirit, One God Amen.

Make us worthy to pray thankfully:

Our Father who art in heaven  
Hallowed by Thy name  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive  
Those who trespass against us  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from the evil  
In Christ Jesus our Lord  
For Thine is  
The kingdom, the power, and the glory  
Forever, Amen.