

BIBLICAL HEBREW WITH MOREH EZRA · CHART

Vowels and marks

Every vowel sign, shown on בּ, the letters that help vowels, the dots and small marks, and the key to the course's transliteration.

Every vowel on one board

Five vowel sounds, each long, short or hurried. A vowel is read **after** its letter, so בָּ is bā. The hurried vowels, the **hateph**s, are a shewa with a short vowel beside it; they stand mostly under the throat letters א ה ח ע.

SOUND	LONG	SHORT	HURRIED
a	בָּ **qamets** ā	בַ **patach** a	בֲ **hateph patach** ă
e	בֵ **tsere** ē בֵי **tsere + yod** ê	בֶ **segol** e	בֱ **hateph segol** ĕ בְ **shewa** ə
i	בִי **hireq + yod** î	בִ **hireq** i	
o	בֹ **holem** ō בוֹ **holem vav** ô	בָ **qamets hatuf** o	בֳ **hateph qamets** ŏ
u	בוּ **shureq** û	בֻ **qibbuts** u	

Letters that help vowels

The helper letter is silent; the circumflex ^ in the transliteration is the sign that one stands in the Hebrew.

MARK	NAME	SOUND	EXAMPLE
בִי	hireq + yod	î	אֱלֹהִים 'ĕlōhîm "God"
בֵי	tsere + yod	ê	בֵּין bên "between"
בֶי	segol + yod	ê (or e)	אֱלֹהֶיךָ 'ĕlōhêkhā "your God"
בוֹ	holem vav	ô	אוֹר 'ôr "light"
בוּ	shureq	û	רוּחַ rûaḥ "spirit"
בָה	qamets + he	â, at the end of a word	לַיְלָה láylâ "night"
בֵה בֶה	segol or tsere + he	ê, at the end of a word	זֶה zê "this"
בַי	patach + yod	ay, as in "eye"	וַיְהִי wayhî "and there was"

SHEWA בְּ
Two dots stacked under a letter: a very short ə, or nothing at all. At the start of a word it is said: בְּרֵאשִׁית bərēʾšît.

QAMETS HATUF בָּ
The sign of qamets, read as a short **o** in a closed syllable without stress: כָּל־ kol- "all of", חָכְמָה ḥokhmâ "wisdom".

FURTIVE PATACH חַ
At the very end of a word, a patach under ח or ע is said **before** the letter: רוּחַ rûaḥ, נֹחַ nōaḥ.

One dot, four jobs

A dot inside or beside a letter can mean four things. The letter it sits in tells you which. If a full vowel comes right before the dot, it doubles the letter.

DOT	NAME	WHERE	WHAT IT DOES	EXAMPLE
בּ	dagesh lene	in בּ גּ דּ כּ פּ תּ, at the start of a word or after a consonant	makes the letter hard	בָּרָא bārāʾ "he created"
מּ	dagesh forte	in almost any letter, right after a full vowel	doubles the letter	הַמַּיִם hammáyim "the waters"
וּ	shureq	in a vav with no other vowel	the vowel û	רוּחַ rûaḥ "spirit"
הָ	mappiq	in a ה at the end of a word	the h is said; often "her" or "it"	לָהּ lāh "to her"

Other small marks

MARK	NAME	WHAT IT DOES
שׁ · שׂ	shin dot · sin dot	on the right shoulder š, said sh; on the left ś, said s
בֹ	holem	a dot above, at the top left: ō
וַיְהִי־אוֹר	maqaf	a short line high between words: two words said as one, with one stress
:	sof pasuq	"end of verse": two stacked dots after the last word of every verse

How the course writes Hebrew in Latin letters

YOU SEE	IT MEANS
ā ē ō	a long vowel
a e i o u	a short vowel
ă ĕ ŏ ə	a hurried vowel, or a vocal shewa
â ê î ô û	a long vowel with a silent helper letter
á é ó	the weight of the word, when it falls before the last syllable: šāmáyim

YOU SEE	IT MEANS
ʾ	alef or ayin, both silent today
š ś ṣ	shin, said sh; sin, said s; tsade, said ts
ḥ ṭ q	ḥet, ch as in "loch"; ṭet, said t; qof, said k
kh w	soft kaf, as in "loch"; vav, said v

> The vowel signs and the dots were added by the Masoretes, scholars at Tiberias, between about 600 and 1000 AD. The letters are much older.