



VOWELS AND SYMBOLS

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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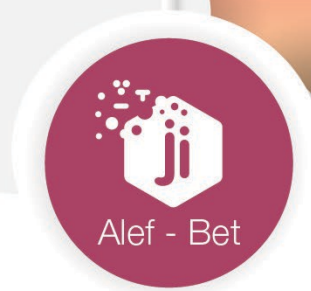


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THE Ji ALEF-BET SERIES

This educator guide accompanies the **Ji Tap** course that can be played here:

<https://www.jitap.net/store/course/346/>

Visit the pages on our **website** for the whole series:

<https://www.jewishinteractive.org/ji-alef-bet-series/>



Ji Alef-Bet
Stage 1

<http://bit.ly/JiAlefBet1>



Ji Alef-Bet
Stage 1a

<http://bit.ly/JiAlefBet1a>



Ji Alef-Bet
Stage 2

<http://bit.ly/JiAlefBet2>



Ji Alef-Bet
Stage 3

<http://bit.ly/JiAlefBet3>



About the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation

In 1957, when Michael Goulston z"l 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"l 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 programs!

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

In 2012, upset by the fact that so many of our children (even those starting their Bar/BatMitzvah program) 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.

In February 2014 (still searching for an organization 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 and I started working on the Alef-Bet project which has now come to fruition – 60 years after my teaching Michael the Alef Bet!

Having completed Stages 1, 1a (Mish Mash Letters), and 2, which enabled children to learn the alphabet, read simple phrases and then in Stage 3 start learning the structure of the Hebrew language, our research informed us that there was inconsistency in the retention of the learning. We therefore have produced an additional unit which is a 'vowel recap' and we will shortly add a game as a companion to recap the letters. These additional recap units will also be useful for late starters whose knowledge is patchy.

Edward Gold
January 2022



Vowels and Symbols - Educator Guide

Course Overview



Rationale

Vowel Recap

Before starting Stage 3, where Tefilot and Biblical texts are used to teach 6 prefixes and 3 suffixes, students may need to make sure they know how to pronounce all their vowels – in particular the endings וי, וי, וי, and the Kamats Katan/Chatuf and the Chataf-Kamats.

We are also preparing a game to ensure all the letters are remembered. This vowel recap and in due course the alphabet game will also be useful for year 5 students who may be less proficient.

We have invented new symbols for both the Kamats Katan and the Chataf-Kamats as the slightly longer down stroke of the Kamats used in many siddurim is not noticed or ignored and even the small 'o' superscription in some siddurim is also ignored. Of course, when texts outside of this course are learnt, the students will have to be guided as the regular Kamats symbol is used.

We have used an Israeli in our recordings so you will notice that the Cholem is pronounced as a short vowel, and this is particularly noticeable at the end of words. Also, unfortunately there is usually no distinction between the Segol (short vowel) and the Tsayray (long vowel) except when the Tsayray is spelt with a yod.

Grammar rules

We decided not to teach rules but maintain our discipline of using interactive activity and visuals to teach and leave it to teacher's discretion whether to teach the rules or not. For ease of reference the relative rules are as follows:

Sheva rules:

- Sheva is sounded at the beginning of a word.
- It is sounded under a letter that has a dagesh.
- It is sounded after long vowels – Cholem, Chirik (spelt with a yod), Tsayray.
- It is silent after short vowels – Patach, Chirik (spelt without a yod), Segol and Kubuts.
- It is silent under **ה, ע, א**
- If there are two Shevas together, the first is silent (closing the syllable) and the second is pronounced except when they occur at the end of a word and then they are both silent.

Kamats Katan rules (also called Kamats Chatuf):

- Kamats Katan occurs in closed, unaccented syllables, and is pronounced as short 'o'.
- Often Kamats Katan is followed by a silent Sheva as in **אֶכְלָה** (*food*) and can be distinguished from **אֶכְלָה** (*she ate*) by the meteg.
- Kamats Katan is also often followed by a hyphen **כֶּלֶהְאֶרֶץ**.
- Kamats Katan also often follows an accented Kamats as in **וַיִּקָּם**.



Translations and Gender

We have used literal translations rather than apply gender neutral alternatives (which many recent siddurim use) to words such as **אֲדוֹן** and **אֲבוֹתֵינוּ**.



Lesson Structure

Every lesson follows the same structure, allowing the student 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.

The items in this menu reflect the nature of this series, emphasizing vowel sounds, word-analysis, and reading practice. At the end of the reading practice, in most cases, there are songs for the children to sing along to. The menu provides an opportunity to revise any part of the lesson.





What are we going to learn?

A short introduction to the vowel sound, symbol or combination that will be the main topic of the lesson.



Vowel sounds

An interaction that reinforces the vowel sound or vowel combination.



Finding sounds in texts

The student has the task of finding the relevant sounds or vowel combinations in the texts – tapping them will highlight those sounds. There is a voiceover for each word that is found, reinforcing the word. Kivi's highlighter is marked with the number of times that the particular vowel is to be found.

Once all the highlighting and analysis has been done, then the student is asked to read the various passages that have been carefully chosen to emphasize the vowel rule that has been taught. Each word can be tapped to see and hear the syllabic breakdown of that word. If there is a song for this verse, students can sing along to it – as karaoke.



Summing up

A screen that summarizes the vowel sound, symbol or vowel combination that was taught or revised in this lesson.

Navigation Buttons



The Hebrew verse is read out, karaoke style, highlighting the word spoken at that time. This will encourage the child to develop fluency when reading the verse.

Note: to have the English read out, tap the English paragraph.



This icon will trigger a song of the verse, so that children can learn the verse with music – a great way to learn a prayer!

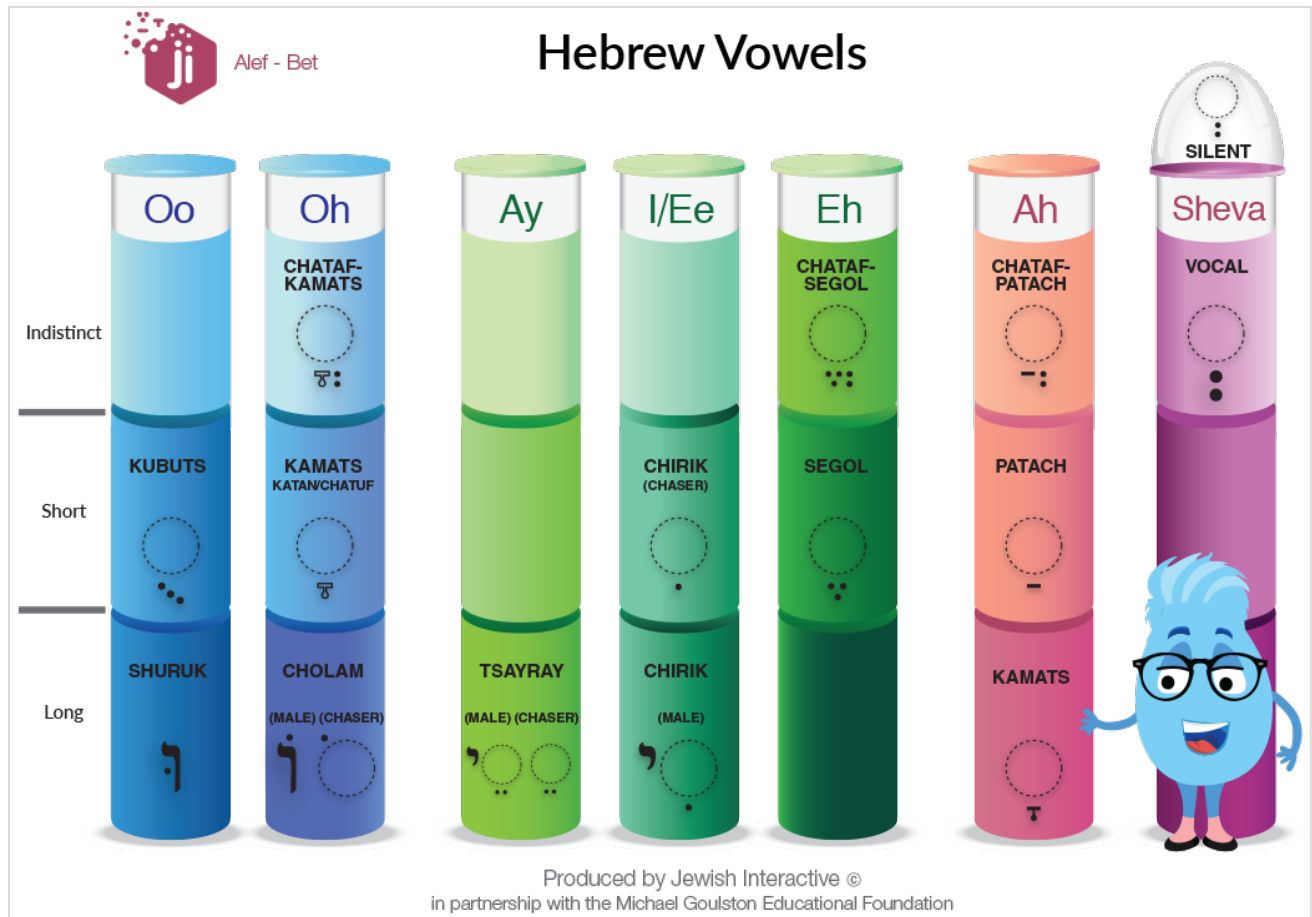


This icon takes you to the next screen.



These buttons are always in the lower left and right corners of a Ji Tap game. They take you to the previous and next screens respectively.

Vowel Groupings



We have grouped the vowels in their three academic classes 'A', 'E' and 'O', but we have subdivided the 'E' and 'O' classes into 'E' and 'I' and 'O' and 'U'. For convenience, we have added in the Shevas, which are normally dealt with quite separately.

The shading has been used to distinguish between the indistinct, short and long vowels. The darker the shading, the longer the vowel sound. We are not proposing to explain the differences between the similar vowels, but leave that to the educators, should they want to do so.

To download the poster with the Hebrew or English names, [click here](#).

Independent Reading and Syllabic Breakdown of Words



Throughout this series children can practice reading thoroughly in many ways:

1. Try and read a word independently, then click the word to check yourself.

- a. Tap the word 'baruch'

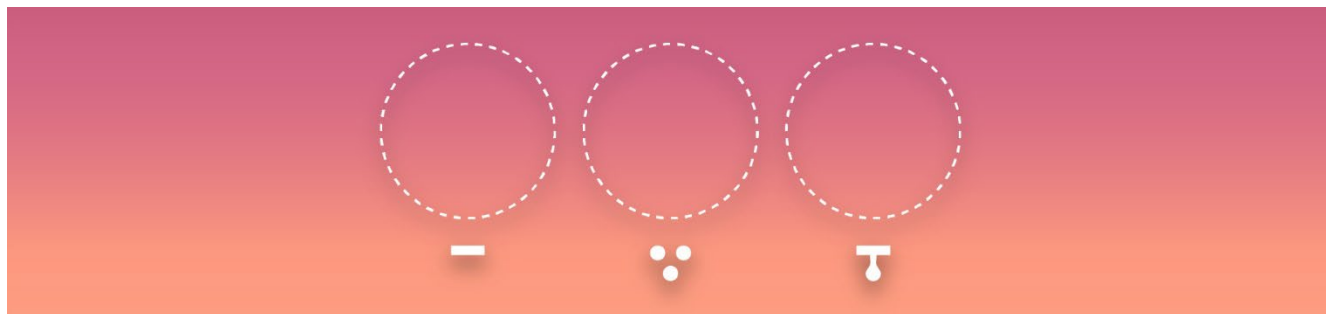
ברוך

ברוך

ברוך

Lessons

1. Vowel Sounds and Symbols



URL: <https://jitap.net/activities/gexc/play/>

Overview

We introduce the concept of a Hebrew vowel and recap the basic vowel sounds and symbols. Reading practice is the first sentence of the Shema (שמע).

We first compare the position of English vowels with Hebrew vowels and then provide an interactive game to ensure familiarity with the vowels. This includes the new symbol that we are using in this series for the Kamats Katan and the Chataf-Kamats. We explain this new symbol and compare the Kamats Katan with the Kamats. We have also used this Kamats Katan symbol with the Chataf-Kamats.

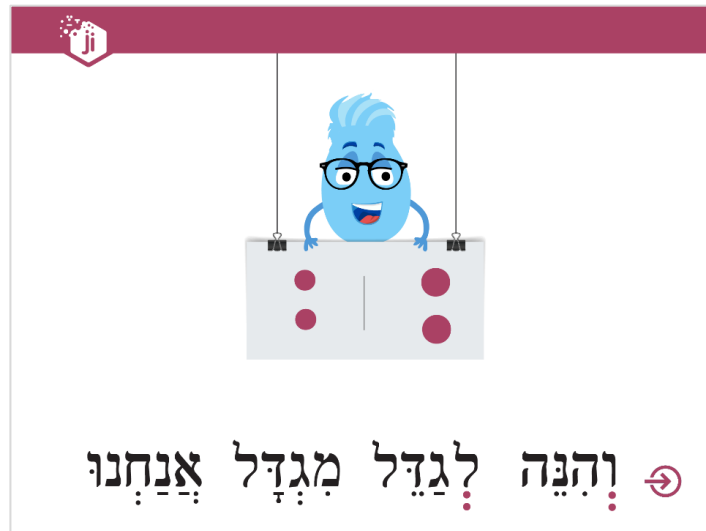


We have used colors to differentiate between the 'A', 'E' and 'O' classes of vowel and used shading to differentiate the long, short and indistinct vowels.

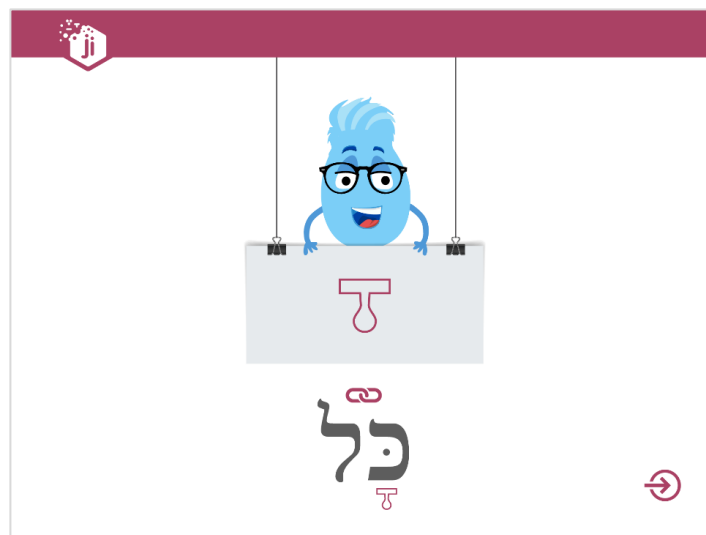
We also introduce the bold Sheva to explain the difference between the vocal and silent Sheva.

Introducing the Bold Sheva

We introduce the **bold** Sheva so that it can be sounded and differentiated from the silent Sheva.



Introducing Kamats Katan



We have introduced a new symbol to differentiate a Kamats Katan (pronounced 'o') from the Kamats. Some have used an elongated downward stroke of the Kamats, but it is often missed as is the superscription of a small 'o', which similarly is overlooked. We hope this aid will be a welcome solution.

Reading Practice: First sentence of the Shema

Students are asked to go through the full set of vowels and highlight each one in this sentence. The number appearing on the highlighter indicates how many symbols with that sound should be found.

For example, in the screen capture below, the 'Eh' cylinder is highlighted, with a 2 written on the highlighter. Thus students will know to look for 2 'eh' sounds in the sentence. (This diagram shows the 'eh' sounds already highlighted.)

NOTE: Whenever the child is asked to find the sounds in words, there is a number on the highlighter. This number tells the child how many sounds there are to find. For example, in the example below, there are 2 shevas to find, since there is the 2 on the highlighter.

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

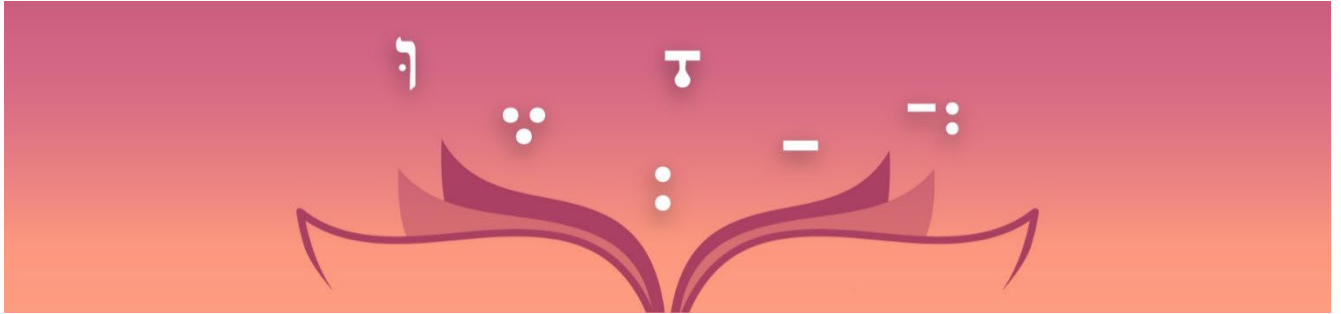
Listen, Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

Oo Oh Ay Ee Eh Ah Sheva

Song: Shema

The karaoke song included in this lesson is courtesy of Cantor Tamara Wolfson.

2. Reading with Vowels



URL: <https://jitap.net/activities/gfOv/play/>

Overview

This lesson is about reading with Hebrew vowel sounds and symbols. Reading practice and songs include Mah Tov (מַה טוֹב), Tzadik Katamar (צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר), and part of the Shema (וְיִתְבָּרֵךְ).

In this lesson we use the letter ק to demonstrate how the vowel is pronounced with the letter. (We chose this letter because Kivi wanted to use his name as an example!) From then on, students are asked to analyze the reading passages by highlighting the various vowel symbols. Once highlighted, they can try and read the words. Tapping each word will initiate an animation showing the syllabic breakdown of the word.

Reading Practice: Mah Tov (מַה טוֹב),

מַה טוֹב אֱלֹהֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
How good are your tents, Jacob, your dwellings, Israel.

וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ
And I, in Your great loving kindness, will come into Your house.

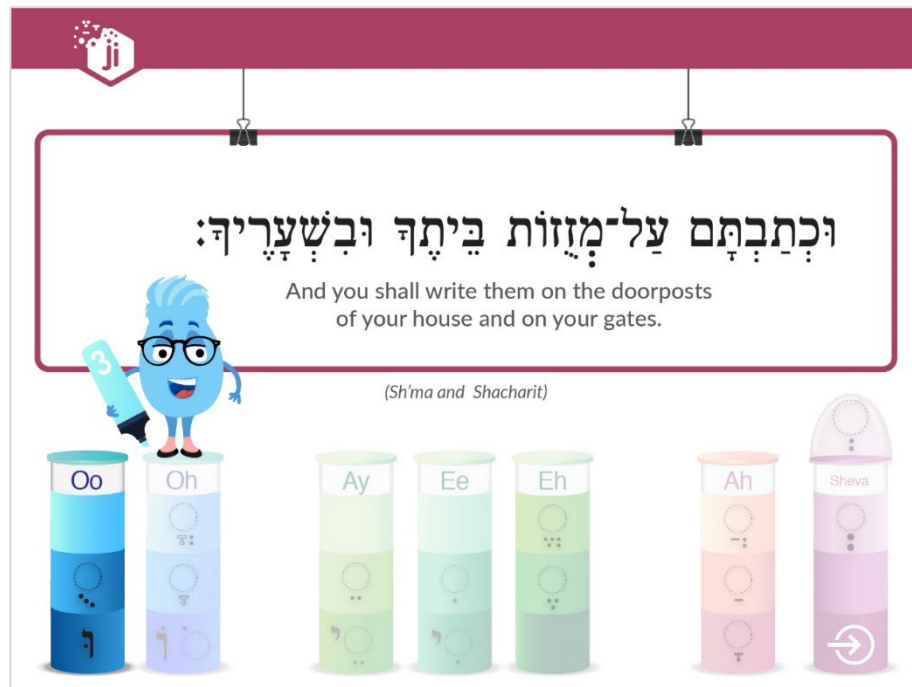
אֲשַׁתְּחוּהָ אֶל-הֵיכַל-קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ:
I will bow down to Your holy temple in awe of You.

Song courtesy of Danny Maseng, www.dannymaseng.com

Song: מה טוב

The song 'Mah Tov' is sung by Danny Maseng. You can visit his website at www.dannymaseng.com. You can watch it on YouTube here: https://youtu.be/n9_o4iwXZZg or listen on Spotify here: <https://open.spotify.com/track/4ICl3cXLnJDJzXq96DF7gl?si=ab058b9ec2ce44b9>

Reading Practice: Uchtavtam (part of the Shema) (וּכְתַבְתֶּם),



Reading Practice: Tzadik Katamar (צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר),



The righteous will bloom like a date-palm;
They will thrive like a cedar in Lebanon;
Planted in the house of Adonai,
They will flourish in the courts
of our God.

צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר יִפְרֹחַ
כְּאַרְז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה:
שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה
בְּחֲצֵרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:

Song: Tzadik Katamar (צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר),

The song Tzadik Katamar is courtesy of Cantors Azi Schwartz and Rachel Brook. The full video is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/FQoJ-9e88Z4>. You can listen on Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/track/0ljiqmMnS0zxol6hAZ34pq?si=d51c3372659342ab>.

3. One Dot Two Jobs

מִשֶּׁה

URL: <https://jitap.net/activities/geqi/play/>

Overview

We learn about when one dot has two different jobs, as in the word מִשֶּׁה. Reading practice is Exodus 15:1 and 11, with the song מִיִּכְמֹכָה.

Although many texts do point words like מִשֶּׁה, the chumashim and some prayer books do not, so the student is then expected to read מִשֶּׁה without a separate sign for the Cholam as the dot of the shin doubles for both the letter and the vowel. A word like עֲשֶׂה can be confusing, but here the sin has its own vowel (the Segol) so the Cholam has to belong to the ayin.

Reading Practice: Exodus 15:1

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to Adonai:

אֲזַיִשִּׁיר־מִשֶּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה: (Exodus 15:1)

Vowel cylinders shown: Oo, Oh, Ay, Ee, Eh, Ah, Sheva.

Reading Practice: Exodus 15:11

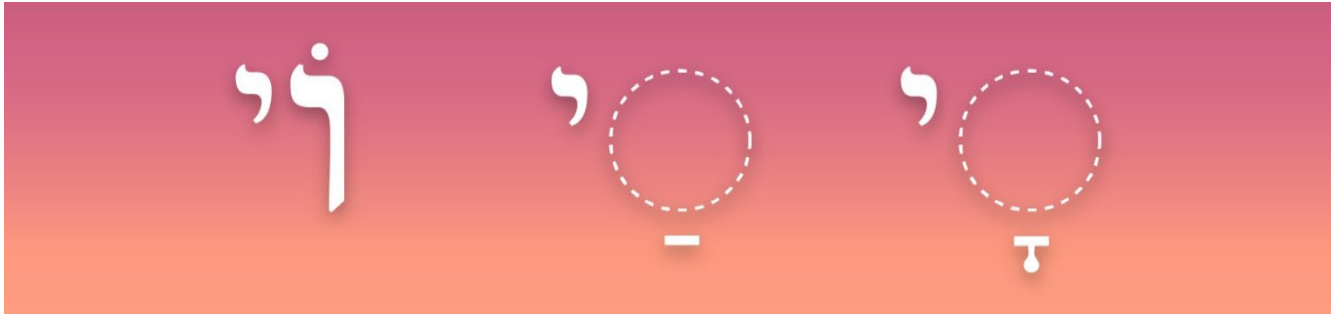


Who is like You, Adonai, among the gods; מִי־כַמֹּכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה
Who, like You, is majestic in holiness, מִי כַמֹּכָה נְאֻדָּר בִּקְדוּשׁ
awesome in praises, working wonders? נִרְאָה תְהִלָּת עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא:

Song: Mi Chamocha (מִי־כַמֹּכָה)

The song Mi Chamocha is courtesy of the TDHS Rock Shabbat Ensemble (Songwriter: Debbie Friedman).
The full video is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/sSSc-QEbd44>.

4. Words Ending in AY and OY



URL: <https://jitap.net/activities/gewl/play/>

Overview

We learn about words ending with the sounds aye or oy. Reading practice is Genesis 12:2 and the song 'Elohai Neshama' (אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה) from Shacharit. The lesson is divided into 3 parts, with reading practice involving each vowel combination.

Reading Practice: Shacharit - Elohai Neshama (אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה)

אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה שְׁנַתָּה בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא... כָּל־זְמַן
שֶׁהַנֶּשְׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי רַבּוֹן כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲדוֹן כָּל־הַנְּשָׁמוֹת:

My God, the soul which You have given me is pure;....All the time the soul is within me I give thanks to You, Adonai my God, and God of my fathers, Ruler of all creatures, Master of all souls.

Song: Elohai Neshama (אֱלֹהֵי נִשְׁמָה)

This version of the song Elohai Neshama is by the Chloe Pourmorady Ensemble.

The full video is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/Kxi8Ciscf04>. You can listen on Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/track/0t3OAv3kKs7GOan8AYbcoR?si=216c39f24b0b43e3>.

Reading Practice: Psalm 51:17 and Amidah



אֲדֹנָי שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:
Adonai, open my lips, and let my mouth declare Your praise.

Psalm 51:17 and Amidah



Reading Practice: Genesis 12:2



I will make you a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you shall be a blessing.

וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ גֹדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ
וְאֶגְדָּלְךָ שִׁמְךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:

-Genesis 12:2-



5. Words Ending in AV



URL: <https://jitap.net/activities/geqf/play/>

Overview

We learn about the vowel combination that says 'AV' at the end of a word. Reading practice and songs includes verses from Psalms 144 and 145:9 that have examples of words ending in 'AV'.

Reading Practice: Psalm 144:15

Song: Ashrei Ha'am (Psalm 144:15)

You can view the full song 'Ashrei' by Jeremy Gimpel on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-FYe52WCLw> .

Reading Practice: Psalm 145:9



טוֹב־יְהוָה לְכָל
 וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׁיו:

Adonai is good to all
 and His compassion is over all His works.

Psalm 145:9

Reading Practice: Psalm 145:17



צַדִּיק יְהוָה בְּכָל־דַּרְכָּיו
 וְחַסִּיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׁיו:

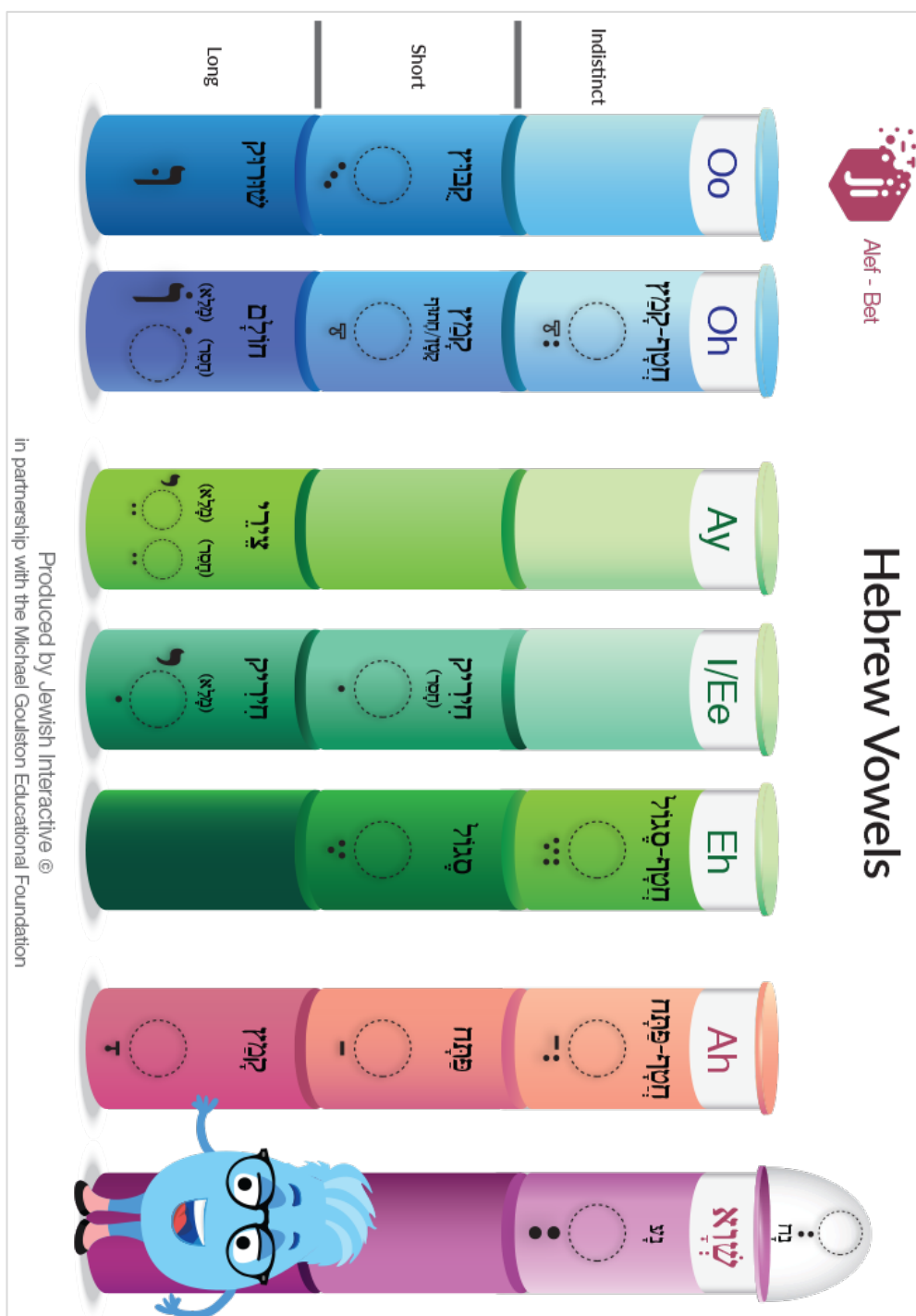
Adonai is just in all His ways
 and loving in all His works.

Psalm 145:17

Posters for download

We have created posters of the vowel names and sounds for you to download and use in your classroom. Download the print-ready [PDF files here](#). We have 2 versions, one with our Kamats Katan conventions, and the other with the regular Kamats Katan (for adults).

Vowel names in Hebrew





Alef - Bet

Hebrew Vowels

Indistinct	Short	Long
 Oo	 KUBUTS	 SHURUK
 Oh	 KAMATS KATANCHATUF	 CHOLAM (MALE) (CHASER)
 Ay	 TSAYRAY (MALE) (CHASER)	
 I/Ee	 CHIRIK (CHASER)	 CHIRIK (MALE)
 Eh	 SEGOL	 CHATAF- SEGOL
 Ah	 PATACH	 KAMATS
 SILENT Sheva VOCAL	 SILENT Sheva VOCAL	 SILENT Sheva VOCAL

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Credits

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Educator Guide	Corinne Ossendryver & Rachel Silke

With special thanks to
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