

Educator Guide

Explore our Magical world of Hebrew letters

Produced by Jewish Interactive
in partnership with the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation
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About the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation

In 1957 when Michael Goulston z"I came to the Leo Baeck College aged 26 to study for the Rabbinate he had no Hebrew at all. He did not even know the Alef Bet and I had the privilege of teaching him the Alef Bet. In 1968 Rabbi Michael Goulston was appointed assistant Rabbi at West London Synagogue (where Rabbi Hugo Gryn z"I was Senior Rabbi) and we renewed our friendship. Tragically Michael died in 1972 but in his years at West London Synagogue he had great foresight and was using a 2-inch Ampex video tape machine to make educational video programmes!

Immediately after his death, the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation was formed to continue his work and we published a number of audio visual programmes.

Five year ago, upset by the fact that so many of our children (even those starting their Bar/BatMitzvah programme) did not even know all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, I had the idea to create a series of videos for 5/6 year olds in which there would be a story about each letter.

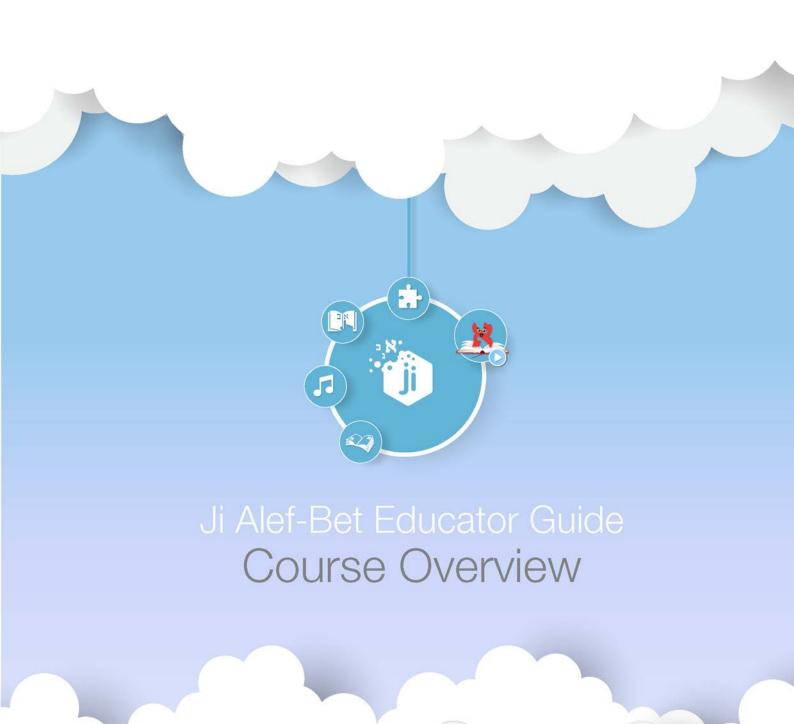
Two years later, in February 2014 (still searching for an organisation that had the capability to do this and importantly shared my vision), I came across Jewish Interactive and went to meet their CEO, Chana Kanzen who was immediately excited by the idea as she had already written a number of stories for the same reason. In addition to make it more fun, singing as well as games and puzzles with words which would be associated with each letter would be introduced as this would improve the learning experience enormously.

So at the beginning of 2017 Jewish Interactive started working on the Alef-Bet project which has now come to fruition – 60 years after my teaching Michael the Alef Bet!

The hope now is that 5/6 year old children will complete the 24 units in the course of a year and will then have the basis on which to take the next step in their Hebrew learning. We intend to continue this partnership and develop more fun digital Hebrew learning programmes.

Edward Gold

16th November 2017







Welcome to the magical pop-up book of the Hebrew Alef Bet!

We chose the idea of this type of book for several reasons:

- Children of this age love pop-up books! It allowed for simplicity, yet the creation of different worlds, from snow scenes to parks, mountains and picnics.
- We could emphasize the right-to-left directionality of Hebrew, with the child experiencing, and hopefully, learning that a Hebrew book opens from the other side.
- We have the letters persistently along the lower edge of the book, showing the learner where they are in the alphabet. This is reinforced in the animation at the beginning of each letter, when we page through the letters until we reach the current letter.
- Each letter's story is in a unique setting, but anchored within the theme of the pop-up book.

The stories and instructions are in English as this course was designed not only for 'Sunday' schools and cheders, but for families with young children, whose parents do not necessarily know Hebrew.

All the pages in the magical pop-up book start with the Hebrew book opening as seen here. The book then pages to the letter that is about to be taught, displaying each letter as it pages.





The course has been designed so that teachers can teach the letters in any order. The default playlist goes in order, but any lesson can be accessed at any time.





Every one of the lessons follows the same structure, allowing the young child to know what to expect in each section.

To get the children used to reading in Hebrew from right to left, the menu starts on the top right, with small arrows indicating the flow. We used voiceover in Hebrew, to slowly introduce these menu items.



Animation

The biggest, most colourful item in the menu is the button to activate the animation on that letter. Many of the animations are interactive, asking the child to make a choice within the action, hopefully increasing the child's engagement.

The stories are all delightfully full of alliteration, emphasizing the sound of the letter.



Let's Play (בואו נשחק)

There are usually two puzzles to complete of each letter, each one in a different font, so that the child can still recognize the letters, even when they are slightly different. We have usually used a serif and a san-serif font for the letter puzzles. Included in this section are quests for the children to complete, like finding letters, sorting letters or differentiating letters. For example, there is confusion between Mem and Tet, so one of the puzzles is to find every letter Mem in collection of letters Mem and Tet.



Let's Read (בואו נקרא)

This section enables the child to work out the sound of the letter with the vowel underneath, and then to check independently whether they are correct, by tapping the letter to hear the sound.

There is a pattern to the progress:

- Screen 1 practice the current letter being learned with various vowel sounds.
- Screen 2, 3 practices sounding out letters that have been learned thus far, and then blend some into a simple word. The child can tap any time to hear if they are correct. They tap the chain image above the blended letters to hear the whole word. For a full list of the words included, see the **Reading Words** section.
- We use an image of Kivi showing where to start sounding the words, from right-to-left.





Let's Sing (בואו נשיר)

Our original song for each letter introduces the letter name and sound. It is the same song in each letter, encouraging the child to sing along and show that they know the name and sound of that letter.



Let's Learn Words (בואו נלמד מילים)

This section introduces Hebrew words that start with the current letter, or, if it is a letter that will never start a word, then the words will contain that letter. For a full list of the words taught in this series, look at the **Dictionary** section.

Some of the words teach more concepts connected with the letter. For example, we teach the colours in Kuf, where there is a rainbow; we teach the parts of the head (rosh), like eyes, ears, nose, etc. in Resh.



Let's Continue (בואו נמשיך)

The learner can decide that they want to continue to the next section or to the next letter.



For all letters it is advised to have a number of classroom or home activities to go alongside the interactive lesson. Magnetic letters, drawing in the sand/shaving foam, making letters with your bodies. The more kinaesthetic activities that are linked with the digital experience - the better!



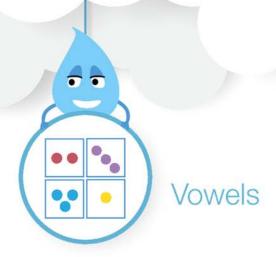


Letters and Colours

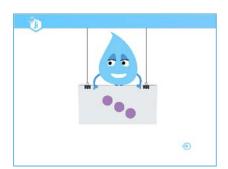
The colours of the letters have been carefully designed, taking into account the 'personalities' that are projected in the animations. We coloured the letters according to the Hebrew word for that colour. You could incorporate this correlation into your lessons.

לָבָז	**	אָדוֹם	\$ 0.0 X
סָגוֹל		וָרוֹד	***
צָהוֹב		זָהָב	
יְשָׁחוֹר		חוּם	*
ּתְכֵלֶת		יָרוֹק	
		כָּחוֹל	

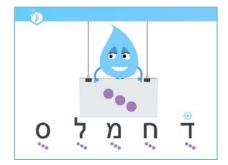




We introduce the vowels using only their sounds. For this age we did not introduce the vowel names. The concept of a vowel is introduced in the first lesson, in Alef, where learners drag a vowel under the Alef to hear that it gives Alef a voice. We begin there with kamatz, patach and chataf patach (to keep it simple we do not distinguish between the sounds of these vowels). Throughout the course, we introduce sounds in a series of three screens, in the reading section, before the learner sounds out the letters. Below is an example of the *kubutz* sound:



Screen 1: Invite learner to tap the sound and listen.



Screen 2: Invite learner to tap on letters with that sound and listen to the sound.



Screen 3: Introduce a word (or words) with that that vowel sound.

Learner can tap the letter and sound, as well as the picture of the word to learn a new Hebrew word.





The Ji team believes that every aspect of Ji Alef-Bet should be a learning moment, and it is for this reason that the character who guides learners through learning the Alef-Bet is called 'Kivi'.

In Israel, 'Kivi' is used as the shortened version of the name 'Akiva' and we chose this having been inspired by the many stories in the Talmud about Rabbi Akiva.

Though recognized as one of the greatest scholars in Jewish history, Rabbi Akiva's early life was anything but scholarly. Akiva had a negative attitude towards Judaism. He disliked Jewish tradition, and had no patience for the teachings of the local Rabbis. He continued this way until he reached the age of 40 when he made a profound observation with life-changing consequences.

One day, Akiva went to get some water from a well in the town of Lydda. Though made of stone, the well looked like it had been sculpted as it had round rather than square edges, and the stone had been hollowed at the bottom.

Though not learned, Akiva was very curious, and so - having made a brief introduction - he inquired from a stranger who was standing by the well 'who hollowed out this stone?'.

The stranger replied: 'Akiva, haven't you read that "water wears away stone (Job 14:19)" - it is shaped this way because water has been falling on this stone, day after day'.

Though discussing water and stone, this reply made Akiva think deeply about his own life choices. 'Is my mind harder than this stone? If the stone can change its shape from dripping water, perhaps I can change myself through learning more about Judaism?' And so, despite being aged 40, Akiva went to a local school where his son was enrolled to begin learning about Judaism.

Akiva sat in the classroom alongside the young children and he began his journey of Jewish learning with the Alef-Bet. We are told that he then









progressed to study some of the Torah, and then all of the Torah, and soon he had become the greatest Torah scholar of his generation.

It is for this reason that we gave the name 'Kivi' to the character in Ji Alef-Bet – and why he is shaped as a drop of water, because we learn from Akiva how the successful study of the Alef-Bet can enable a person to become a truly great Torah scholar.

However, there is one final reason why we chose to use 'Kivi' as opposed to the name Akiva, because there is an etymological link between the name 'Kivi' and the word 'Tikva', which means 'hope'.

When teachers begin teaching their students the Alef-Bet, they have hope and aspiration that their students will go on to grow and learn even more about their Judaism. The Ji team shares this aspiration, and we hope that Ji Alef-Bet will not only teach students – of all ages and backgrounds – about the Alef Bet, but also be a springboard for further learning and growing.



Rabbi Johnny Solomon













Alef loses her voice

Alef has lost her voice, so she visits Dr. Rofeh, who prescribes her special medicine to give her a voice: kamatz, patach and chataf patach vowels. Learners drag the 'medicine' under Alef, and test how they give her a voice.

This first lesson is about Alef, who has no sound unless a vowel is present. The interaction within the video encourages the learner to drag the 'medicine', the vowel, under Alef to see if it makes Alef talk. Use this as an opportunity to introduce the concept of vowels.









Bet has a belly button, Vet's belly button vanishes

Bet and Vet are identical twin brothers. Bet is a joker and a poker, and pokes Vet so many times, that Vet's belly button vanishes.

This lesson provides a device to differentiate between Bet and Vet. Bet is the bully who pokes his brother in the belly all the time, until his brother's belly button disappears!



Repeat often that **B**et has a **b**elly **b**utton, **V**et's belly button has **v**anished.









Gimmel has a gap

Gimmel loves glidah (ice cream). She won't eat any healthy foods, only glidah. Then one day she gets a belly ache, and her tooth falls out, as well as a small piece of her body. Gimmel now has a gap!

Children often confuse Gimmel (λ) and Nun (λ). The unlikely, comical story around Gimmel, about her eating too much גְּלִינָה (glidah, ice cream), which results in her tooth falling out and her losing a part of her body too, is a device to emphasize the shape of Gimmel. When a learner confuses Nun with Gimmel, ask 'Does it have a gap?'. If so, then it's a Gimmel! (Also, notice how Gimmel is holding a נָּבֶּר (gezer, carrot) in her hand once she is healthy!)







Daled's delet (door) can not be opened. Daled and Kivi try vowel-shaped keys in the lock, but with no success. Then Daled's letter friends come to help, and Daled is able to put a broken part of the door frame back in place, opening the door.

Daled (7) is often confused with Resh (7). The story with Daled is another improbable story, which is a device to remember the Daled shape. Daled's door is stuck until he fits in the broken part along the top of the door, and the door opens. Use this extra little broken part of the door frame to remind children of the shape when they see the Daled.

We bring in Daled's friends, the letters that have been learned already, to help Daled. This is a way to revise the other letters, and to talk about the value of friendship and הַּכְנַסַת אוֹרְחִים (*Hachnasat Orchim*, Welcoming visitors)







Hey, wait for me!

Hey has only half a leg, and always calls "Hey! Wait for me!". Just once, he wishes he could be a star on the football field.

In the story we use the shape of $\mathbf{7}$ as the basis of the story. It is also a device to differentiate

Hey $(\begin{subarray}{l} \begin{subarray}{l} \begin{subarray}{l}$



This is a great place to discuss inclusion, and noticing people that might need help.









Vav stands up straight

Vav stands up straight, just like a soldier.

The shape of Vav is 'very vertical'. It is straight up and down, just like a stick, or as a soldier when they salute. This story plays on the concept of self-esteem and self-image, and being just the correct shape and size for you.

Kivi and Vav also discuss the mitzvah of visiting the elderly, and end off by picking some וְרָדִים (veradim, roses) to take for the people they are going to visit.

and i



At this point, we introduce the vowel sounds that Vav makes, depending on the position of the dot: The activity here is to tap each Vav to hear the sound that it makes. The activity is based on a classroom exercise with a ball:



If you catch the ball above your head, you stretch and say 'O-', '¶'.

If the ball hits your belly, you would say 'OO', '\frac{1}{3}'.



Bring a ball to class and recreate the activity! Throw the ball at a student's belly, and he/she must

say as they catch it. Throw the ball above their heads, and they say 1.



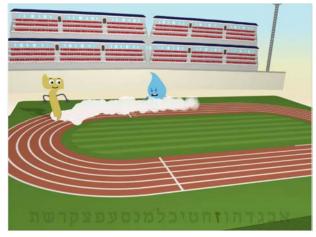


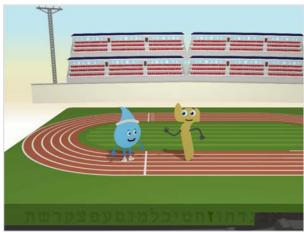


Zayin zigs and zags

Zayin zigs and zags, running to raise funds for his charity projects.

Children confuse Vav (1) and Zayin (5), so this lesson emphasizes Zayin's shape, which is a little like a zigzag, as opposed to Vav, which is straight up and down. Zayin talks of doing mitzvot with זְרִיזוּת (zerizut, agility). We should always hurry to do a good deed.









Chet is flat and sturdy like a shulchan

Chet is preparing for Chanukah, when Kivi points out that she looks very much like the table (shulchan) that they are working on. She also sounds like the 'ch' in 'shulchan'!

Children can confuse Chet $(\overline{\Lambda})$ with Hey $(\overline{\Lambda})$. The emphasis of this lesson is the table, the shulchan. Chet explains some uses for a shulchan, like preparing for Chanukah, braiding challah, doing **ch**esed (kindness) or eating **ch**umus with your **ch**averim (friends). Kivi points out that Chet looks like a shul**ch**an - sturdy legs and a flat top, thus differentiating from Hey.

In the puzzle that the learners complete, they are exposed to several customs and songs for Chanukah. Listen to each song as you place the puzzle pieces!









Tet has a hole at the top

Tet is good at everything: school, basketball, chess and more! But she has a hole at the top to remind her to be humble, and try to keep trying.

Learners confuse Tet (2) and Mem (2), so the stories for these two lessons give devices to remember the shapes of the letters. Tet is top of her class! She gets scores of 100%, nets the ball easily, and even beats Kivi at chess. Tet points out that she has a hole at the top to remind herself that she should always be humble, and that there is always more to learn. She teaches Kivi to 'try to keep trying'.









Yud is teeny tiny, but very special

Yud is teeny, tiny, but very special because he is part of a very important word.

Yud is small, so small they he can't jump up to the first rung of the ladder to help his friends Bet and Tav make the word Bayit! So Kivi gives him a lift up. He is also too small to join Kivi at the amusement park - he would not be tall enough to ride the rides! But all through this, he has a very positive attitude towards his height - why? Because Yud is part of God's name, so he is teeny, tiny but very special.









Caf likes cough drops, Chaf doesn't

Caf and Chaf are sick at home and can't go out to play with their friends in the snow. Caf likes cough drops and coughs with the sound 'k', while Chaf does not like cough drops and makes the sound 'ch'!

This lesson provides a device to differentiate between Caf and Chaf. Both letters are sick and can't go out to play in the snow with their friends.



Did you notice how Yud is putting the יָר (yad, hand) onto the snowman!

Caf likes to take cough drops. When the learner gives Caf a cough drop, it remains in the belly. Chaf doesn't like cough drops, and so continues to clear the throat, making the ch-ch-ch- sound.



Learners sometimes confuse Chaf (ב) and Caf (ב) with Bet (ב) and Vet (ב). There is an exercise in the lesson, where learners have to find all the letters 'Caf' in the בּוֹתֶל (Kotel, Western Wall). If they make a mistake, we explain that Bet and Vet have the extra little bit, shown in yellow. If they get it correct, it turns into a note to be put into the wall!







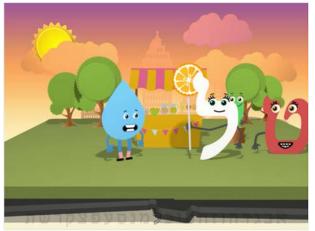




Lamed loves long lemon lollipops

Lamed is making her long, lemon lollipops to sell to raise money to help lonely people light Shabbat candles.

Lamed is the tallest letter - the only one that extends above the others. In this lesson, Lamed is selling lollipops that are long and tall, just like a lamed. Lamed is selling to raise money to help lonely people light Shabbat candles, teaching the value of צָּדָקָה (tzedaka, charity). Once again, the letters already learned are part of the lesson, waiting in line for their lollipops.









Mem has a hole at the bottommm

Mem has a hole at the bottom (emphasize mmmm sound!). She loves swimming in mayim (water) and doing mitzvot (good deeds).

As pointed out earlier, learners can confuse Tet ($^{\circ}$) and Mem ($^{\circ}$). We taught that Tet has a hole at the top,and now we teach that Mem has a hole in the bottommmm. Emphasize the sound 'mmm'. The story shows Mem swimming, floating easily because of the hole! While she is swimming she is using her imagination.

Mem also thinks that swimming is a mitzvah, as it is a מְצְוָה (*mitzvah*, good deed) to keep your body healthy and strong. Then you can go on to do more *mitzvot*. Complete the puzzle to learn about other *mitzvot* that can and should be done.









Nun is naughty but nice

Nun is naughty! He would rather sit and do nothing than risk being naughty. Then Kivi shows him how he can turn naughty into nice.

In this delightful story, naughty Nun is sitting and doing nothing, rather than risking doing something naughty. Learners are encouraged to tap around and find possibilities for him to be naughty. Kivi then suggests that Nun should not be doing nothing. Nun can turn naughty into **n**ice, and then do good deeds.

Children often confuse Gimmel (λ) and Nun (λ). Remember to point out that Gimmel has a gap! There is an exercise where learners are asked to find every Nun on the dreidels on the screen, differentiating between Nun and Gimmel.









Samech circles and somersaults

Samech is almost a circle, so she loves somersaulting and rolling down the hill. Will Kivi join her?

This story finds Samech somersaulting down the hill, over and over. Emphasizing that her shape (\overline{O}) is almost a circle, she even mischievously encourages the learner to help Kivi roll down the hill.









Ayin has an eye out for good deeds

Ayin is always on the lookout to help others in distress.

Ayin, which means 'eye' in Hebrew, is high above the ground in a treehouse, keeping 'an eye out', looking for people in distress to go and help. Learners can choose who they want Ayin to help, and she goes off and changes the situations.

Like Alef, Ayin has no sound until there is a vowel under the letter. There is a similar interaction to the one we did in Alef, where the learner chooses a vowel, and listens to the sound Ayin makes.









Peh and Feh are identical and they have a problem because Peh loves peas, and Feh doesn't! Kivi finds a solution.

Peh, Feh and Kivi are having a picnic. Feh doesn't like eating peas (says 'fooey!'), and Peh loves peas. Feh has a problem, as all those peas have to be eaten! Kivi comes up with the idea that if the learner puts a pea on Peh's belly, then we will know who Peh is, and always give him the peas. Then Feh will never have to say 'Fooey' to peas again!









Tzadi keeps a tzedaka book

Tzadi is a tzadik (righteous person)! He takes care of all the charity projects in his community.

Tzadi keeps track of all the צְּדָקָה (tzedaka, charity) projects going on in the community. We revise all the various forms of charity that the learners have seen thus far in the series. We also cover the various forms of charity - money, things or time.









Kuf has a long cane

Kuf wants Kivi to climb the mountain with her to see the beautiful keshet (rainbow).

She uses her long cane to help her.

The shape of Kuf (אָן) lends itself to the story of a long cane, that will help Kuf go on a hike into the mountains to see the אָשֶׁת (keshet, rainbow). This is an excellent opportunity to teach about colours in Hebrew.









Resh rushes to be rosh

Resh is always rushing to be rosh, or the first of important things. Like Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) or Rosh Chodesh (first of a new Jewish month).

Kivi helps him train to be first!

Resh is **r**unning, trying to get fit so that he can be the מראש (*rosh*, head) of things, like **R**osh Hashanah and **R**osh Chodesh. Kivi helps him.

Learners learn about what the moon looks like on Rosh Chodesh, and we also use the opportunity to teach about the parts of your **r**osh.













Shin is tired and wants to say Shema and go to sleep. Sin wants to sing! How will Kivi solve this?

We try to give meaning to the dots on Shin and Sin, so that children will be able to remember which letter is which. We show that when we say Shema, we use our right hand to cover our eyes. Kivi turns around and show the children his right hand going over his eyes. Shin and Shema go together, with the right hand being the Shema hand.

The letters use a torch to highlight the dots on their letters, so when **S**in wants to **s**ing, the left-hand dot is illuminated by the torch. When **Sh**in wants to say **Sh**ema, the right-hand dot is illuminated.

We use this opportunity to teach the learners the prayer itself.



TEACHER ENRICHMENT: Why do we cover our eyes when reciting the Shema?

The Shema is arguably the most important Jewish prayer as it

begins with a line that declares our faith and commitment to One G-d. Given the great significance of this declaration, many Jews have the custom of covering their eyes when reciting the first line of the Shema in order to block out any distractions and focus on the full meaning of the words. Interestingly, this custom was first mentioned in the Talmud (Brachot 13b) while



describing the prayer customs of the second-century Rabbi Judah the Prince about whom we are told that 'at the time [of the reading of the Shema], he passed his hands over his face and he accepted upon himself the yoke of Heaven's sovereignty'. From here, the custom of covering our eyes during the recitation of the Shema developed (see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 61:5). While there are countless Jewish customs, this particular custom is one of the best known and most observed around the world.



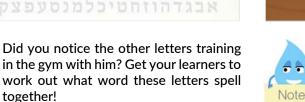


Tav trains to hold the Torah

Tav is training to hold something heavy for the upcoming festival. What could he be training for?

Tay, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is training to be tough. He is training to hold the Torah on Simchat Torah.









Within Tav we have included an activity to find fruit starting with Tav. Take this opportunity to learn the Hebrew words for the various fruits: Fig תַּבּוּח, Orange תַּבּוּז, Apple תַּבּוּח, Strawberry תוּת, Date הָּמֶר





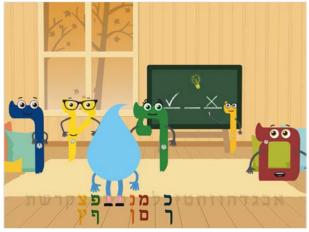
Final letters: Club Sofit

This story attempts to explain how final letters work. We have the 5 letters, Chaf, Mem, Nun, Fey and Tzadi all sitting in their treehouse, trying to find an idea for a club. They come up with the idea of dressing up and disguising themselves. But Kivi points out that they should only dress up sometimes, not all the time, otherwise how would their friends recognize them? So, they make club rules - dress up only at the end of a word, never at the beginning or middle of the word. The learner taps each letter and watches how it **twists** into its new shape.



Classroom activity: Make your own final letters with butterfly clips and cardboard. Insert the butterfly clips as shown, and learners can transform their own final letters.









Ji commissioned an original version of the Alef-Bet song, and this forms the finale for the series. All the letters perform within the pop-up book stage.





The list below comprises all the words that were used in the reading exercises as blending words. The student sounds out each letter individually, and then taps on the chain to hear the whole word.

For your convenience, we have given you a list of the reading words together with their English meanings.



Please	נָא
Pleasant	נָאֶה
Grandfather	סָב
Wonder	פֶּלֶא
Tortoise	גָב
Shadow	צֵל
Step	צַעַד
Line	קַו
Code	קוֹד
Bad	רַע
Empty	רֵיק
Market	שוק
Your (masculine)	שֶּלְ ךָּ
Your (feminine)	שֶׁלָדְ
Sing	שָׁר
Musical note	רָנו

Father	אָב
Back	גַּב
Garden, kindergarten	72
This	דָּא
Give, bring	הַב
Steering wheel	הֶגֶה
Festival	חַג
Sharp	תַד
No	לא
Alone	לְבַד
To you (masculine)	לְּדָּ
To you (feminine)	לָד
View	מַבָּט
Tower	מִגְדָּל
Gauge	מַד



The following 170 words have been extracted from the entire Ji Alef-Bet series. They are sorted alphabetically for your convenience, and have the English translation.





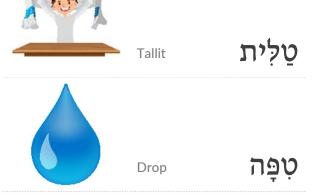
























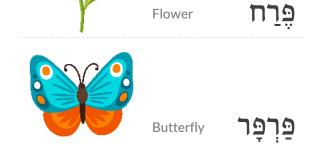


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ש Shabbat שַׁבַּת שָׁלוֹם Shalom, 'Good שָׁמֵח Нарру Shabbos' שִּׁמְחַת תּוֹרָה Simchat שופט Torah Judge שִׁמְלָה שֶׁלֶג Dress Snow שֶׁלְחָן שֶׁמֶש Table Sun

שֵעָר

Hair

	ת			ת
Date	הָּמָר		Fig	רְּאֵנָה
Drum	ባነገ	n military	Torah	תוֹרָה
Orange	תַפּוּז		Strawberry	תוּת
Apple	תַפּוּתַ		Corn/ maize	תִּירָס
Prayer	ּתְּפִילָּה		Pupil	תַּלְמִיד



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Instructional Designer & Producer Corinne Ossendryver

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Voices USA Kivi: Mitch Clyman

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British version of the Ji Alef-Bet course can be found at www.jitap.net/store/course/75/ American version of the Ji Alef-Bet course can be found at www.jitap.net/store/course/66/