

## Curriculum

# Learning Greek with Inscriptions (Grades 9-12)

Inscriptions are critical for our understanding of Greco-Roman antiquity. They frequently preserve information not recorded in literary texts, their multiplicity can provide context and grounding to otherwise-isolated events or facts, they give witness to places and people not discussed in extant histories, and the deviations in their orthography can reveal hints about pronunciation. In addition to their historical importance, inscriptions are a great aid in learning the ancient Greek language. They provide an immediacy that many students find compelling: unlike reading Homer's *Odyssey*, a story told by generations of bards before being written down, then copied and recopied for millennia and finally appearing in a paperback book, a student examining an inscription, whether in person or by squeeze or photograph, is almost directly in touch with the composer and the moment of composition of the text.

The study of inscriptions also overlaps particularly well with beginning-level study of Greek. An epigraphist begins with transcription, the simple recognition of letters, before moving to words and finally to sense units; furthermore, many inscriptions are written in relatively simple, formulaic language, so that with some simple vocabulary assistance and glossing students can make their own way. In the past it has been difficult to use inscriptions in introductory Greek language instruction: there are few textbooks that provide epigraphic texts, images, or lesson plans, and it is even rarer for a school or university to have access to a collection of inscriptions, squeezes (paper negatives of inscriptions), or high-quality photographs of inscriptions. The Krateros Project to digitize and openly publish the squeeze collection of the Institute for Advanced Study seeks to support teachers in the use of inscriptions in Greek language teaching both through their extensive database of high-quality squeeze images and through lesson plans like those included in this curriculum. Questions or requests for assistance can be sent to [krateros@ias.edu](mailto:krateros@ias.edu).

The lessons in this unit are meant not to replace but to accompany conventional first-year ancient Greek instruction. In the first lesson the students confront the materiality and transmission of ancient texts and use the image of a squeeze on Krateros to practice recognizing the letters of the Greek alphabet. In the second lesson the students move on to practice identifying word forms: at this point the students return to their Krateros images and work on breaking down the letters into words; they will also learn about the conventions of published epigraphic texts. In the third lesson students create a translation of their inscription. They will workshop their translation, first with their peers and then with their teacher.

## Guiding Questions

- What is a text, and how did it come to be in the form in which you are encountering it?

- How do knowledge of vocabulary and of morphology interact to permit comprehension of a foreign-language text?
- What decisions need to be made in editing, translating, and publishing a foreign-language text?

## Curriculum Details

### College and Career Readiness Standards

#### Anchor Standards:

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#)

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Grade Level Standards:

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5](#)

Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6](#)

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

## Background

The ancient Greeks inscribed a great variety of texts on stone, such as treaties, laws, decrees, honorific inscriptions, accounts of building projects, tribute lists of the Athenian Empire, grave inscriptions, literary texts (epigrams), lists of officials, dedications, inventories, and artists' signatures. These inscriptions, hundreds of thousands of which survive in whole or in part, preserve critical contemporary information about life in the ancient Mediterranean. The high point of the Greek "epigraphic habit", as it is called, overlaps with the period of democracy and empire in Athens; unsurprisingly, the topics considered in these 5<sup>th</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-century BCE Athenian inscriptions are highly relevant to the contemporary American experience.

Furthermore, the highly physical form of inscriptions, alien to our usual modern interaction with text, confronts readers with oft-overlooked questions of transmission, translation, interpretation, and reliability.

## Assessment

At the end of the lessons, the students will have produced a full transcription and translation of an inscription in the Krateros database. The steps taken along the way should be assessed by the teacher, but if further assessment is desired, the students can be assigned to select another inscription and prepare a full transcription and translation of it. This assignment should be significantly easier for the student after the experience of completing the curriculum, and especially given that the student will, by that point, be much further along in their language instruction. If the teacher wishes to assign a more difficult assessment, they may select for the student(s) an inscription that has never previously been translated into a modern language.

If students are completing the entire curriculum by creating transcriptions and translations of individually assigned inscriptions, this project is an excellent opportunity for student teaching: at each step along the way, students can be asked to present their work to the class, explain their findings, and discuss difficulties and successes. If the students are operating in small groups, a different group member can be asked to present for each lesson.

If more historical and cultural integration is desired, teachers may conclude the curriculum by asking each student to produce a poster about their inscription. This poster would include not only text and translation, but information about the people, places, and practices encountered in the inscription. Students will have to be somewhat discriminating and choose which elements upon which they wish to place their focus. In keeping with the physicality of inscriptions, emphasis should be placed on the visual aspects of the poster: readability, target audience, impact, and self-sufficiency should all be considered and addressed.

## Extending the Value

The epigraphy community is increasingly embracing the advantages offered by the technology of the digital age: databases of the text, metadata, and images of inscriptions have appeared and proliferated over the last two decades, and formats have been devised for encoding epigraphic information for computer interaction. EpiDoc XML is the current standard used to promote interoperability between various epigraphic projects and databases, and learning to use it is no more difficult than learning the old conventions for publishing inscriptions! To teach the students how to format their work for sharing in a digital ecosystem, introduce the students to the EpiDoc [guidelines](#). Then, work with the students to reformat the inscription that they edited during Lessons 1-4 into EpiDoc XML. There are straightforward, openly available resources like [EFES](#) (EpiDoc Front-End Services) that can be used to turn students' XML files into functioning online editions. This activity stresses student participation in knowledge creation, rather than simply knowledge reception.

## **Lesson Plans in Curriculum**

### **Lesson 1: Texts, Transmission, and the Greek Alphabet**

Students often think of texts as disembodied, definitive, and unchanging; at the very beginning of ancient language study it is important to take the time to dispel those misconceptions and discuss the transmitted and constructed nature of most texts. In addition to this discussion, students will also take this time at the beginning of their instruction to practice their knowledge of the Greek alphabet by transcribing letters from the image of a squeeze on the Krateros database.

### **Lesson 2: Using Morphology to Distinguish Words**

Most ancient Greek inscriptions have no word separation (or punctuation), so that after identifying letters an epigraphist (or any interested reader) must determine where each word begins and ends. The students will work on distinguishing individual words in the images of squeezes on the Krateros database. Students will also learn about the various conventions used by professional epigraphists in creating publishable editions of inscriptions so that they can compare the text they have created to the published text on the Packard Humanities Institute's "Searchable Greek Inscriptions" [website](#), as linked by Krateros.

### **Lesson 3: Translation: Theory and Practice**

Continuing the exploration of texts and their production/transmission, the students will discuss the theory of translation. Students will be asked to consider not only how they understand the foreign-language text (the first step of translation), but also how they will convey that text to an English-reading audience, in terms of format and style as well as word choice and phrasing.

## Lesson Plan

# Lesson 1: Texts, Transmission, and the Greek Alphabet

Curriculum: Learning Greek with Inscriptions

Grades: 9-12

Class Periods: 1-3

Students often think of texts as disembodied, definitive, and unchanging; at the very beginning of ancient language study it is important to take the time to dispel those misconceptions and discuss the transmitted and constructed nature of most texts. In addition to this discussion, students will also take this time at the beginning of their instruction to practice their knowledge of the Greek alphabet by transcribing letters from the image of a squeeze on the Krateros database.

The study of an individual inscription begins in much the same way as the study of the Greek language itself: with individual letters. Most Anglophone students will be initially unfamiliar with the Greek alphabet; inscriptions offer an excellent opportunity to practice identifying capital Greek letters. This lesson also presents two opportunities for useful auxiliary discussion. (1) As the students begin (or intensify) their foray into classical studies, careful consideration of text and textual transmission, especially in light of the difference in transmission between an inscription and a book text, is warranted. (2) The same mistaken assumption of the monolithic and unchanging nature of text generally holds for alphabets, which have come to be highly standardized in modernity; inscriptions, whose alphabets can vary noticeably depending upon geographic and chronological location, are an excellent tool for disrupting these assumptions.

This lesson is one of a four lesson unit integrating inscriptions into introductory ancient Greek instruction. If approached as a unit the four lessons will work best taught in sequence, but the lessons can also be used on their own. Teachers may link to the full unit with Guiding Questions, College and Career Readiness standards, and Background.

## Learning Objectives

Reconsider the stability of familiar concepts like “a text” and “the alphabet”. Identify capital letters within the text of inscription using an image from the Krateros database.

## Lesson Plan Details

### Preparation

The theoretical and historical aspects of this lesson can be addressed either by lecture or by student reading and discussion. In the former case, recommended reading for teachers to familiarize themselves with textual transmission and the history/development of the Greek alphabet include Reynolds and Wilson’s *Scribes and scholars: A guide to the transmission of*

*Greek and Latin literature* and Jeffery's *The local scripts of archaic Greece: a study of the origin of the Greek alphabet and its development from the eighth to the fifth centuries B.C.* If student reading and discussion is preferred, it may be helpful to use a case study for textual transmission; one good such option is Finglass's chapter on "The Textual Transmission of Sophocles' Dramas" in Blackwell's *A Companion to Sophocles*. Wachter's chapter on "Inscriptions" in Blackwell's *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* is a good introductory reading for this unit, and covers the diversity and evolution of Greek alphabet(s) without descending into jargon.

High-quality images of squeezes are available at the [Krateros database](#). The teacher should assign students (either individually or in groups) an inscription. It is important for the teacher to assess images before selecting them for students: many squeezes capture extremely short or fragmentary inscriptions, or inscriptions that are very poorly preserved. If this lesson is being taught on its own, teachers should at least confirm that images selected are of similar levels of difficulty and length. Regardless of which approach to theoretical/historical material has been taken, the teacher should be particularly careful to identify any non-standard letters for students (zeta is a particular problem in Attic inscriptions). If this lesson is being taught as part of the unit "Learning Greek with Inscriptions" and students will be continuing with these inscriptions, the teacher should confirm that the texts selected are grammatically and semantically of similar difficulty; teachers may also want to choose texts with a shared topic or theme, such as honorific decrees or imperial letters.

## Lesson Activities

### Activity 1. Context: Textual Transmission and Language Development

If feasible, assign Wachter's "Inscriptions" or a similar short introduction to epigraphy to the students. This reading will both address issues that the students will encounter in this lesson and will lay the groundwork for future lessons in this unit. If time permits and the students are of the right level, also assign Finglass's "The Textual Transmission of Sophocles' Dramas" or a similar case study on the transmission of a classical author/text. The teacher may want to do some amount of lecturing to fill holes left by the readings; for example, the readings may not discuss the development of the "lowercase" alphabet in Greek, which will be an interesting subject for students who will now confront texts written entirely in "uppercase".

Have the students discuss the reading(s), either in groups or as a full class. Focus should be on the students comparing their preconceived notions about texts and about the most basic building blocks of written language to the materials presented in the reading(s) (or in the teacher's lecture). Discussion may also be directed to the interconnectedness that the history of the alphabet shows: its transmission and development properly places Greek and Italian civilizations in the context of, and even in cultural debt to, African and Middle Eastern civilizations. If this lesson is being taught as part of the unit "Learning Greek with Inscriptions" and the teacher intends to employ the "Extending the Value" activities, students may also be encouraged to consider how the advent of the digital age has affected the transmission and fluidity of text and of language.

## Activity 2. Identifying Greek Capital Letters in Inscriptions

Using an inscription not assigned to any of the students, demonstrate for the students the process of distinguishing letters. Make sure to remind the students about any unusual letters or markings. Individually, in pairs, or in groups, have the students look at the image of their inscription and try to distinguish individual letters. Move around the room, assisting with questions and observing methods and effort. This activity can be timed (i.e., the teacher can devote a set number of class periods to it), or it can be continued until the inscription has been fully transcribed.

### Assessment

Assessment of the reading and discussion activity will vary from teacher to teacher. It may be carried out by a quiz, by students (or groups) producing a short response to the reading(s), or by the teacher's assessment of participation in group or class discussion. The material covered in the reading may also be assessed on future examinations.

The teacher should assess the transcription activity while it is in progress. Students should be assessed as much for the effort and technique as for their "success" or speed: it is more important to get practice identifying letters than it is to quickly become adept at that task. If the class is continuing with the unit "Learning Greek with Inscriptions", the teacher may at this point want to have compare the students' texts to the published text available on the Packard Humanities Institute's "Searchable Greek Inscriptions" [website](#), as linked by the inscription's Krateros database entry. Since students will return to identify individual words in Lesson 2, this comparison should be done by the teacher, but it is important to ensure that the transcription is correct in order to facilitate the students' task in Lesson 2.

An excellent opportunity also exists here for student teaching. Students, whether individually or in groups, can be asked to teach their inscriptions to the rest of the class. This activity will take more time, but will result in the students looking at more inscriptions (and thus more Greek) than they would if focusing only on their own (or their group's own) text. It will also, of course, require the students as teachers to think about their own inscription in a different way as they identify areas that surprised them or gave them difficulty and devise ways to guide their classmates through those aspects of their texts. For this first lesson, students should be expected to discuss the letter forms in their inscription, especially if any are unusual, and their experience working with a highly imperfect text.

## Lesson Plan

# Lesson 2: Using Morphology to Distinguish Words

Curriculum: Learning Greek with Inscriptions

Grades: 9-12

Class Periods: 2-4

Most ancient Greek inscriptions have no word separation (or punctuation), so that after identifying letters an epigraphist (or any interested reader) must determine where each word begins and ends. Although an extensive vocabulary helps speed this process up, there are sometimes instances of *hapax legomenon*, or a word that appears in only one place, in inscriptions; in such cases, a confidence grasp of morphology is the reader's best tool. In this lesson students work on distinguishing individual words in the images of squeezes on the Krateros database.

In the previous lesson, students worked to identify letters, the smallest building blocks of language. In this lesson, students will move up one level to identifying words. This task is particularly important in the context of ancient language instruction: because there are almost no opportunities to hear ancient Greek (or Latin) spoken, there are correspondingly few opportunities to increase competence at distinguishing words. By entering a situation with no spaces between words, students can simulate one of the important pedagogical aspects of conversational training in modern languages.

Once the students have broken their inscription down into words, whether the entire inscription or the portion which time permitted, they will check their version against a published text of the inscription. In order to do so, they will have to confront the issue of conventions for publication. As A.G. Woodhead notes in his 1959 monograph on *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, “[t]he editor of an epigraphic text is faced at the outset by the problem of conveying to his readers a general picture of the inscription with which he is dealing—how much of the original stone survives and is legible, what he can see of the parts not easily legible, his ideas if any on the extent and contents of the sections now lost....For all these purposes certain commonly agreed symbols are in use, and they form a necessary part of the epigraphist's stock-in-trade,” (6). Becoming familiar with the conventions of epigraphic publications will allow students to continue to use epigraphic materials going forward, both within this learning unit and in their studies generally.

This lesson is one of a four lesson unit integrating inscriptions into introductory ancient Greek instruction. If approached as a unit the four lessons will work best taught in sequence, but the lessons can also be used on their own. Teachers may link to the full unit with Guiding Questions, College and Career Readiness standards, and Background.

## Learning Objectives

Identify individual words within the text of inscription using an image from the Krateros database; if possible, identify the part of speech of each word. Learn about the conventions for publishing the texts of inscriptions.

## Lesson Plan Details

### Preparation

High-quality images of squeezes are available at the [Krateros database](#). If this lesson is being taught as part of the unit “Learning Greek with Inscriptions”, students may continue with the inscription they worked on in Lesson 1; if not, the teacher should assign students (either individually or in groups) an inscription. If the students are using the same inscription that they worked on from Lesson 1, it is critical that the teacher have checked their transcription to ensure that no mistakes were made with letter identification.

Go over each assigned inscription and prepare a sheet of glosses. These should explain for the student any forms that they have not yet learned. If this lesson is used early in the course of introductory instruction, the gloss material may be substantial; if the students are more advanced, it will be minimal. Depending upon the inscription selected, there may be deviations from Greek orthography as taught in textbooks. Usually these can be easily recognized and explained with several rules; for example, subscript iotas (here combined with an alpha:  $\alpha$  ) may all appear as full letters. Sometimes there will be spelling deviations that reflect spoken pronunciation; here again glosses should be provided.

The [Perseus Project](#) provides an excellent [Greek Word Study Tool](#) that will allow students to look up words and determine if they are correct forms. This tool should be deployed with some care, as students will miss the benefit of the lesson if they simply insert combinations of letters into it without making an effort to determine word forms.

Teachers can familiarize students with the conventions of epigraphic publications through readings, lecture, examples, or combinations of these elements. The first chapter of Woodhead’s *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* has an excellent overview and discussion of these conventions, as does Wachter’s chapter on “Inscriptions” in Blackwell’s *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*. *Hesperia*, the journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, is a treasure-trove of inscription publications; alternatively, the LACTOR series published by the London Association of Classical Teachers includes several volumes, such as “The Athenian Empire”, “Athenian Radical Democracy, 461-404 BC”, and “Greek Historical Inscriptions, 359-323 BC” that present many examples of published epigraphic texts.

### Lesson Activities

#### Activity 1. Using Morphology to Distinguish Words

Using an inscription not assigned to any of the students, demonstrate for the students the process of distinguishing words without the aid of spaces. Remind them of the endings that they have

learned to this point: there are some letters that (almost) never end Greek words, and other letters (or combinations thereof) that often indicate the end (or beginning) of a word. Make sure to demonstrate as well the process of using one of the sheets of glosses, and how to proceed in cases where they are confused, whether by asking their peers, asking you, turning to the digital tools, or some combination of all of these options.

Individually, in pairs, or in groups, have the students look at the transcription of their inscription and try to distinguish individual words in that text. Move around the room, assisting with questions and observing methods and effort. This activity can be timed (i.e., the teacher can devote a set number of class periods to it), or it can be continued until the inscription has been fully parsed.

If students are curious about the names or places in their texts, they should be encouraged to follow up on those historical threads. For places this exploration will be relatively easy: teachers can direct students to [Peripleo](#), a website that allows users to search for places in the ancient world (contained in a variety of gazetteers) and see both their locations on a map and links to any information known about the places. A similar result can also be accomplished by searching [Pleiades](#), a community-built gazetteer of the ancient world. Persons present more difficulty, as there is not yet a searchable digital prosopography of the ancient world. The core of the Krateros collection are inscriptions from Athens and Attica; for these inscriptions the best prosopographical work is John S. Traill's *Persons of Ancient Athens*. If, however, access to these volumes is not available, [both volumes](#) of the earlier *Prosopographica Attica* by Johannes Kirchner are out of copyright and freely accessible online. A caveat on *Prosopographica Attica*: it is written in Latin, with extensive quotations in Greek, and so students will likely require teacher assistance to work with it.

## **Activity 2. Checking a Text against a Publication**

If time and resources permit, assign the first chapter of Woodhead's *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* to students as a reading. To demonstrate (or reinforce) the meaning of the various epigraphic *sigla* (conventional signs), the teacher may choose to diagram an inscription not assigned to any of the students. This process will include identifying all *sigla* and writing out in full what those *sigla* are supposed to indicate for the comprehension of the printed text. Students may then be asked to repeat this process with a short text of their own.

Once students are comfortable with the *sigla* of epigraphic publications, they should compare the text that they produced in Activity 1 with a published text of the same inscription, such as that available on the Packard Humanities Institute's "Searchable Greek Inscriptions" [website](#), as linked by the inscription's Krateros database entry. They may find discrepancies between their text and the publication; in such a case, the teacher should discuss that discrepancy with them (and potentially with the class) and should decide whether they think the published text makes better sense, or that of the student. It should be emphasized here that published texts are neither infallible nor necessarily better than the texts that the students have created.

Students will also use this opportunity to engage with restorations in the text: where they have been asked only to work with words from letters they can see, professional epigraphers will often

“fill in the blanks” in the usually-fragmentary texts. If time and resources permit, the students can be assigned the sixth chapter of Woodhead’s *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, but a simple recognition of the degree and sort of restorations common to epigraphy will suffice.

## Assessment

The teacher should assess the activity while it is in progress. Students should be assessed as much for the effort and technique as for their “success” or speed: it is more important to grasp the principle of using morphological forms to identify words than it is to quickly become adept at that task. In addition, some students will have more aptitude for vocabulary, which will make their work in this task significantly faster. To help assess the second activity, teachers may choose to assign a short written response in which the students discuss the process of comparing their text with the published text. Alternatively, knowledge of the epigraphic *sigla* may be tested in a quiz or examination.

An excellent opportunity also exists here for student teaching. Students, whether individually or in groups, can be asked to teach their inscriptions to the rest of the class. This activity will take more time, but will result in the students looking at more inscriptions (and thus more Greek) than they would if focusing only on their own (or their group’s own) text. It will also, of course, require the students as teachers to think about their own inscription in a different way as they identify areas that surprised them or gave them difficulty and devise ways to guide their classmates through those aspects of their texts. For this lesson, students should present their transcribed text to their classmates, highlighting locations where wording was uncertain and sharing any cultural, historical, or literary discoveries they made in the process of their transcription.

## Lesson Plan

# Lesson 3: Translation: Theory and Practice

Curriculum: Learning Greek with Inscriptions

Grades: 9-12

Class Periods: 1-3

The heart of classical language instruction is translation: teachers are training their students not for eventual immersion or to think in Latin or ancient Greek, but to render those languages in the students' own tongue. In spite of this reality, it is rare for classical language courses to devote time to the concept of translation itself, and this is a pity. This lesson, therefore, tackles translation in two respects: first, by asking students to consider what it means to translate and what factors they will be making decisions about, consciously or unconsciously, as they do so; and second, by having the students translate into the modern language of their choice an inscription from the [Krateros database](#).

In preparation for translating, students will be asked to consider not only how they understand the classical-language text (the first step of translation), but also how they will convey that text to a modern-language audience, in terms of format and style as well as word choice and phrasing. This exercise in mindfulness will not only improve the quality of their translations here and in the future, but will encourage them to be more active and discerning while reading the translations of others, including published translations, which can often be seen by students as impartial and authoritative.

This lesson is one of a four lesson unit integrating inscriptions into introductory ancient Greek instruction. If approached as a unit the four lessons will work best taught in sequence, but the lessons can also be used on their own. Teachers may link to the full unit with Guiding Questions, College and Career Readiness standards, and Background.

## Learning Objectives

Confront the theoretical issues underpinning translation. Translate an inscription from the Krateros database into a modern language.

## Lesson Plan Details

### Preparation

The portion of this lesson centered on the theory of translation can be addressed through readings, lecture, examples, or combinations of these elements. A good primer on the subject is Kistral's chapter on "Philosophical/Theoretical Approaches to Translation" in Blackwell's *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Alternatively, translation theory is an excellent context in

which to introduce the students to the work of Jorge Luis Borges, such as “The Homeric Versions”. Teachers may additionally wish to give examples to the students in the form of two very different translations of the same classical text; Homer is perhaps the easiest in this respect, given the great length and variety of his translation history.

With respect to the students’ translation, if this lesson is being taught as part of the unit “Learning Greek with Inscriptions”, students may continue with the inscription they worked on in Lessons 1 and 2; if not, the teacher should assign students (either individually or in groups) an inscription. If the students are using the same inscription that they worked on from Lesson 1 (and/or 2), it is critical that the teacher have checked their transcription to ensure that no mistakes were made with letter or word identification.

The teacher should decide how much support, and in what form(s), the students require. More advanced students may need only access to a dictionary, while less self-sufficient students may need a grammar, access to a parser tool like the [Perseus Project](#)’s [Greek Word Study Tool](#), or glosses created by the teacher. In either case, teachers should familiarize themselves with the inscriptions beforehand and, if they are assigning previously untranslated inscriptions, should reach out to professional epigraphists as necessary to check difficult sections. If Athenian state inscriptions are being used, demotics (the portion of an Athenian name that is an adjectival form of the person’s deme) will appear frequently; [the Wikipedia entry on “deme”](#) is a good resource for these names.

## Lesson Activities

### Activity 1. Translation in Theory

Assign students to read Kistral’s chapter on “Philosophical/Theoretical Approaches to Translation” in Blackwell’s *A Companion to Translation Studies* and/or Jorge Luis Borges’ “The Homeric Versions”. These readings may be replaced or supplemented by teacher lecture on the subject of translation studies. Have the students discuss the readings as a class or in groups. Topics to focus on may include questions of literalness, foreignness, cultural imperialism, and style.

After the discussion, distribute to students a passage from Homer along with two translations of that passage. If possible, “translate” the passage with the students, so that they are comfortable with the Greek and have an idea of what it says before they encounter the published translations. Then, either as a class or in groups, have the students dissect the two translations and discuss how those translations answer the various questions raised by the readings/discussions about translation studies.

### Activity 2. Translation in Practice

Individually, in pairs, or in groups, have the students look at the text of their inscription and try to create a translation of it. Move around the room, assisting with questions and observing methods and effort. This activity can be timed (i.e., the teacher can devote a set number of class periods to it), or it can be continued until the inscription has been fully translated.

There are three recommended approaches to revision/error-checking. The first approach is to use peer revision. This approach will be accomplished automatically in a group setting; if the students are working individually, teachers may ask them to pair up and exchange translations and inscriptions. If this approach is chosen, it will be important for the teacher to model appropriate revision etiquette: how to give feedback in a positive, actionable way. Another approach is for the teacher to spend direct time with the students/groups going over their translation, answering questions, clearing up confusion, and guiding them towards accurate renderings. The third approach is to have the students/groups complete their translations to the best of their ability (with the possibility of contacting the teacher for assistance as needed), and then for the teacher to go over those translations, noting problematic areas and suggesting revisions. The students/groups will then receive their translations back and will create a second draft. Google Docs works particularly well for this application, as both students and teachers can access the same document, and can make comments and make (or suggest) changes.

If the inscription(s) being translated have not previously been translated into the modern language selected by the students/groups, the teacher may send the final translation to the Krateros Project at [krateros@ias.edu](mailto:krateros@ias.edu). The Krateros Project will review the translation and, if it is acceptable, will add it to the metadata for the inscription in question, giving full credit to the student(s) who prepared the translation.

## Assessment

Assessment of the reading and discussion activity will vary from teacher to teacher. It may be carried out by a quiz, by students (or groups) producing a short response to the reading(s), or by the teacher's assessment of participation in group or class discussion. The material covered in the reading may also be assessed on future examinations.

The teacher should assess the translation activity while it is in progress. Students should be assessed more on their ability to identify vocabulary and forms than on the speed or style of their translation, although attempts to address the questions raised about translation in Activity 1 should be acknowledged. Teachers may additionally want to have students/groups present their inscriptions and final translations to the class, as an opportunity to foster discussion about the similarities and differences between the inscriptions, the historical issues addressed by the inscriptions, and the ways that the translating has been handled.

An excellent opportunity also exists here for student teaching. Students, whether individually or in groups, can be asked to teach their inscriptions to the rest of the class. This activity will take more time, but will result in the students looking at more inscriptions (and thus more Greek) than they would if focusing only on their own (or their group's own) text. It will also, of course, require the students as teachers to think about their own inscription in a different way as they identify areas that surprised them or gave them difficulty and devise ways to guide their classmates through those aspects of their texts.

This lesson gives the students a real opportunity to fill their teacher's shoes: they will, in essence, be teaching a Greek text to their classmates. While presenting their translation, they should parse the Greek, identify grammatical constructions, and be prepared to answer student questions.

They should also explain the decisions they made regarding their theoretical approach to translation in light of the lesson's readings and class discussion. They may also share any cultural, historical, or literary discoveries they made in the process of their translation.