General Characteristics of the Adjective

1. An adjective has case, number, and gender, and will always have the same case, number, and gender as the noun it modifies.

    The case endings for adjectives are the same as the case endings for nouns. The feminine follows the first declension and the masculine and neuter follow the second declension.

2. Just like nouns, adjectives in the feminine can have an alpha or an eta as the stem vowel. Examples: ἀγαθός, ή, -όν and ἅγιος, -ία, -ιον (note that the lexical forms show the endings for the nominative form).

3. If the next to the last letter in the stem of an adjective is a rho or a vowel, the feminine stem ends in alpha (νεκρός, -ά, -όν → νεκρά). All other first and second declension feminine adjectives end in eta (ἀγαθός, ή, -όν → ἀγαθή).

    This is an important rule since it helps determine whether an adjective ending in ας could be genitive or not. Example: νεκράς could be F,G,Sg or F,Acc,Pl but ἀγαθάς can only be F,Acc,Pl since the F,G,Pl is ἀγαθῆς.

Adjectival Use of the Adjective

1. *An adjective in the **attributive** position is immediately preceded by the article.* The noun can also be modified by the article. The attributive adjective can appear in two different positions; both are translated in exactly the same way.

    ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος = ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀγαθός = The good man

Substantival Use of the Adjective

1. If there is no noun for the adjective to modify, the adjective must be functioning substantivally. Adjectives used substantivally are regularly (but not always) preceded by the article.

    In this case you must use your common sense to translate properly. Ask these questions of the text in order to translate the adjective.

    *   *What case is it?* Case is determined by its function in the sentence. If, for example, the adjective is in the nominative case, it must be either the subject or the predicate nominative.
    *   *What gender and number is it?* Gender and number are determined by the noun it is replacing. Often you can follow natural gender in deciding how to translate. Notice how you can add an extra word ("man," "woman," "thing," "person," "one") to make sense of the construction in English.

        ἀγαθός = "a good man," ἀγαθαί = "good women," ἀγαθόν = "a good thing"

        The masculine gender also is used generically; οἱ ἀγαθοί could be "the good ones" or "the good people."

Predicate Use of the Adjective

1. *An adjective in the **predicate** position is not immediately preceded by the article.* The noun is modified by the article. In this case you must use the verb "is" to show the "predicating" nature of the adjective.

    ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός = ἀγαθὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος = The man is good

2. When there is **no article** before the noun or adjective, check the context to determine your translation. Be sure not to supply the article in your translation unless English demands it.

    ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος = "A good man" *OR* "A man is good."
    ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός = "A good man" *OR* "A man is good."

A Quick Overview of Adjectives

Three basic functions of adjectives
- Attributive
- Substantive
- Predicate

Articular Adjectives		*Anarthrous Adjectives*	
Article Before the Adjective		No Article before the Adjective	
		Noun with an article next to it	Noun without an article next to it
A noun is next to it	No noun next to it		
Attributive	Substantive (Independent)	Predicate	Check the Context
ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀγαθός ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀγαθός	ὁ ἀγαθός ἡ ἀγαθή τό ἀγαθον	ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός ἀγαθός ὁ ἄνθρωπος	ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός
The good man	The good man/person The good woman The good thing	The man is good	A good man *or* A man is good

Notes:
1. Attributive adjectives agree with the noun they modify in case, number, and gender.
2. Substantiva adjectives have their case determined by their function, while their gender and number are determined by what they stand for (I gave a book to the good men, good women: τοῖς ἀγαθοίς; ταῖς ἀγαθαῖς).
3. If the next to last letter in the stem of an adjective is a rho or a vowel, the feminine stem ends in alpha (νεκρά — ἡ νεκρὰ γυνή, αἱ νεκραὶ γυναί.). All other first and second declension feminine adjectives end in eta (ἀγαθή — ἡ ἀγαθή, αἱ ἀγαθαί).
4. In nouns and adjectives that end in alpha, if the next to last letter is epsilon, iota, or rho, it does not shift from alpha to eta in the feminine singular, genative and dative but remains an alpha. This means the ending ας could be genitive singular or accusative plural. (ἁγία, ἁγίας, ἁγία, ἁγίαν, ἅγιαι, ἁγίων, ἁγίαις, ἁγίας)