



Greek Letters Quiz by Laura King, MA, ELS

Directions: Select which term highlighted in bold is correct in the following sentences. For further explanation of the correct answers, refer to [chapter 17](#) (pp 781-783 in print) and associated other sections of the [AMA Manual of Style](#).

1. An elevated serum **alpha-fetoprotein** or **α -fetoprotein** level before orthotopic liver transplantation is predictive of mortality after orthotopic liver transplantation for hepatocellular carcinoma.

ANSWER:

An elevated serum **α -fetoprotein** level before orthotopic liver transplantation is predictive of mortality after orthotopic liver transplantation for hepatocellular carcinoma.

Editor's Note: The *AMA Manual of Style* recommends the use of Greek letters rather than spelled-out words, unless usage dictates otherwise. Consult *Dorland's* and *Stedman's* medical dictionaries for general terms. These sources may differ in the representation of terms, ie, α -fetoprotein (symbol) (*Stedman's*) and alpha fetoprotein (*Dorland's*). If the Greek letter, rather than the word, is found in either of these sources for the item in question, use the letter in preference to the word ([§17.1](#), Greek Letter vs Word, p 781 in print).

LEARNING RESOURCES

2. The nuclear fractions were analyzed by electrophoretic mobility shift assay for nuclear factor κ B or **kappa B (NF- κ B or NF-kappaB)** activation.

ANSWER:

The nuclear fractions were analyzed by electrophoretic mobility shift assay for nuclear factor κ B (**NF- κ B**) activation.

Editor's Note: Both the term and the abbreviation for nuclear factor κ B use the Greek letter ([§15.8.4](#), Cytokines, pp 684-688 in print).

3. To examine the neuroradiologic and clinical correlations of focal continuous **polymorphic delta activity** or **polymorphic Δ activity** (PDA) in children, we reviewed the records of patients with continuous PDA that was either focal or lateralized to one hemisphere.

ANSWER:

To examine the neuroradiologic and clinical correlations of focal continuous **polymorphic delta activity** (PDA) in children, we reviewed the records of patients with continuous PDA that was either focal or lateralized to one hemisphere.

Editor's Note: For electroencephalographic (EEG) terms, use the Greek word ([§17.1](#), Greek Letter vs Word, p 781 in print). Descriptions of EEG potentials include many qualitative terms for waveforms and frequencies. The following are a few of numerous descriptive terms (note that Greek letters are spelled out): alpha rhythm, beta activity, polymorphic delta activity, sleep spindles, spike-wave complexes, paroxysms, spikes, sharp waves, delta brush, frontal sharp transient, mu rhythm, lambda waves ([§15.11.2](#), Electroencephalographic Terms, pp 724-727 in print).

LEARNING RESOURCES

4. Interferon alfa or **interferon α** is the only treatment that has currently been shown to alter the natural history of the disease, delaying relapse-free survival, particularly in patients with micrometastatic disease.

ANSWER:

Interferon alfa is the only treatment that has currently been shown to alter the natural history of the disease, delaying relapse-free survival, particularly in patients with micrometastatic disease.

Editor's Note: For drug names that contain Greek letters, consult the sources listed in 15.4, Nomenclature, Drugs, for preferred usage. For some names, the approved nonproprietary name takes the word and not the letter, as in interferon alfa ([§17.1](#), Greek Letter vs Word, p 781 in print). For interferon alfa (formerly leukocyte or lymphoblastoid interferon), the *f* is used rather than *ph* to avoid the confusing *ph* in international usage ([§15.4.13](#), Nomenclature for Biological Products, pp 574-579 in print).

5. β -Blockers or **β -blockers** were administered to patients scheduled for intermediate- or low-risk surgery.

ANSWER:

β -Blockers were administered to patients scheduled for intermediate- or low-risk surgery.

Editor's Note: In titles, subtitles (except in references), headings, table column heads, and line art and at the beginning of sentences, the first non-Greek letter after a lowercase Greek letter should be capitalized ([§17.2](#), Capitalization After a Greek Letter, pp 781-782 in print).



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6. Sixteen functional cell types, including T-cell subsets producing **interferon-gamma** or **interferon- γ** and tumor necrosis factor, were measured using multicolor flow cytometry.

ANSWER:

Sixteen functional cell types, including T-cell subsets producing **interferon- γ** and tumor necrosis factor, were measured using multicolor flow cytometry.

Editor's Note: When referring to interferons as cytokines rather than drugs, use the Greek letter rather than the Greek word ([§15.8.4](#), Cytokines, pp 684-687 in print).

7. One year before his presentation, the patient had elevations of serum **kappa** or κ free light chain levels.

ANSWER:

One year before his presentation, the patient had elevations of serum κ free light chain levels.

Editor's Note: There are 2 types of light chain: κ and λ . Both of these terms use the Greek letter ([§15.8.6](#), Immunoglobulins, pp 695-701 in print).

8. Between 1980 and 1994, the mean total retinol intake decreased from 1378 to 1114 **mcg/d** or **$\mu\text{g/d}$** .

ANSWER:

Between 1980 and 1994, the mean total retinol intake decreased from 1378 to 1114 **$\mu\text{g/d}$** .

Editor's Note: The correct abbreviation for micrograms is μg ([§14.12](#), Units of Measure, pp 519-525 in print). Because Greek letters can pose problems for some Internet browsers, some journals have opted to use mcg for micrograms. The *AMA Manual of Style* does not follow this option ([§17.4](#), Page Composition and Electronic Formats, p 783 in print).



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9. Low- to moderate-powered prism segments (12-20 prism diopters [Δ or **delta**]) were fitted mainly as binocular or monocular sector corrections (covering only part of the lens), providing field relocation or expansion of less than 10°.

ANSWER:

Low- to moderate-powered prism segments (12-20 prism diopters [Δ]) were fitted mainly as binocular or monocular sector corrections (covering only part of the lens), providing field relocation or expansion of less than 10°.

Editor's Note: The correct abbreviation for prism diopters is PD or Δ (§14.12, Units of Measure, pp 519-525 in print), and the term *prism diopters* should be spelled out at first mention.

10. **GLA** or **GL α** is the approved gene symbol for α -galactosidase.

ANSWER:

GLA is the approved gene symbol for α -galactosidase.

Editor's Note: A gene symbol is a short term, typically 3 to 7 characters long, that conveys in abbreviated form the name or other attribute of a gene. Human gene symbols usually consist of uppercase letters and may also contain (but never begin with) numerals. Approved gene symbols do not contain Greek letters, roman numerals, superscripts, or subscripts and usually contain no punctuation; therefore, Greek letters should be changed to roman letters in gene symbols (§15.6.2, Human Gene Nomenclature, pp 608-632 in print).