The Hebrew Alphabet

All 22 letters · names · sounds · example words

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Hebrew has **22 letters**, all consonants, and is read **from right to left**. Sounds follow standard Modern Israeli Hebrew. English sound-alikes are approximations: "ch" is always the throaty sound in Scottish *loch*.

#	Letter	Name	Sound	Example	Transliteration	Meaning
1	א	Aleph	silent – carries a vowel	אבא	*abba*	dad
2	ב	Bet / Vet	b (בּ) · v (ב)	בית	*bayit*	house
3	ג	Gimel	g as in "go"	גמל	*gamal*	camel
4	ד	Dalet	d	דג	*dag*	fish
5	ה	He	h (silent at word end)	הר	*har*	mountain
6	ו	Vav	v · vowel o / u	ורד	*vered*	rose
7	ז	Zayin	z	זאב	*ze'ev*	wolf
8	ח	Chet	ch as in "loch"	חלב	*chalav*	milk
9	ט	Tet	t	טוב	*tov*	good
10	י	Yod	y · vowel i	ילד	*yeled*	boy, child
11	כ	Kaf / Chaf	k (כּ) · ch (כ)	כלב	*kelev*	dog
12	ל	Lamed	l	לב	*lev*	heart
13	מ	Mem	m	מים	*mayim*	water
14	נ	Nun	n	נר	*ner*	candle
15	ס	Samekh	s	ספר	*sefer*	book
16	ע	Ayin	usually silent – carries a vowel	עין	*ayin*	eye
17	פ	Pe / Fe	p (פּ) · f (פ)	פרח	*perach*	flower
18	צ	Tsadi	ts as in "cats"	צב	*tsav*	tortoise
19	ק	Qof	k	קוף	*kof*	monkey
20	ר	Resh	r (in the throat)	ראש	*rosh*	head
21	ש	Shin / Sin	sh (שׁ) · s (שׂ)	שמש	*shemesh*	sun
22	ת	Tav	t	תפוח	*tapuach*	apple

The five final letter forms (sofit)

These five letters change shape only when they are the **last letter of a word**. The sound stays the same. Memory word: מנצפ״ך (*menatzpach*).

Regular	Final	Name	Sound	Example	Transliteration	Meaning
כ	ך	Final Kaf	ch	מלך	*melech*	king
מ	ם	Final Mem	m	שלום	*shalom*	hello, peace
נ	ן	Final Nun	n	בן	*ben*	son
פ	ף	Final Pe	f	כף	*kaf*	spoon
צ	ץ	Final Tsadi	ts	עץ	*ets*	tree

Dagesh – the dot that changes three sounds

With dot	Sound	Without	Sound	Examples
בּ	b	ב	v	בַּיִת *bayit* house · אָבִיב *aviv* spring
כּ	k	כ	ch	כֶּלֶב *kelev* dog · מֶלֶךְ *melech* king
פּ	p	פ	f	פֶּרַח *perach* flower · סֵפֶר *sefer* book

Shin and Sin: dot on the right שׁ = sh (שֶׁמֶשׁ *shemesh*, sun). Dot on the left שׂ = s (שִׂמְחָה *simcha*, joy).

Reading right to left

- Start at the right-hand edge of the line: שלום begins with ש and ends with ם.
- Numbers and foreign words inside Hebrew text are still written left to right.
- There are no capital letters, and printed letters never join.

Sounds shared by several letters

Sound	Letters	Sound	Letters
silent	א ע	v	ב ו
ch (loch)	ח כ	k	כ ק
t	ט ת	s	ס שׂ

Vowel marks (niqqud)

Optional dots and lines under, inside or above the letters, read **after** the consonant. Modern Hebrew has five vowel sounds: a, e, i, o, u. Shown here on the letter בּ.

Mark	Name	Sound	Example	Meaning
בַ	Patach	a (father)	פֶּרַח *perach*	flower
בָ	Kamatz	a (sometimes o)	דָּג *dag*	fish
בֶ	Segol	e (bed)	יֶלֶד *yeled*	boy
בֵ	Tsere	e (bed), sometimes "ey"	לֵב *lev*	heart
בִ	Hiriq	i (ski)	אִמָּא *ima*	mum
בֹ בוֹ	Holam	o (more)	שָׁלוֹם *shalom*	peace
בֻ בוּ	Kubutz / Shuruk	u (flute)	סוּס *sus*	horse
בְ	Shva	silent or very short e	שְׁמוֹנֶה *shmone*	eight
חֲ	Hataf patach	short a	חֲלוֹם *chalom*	dream
אֱ	Hataf segol	short e	אֱמֶת *emet*	truth
חֳ	Hataf kamatz	short o	חֳדָשִׁים *chodashim*	months

Beginner pronunciation notes

- **ch** (ח, and כ without a dot) is a soft scrape at the back of the mouth, never the "ch" in *chair*.
- א, ע and a final ה are usually silent. Just say the vowel.
- ר is made in the throat, close to a French r. A rolled r is also understood.
- Keep vowels short and pure. Most words are stressed on the last syllable, but learn each word's stress by ear.
- Accents differ: some speakers pronounce ח and ע deep in the throat, and Ashkenazi prayer Hebrew reads ת without a dot as "s".

Look-alike letters

Letters	How to tell them apart
ב Bet · כ Kaf	Bet has a small heel at the bottom right; Kaf is smoothly rounded.
ד Dalet · ר Resh	Dalet has a sharp corner that sticks out; Resh is rounded.
ה He · ח Chet · ת Tav	He has a gap at the top left; Chet is closed; Tav has a foot on the left leg.
ו Vav · ז Zayin · ן final Nun	Vav is a short line; Zayin has a flat cap; final Nun drops below the line.
ס Samekh · ם final Mem	Samekh is round; final Mem is square.

Practice 1 – Trace and write

Trace the grey letter, then write it three times in the empty boxes. Write from right to left.

א				ב			
ג				ד			
ה				ו			
ש				ל			
ם				ץ			

Practice 2 – Name the letter

ס ט ק צ ל ג

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Practice 3 – Circle the words that end in a final letter

שמש · מים · עץ · ילד · בן · כף

Practice 4 – Read and match

אַבָּא	○	○	horse
דָּג	○	○	heart
לֵב	○	○	dad
סוּס	○	○	fish

Answers: Practice 2 (right to left) – Gimel, Lamed, Tsadi, Qof, Tet, Samekh. Practice 3 – מים, עץ, בן, כף. Practice 4 – אַבָּא *abba* = dad, דָּג *dag* = fish, לֵב *lev* = heart, סוּס *sus* = horse.
More practice, audio and games: **alphabetslearn.com/blog/hebrew-alphabet-letters-pronunciation.html**