Greek Alphabet CS 358, Winter 2022

Let's summarize the Greek alphabet. Here, "igh" denotes the vowel sound in "high" or "sigh".

Upper	Lower	Spelling	Pronunciation	Remarks
\overline{A}	α	alpha	al fuh	
B	β	beta	bay tuh	
Γ	γ	gamma	ga muh	
Δ	δ	delta	dell tuh	
E	ϵ, ε	epsilon	ep si lawn	
Z	ζ	zeta	zay tuh	
H	η	eta	ay tuh	
Θ	θ	theta	thay tuh	
\overline{I}	ι	iota	igh owe tuh, ee owe tuh	
K	κ	kappa	ka puh	
Λ	λ	lambda	lamb duh	
M	μ	mu	myou	rhymes with "pew" more than "poo"
N	ν	nu	new	rhymes with "poo" more than "pew"
Ξ	ξ	xi	zigh, ksigh, ksee	
O	0	omicron	owe mi cron	rarely used; identical to Roman o
Π	π	pi	pie	
R	ho	rho	roe	
Σ	σ	sigma	sig muh	
T	au	tau	tow, tau	rhymes with "ow" not "owe"
Υ	v	upsilon	up si lawn	rarely used; too similar to Roman v ?
Φ	ϕ, φ	phi	fee, figh	
X	χ	chi	kigh	really "chigh", with "ch" as in "Bach"
Ψ	ψ	psi	sigh, see, psigh, psee	
Ω	ω	omega	owe me guh	pronunciation varies widely

I've added horizontal lines to split the alphabet into blocks. Some of the blocks are similar to the Roman alphabet. The second block rhymes. Whatever helps you remember is good. Half of the uppercase letters are identical to their Roman counterparts and hence go unused in science.

It's worth emphasizing that this is how the scientific community in the USA views the Greek alphabet. A speaker of current or ancient Greek may have a different view. In particular, the letters are pronounced differently in actual Greek, and the sounds that they make when used in words might not be what you expect. For example, δ does not make a d sound but rather the th sound in "this", while θ makes the th sound in "thistle". If you know ancient or current Greek, and you use authentic Greek pronunciation while communicating in the USA scientific community, then you might not be understood.