

Biblical Hebrew 101
Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew
Lesson 1
שְׁעוֹר א

Introducing the Hebrew aleph-bet



Congregation Faithful Stewardship Torah Scroll. (Written in Romania, circa 1936, during the rise of extreme anti-Semitism which led to WWII and the Holocaust.)

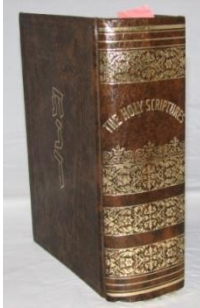
- 1.01 Introducing the first 5 consonants: aleph - hay
- 1.02 Practice saying the first 5 consonants and the first two vowels
- 1.03 Now, practice saying and writing
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INTERESTING FACT: *What did Yeshua study?*

During the time of Yeshua (Jesus), all followers of Yeshua including Yeshua Himself, the Apostles, Paul, James, etc. each read weekly from the Hebrew Scriptures (the Torah and the TaNaKh, (aka Old Testament)) on a table (which is called the Bema) in the synagogues.

1.01 First 5 letters in Hebrew Aleph-Bet (אָלֶפֶת-בֵּית עִבְרִית)

Congratulations on getting started learning Biblical Hebrew! The objective of this course is to learn to read -- write -- study in the Hebrew language of the LORD. Our desire is to learn to study God's Word effectively, which includes studying in the original language.



In this lesson, we will:

- Begin to learn to pronounce Biblical Hebrew with Sephardic pronunciation.
- (Sephardic is the pronunciation that is used in Israel today).
- Begin to print in Hebrew with Block (aka Square) letters.
- Begin to sound out the first 5 letters of the Hebrew aleph-bet with 2 vowels (aka nikkud).

1.02 Practice saying the first 5 letters of the Hebrew aleph-bet

1. Read the name of each letter below. (Refer to Sound of Letter column for pronunciation)
2. Do *the hand*: make a fist with your right hand. Point thumb down and say *aleph*. Raise index finger - say *bet*. Lift middle finger - say *gimmel*. Lift ring finger – say *dalet*. And finally lift pinkie – say *hay*
3. Print each letter. (Copy the Block print below & refer to Aleph-Bet chart for letter formulation.)



Letters (aka consonants) & Vowels (aka nikkudot נִקּוּדוֹת)					
Please note that there are two forms of the ב.					
The first is the ב (bet, which has a dot), while the second is the ב (vet, does not have a dot).					
Book print	Numeric value	Name of letter	Sound of letter	Block print (as in English, there are slight variations in letters' shapes)	Write each letter
א	1	aleph	<i>silent</i>	א	
ב ב	2	bet vet	b in ball v in vice	ב ב	
ג	3	gimmel	g in get	ג	
ד	4	dalet	d in dog	ד	
ה	5	hay	h in hi	ה	
Vowels (Note: the aleph is used below for illustration purposes. These vowels can be used with most consonants)		Name of vowel	Sound of vowel There are two “ah” vowels in Hebrew. This is similar to “sew” and “so” in English. (We will discuss the grammatical reason in a future lesson.)	Block Print	Write
א		<i>kamats</i> : קָמֶץ	“ah” in spa	אָ	
א		<i>patach</i> : פָּתַח	“ah” in spa	אָ	

1.03 Now, practice saying and writing

First 5 Consonants (Consonants #1-5) & 2 vowels (nikkudot): patach & kamats				
Letter	Name	Sound	Block	Write letter & vowel
א	aleph	<i>silent</i> (the aleph has the sound of attached vowel)	א	
אָ	aleph with kamats	ah (as in spa)	אָ	
אֲ	aleph with patach	ah (as in spa)	אֲ	
ב	bet	b (as in ball)	ב	
בָּ	bet with kamats	bah	בָּ	
בַּ	bet with patach	bah	בַּ	
ו	vet	v (as in vice)	ו	
וָּ	vet with kamats	vah	וָּ	
וַּ	vet with patach	vah	וַּ	
ג	gimmel	g (as in get)	ג	
גָּ	gimmel with kamats	gah	גָּ	
גַּ	gimmel with patach	gah	גַּ	
ד	dalet	d (as in dog)	ד	
דָּ	dalet with kamats	dah	דָּ	
דַּ	dalet with patach	dah	דַּ	
ה	hay	h (as in hi)	ה	
הָּ	hay with kamats	hah	הָּ	
הַּ	hay with patach	hah	הַּ	

1.04 Practice reading actual Hebrew words

1. Our objective in Hebrew 101 is to become familiar with the letters and their sounds *not* to memorize words.
2. Hebrew is read right to left and top to bottom. Begin by reading the right-most letter. Then, add the vowel that is written below it.
3. For example: with the word אֶהָב. Begin by reading the אָ; then add the הָ. We now have אֶהָ (ah-ha). Finally, we add the בּ. Since there is no vowel below this letter, it only has the sound of the consonant. When we put the word altogether we have: אֶהָב (ah-hav).



Always remember read: right to left and top to bottom.

Read & Write words below			
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration The accented syllable is bold and highlighted (please, try to read before looking at transliteration)	Practice writing each word below
בָּהּ	in her	bah	
אָב * אֶבְ	Av is the 5 th month of the Biblical year, counting from Nisan. (*note: there are 2 forms for this consonant. When there is no "dot," it is a <i>vet</i> אָ; when there is a "dot," it is a <i>bet</i> אֶבְ)	ahv: (reminder – "a" in Hebrew sounds like "a" as in spa – <u>not</u> like "a" as in apple.)	
אָב	father	ahv	
אֶהָב	he loved	ah- hahv	
אֶדָּ	Gad (as in the tribe of Gad)	gahd (like "a" in spa)	
אֶבְדָּ	he was lost or perished	ah- vahd	

Tip:

Place these pages and your notes in a ring-book binder ... Bring your notebook to class.

1.05 How Shall I Study Hebrew?



1. Consider taking your lesson with you & review it during lunch.
2. Practice saying the first 5 letters of the aleph-bet *using the hand*.
3. **Read** the Hebrew words in this lesson.
4. **Print** the words. Again, **read** the words.



Extra Practice reading and writing

Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration The accented syllable is bold and highlighted (please, try to read before looking at transliteration)	Practice writing each word below
בָּא	I <u>come</u> (masculine); also he <u>came</u> ; arrived	bah	
בָּאָה	I <u>come</u> (feminine); also she <u>came</u>	bah -ah	
אָבָה	he was willing	ah- vah	
בָּגַד	he acted deceitfully or treacherously – <i>verb</i> (1Sam 14:33)	bah- gahd	
בָּדַד	alone (Lev 13:46)	bah- dahd	
גָּבָהּ	he exalted, triumphed – <i>verb</i> (Ex 15:1, 21)	gah- ah	

1.06 Reading exercise: Genesis 1:1

Please write the name of each letter above that particular letter & the name of the vowel below the letter. (Only identify the letters & vowels which we have introduced thus far.)

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

← Aleph

kamats →

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” Gen 1:1.

Today, we read 12 *real* Hebrew words!!!