

Qal  
Nif'al  
Pi'el  
Pu'al  
Hitpa'el  
Hif'il  
Hof'al

# Hebrew

ncBc Grammar

א ב ג ד  
ה ו ז  
ח ט י  
כ ל מ נ  
ס ע פ  
צ ק ר  
ש ש ת

## Hebrew: ncBc Grammar

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- |  |                                    |          |
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# 1 Hebrew Syntax Summary

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת  
 א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת

## Normal V-S-O Word Order. K§12.18-19

Object ← Modifier ← Subject ← Verb

**Adjectives.** *Attributive adjectives* directly describe; follow a noun; agree in gender, number, and definiteness. *Predicative adjectives* are verb-less (“to be”); precede a noun; agree in gender and number. K§8; 071-72; AC§2.5

**Construct Relationship.** The joining of two or three (rarely four) nouns expresses genitival relationships (e.g., “of”). Nuances: (1) location or origin, (2) further description or identification of a person or thing, (3) possession or ownership. K§10; 071; AC§2.2

**Perfect and Imperfect.** Hebrew verbs have two full inflections that cover all variations of person, gender, and number. These two inflections primarily reflect aspect (the quality of action rather than strictly temporal tenses).

**The perfect** with verbs denoting state of being or mind is used for the present tense, but with regular verbs it reflects a completed action (e.g., the Greek aorist), expressing: (1) a simple action completed in past time, (2) a past perfect (prior to a point in the past), or (3) a future tense (if with a vav conjunction).

**The imperfect** reflects an incomplete event (e.g., the Greek present), used to express: (1) a simple future, (2) a repeated, habitual, or customary action in the past or present, or (3) an action contingent or dependent upon other factors. K§15.8-15.21; 067; AC§3.0, 3.2

**Coordinate Relationships:** when two or more verb forms are linked by a vav conjunction or vav consecutive, the first verb governs the time and the mode of the verb(s) sequentially linked to it. K§21; AC§3.5, S243-45; BHD§1.4-5 (pp. 61-87)

The most frequent sequences of coordinate relationship		
Perfect	+ Perfect	Linked perfects are not altered; all are essentially alike; rare
	+ Imperfect	Perfect followed by imperfections without vav consecutive are rare.
	+ Imperfect vav consec.	Perfect followed by imperfections with vav consecutive are very frequent: the true narrative expressing temporal sequence, logical result, clarification. So common, a sequence can begin with imperf. + vav consec. or with imperfect of “to be” (“he was”).
Imperfect	+ Imperfect	Joined by ordinary vav conjunction, linked imperfections may express outcome or purpose.
	+ Perfect	Linked perfects are used with all meanings, modes of imperfect.
	+ Perfect vav consec.	Adds temporal sequence, logical result, volition, apodictic result.
Imperative	+ Perfect	Linked perfects must also be translated as imperatives.
	+ Imperfect	Linked imperfections sometimes express purpose or result.
	+ Imperative	Linked imperatives often express purpose or result
Inf. Abs.	+ Perfect	If the infinitive absolute has the force of an imperative, so do any linked perfects.
Participle	+ Perfect	If the leading participle describes impending, future actions, so do any linked perfects.

Reminder: **Biblical Hebrew-language semantics inform but are not limited by modern-English translation possibilities.**

**Verb Stems (*binyānîm*)** K§12.2, 14.2; O67; AC§3.1; GC§15

Stem and its pattern	Function of the G, D, H categories	Voice of individual stems
<b>Qal/Paal</b> <sup>G</sup> קָטַל qāṭal	<b>Simple</b> , קָל <i>to be light</i> ; G = <i>grundstamm</i> פָּלַל <i>he did, made</i>	Active
<b>Nifal</b> <sup>N</sup> נִיטַל niqṭal		Middle-Passive/-Reflexive
<b>Piel</b> <sup>D</sup> קִיטְּעַל qiṭṭēl	<b>Intensive?</b> Traditional view of D, Dp, HtD <b>Factitive</b> (intransitive Qal → trans. state)	Active, Causative <i>patience</i> , etc.
<b>Pual</b> <sup>Dp</sup> קִיטְּעַל quṭṭal		Passive
<b>Hitpael</b> <sup>HtD</sup> הִיטְּעַל hitqatṭēl	<b>Resultative</b> (transitive → intransitive) <b>Denominative</b> (verb derives from noun) <b>Pluralative</b> (repetition of that in the qal) <b>Causative with <i>patience</i></b> ( <i>to be in a state</i> )	Reflexive, Reciprocal ... s. times simple active as Qal
<b>Hifil</b> <sup>H</sup> הִיטְּעַל hiqṭil	<b>Causative with <i>agency</i></b> ( <i>to do an action</i> ) (or H and Hp sometimes permissive)	Active
<b>Hofal</b> <sup>Hp</sup> הוֹטַל hoqṭal		Passive

See Arnold and Choi, Appendix A, *Stem Chart*, and esp., Appendix B, *Expanded Stem Chart*

**D-stem's** (D, Dp, HtD) traditional '**intensity**' attempts to summarize a variety of functions: (1) **factitive**: intransitive Qal *to learn* ▶ trans. *to teach*; (2) **resultative**: trans. *to break* ▶ intr. *to make broken*; (3) **denominative**: noun *word* ▶ verb *to speak words*; or (4) **causative with *patience* nuance**: causing *to be in a state*. The **H-stem** (H, Hp) can be viewed as **causative with *agency* nuance** (causing *to do*). O67, AC§3.1.3-3.1.5, WO§24.1, FC§23.5, J§40a

**Desires, commands, and prohibitions** can be expressed with the imperfect, imperative, and independent particles. The **jussive**, occurring in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. imperfect forms, expresses the speaker's desire, wish, or command (cf. the frequent translations with "may..." or "let ..."). The **cohortative**, occurring in 1<sup>st</sup> person imperfect forms, expresses the speaker's desire, intention, self-encouragement, or determination. K§15.18-15.21

The **imperative**, in only the 2<sup>nd</sup> person as a separate verb conjugation, expresses positive commands (never prohibitions); may occur in any stem except the passive pu'al and hof'al. Hebrew expresses **negative commands** or **prohibitions** using אַל with the imperfect and **milder prohibitions** using לֹא with the jussive. K§18; O67; AC§3.3

**Infinitives**, a separate verb conjugation, express the bare idea of the verb root without the limitations of person, gender, and number. The focus is on the **process** (vs. the participant). There are two kinds of infinitives:

The **infinitive construct** may take prepositional prefixes and/or pronominal suffixes; it often functions like the English gerund ("eating," "drinking") as subject or object; it is used in temporal, purpose, result, and causal clauses; it usually occurs with the preposition לְ. K§19.1-19.14; O67; AC§3.4.1

The **infinitive absolute** never takes the prepositional prefixes or pronominal suffixes; it functions as an adverb; frequently used to intensify or reiterate the verbal statement ("killing he will kill"); used like English gerunds, as complements giving attendant action, or to stand for the main verb, often as an imperative. K§19.15-19.28; O68; AC§3.4.2

**Participles**, a separate verb conjugation, focus on the **participant**. Active participles **express continuous action**; passive participles express completed action. All participles share the properties and functions of adjectives, verbs, and nouns. Like adjectives, can be used as **attributives, predicatives, and substantives**. Endings display gender and number (not person). K§20; O67-68; AC§3.4.3

## 2 Orthography and Phonetics K§1-4

### 2.1 Alphabet and Vowels K§1-3

The Hebrew Alphabet <small>K§1</small>									
א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י
כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר
ש	שׁ	שׂ	ת						
t	š	ś	r	q	ṣ	p/f	ʿ	s	n
m	l	k/kh	y	ṭ	ḥ	z	v	h	d
g	b/v								

  

<p><b>Māqqēf</b> (ֿ) joins words, e.g., כָּל־הַיּוֹם; accent is on the final word. <small>K§3.1</small></p> <p><b>Dagesh lene</b> (<i>weak</i> dagesh, ◉): בַּגְּדֵי כְּפָתֵת = <b>BeGaD KePaT</b> (vs. כַּפֵּת בַּגְּדֵי, <b>VeGaD KheFaT</b> that never follow a vowel).</p> <p><b>Dagesh forte</b> (<i>strong</i> dagesh, ◉) double non-guttural consonants; f. vowels, never f. ševā. <small>K§3.3</small></p>	<p><b>א</b> and <b>ה</b> are <b>weak letters</b>. Syllable-ending א and word-ending ה (unless pātāḥ furtive) are silent <b>vowel letters</b>. <small>K§4.15-4.16, BBH2.8-2.9</small></p> <p><b>Gutturals</b> א ה ח ע (ר) reject dagesh forte and cannot be doubled ( ה and ה imply doubling); prefer a-class vowels and compound ševā. <small>K§5.1ff</small></p> <p><b>Sibilants</b> are שׁ שׂ ע ס ז ; <b>labials</b> are ב פ ׀.</p>
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Vowels by class and length ( Unchangeably Long [L], Long, Short, Reduced ) <small>K§2-3</small>									
The ה of the qāmēṣ-he ( הֶ ) is a silent vowel letter; cf. the sērê-he, s <sup>e</sup> gôl-he, and ḥôlēm-he.									
ה ah	a	[L] qāmēṣ-/pātāḥ-yôd @ word end	אֵי- אִי- āi	a i	<i>aisle</i>	<small>K§2.14</small>			
		... with a vav consonant added	אִיו- אֵיו- āv	a v		בָּנָיו his sons			
		Long qāmēṣ	אָ	ā	a h	<i>car</i>	אָב father		
		Short pātāḥ	א	a	ah		בַּת daughter		
		½ ḥāṭēf-pātāḥ (pātāḥ ševā)	אֲ	ă	ah		אֲנִי I		
		½ pātāḥ furtive @ end w. strong gutt.	אֶ	a	aḥ	<small>K§5.3</small>	וְרִיחַ Gen 1.2		
י ee	e	[L] tsērê-yôd (or, yud)	אֵי ..	ê	e y	<i>they</i>	בֵּית house of		
		Long tsērê	אֵ ..	ē	e y		אֵל God		
		Short s <sup>e</sup> gôl	אֶ	e	eh	<i>met</i>	שֶׁקֶל shekel		
		½ ševā (i.e., vocal ševā)	אֶ	e	eh	<i>severe</i>	בְּרִית covenant		
		½ ḥāṭēf-s <sup>e</sup> gôl (s <sup>e</sup> gôl ševā)	אֶ	ě	eh		אָנוּשׁ man		
ו oo	o	[L] ḥôlēm-vāv (interchangeable w. ḥôlēm)	אוּ	ô	o h	<i>row</i>	אוֹר light		
		Long ḥôlēm (ḥ. ḥaser = 'lacking')	אֹ	ō	o h		לֹא not		
		Short qāmēṣ-ḥāṭûf (qāmēṣ qatan) <sup>2</sup>	אוּ	o	oh	<i>cost (cf. car)</i>	כֹּל with		
		½ ḥāṭēf-qāmēṣ (qāmēṣ ševā)	אוֹ	ö	oh		חֲלִי sickness		
ו u	u	[L] šûrēq	אוּ	û	o o	<i>rule</i>	הוּא he		
		S qıbbûṣ <sup>1</sup>	אוּ	u	oo	<i>pull</i>	שֻׁלְחָן table		

  

<sup>1</sup> Ḥîrēq and qıbbûṣ, usually short, are long if in an open syllable or if they are stressed. <small>S§II.2.iv</small>	<sup>2</sup> Qāmēṣ-ḥāṭûf only in closed and unaccented syllables; never with a mētēg ( ׁ ).
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## 2.2 Accents and Syllables <sup>K§4</sup>

### 2.2.1 Accents, Weak Letters, mǎppîq <sup>K§4.1-4.17</sup>

**Accent marks** serve (1) to mark a tone syllable that is not in the usual, last position, (2) to regulate chanting, and (3) to mark punctuation.

Unlike English, the Hebrew **accent, with its stress or lengthening, falls on the last syllable by default** — and will not be indicated by a diacritical mark. The **mûnah** ( ◌ ) marks a syllable when it receives the accent, but it is not the last syllable.

The **'ătnāh** ( ◌ ) and **sîllûq** ( ◌ ) **divide verses**, marking pauses after the last word of the first or second half. The words have long vowels in their accented syllable. **Sôf pāsûq** (:) follows the sîllûq, marking the **end of the verse**.

The **mětĕg** ( ◌ ) looks like sîllûq, but it is not found on the last tone syllable. It **marks for stress** (1) a long vowel positioned two or more syllables before the tone syllable, (2) short vowels before a compound ševā, (3) long or short vowels before a vocal ševā, and (4) unchangeably long vowel before a mǎqqĕf.

**𐤊** and **𐤌** are **weak letters**. Syllable-ending **𐤊** and word-ending **𐤌** (unless pătāh furtive) are **silent vowel letters** (*matres lectionis*).

**mǎppîq** ( ◌ ) is the dot in a final **𐤌**. The pronunciation should not be as a vowel letter, but as a strong guttural consonant, e.g., **𐤌**, **𐤌**.

### 2.2.2 Syllables <sup>K§4.18-4.22</sup> (cf. K. Handbook, Additional Helps); <sup>S§II.12; BBH 3</sup> (w. ševā 3.6)

**Consonants** **must** be followed by a vowel sound (unless final or weak **𐤊**). <sup>K§4.18</sup>

**Syllables** **must** begin with a consonant (except **𐤌** at beginning of word) <sup>K§4.19</sup>

may include only one full vowel

may also begin with a half-vowel, **vocal ševā** <sup>K§4.21</sup>

may be closed by a syllable divider, the **silent ševā** <sup>K§4.22</sup>

A **ševā** under a dagesh forte                      ▶ always vocal; begins open syllable  
after an accented vowel                            ▶ always silent; closes syllable  
before a BGD KPT letter                          ▶ always silent; ends closed syllable  
part of two vocal in a row ( ◌ ◌ )            ▶ lengthens if it is the first

A **ševā** always **vocal** ▶ after a long vowel (unaccented syllable)  
always **silent** ▶ after short, unaccented vowel or stressed syllable

**Open syllables** end in a long vowel when not stressed (but in a short if stressed) <sup>K§4.22</sup>

... or followed by consonant w. vocal ševā

**Closed syllables** end in a consonant and have a short vowel when not accented

... but have a long vowel when accented

**Dagesh forte** indicates the **end** of a **preceding closed** syllable  
and the **beginning** of the **next** syllable.

Closed	←	Open
C v C		v C
𐤒 ֿ 𐤒		ֿ 𐤒
𐤒 ֿ ֿ		ֿ ֿ

### 3 Prefixes, Adjectives, Nouns K§5-10

#### 3.1 Prefixes: Articles, Prepositions, Vav Conjunction K§5.5-6.18; BBH 5.1-5.6

##### 3.1.1 Definite Article K§5.5-5.11; BBH 5.1-5.6

The definite article (ה) is always **prefixed**; **never alone**.

Before...	Prefix	Notes
Non-gutturals *	הַ	The usual form; note dagesh forte: הַיָּד ▶ הַיָּד
ה, ח	הֶ	No d. forte because doubling implied: הַחֵרֶב ▶ הַחֵרֶב
א, ע, ר	הֶ	Rejects d. forte ▶ lengthening of vowel: אַב ▶ אַב
הַ, הָ*, עָ* (* unaccented)	הֶ	e.g., עֵפֶר ▶ עֵפֶר
י, מְ* (* exceptions)	הַ	e.g., יָאֵר ▶ הַיָּאֵר (exceptions: מְלָכִים ▶ מְלָכִים)

There is no indefinite article. \* The **gutturals** are the letters א ה ח ע (ר). Some nouns undergo **irregular**, internal changes, e.g.: *earth, mountain, people, garden, bull, festival, ark*.

##### 3.1.2 Prepositions with Nouns K§6.1-6.8; BBH 6

The **inseparable (prefixed) prepositions** are: K§6.2-6.3; BBH 6.4

בְּ in, by, with

כְּ as, like

לְ to, for, at

Before...	Prefix	Notes
Full vowel	בְּ	Written with simple ševā.
Vocal ševā	בְּ	Cannot have בְּ
...except בְּ	בְּ	... hîrēq + yôd ▶ hîrēq-yôd; ševā drops
Compound ševā ( בְּ בְּ בְּ )	בְּ בְּ בְּ	mētēg + short v. of cmpd. ševā: אֲשֶׁר ▶ אֲשֶׁר
Definite article	הַ ▶ בְּ	הַ of the article is replaced by the preposition בְּ
Tone syllable	בְּ	וְ as vowel of prep. (esp. 1-syllable, a-class vowel)

The forms of the inseparable preposition and the vav conjunction are similar.

The **independent (unattached) prepositions** are: K§6.4-6.8; BBH 6.2, 6.5-6.6

אֶל to, into, toward

עַל upon, above, about

עִם with

בֵּין between

עַד until, unto

לְפָנַי before, in front of

תַּחַת under, instead of

אַחֲרַי behind, after

אֶצְלָא beside, near

מִן from, out of ... Although independent, מִן is prefixed: K§6.5-6.8

מן before...	Prefix	Notes
Definite article	מִן	מִן־הָאָרֶץ
Indefinite noun w. non-guttural 1 <sup>st</sup>	מִן	מִיּוֹם ▶ w. d. forte מִיּוֹם
...except מִן before בְּ	מִי	מִיְהוּדָה...
Indefinite noun w. guttural 1 <sup>st</sup>	מִן	מִן־הָרֶם ▶ מִן־הָרֶם

### 3.1.3 Vav Conjunction K§6.9-6.18; BBH 5.7

The Hebrew conjunction “and” **never stands alone**; it is **always prefixed**. The forms of the inseparable preposition and the vav conjunction are similar.

Before...	Prefix	Notes
Non-labials * with full vowel	וְ	
Labials, simple ševā	וּ	Cannot have וּבְ (cf. “BuMP” rule)
...except וְ	וּוְ	...וּוְ contracts with וְ
Compound ševā ( וּוּ וּוּוּ וּוּוּוּ )	וּ, וּוּ, וּוּוּ	corresponding short, full vowel ... usually also with a mēṭēg
Monosyllabic words; accented syllable of words with 2+ syllables	וְ	Same class; implies close relationship

\* The labials are the consonants formed with the lips: בּ, מּ, פּ.

### 3.2 Nouns, Adjectives, and Pronouns <sup>K§7,8,9</sup>

#### 3.2.1 Nouns, Adjectives <sup>K§7,8;BBH 4,7</sup>

	Nouns		Adjectives	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
<b>Singular</b>	—	תְּ—, הַ—	—	הַ—
<b>Plural</b>	(ות—) יִם—	(ים) ות—	ים—	ות—
<b>Dual</b>		ים—	—	—
	<p><b>Patterns:</b> Masc., qéṭel, qēṭālim Fem., qatlā(h), etc. Abstract, qatlūt<sup>S24</sup></p> <p>The <b>masculine singular</b> is sometimes difficult to identify. The <b>feminine gender</b> has consistent endings. It is used for females, paired body parts, etc.</p> <p><b>Singular nouns</b> are usually not identifiable by their endings.</p> <p><b>Plural nouns</b> are more consistent, but the singular form often changes.</p> <p>The <b>Dual</b> occurs with things in pairs, organs of the body, etc.</p>		<p><b>Patterns:</b> qātōl, qātēl, qātāl, qall, qāṭe(h), etc. <sup>S70-71</sup></p> <p>The endings of adjectives are consistent and uniform, even when describing irregular forms.</p> <p><b>Monosyllabic adjectives</b> with short vowels ▶ double final consonant (except gutturals: reject dagesh forte and have lengthened vowel).</p> <p><b>Bisyllabic adjectives</b> usually begin with initial qāmēš ▶ simple ševā. However <b>Gutturals</b> prefer compound ševā; the irregular קָטָן ▶ קָטָנִים, etc. (ḥôlēm ▶ pātāḥ, plus dagesh forte in nun); ending הַ— dropped for gender, number.</p> <p><b>Attributive adjectives</b> directly describe; usually stand after a noun; always agree in gender, number, and definiteness with noun.</p> <p><b>Predicative adjectives</b> usually stand before the noun in verb-less, “to be,” sentences; never have an article; agree in gender and number.</p>	

#### 3.2.2 Pronouns <sup>K§9;BBH 8.1-8.7</sup>

	Independent Personal		Demonstrative	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
<b>1c</b>	אֲנִי, אֲנֹכִי I	אֲנַחְנוּ, בְּנֵהוּ, אֲנֵנוּ we		
<b>2m</b>	אַתָּה you	אַתֶּם you	זֶה this	אֵלֶּה these
<b>2f</b>	אַתְּ	אַתְּנָה, אַתְּנָה	זֹאת	
<b>3m</b>	הוא he/it	הֵם, הֵנָּה they	הוא that	הֵנָּה (הֵם) those
<b>3f</b>	היא she/it	הֵן, הֵנָּה	היא	הֵנָּה (הֵן)
	<p>Independent personal pronouns are also known as <b>subject pronouns</b> (never used as objects of verbs, prep.).</p> <p>They are often used without a verb, i.e., in “to be” sentences.</p>		<p>A demonstrative pronoun <b>singles out</b> for attention: “This man!” <b>increases specificity</b> above def. art., “the man.”</p> <p>Demonstrative pronouns<sup>1</sup> function like adjectives: <b>attributively</b>, they agree in gender, number, and definiteness, usually after noun; <b>predicatively</b>, they are never with the article, before noun.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Note: PP in BBH call attributives ‘demonstrative adjectives’ and predicatives ‘demonstrative pronouns.’



#### 4 Pronominal Suffixes <sup>K§11,7; GC§9</sup>

**Pronominal suffixes** are shortened forms of personal pronouns attached directly to the end of prepositions, particles, nouns, and verbs. Function varies with the object of the attachment:

- Prepositions** ▶ Objects of the preposition
- Particles** ▶ Relationship depends on the function of the particle
- Nouns** ▶ Possessive pronouns
- Verbs** ▶ Direct objects of the verb

##### 4.1 Pronominal Suffixes with Prepositions and Particles <sup>K§11.1-11.7</sup>

Pronominal suffixes with prepositions are **objective** (*to them, for them, them*). The

inseparable בּ, לְ follow the regular pattern (לִי, לְךָ) but כִּי is irregular (כִּיִּי).

Suffixes with Prepositions (as objects)		... with Particles		
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1c	יְ— me	נוֹ— us	The suffixes of particles are like those with prepositions.	
2m	ךָ— you	כֶּם— you		
2f	ךִּ—	כֵּן—		
3m	וֹ— him	הֶם— them		
3f	הָ— her	הֵן—		
<p>Some prepositions take dagesh forte in the consonant before the suffix:  אֶת, <i>with</i> ▶ אֶתִּי (1p cs, with me)  לְבַד, <i>alone</i> ▶ לְבַדִּי (1p cs, by myself)  מִן, <i>from</i>, is duplicated before some suffixes  ▶ מִמֶּנִּי (1p cs, from me).  אֵל, לְפָנַי take suffixes as if plural nouns.</p>			<p>אֶת, the sign of the direct object  ▶ אֶתִּי (1p cs, me)  ... אֶתְכֶם (2p mp, you)  הִנֵּה, <i>Behold!</i>  ▶ הִנֵּנִי or הִנֵּנִי (1cs, Behold, I)</p>	

##### 4.2 Pronominal Suffixes with Nouns <sup>K§11.8-11.13</sup>

The form of pronominal suffixes used above with the inseparable prepositions, בּ and לְ, are used below with the singular nouns. <sup>GC§9</sup> Pronominal suffixes with nouns serve as **possessive pronouns**. Nouns must always be

in the construct state to receive a suffix. They are always definite, but will never take the article. Therefore, attributive adjectives must be written with the definite article.

Suffixes with Singular Nouns		... with Plural Nouns		
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1c	יְ— my	נוֹ— our	יְ— my	נוֹ— our
2m	ךָ— your	כֶּם— your	ךָ— your	כֶּם— your
2f	ךִּ—	כֵּן—	ךִּ—	כֵּן—
3m	וֹ— his/it	הֶם— their	וֹ— his/it	הֶם— their
3f	הָ— her/it	הֵן—	הָ— her/it	הֵן—

#### 4.3 **Pronominal Suffixes with Verbs** K§17;18.6

A pronoun object of a transitive verb can be expressed by (1) joining a suffix to the sign of the direct object (אָת), or by (2) joining the suffix directly to the end of the verb.

Pronominal suffixes with verbs generally serve as their **direct objects**. Except for the 3p mp, perfect suffixes match the imperfect. Pronominal suffixes for imperatives match the second-person imperfects.

After consonants, **perfects prefer pătăḥ or qāmēš** for their connecting vowel; **imperfects prefer sērê or another e-class vowel**. The same variant form with an additional nun (נ) found in the perfect also applies to the imperfect: whenever nun is supported by a **silent švā** it is assimilated into the following consonant by means of a dagesh forte: נִי נִי נִי

##### 4.3.1 **The Perfect**

	After Vowels		After Consonants	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
<b>1c</b>	נִי— me	נֵנוּ— us	נִינוּ— me	נֵינוּ— us
<b>2m</b>	ךָ— you	כֶּם— you	ךֶ— you	כֶּם— you
<b>2f</b>	ךִ—	כֶּן—	ךִי, כִי—	כֶּן—
<b>3m</b>	ו, הוּ— him	ם, הֶם— them	ו, וֹ— him	ם— them
<b>3f</b>	הָ— her	ן, הֶן—	הָ— her	ן—

##### 4.3.2 **The Imperfect ( cf. 2p for the Imperative \* )** K§18.6

	After Vowels		After Consonants	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
<b>1c</b>	נִי— me	נֵנוּ— us	נִינוּ— me	נֵינוּ— us
<b>2m *</b>	ךָ— you	כֶּם— you	ךִי, כִי— you	כֶּם— you
<b>2f *</b>	ךִ—	כֶּן—	ךִי—	כֶּן—
<b>3m</b>	ו, הוּ— him	ם— them	ו, וֹ— him	ם— them
<b>3f</b>	הָ— her	ן—	הָ, הֶן— her	ן—

Word order: Although Hebrew authors frequently composed sentences in a **Verb-Subject-Object** word order (**V-S-O** or **sV-S-O**), they also showed much flexibility and nuance. s. esp. BBH 23

5.1 **Binyānīm / Stems** K§14; BBH§12.7-12.8; C79-85; GC§15; s. esp. AC 3.1

Biblical Hebrew-language semantics inform but were not limited by modern-English translation possibilities. Unlike English, Hebrew verbs build upon consonantal roots to create seven major *binyanim*: the simple qal *binyan* and six ‘derived’ from it. Marking *aktionsart*, each expands meaning possibilities, indicating the **type** of the verbal action or state of being (cf. fientive, transitive, intransitive, stative) and the subject’s **voice** or relation to the verb in terms of activity, causation, passivity, reflexivity, etc.

The **G / Qal** stem expresses **simple, unnuanced state or action with an active voice** (sometimes passive). Qal verbs may be **stative**, expressing the subject’s state or condition (to be heavy, wise), or **fientive**, expressing an action (to study, stop, break).

The **N / Nifal** stem traditionally expresses the **simple verbal idea with either a passive voice** (of verbs in the qal; was stopped, to be buried) **or a reflexive voice** (subject of the verb is also its implied object). The nifal may also be: **middle** in relation to a transitive qal, expressing an intransitive idea with no agent); **medio-passive** (primarily middle *Adv.*, p. 95); **reciprocal** (mutual; ‘spoke with one another’); or **tolerative** (subject permits or submits to an action; ‘allow oneself to be ...’).

The **D / Piel** stem traditionally expresses **intensive with the active voice** of verbs also in the qal or nifal. More subtly, the piel may be: **factitive** (Latin, *facere*, ‘to make’), producing an intransitive state from a transitive qal or nifal; **declarative**, a kind of factitive use (‘to treat as innocent’); **causative** with a patiency nuance; **resultative**, producing the condition that would be the outcome of a transitive qal (in Ezk 5, Ezekiel ‘must scatter’ hair but the Lord ‘will make scattered’); **denominative** (a verb derived from a noun or substantive); or **pluralative**, repeating that described in the qal (to sew → practice of sewing).

The **Dp / Pual** stem is piel’s **passive voice**, turning a factitive (make holy, scattered) into a causative ‘made holy, scattered.’

The **HtD / Hitpael** stem may be **reflexive, reciprocal, passive, or iterative**.

The **H / Hifil** stem, with verbs appearing in the qal or nifal, most frequently expresses **causative action with an active voice**, i.e., as cause with an agency nuance: a subject caused some secondary agent *to do* something). It may also be: **ingressive**, expressing entry into a state; **exhibitive**, expressing outwardly an inner state; or **denominative**.

The **Hp / Hofal** stem is hifil’s **passive voice**.

Perfect Stem (binyan)	Function G, D, H	Voice	Basic Translation
קָטַל Qal (Pa'al) <sup>G</sup> נִקְטַל Nif'al <sup>N</sup>	<b>Simple</b>	Active Middle-Passive/-Reflexive	stopped was stopped, stopped himself
קָטַל Pi'el <sup>D</sup> קָטַל Pu'al <sup>Dp</sup> הִתְקַטַּל Hitpa'el <sup>HtD</sup>	<b>Intensive? Factitive Resultative Denominative Pluralative Causative</b> <sup>patiency</sup>	Active, Causative <sup>patiency</sup> , etc. Passive Reflexive, Reciprocal, Iterative ... s. times simple active as Qal	stopped [made <i>to be</i> in state] was stopped [ “ “ “ “ ] stopped himself, etc.
הִקְטִיל Hif'il <sup>H</sup> הִקְטַל Hof'al <sup>Hp</sup>	<b>Causative</b> <sup>agency</sup> (or permissive)	Active Passive	caused to stop [made <i>to do</i> ] was caused to stop [ “ “ “ ]

## 5.2 Two Finite Conjugations

Each of the seven major *binyanim* (Qal, Nif'al, Pi'el, etc.) can be further **inflected** (changed in form) according to **six primary conjugations**: two major finite conjugations indicate **aspect**, the **perfect and imperfect** (including its cohortative and jussive modal uses); one volitional/modal conjugation expressing the **imperative**; three non-finite conjugations, the **infinitive construct**, the **infinitive absolute**, and the **participle**. Each conjugation impacts the use of the basic *binyan*.

### 5.2.1 The Perfect Conjugation (*qatal*; suffixed) and its Aspect <sup>K§12,14</sup>

Perfect verb forms reflect **a complete state of action**. I.e., they are encoded not for temporal tense, but for **aspect**: the type of action, as envisioned in the mind of the speaker or writer, that is viewed from outside, as a whole.

#### Syntax of the consecutive perfect. <sup>BBH 17.5-6</sup>

Frequently in narrative, prophetic, or legal literature, an author would indicate **a future tense sequence** by following the initial verb with one or more “**consecutive perfects**” — perfect verbs prefixed with the usual conjunction’s *vav* + *ševā* (וְקָטַלְתָּ). The initial verb in the sequence is often an imperfect, but might also be the temporal modifier וְהָיָה.

The *qāṭal* pattern (קָטַל) changes to *qāṭāl* (קָטַלְתָּ — two *qāmēš*) with final א or ה (הָיָה). Some stative verbs appear with *sērê* or *hōlēm* as their 2<sup>nd</sup> vowel (וְיָשֵׁב or וְיָחֵם). With hollow verbs, an original ו, וּ middle-vowel contracts to become וּוּ, וּוּוּ, or וּוּוּוּ.

**Strong and Weak Verbs.** A verb is **strong** if it has three, non-guttural, strong consonants. A verb is **weak** if: (1) it is hollowed with a middle-vowel; (2) it contains a guttural consonant; (3) it begins with ו, וּ, וּוּ; or (4) the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> consonants are identical. Weak verbs are classified using the letters of פִּעֵל to locate the gutturals or the beginning ו, וּ, וּוּ. <sup>K§12.5-12.7</sup>

### Memorize this process for analyzing the perfect verb (*qatal* form; suffix conjugation): <sup>K§14.57-14.65</sup>

1. If **no prefix** and ...
  - No dages forte ▶ Qal (but may have a dages lene)
  - Dages forte ▶ Pi'el (וְיָדַע) or Pu'al (וְיָדַעְתָּ)
2. If **prefix** is ...
  - וּ ▶ Nif'al
  - וְיָדַעְתָּ ▶ Hitpa'el
  - וְיָדַעְתָּ ▶ Hif'il
  - וְיָדַעְתָּ ▶ Hof'al
3. If **suffix** is ...
 

וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 1cs	I
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 2ms	you <i>m.</i>
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 2fs	you <i>f.</i>
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 3ms	he
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 3fs	she
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 1cp	we
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 2mp	you <i>all f.</i>
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 2fp	you <i>all f.</i>
וְיָדַעְתָּ	▶ 3cp	they
4. **Identify root verb**

See the Syntax Summary’s chart for **Coordinate Relationships with the perfect**.

## 5.2.2 The Imperfect Conjugation (*yiqtol*; prefixed) and its Aspect <sup>K§15-16</sup>

Imperfect verb forms reflect **an incomplete state of action**; i.e., **aspect** or type of action that is viewed from inside, as in progress.

### Functions / Uses of regular imperfect:

(1) simple future actions (*shall, will stop*); (2) repeated, habitual, customary actions (*used to stop, stops*); (3) contingent, dependent actions (*may, can, might, could stop*; cf. subjunctive); (4) as a modal jussive or cohortative. These third- and first-person **volitional imperfects** are most often distinguished from other third- and first-person imperfects by only context and a fronted word order.<sup>2</sup> The **jussive** expresses a 3p speaker's desire, wish, or command (*may, let*). The **cohortative** expresses the 1p speaker's desire, intention, self-encouragement, or determination. <sup>K§15.18-15.21</sup>; see BBH 23.11 on identifying 3p/1p volitional imperfects

Even if an imperfect is translated as a simple active, the underlying *aktionsart* of the verb's stem is implied. Retain the sense in your mind, even if not translated. <sup>K§15.8-15.17; 15.18-15.21</sup>

### The *vay-yiqtol* form and the syntax of the consecutive imperfect. <sup>BBH 17.2-17.4</sup>

Frequently in narrative, sometimes in poetry, an author indicates **past tense sequence** by following the initial verb with one or more "consecutive imperfects" — imperfect verbs prefixed not with the conjunction's *vav* + *ševā* (וְ), but prefixed with a **vav + pătāḥ** (qāmēš if 1cs), and a **dagesh forte in the imperfect's original prefix** (וְ → וּקְטַל). The initial verb in the sequence is often a perfect, but might be either itself in the form a consecutive imperfect or the temporal modifier וְיָדַר.

### Memorize this process for analyzing the imperfect verb (*yiqtol* form; prefix conjugation).

For the imperfect, the **prefixes and suffixes remain the same in all stems** (with a few exceptions for volitional imperfects); the **pointing of the prefix is diagnostic for the stem**:

- If **Prefix / Suffix** is ...
 

	— א	▶ 1cs	I
	— ה	▶ 2ms = 3fs	you m. (= she; <b>imperative</b> has 2p <i>suffixes</i> )
	וְ— ה	▶ 2fs	you f.
	— י	▶ 3ms	he
	— ה	▶ 3fs = 2ms	she (= you m.)
	— נ	▶ 1cp	we
	וְ— י	▶ 2mp	you all m.
	וְ— הָ	▶ 2fp = 3fp	you all f. (= they f.)
	וְ— י	▶ 3mp	they m.
	וְ— הָ	▶ 3fp = 2fp	they f. (= you all f.)
- If **Pointing** is ...
 

	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Qal	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Nif'al (d. forte becomes nun and drops)	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Pi'el	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Pu'al	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Hitpa'el	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Hif'il	
	○ ○ ○ י (ה א ק)	▶ Hof'al	
- Identify root verb

See the Syntax Summary's chart for **Coordinate Relationships with the imperfect**.

<sup>2</sup> The particle וְ is sometimes added after jussives and cohortatives, perhaps to make them more emphatic. The

cohortative is sometimes lengthened by the addition of וְ as a suffix.

## 5.3 One Volitional and Three Non-Finite Conjugations KS18-21;22-31

Unlike the finite perfect and imperfect, the four remaining major conjugations do not encode **aspect**. The **imperative** conjugation is one of several ways in which Hebrew expresses volition. Three non-finite conjugations include the **infinitive construct**, the **infinitive absolute**, and the **participle**.

### 5.3.1 Desires, Prohibitions, Commands — including the Imperative Conjugation

Hebrew utilizes the imperfect, the imperative, and the independent particles to express **volition** (modals): desires, commands, and prohibitions. KS15, 18

For the **jussive** and **cohortative** volitional imperfects, see the full discussion under the imperfect conjugation.

**Particles.** A **negative command or prohibition** is expressed using **לֹא** with the **imperfect**. A **milder prohibition** is expressed by using **אַל** with the **jussive**. KS18.22-18.24

The **imperative** verb conjugation expresses **positive commands** (never prohibitions). It occurs in only the 2nd person. Imperatives may occur in any stem except the passive Pu'al and Hof'al.

Imperatives derive from imperfect 2<sup>nd</sup> person forms and in all stems the **imperative suffixes are identical to those of the imperfect**. The imperative **prefixes are either dropped** (Qal / Pi'el) **or modified** (Nif'al, Hitpa'el, Hif'il): KS18

Qal / Pi'el:     ת   ▶ dropped

Nif'al:       ת   ▶ ה

Hitpa'el:   ת   ת   ▶ ת   ה

Hif'il:       ת   ▶ ה (2ms ' , ▶ ..)

See the Syntax Summary chart for **Coordinate Relationships with the imperative**.

### 5.3.2 Two Infinitive Conjugations KS19

**Infinitives** are two separate verb conjugations that expresses the bare idea of the verb root without the limitations of person, gender, and number. There are two kinds of infinitives:

The **infinitive construct** may take prepositional prefixes and/or pronominal suffixes. It is used in **temporal, purpose, result, and causal clauses**; it usually occurs with the preposition **לְ**. KS19.2-19.14

The **infinitive absolute** is the form of the infinitive that never takes the prepositional prefixes or pronominal suffixes. They serve (1) to intensify or reiterate the verbal statement (by standing before or after a conjugated form of a cognate verb), (2) like English gerunds (e.g., “eating,” “drinking,” etc.), and, sometimes, (3) as an alternative to the imperative. KS19.15-19.28

**Coordinate Relationships with the infinitive absolute:** If the infinitive absolute has the force of an imperative, so do any linked perfects (see Syntax Summary chart).

### 5.3.3 The Participle Conjugation KS20

**Participles**, along with the two infinitives, constitute a third, separate non-finite verb conjugation.

The normal Qal **Active**, following the *qōṭel* pattern, **expresses continuous action** (more so than the imperfect). The normal Qal **Passive**, following the *qāṭûl* pattern, **expresses completed action**.

Participles share the properties and perform the function of adjectives, verbs, and nouns; their endings display gender and number (not person).

**Coordinate Relationships with the participle:** If the leading participle describes impending, future actions, so do any linked perfects (see Syntax Summary chart).

#### 5.4 **Verb Diagnostics and Strong-Verb Paradigm**

In addition to our ncBc handouts, see the Appendices of BBH and its teacher handouts (PDF).

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