Aorist tense worksheet
[This worksheet accompanies the video by Simon Costello on the 1st and 2nd / weak and strong aorist]

The aorist is the equivalent of the simple past tense in English. In English, that tense is usually formed by adding -ed to the end of the word: e.g. 'I play' becomes 'I played'; however, there are a large number of English verbs that do not follow this rule, but instead use a different form from that used in the present tense. Sometimes the difference is only small (e.g. 'I run' becomes 'I ran'); sometimes it is very significant (e.g. 'I go' becomes 'I went').

The situation for the aorist tense in Greek is very similar. There are two ways to form the aorist, the second of which involves changing the stem.

The first aorist

The first aorist (sometimes called the weak aorist) is formed by adding an epsilon augment to the start of the verb stem, as in the imperfect tense, and adding a sigma to the end of the stem, as in the future tense. When a verb stem ends in a consonant, adding the sigma can lead to a spelling change:

\[
\begin{align*}
\pi/\varphi &= \psi \\
\kappa/\gamma &= \xi \\
\zeta/\theta &= \sigma
\end{align*}
\]

The first aorist has its own set of endings. They are very similar to those of the imperfect tense. The key marker is that the majority of the endings contain an alpha (α):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st person singular</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>-α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd person singular</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>-ας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person singular</td>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>-ε(ν)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1st person plural | we | -αμεν |
| 2nd person plural | you | -ατε |
| 3rd person plural | they | -αν |

With all these elements in place, the first aorist is very simple to spot:

- παύω → ἔ-παυσ-α = 'I stopped'
- ἀκούω → ἔ-ακουσ-α = 'I heard'
- διώκω → ἔ-διωκσ-α = 'I chased'
- ἐλπίζω → ἔ-ἐλπιζσ-α = 'I hoped'
Practising the forms of the first aorist

Translate into English:  
1. ἐπαύσαμεν  
2. ἐδακρύσατε  
3. ἔγραψεν  
4. ἥκουσα  
5. ἔπαυσαν  
6. ἐδίωξε  
7. ἠλπισας  
8. ἔγραψαν

Translate into Greek:  
1. They cried  
2. We heard  
3. I chased  
4. You (p) wrote  
5. She stopped  
6. We hoped  
7. You (s) cried  
8. You (p) stopped

First aorist practice sentences

1. ἡ Ἡρα τῶν γυναικῶν ἥκουσεν.  
(Vocabulary: γυναικῶν – genitive plural of γυνή, 'woman', a third declension noun; ἁκούω can take a genitive instead of an accusative when a person or persons is being referred to)

2. ἄρα τὰς ἐπιστολὰς ἔγραψας;

3. τοὺς ἐλέφαντας ἐφυλάξαμεν.  
(Vocabulary: ἐλέφαντας – accusative plural of ἐλέφας, 'elephant', a third declension noun)

4. ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς τὸν Ἑκτορα ἔδίωξεν.  
(Vocabulary: Ἑκτορα – accusative singular, third declension noun)

5. τὰς βίβλους οὐκ ἐκλεψα.  
(Vocabulary: κλέπτω – steal)
Second aorist

The second aorist (sometimes called the strong aorist) involves a change to the stem from the present tense stem. Sometimes the change is quite small; sometimes it is quite significant; sometimes the aorist stem is very different from the present tense stem:

βάλλω → ἔβαλ-ον = I threw
λαμβάνω → ἔλαβ-ον = I took
τρέχω → ἔδραμ-ον = I ran

The same rules about adding the augment apply to the second aorist. The second aorist uses the same set of endings as the imperfect tense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st person singular</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>-ον</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd person singular</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>-ες</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person singular</td>
<td>he/she/it</td>
<td>-ε(ν)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person plural</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>-ομεν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person plural</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>-ετε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person plural</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>-ον</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second aorist stem will make it clear that the verb is aorist rather than the imperfect.

Some common second aorists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present tense</th>
<th>Aorist (stem underlined)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>λαμβάνω</td>
<td>ἔλαβ-ον</td>
<td>I take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀποθηγασκω</td>
<td>ἀπέθα-ανον</td>
<td>I die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βάλλω</td>
<td>ἔβαλ-ον</td>
<td>I throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λέγω</td>
<td>ἔσπον</td>
<td>I say/speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἁγιο</td>
<td>ἠγαγον (ἁγαγ-)</td>
<td>I lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τρέχω</td>
<td>ἔδραμον</td>
<td>I run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐσθιο</td>
<td>ἐφαγον</td>
<td>I eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μανθάνω</td>
<td>ἐμαθον</td>
<td>I learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most textbooks and grammars give lists of important second aorist stems.

A lot of English words derived from Greek verbs are formed from the second aorist stem (e.g. mathematics is derived from the aorist stem of μανθάνω).
Practising the forms of the second aorist

Translate into English:

1. ἐλάβομεν
2. ἐφάγετε
3. ἔδραμες
4. ἀπέθανον
5. ἐίπετε
6. ἔβαλε
7. ἐἰσήγαγον

Translate into Greek:

1. She learned
2. They took
3. You (s) ate
4. We threw
5. You (p) died
6. You (s) ate
7. I ran in
8. He ate

Second aorist practice sentences

1. ἡ Κλεοπάτρα τὸν οἶνον ἔλαβεν.

2. ἐν τῇ ἁγορᾷ ἐμάθομεν.
   (Vocabulary: ἁγορά – marketplace)

3. ὁ Σωκράτης τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις εἶπεν.

4. ἄρα τούς παιδας εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἰσήγαγες;

5. ὁ λεών τὸν καμήλον ἔφαγεν.
   (Vocabulary: καμήλος – camel)

Answers are given in the video and at the end of the worksheet.
Augmenting compound verbs

Many Greek verbs are formed by adding a preposition to the front of a verb:

εἰσβάλλω = I throw in

If a compound verb is in the imperfect or aorist tense, the augment comes after the prefix:

εἰσέβαλον = I threw in

Sometimes this leads to the vowel at the end of the prefix being lost:

ἀποβάλλω → ἀπέβαλον
Practising the forms of the first aorist: answer key

Translate into English:  
1. έπαυσαμεν = we stopped  
2. ἐδακρύσατε = you (p) cried  
3. ἔγραψεν = he/she wrote  
4. ἤκουσα = I heard  
5. ἔπαυσαν = they stopped  
6. ἔδιώξε = he/she chased  
7. ἡλπισας = you (s) hoped  
8. ἔγραψαν = they wrote

Translate into Greek:  
1. They cried = ἕδακρυσαν  
2. We heard = ἤκουσαμεν  
3. I chased = ἔδιώξα  
4. You (p) wrote = ἔγραψατε  
5. She stopped = ἔπαυσε  
6. We hoped = ἡλπίσαμεν  
7. You (s) cried = ἕδακρυσας  
8. You (p) stopped = ἔπαυσατε

First aorist practice sentences: answer key

1. Hera heard the women.  
2. Did you (s) write the letters?  
3. We guarded the elephants.  
4. Achilles chased Hector.  
5. I did not steal the books.

Practising the forms of the second aorist: answer key

Translate into English:  
1. ἐλάβομεν = we took  
2. ἐφάγετε = you (p) ate  
3. ἤγαγεν = he/she led  
4. ἔδραμες = you (s) ran  
5. ἀπέθανον = I /they died  
6. εἰπέτε = you (p) said  
7. ἔβαλε = he/she threw  
8. εἰσήγαγον = I /they led

Translate into Greek:  
1. She learned = ἔμαθε(ν)  
2. They took = ἐλάβον  
3. You (s) ate = ἔφαγες  
4. We threw = ἔβαλομεν  
5. You (p) died = ἀπέθανετε  
6. You (s) ate = ἔφαγες  
7. I ran in = εἰσέδραμον  
8. He ate = ἔφαγε(ν)

Second aorist practice sentences: answer key

1. Cleopatra took the wine.  
2. We learned in the market.  
3. Socrates spoke to the Athenians.  
4. Did you lead the children into the house?  
5. The lion ate the camel.