Activity: Translating and Understanding Euclid

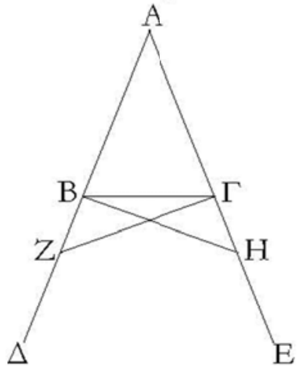
Today's theorems of geometry, although stemming from Euclids, often don't resemble it's original. Below are two such theorems, as stated by Euclid.

1. Book I - Proposition 5: About isosceles triangles and base angles.
   a. Read and understand Euclid's proof.
   b. Create a two column proof of Euclid's paragraph proof.
   c. Note the subtle (or not so subtle) difference to our geometry book theorem.

2. Book I – Proposition 16: About exterior angles of triangles.
   a. Read and understand Euclid's proof.
   b. Explain it in language understandable by your students.
   c. Note the difference to "our" exterior angle theorem.

ε΄.

Τῶν ἰσοσκελῶν τριγώνων αἱ πρὸς τῇ βάσει γωνίαι ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις εἰσίν, καὶ προσεκβληθεισῶν τῶν ἴσων εὐθειῶν αἱ ὑπὸ τὴν βάσιν γωνίαι ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις ἔσονται.



Ἔστω τρίγωνον ἰσοσκελὲς τὸ ΑΒΓ ἴσην ἔχον τὴν ΑΒ πλευρὰν τῇ ΑΓ πλευρᾷ, καὶ προσεκβεβλήσθωσαν ἐπ' εὐθείας ταῖς ΑΒ, ΑΓ εὐθεῖαι αἱ ΒΔ, ΓΕ· λέγω, ὅτι ἡ μὲν ὑπὸ ΑΒΓ γωνία τῇ ὑπὸ ΑΓΒ ἴση ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ ὑπὸ ΓΒΔ τῇ ὑπὸ ΒΓΕ.

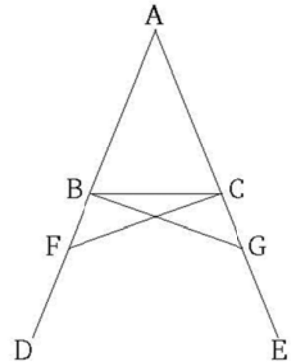
Εἰλήφθω γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς ΒΔ τυχὸν σημεῖον τὸ Ζ, καὶ ἀφῃρήσθω ἀπὸ τῆς μείζονος τῆς ΑΕ τῇ ἐλάσσονι τῇ ΑΖ ἴση ἡ ΑΗ, καὶ ἐπεζεύχθωσαν αἱ ΖΓ, ΗΒ εὐθεῖαι.

Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ μὲν ΑΖ τῇ ΑΗ ἡ δὲ ΑΒ τῇ ΑΓ, δύο δὴ αἱ ΖΑ, ΑΓ δυσὶ ταῖς ΗΑ, ΑΒ ἴσαι εἰσὶν ἑκατέρα ἑκατέρᾳ· καὶ γωνίαν κοινὴν περιέχουσι τὴν ὑπὸ ΖΑΗ· βάσις ἄρα ἡ ΖΓ βάσει τῇ ΗΒ ἴση ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ ΑΖΓ τρίγωνον τῷ ΑΗΒ τριγώνῳ ἴσον ἔσται, καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ γωνίαι ταῖς λοιπαῖς γωνίαις ἴσαι ἔσονται ἑκατέρα ἑκατέρᾳ, ὑφ' ἃς αἱ ἴσαι πλευραὶ ὑποτείνουσιν, ἡ μὲν ὑπὸ ΑΓΖ τῇ ὑπὸ ΑΒΗ, ἡ δὲ ὑπὸ ΑΖΓ τῇ ὑπὸ ΑΗΒ. καὶ ἐπεὶ ὅλη ἡ ΑΖ ὅλῃ τῇ ΑΗ ἐστιν ἴση, ὧν ἡ ΑΒ τῇ ΑΓ ἐστιν ἴση, λοιπὴ ἄρα ἡ ΒΖ λοιπῇ τῇ ΓΗ ἐστιν ἴση. ἐδείχθη δὲ καὶ ἡ ΖΓ τῇ ΗΒ ἴση· δύο δὴ αἱ ΒΖ, ΖΓ δυσὶ ταῖς ΓΗ, ΗΒ ἴσαι εἰσὶν ἑκατέρα ἑκατέρᾳ· καὶ γωνία ἡ ὑπὸ ΒΖΓ γωνίᾳ τῃ ὑπὸ ΓΗΒ ἴση, καὶ βάσις αὐτῶν κοινὴ ἡ ΒΓ· καὶ τὸ ΒΖΓ ἄρα τρίγωνον τῷ ΓΗΒ τριγώνῳ ἴσον ἔσται, καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ γωνίαι ταῖς λοιπαῖς γωνίαις ἴσαι ἔσονται ἑκατέρα ἑκατέρᾳ, ὑφ' ἃς αἱ ἴσαι πλευραὶ ὑποτείνουσιν· ἴση ἄρα ἐστὶν ἡ μὲν ὑπὸ ΖΒΓ τῇ ὑπὸ ΗΓΒ ἡ δὲ ὑπὸ ΒΓΖ τῇ ὑπὸ ΓΒΗ. ἐπεὶ οὖν ὅλη ἡ ὑπὸ ΑΒΗ γωνία ὅλῃ τῇ ὑπὸ ΑΓΖ γωνίᾳ ἐδείχθη ἴση, ὧν ἡ ὑπὸ ΓΒΗ τῇ ὑπὸ ΒΓΖ ἴση, λοιπὴ ἄρα ἡ ὑπὸ ΑΒΓ λοιπῇ τῇ ὑπὸ ΑΓΒ ἐστιν ἴση· καί εἰσι πρὸς τῇ βάσει τοῦ ΑΒΓ τριγώνου. ἐδείχθη δὲ καὶ ἡ ὑπὸ ΖΒΓ τῇ ὑπὸ ΗΓΒ ἴση· καί εἰσιν ὑπὸ τὴν βάσιν.

Τῶν ἄρα ἰσοσκελῶν τριγώνων αἱ πρὸς τῇ βάσει γωνίαι ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις εἰσίν, καὶ προσεκβληθεισῶν τῶν ἴσων εὐθειῶν αἱ ὑπὸ τὴν βάσιν γωνίαι ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις ἔσονται· ὅπερ ἔδει δεῖξαι.

Proposition 5

For isosceles triangles, the angles at the base are equal to one another, and if the equal sides are produced then the angles under the base will be equal to one another.



Let ABC be an isosceles triangle having the side AB equal to the side AC, and let the straight-lines BD and CE have been produced in a straight-line with AB and AC (respectively) [Post. 2]. I say that the angle ABC is equal to ACB, and (angle) CBD to BCE.

For let the point F have been taken at random on BD, and let AG have been cut off from the greater AE, equal to the lesser AF [Prop. 1.3]. Also, let the straight-lines FC and GB have been joined [Post. 1].

In fact, since AF is equal to AG, and AB to AC, the two (straight-lines) FA, AC are equal to the two (straight-lines) GA, AB, respectively. They also encompass a common angle, FAG. Thus, the base FC is equal to the base GB, and the triangle AFC will be equal to the triangle AGB, and the remaining angles subtendend by the equal sides will be equal to the corresponding remaining angles [Prop. 1.4]. (That is) ACF to ABG, and AFC to AGB. And since the whole of AF is equal to the whole of AG, within which AB is equal to AC, the remainder BF is thus equal to the remainder CG [C.N. 3]. But FC was also shown (to be) equal to GB. So the two (straight-lines) BF, FC are equal to the two (straight-lines) CG, GB, respectively, and the angle BFC (is) equal to the angle CGB, and the base BC is common to them. Thus, the triangle BFC will be equal to the triangle CGB, and the remaining angles subtended by the equal sides will be equal to the corresponding remaining angles [Prop. 1.4]. Thus, FBC is equal to GCB, and BCF to CBG. Therefore, since the whole angle ABG was shown (to be) equal to the whole angle ACF, within which CBG is equal to BCF, the remainder ABC is thus equal to the remainder ACB [C.N. 3]. And they are at the base of triangle ABC. And FBC was also shown (to be) equal to GCB. And they are under the base.

Thus, for isosceles triangles, the angles at the base are equal to one another, and if the equal sides are produced then the angles under the base will be equal to one another. (Which is) the very thing it was required to show.

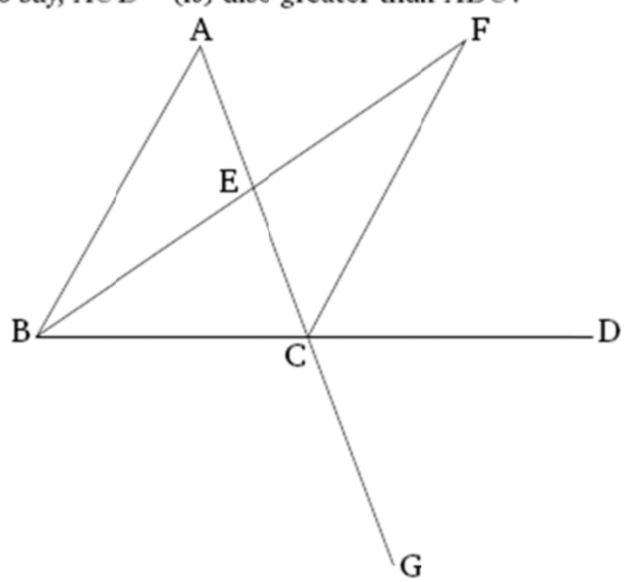
Proposition 16

For any triangle, when one of the sides is produced, the external angle is greater than each of the internal and opposite angles.

Let ABC be a triangle, and let one of its sides BC have been produced to D. I say that the external angle ACD is greater than each of the internal and opposite angles, CBA and BAC.

Let the (straight-line) AC have been cut in half at (point) E [Prop. 1.10]. And BE being joined, let it have been produced in a straight-line to (point) F.† And let EF be made equal to BE [Prop. 1.3], and let FC have been joined, and let AC have been drawn through to (point) G.

Therefore, since AE is equal to EC, and BE to EF, the two (straight-lines) AE, EB are equal to the two (straight-lines) CE, EF, respectively. Also, angle AEB is equal to angle FEC, for (they are) vertically opposite [Prop. 1.15]. Thus, the base AB is equal to the base FC, and the triangle ABE is equal to the triangle FEC, and the remaining angles subtended by the equal sides are equal to the corresponding remaining angles [Prop. 1.4]. Thus, BAE is equal to ECF. But ECD is greater than ECF. Thus, ACD is greater than BAE. Similarly, by having cut BC in half, it can be shown (that) BCG—that is to say, ACD—(is) also greater than ABC.



Thus, for any triangle, when one of the sides is produced, the external angle is greater than each of the internal and opposite angles. (Which is) the very thing it was required to show.