



## The Greek Alphabet

It is quite common to use symbols from the Greek alphabet to represent quantities in mathematics. You should just regard these symbols as symbols, used in a certain way by convention, and not as having any deeper intrinsic meaning. Probably one reason their use is so widespread in mathematics is their distinct shapes, which prevents confusion with our usual alphabetic characters in ordinary text.

You don't have to be able to speak Greek to understand mathematics, but it is probably helpful to recognize the symbols and be familiar with their names. The Greek alphabet consists of 24 characters, usually written as follows:

uppercase	lowercase	name	pronunciation
A	$\alpha$	alpha	
B	$\beta$	beta	"bayta"
$\Gamma$	$\gamma$	gamma	
$\Delta$	$\delta$	delta	
E	$\epsilon$	epsilon	
Z	$\zeta$	zeta	"zayta"
H	$\eta$	eta	"ayta"
$\Theta$	$\theta$	theta	"thayta"
I	$\iota$	iota	
K	$\kappa$	kappa	
$\Lambda$	$\lambda$	lambda	
M	$\mu$	mu	"m-yoo"
N	$\nu$	nu	"n-yoo"
$\Xi$	$\xi$	xi	"xs-eye"
O	$\omicron$	omikron	
$\Pi$	$\pi$	pi	"p-eye"
P	$\rho$	rho	"roe"
$\Sigma$	$\sigma$	sigma	
T	$\tau$	tau	"t-ow"
Y	$\upsilon$	upsilon	
$\Phi$	$\phi, \varphi$	phi	"f-eye"
X	$\chi$	chi	"k-eye"
$\Psi$	$\psi$	psi	"p-sigh"
$\Omega$	$\omega$	omega	"omayga"

The BCIT Math 11 Competency Test does not ask you questions about the characters in the Greek alphabet directly. However, in some questions on the test, these symbols may be used as algebraic symbols. This list is provided here just to give you a reference for the origin of symbols such as these.