

Biblical Hebrew 101

Lesson 2

שְׁעוֹר ב

Introducing the next 5 letters



The father of modern Hebrew: Eliezer Ben Yehuda at his desk in Jerusalem, circa 1912 (en.wikipedia.org). He said: “The Hebrew language will go from the synagogue to the house of study, and from the house of study to the school, and from the school it will come into the home and... become a living language.”

Continue learning the Hebrew aleph-bet

- 2.01 First 10 consonants and 2 vowels: vav – yud/yod, kamats, & patach
- 2.02 Practice saying these consonants and the accompanying sounds
- 2.03 Interesting fact: Revival of Hebrew language
- 2.04 Practice reading and writing
- 2.05 Practice reading actual Hebrew words
- 2.06 Review: How shall I study Hebrew?
- 2.07 Introduction to Hebrew Syllables
- 2.08 Reading exercise: Genesis 1:1

2.01 First 10 consonants of Hebrew Aleph-Bet and 2 vowels

In this lesson, we will:

- Begin to learn the next 5 letters in the Hebrew aleph-bet.
- Continue learning with the same two vowels from Lesson 1.

Below are the next consonants 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*. Again, point thumb down and this time say *vav*. Raise index finger - say *zayin*. Lift middle finger - say *chet*. Lift ring finger – say *tet*. And finally lift pinkie – say *yod*.
3. Print each letter. (Copy the Block print below & refer to aleph-bet chart for letter formulation.)



2.02 Practice saying these letters & sounds

Letters (aka consonants) & Vowels (aka nikkudot נִקּוּדוֹת)

Please note that there are two forms of the ב:

1. The first is ב (bet, which has a dot called a dagesh, which means emphasis).
2. The second is 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
ו	6	vav	v in vice	ו	
ז	7	zayin	z in zoo	ז	
ח	8	chet	ch in Bach	ח	
ט	9	tet	t in tell	ט	
י	10	yod (or yud)	y in yell	י	
Vowels (aka nikkudot)	Name of vowel	Sound of vowel	Print	Write	
ָ	<i>kamats</i> : קָמָץ	“ah” in spa	ָ		
ַ	<i>patach</i> : פָּתַח	“ah” in spa	ַ		



2.03 Interesting facts: *Revival of the Hebrew language*

Did you know that Hebrew had ceased to be an everyday spoken language between 200 and 400 AD, following the Bar Kohba war which was in 135 AD. In the late 19th Century, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda began to revive Hebrew as a living language for the Jews in Israel. He stated, “The Hebrew language will go from the synagogue to the house of study, and from the house of study to the school, and from the school it will come into the home and... become a living language.”... In 1948, when the state of Israel became an independent nation, Hebrew once-again became the official language of the land, the State of Israel. Excellent book: “Tongue of the Prophets,” by Robert St. John.

2.04 Practice reading and writing

Next 5 Letters (Consonants #5-10) & 2 vowels (nikkudot): patach & kamats				
Letter	Name	Sound	Block print (as in English, there are slight variations in letters' shapes)	Write each letter
ו	vav	v in vice	ו	
וֹ	vav with kamats	vah	וֹ	
וַ	vav with patach	vah	וַ	
ז	zayin	z in zoo	ז	
זֹ	zayin with kamats	zah	זֹ	
זַ	zayin with patach	zah	זַ	
ח	chet	ch in Bach	ח	
חֹ	chet with kamats	chah	חֹ	
חַ	chet with patach	chah	חַ	
ט	tet	t in tell	ט	
טֹ	tet with kamats	tah	טֹ	
טַ	tet with patach	tah	טַ	
י	yod (or yud)	y in yell	י	
יֹ	yod with kamats	yah	יֹ	
יַ	yod with patach	yah	יַ	

2.05 Practice reading actual Hebrew words

Our objective, at this point, is to become familiar with the letters and their sounds not to memorize words.

How to read Hebrew:

1. 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.
2. For example: with the word אָהָב. Begin by reading right to left with the אָ; then add the הָ. We now have אָהָ (ah-ha). Finally, add the ב. Because there is no vowel below this letter, it only has the sound of the consonant. Altogether we have: אָהָב (ah-hav).



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

Read & Write words below – note: <u>generally</u> the last syllable is the accented syllable.			
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration <small>(please try to read before looking at transliteration) Accented syllables have yellow highlight and are bolded.</small>	Write each word
יָד	hand	yahd	
יָדָה	he threw, he shot	yah- dah	
אָח	brother	ach	
יְהוָה <small>(also written יְהוּוָה)</small>	YHVH (aka the tetragrammaton (YHVH), the name of God. Vowels from Adonai &/or Elohim have been superimposed on letters.)	YaH- VeH	
וָו	vav (6th letter of Hebrew Aleph-Bet)	vahv	
גָּג	roof	gahg	
דָּג	fish	dahg	

2.06 Review: How Shall I Study Hebrew?



Consider taking your lesson with you & review it during your lunch.

1. Practice saying the first 10 letters of the aleph-bet *using the hand.*
2. **Read** the Hebrew words in this lesson.
3. **Print** the words. Again, **read** the words.



Tip:

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

2.07 Introduction to Hebrew syllables

Guidelines for syllables:

- Every Hebrew syllable begins with a consonant and a vowel. (Note: in Hebrew, syllables cannot begin with a vowel/nikkud.)
- Easy way to know how many syllables: count the number of vowels 😊
- Hebrew has two types of syllables: *open* and *closed*
 - Open syllables end with a vowel:
אָהַב has two syllables אָהַ & בּ .
The first syllable of אָהַב is אָהַ. It is open because it ends with a kamats (which is a vowel).
 - Closed syllables end with a consonant: אָהַבּ
The second syllable of אָהַבּ is אָהַבּ. It is *closed* because it ends with a vet (a consonant).
- Easy way to identify how many syllables are in a word – count the number of vowels.
 - The number of vowels in a word equals the number of syllables. (Each syllable has a vowel or diphthong.)
 - Indicate type of syllables:
“O” = an open syllable
“C” = a closed syllable

Practice identifying the number of syllables					
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration Read before looking at transliteration	Number of syllables	Write each word with syllables	Indicate type of syllables (remember Hebrew is read right to left; use the right to left order when notating the syllables below) C = closed syllable, ends with a consonant O = open syllable, ends with a vowel
יָד	hand	yahd	1	יָד	C
אָח	brother	ach	1	אָח	C
אָהַב	he loved	ah- hahv	2	בּ - אָהַ	O (1 st syllable on right: “אָהַ”) C (2 nd syllable: “בּ”)
וָו	vav (6th letter of Hebrew Aleph-Bet)	vahv	1	וָו	C
גָּג	roof	gahg	1	גָּג	C
אָב	father	ahv	1	אָב	C
אָהַבּ	he was lost or perished	ah- vahd	2		
גָּד	Gad (as in the tribe of Gad)	gahd (like “a” in spa)	1		
חָגַג	celebrated (verb, as in he made or kept a festival)	chah- gahg	2		
דָּג	fish (masculine)	dahg	1		
דָּאָג	anxious, fear, concerned	dah- ahg	2		

2.08 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.)

← vav

א בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

patach →

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

Today, we read 13 real Hebrew words!!!
So far, we’ve read 26 actual Hebrew words – isn’t that great!!!