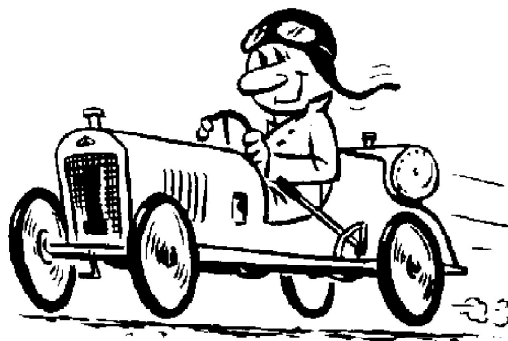


A SHORT PREVIEW OF HOW HEBREW READING AND WRITING WORKS. 1.3

(Including a quick look at the vowel symbols for those in a hurry to get started)



← ← ← ← (Hebrew goes) seog werbeH
 ← ← ← ← from right to left

1. This book gives you the option of beginning with either the Hebrew script letters, used for writing Hebrew, or the block letters used for reading Hebrew. The “block letters” are used in printed books. For example: שלום
2. For Chapters One and Two you have the choice of script or block letters. After that the font will be in block letters, but you will need to know how to write in script letters. If you wish to learn the script letters at the same time as you learn the block letters look in both file options to see how to write the letters. For example: שלום (שלום).
3. In Chapter Three the readings in the book will use block letters and the exercises and quizzes will require script.
4. There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. All are consonants.
5. In Ancient Hebrew the vowels of the spoken language usually were not indicated in the writing. So, each letter could be read (if we use the consonant “b” as an example) as “ba”, “bih”, “bo”, “boo”, or “beh”. Talk about ambiguity! Consider this English sentence with all vowels removed: *ystrdy I rd sx bks*
Possible choices: *rd*= read / red / rode /ride /road; *sx*=six / sex; *bks*=books / bikes
6. In the Middle Ages an elaborate system of marks, called “nikkud” - ניקוד in Hebrew, was developed to indicate the vowel sounds that accompany the consonants. There were many persons who needed the nikkud to help them read Hebrew. Today, some educational materials have the student use the complex system of “nikkud”, as they learn to read (represented by dots and dashes), that stand for the vowel sounds.
7. The “nikkud” has symbols for vowel sounds like the English vowels A, E, I, O, U). Here are the fourteen (14) symbols that are used as “nikkud” when using all the symbols: (You will learn them as we proceed in Chapter One.)



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Below is an example of the first verse of a poem by the Israeli poet Dan Pagis, with and without nikkud.

תפילת שאול האחרונה

אלהי, כבקר בחריש
 בין כל אבניך הייתי איתך.
 בצול רצא'ך הייתי אמריש
 ותה' שתקתי' ל' לטן.

תפילת שאול האחרונה

אלהי, כבקר בחריש
 בין כל אבניך הייתי איתך.
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 ותה' שתקתי' ל' לטן.

8. "Nikkud" is not used much in modern Hebrew, since once you become familiar with vocabulary and the Hebrew grammatical system the symbols are usually not necessary. For example, the English reader knows how to read - "yesterday I **read** a book" as opposed to "tomorrow I will **read** a book. We know from context how to pronounce the word represented by the letters "**read**".
9. In this course, the "nikkud" will be supplied when a word could be read in more than one way, providing clarification of the correct pronunciation when necessary. As the course progresses and you advance in vocabulary and grammatical mastery, less "nikkud" will be necessary.
10. Note that it is common to include the vowel symbols (nikkud) in songs, poetry and biblical texts. We will follow this practice.

1.4 קראו וכתבו - LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE HEBREW



Use with Software Chapter 1:3 "Writing in Uetkr v letters" (When you get to the screen that says "skip explanation" click on that. Then click on the letter of the alphabert on the botton of the screen that you want to learn to write.)

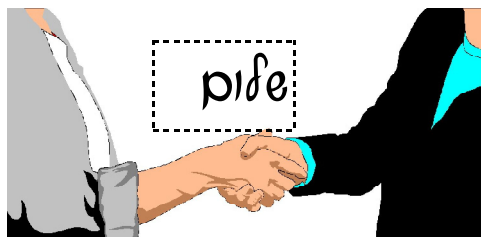
Sections 1 - 9 focus on learning to read. These sections will be covered quickly, but are crucial to your success in learning Hebrew.

The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet will not be taught in alphabetical order. Each letter will be introduced in words you will find useful as you learn to speak and write Hebrew.

Pay attention to the *name* of each letter.

If the last syllable of a word is not accented then the accented syllable will be written in capital letters.

Let's begin with the word /shalom/ "peace", /hello/, /goodby/. שלום



ע :ת'ל-שָׁהָה 1.4.1

The first letter in */shah-lohm/* is named **sheen ע**. It has the sound */sh/*.

The vowel in the first syllable is */ah/*. The first syllable is pronounced */shah/*.

Practice writing */shah/ ע*. Note the arrow in the demo marking the starting point and the direction your pencil should move. This is important. You should finish your stroke so that you are moving to your left; this will position you for the next letter.



Begin Here



ע

← See Demo

Click to see demo of how to write this letter

- The most common vowel in Hebrew is the sound */ah/*. It occurs far more frequently than any other vowel. To borrow from the terminology of computer jargon, it is the "default vowel". Assume that the vowel is */ah/* unless another vowel is indicated by a vowel indicator. Thus if you see a consonant with **no** vowel indicator following it, or under it, you should add */ah/* to the consonant in order to form a syllable. For example, using the symbol ע for */sh/* + no vowel indicator following it is the way to indicate the syllable */sha/*. */shah/* = ע.
- When full nikkud is used, the symbols  or  would be placed under the consonants that the */ah/* vowel follows.

ל :ת'ל-שָׁהָה 1.4.2

The second syllable of */shah-lohm/* **למה** begins with **LA-med** = */l/*. It has the sound */L/*. In the word */shah-lohm/* the ל is followed by the letter *vahv* ם which is the indicator for the vowel */oh/*. *LAH-mehd* + *vahv* = */loh/* ם. Note: When writing with nikkud there would be a dot over the *vahv* for the */oh/* sound. In this textbook there will be no dot over the *vahv*. The symbol ם stands for */oh/*.

WRITING PRACTICE ת'ל-שָׁהָה 1.4.3



ע ←

ל ←

See Demo

לע ←

The Hebrew word **שלש**, meaning *three*, uses the letters you have learned.

Practice writing /shah-lohsh/



1.4.4 אֵלֶּף-סוּף : ת' : פ

The last syllable of **לופ** /loh^m/ ends with a special form of the letter /mehm/ - **פ** which must be written whenever *mehm* (the /m/ sound) comes at the end of a word. The *mehm* is one of five letters which have a special "final form" when appearing at the end of a word. Final letters can only be written at the end of a word.

Final letters (with one exception: *xaf sofit*) **are never followed by a vowel.**



Note: Hebrew does not have capital letters.

Practice writing:

mehm soh-feet _____



פ

[See Demo](#)

the syllable /loh^m/ _____

לופ

Now put the whole word together:

"hello,goodby" _____

/shalom/ שלום

1.4.5 אֵלֶּף-סוּף : ת' : מַחַח Review -

Practice writing the following syllables:

/shoh/ _____

ש

/shohl/ _____



שול

/lohsh/ _____

של

/shahm/ _____

שמ

As you will learn in §1.5.1, when a consonant is not followed by the letters *yood* or *vahv*, you should usually supply the vowel /ah/. If there is another vowel then /ah/ we will provide it.

Remember: At the end of the word do not add any vowel; just say the sound of the consonant: /sh/ = **ש** /lahm/ **שמ**.

Read the following :

של שול שול שול שול שול שול
של של שול שול שול שול שול



