

הַדִּיקְדוּק הָעֵבְרִי

Hebrew Grammar

Class 1 - Reading Hebrew

אותיות - Consonants

The Hebrew language posses 22 distinct letters written right to left, top to bottom. Five of these letters have a form that appears only at the end of a word - מנצפ"ך. Eight have dual sounds בג"ד כפ"ת ר"ש (Modern Israeli pronunciation only pronounces four of them ש כ פ ש). The exact sound of the ך is currently unknown and is only seen once in תהילים.

Letter	Name	Sounds	Final Form
א	Alef	Silent	
ב	Bet	ב - B ב - V	
ג	Gimel	G (tr. ג - G ג - Guttural G)	
ד	Dalet	D (tr. ד - D ד - DH)	
ה	Heh	H	
ו	Vav	V (tr. W)	
ז	Zayin	Z	
ח	Het	Guttural H (trans lit ch)	
ט	Tet	T	
י	Yud	Y	

כ	Kaf/Khaf	כ - K כ - CH (as in German noch) (trans lit c/kh)	ך
ל	Lamed	L	
מ	Mem	M	ם
נ	Nun	N	ן
ס	Samekh	S	
ע	Ayin	Silent (tr. Glottal Stop) (trans lit. ')	
פ	Pey/Fey	פ - p פ - f	ף
צ	Tsadi	Ts (tr. Strong S)	ץ
ק	Kuf	K (tr. Guttural K)	
ר	Resh	Rolling R (tr. R)	
ש	Shin/Sin	ש - SH ש - S	
ת	Tav	T (tr. ת - T ת - Th)	

The above follows the modern Israeli pronunciation with tr. meaning the original traditional pronunciation much of which is still preserved by Jews whose families are from Israel and its surrounding territories and countries.

Many Jews of European decent pronounce during prayers and studies hebrew in a traditional yiddish / germanized style. The most significant differences being the pronunciation of the Tav as ת - T ת - S

Vowels - תנועות

The vowels are divided in to two groups, the Greater (גדולות) and Lesser (קטנות) Vowels. The difference in the groups is grammatical and not in pronunciation.

Greater Vowel	Name	Lesser Vowel	Name	Pronunciation
אָ	Kamatz Gadol	אֲ	Patach	Ah (trans lit a)

יֵאָ	Cholam	אָ	Kamatz Katan	Oh (trans lit o)
יְאֵ	Tsere	אֵ	Segol	Eh (trans lit e)
וֵאֹ	Shuruk	אֹ	Kubuts	Oo (trans lit u)
יֵאִ	Chirik Gadol	אִ	Chirik Katan	Ee (trans lit i)

The אִ is used as a place holder above.

Sheva - שְׁוָא

Every consonant (accept the letters י ו ה א that often are vowel indicators only) in hebrew must have a vowel or a Sheva (שְׁוָא) under it unless it is the last letter of a word. If the Sheva is ends the syllable it is silent and is called a Sheva Nach - נָשְׁוָא. If it starts the syllable it is called a Sheva Na' (נָשְׁוָא) and pronounced as Eh.

Chatafim - חֲטָפִים

The letters ע נ ה א can not receive a נָשְׁוָא. As such will instead have one of three semi-vowels called a Chataf (חֲטָפִים) that is written as a combination of a Sheva and either אָ אַ אֵ.

Semi-Vowel	Name	Sound
אָ	Chataf Kamatz (Katan)	Oh
אֶ	Chataf Patach	Ah
אֵ	Chataf Segol	Eh

Patach Genuvah - פְּתַח גְּנוּבָה

When the consonants ה נ ע fall at the end of a word with the vowel patach, the

patach is vocalized before the consonant.

Dagesh - דגש

A dot called a דגש may be found in the middle of a letter. This occurs in the letters בג"ד כפ"ת to indicate the alternative sound of the letter and is called a Dagesh Kal - דגש קל. In any other letter except א ה ח ע to indicate what is traditionally pronounced as a doubling of the consonant with the first double having a Sheva Nach (this is not used in modern pronunciation) and is called a דגש חזק. A dot can also be found in the letter ה at the end of a word that should be pronounced instead of absorbed in to the sound of the preceding vowel and is called a דגש חזק.

Accent - תבנית

The accent in Hebrew is usually on the last syllable of a word and is called תבנית, but at times can be the second to last and is called תבנית.