

day : יוֹם	to, towards : אֶל-
days (irreg. pl.) : יָמִים	God : אֱלֹהִים
Israel : יִשְׂרָאֵל	who, which (relative pronoun) : אֲשֶׁר
all : כָּל	marker of definite, direct object : אֶת-
all of (construct form) : כָּל-	he goes, comes (part.) : בָּא
what?: מָה	she goes, comes (part.) : בָּאָה
altar : מִזְבֵּחַ	son, child : בֶּן
he does, makes (part.) : עָשָׂה	sons, children (irreg. pl.) : בָּנִים
she does, makes (part.) : עָשָׂה	Yahweh (usually read "LORD") : יְהוָה

Chapter 4: Adjectives, the object marker אֶת-, and prepositions (cont.)

In this chapter the student will begin to read larger selections of Hebrew prose. Students will also learn the various uses of the adjective, which is critical for understanding Hebrew sentences. Likewise, students must learn to identify the definite direct object (DDO) marker אֶת- and become proficient at producing and translating prefixed prepositions.

The following is a list of the **essential items** that must be learned in this chapter:

1. **Form of the adjective**
2. **Uses of the adjective (predicate and attributive)**
3. **Use of object marker אֶת-.**
4. **Vowel changes associated with prefixed prepositions**
5. **Preposition לְ and its usages.**

One: The adjective (introduction and orthography)

The adjective, like the active participle, has four forms (masculine singular [ms], masculine plural [mp], feminine singular [fs], and feminine plural [fp]). When adjectives modify nouns they must agree in gender and number. Unlike nouns, which are sometimes irregular in gender and number, adjectives are very regular and follow a set pattern. The forms of the adjective are similar to the active participle and must be memorized (see CD; Example 4.01).

Plural	Singular	
טוֹבִים	טוֹב	Masculine
טוֹבוֹת	טוֹבָה	Feminine

Vowel reductions:

Just as was the case for plural nouns, the same rules of vowel reduction apply for various forms of the adjective (see chapter 3, part one): (Example 4.02)

Translation	fp	mp	fs	ms
good	טוֹבוֹת	טוֹבִים	טוֹבָה	טוֹב
big, great	גְּדוּלִים	גְּדוּלָה	גְּדוּלָה	גְּדוּל
wise	חֲכָמוֹת	חֲכָמִים	חֲכָמָה	חֲכָם
beautiful	יְפוֹת	יְפִים	יְפָה	יְפֵה
hard, difficult	קְשׁוֹת	קְשִׁים	קְשָׁה	קְשֵׁה

Two: Uses of the adjective (predicative and attributive)

In English adjectives are often thought of as *attributive*—they modify a noun, and they often precede the noun that they modify. For example, in the phrase “the big dog,” the word *big*

is an adjective that modifies the noun “dog.” In the cases where the adjective modifies the noun, the adjective is called an *attributive* adjective.

English also has *predicate* adjectives. These adjectives, like *attributive* adjectives, describe a noun, but they do the describing by making a comment about a noun rather than simply modifying the noun. It is also common for a predicate adjective to be followed by a linking verb such as the verb to *be*. For example, the sentence “The dog is big” contains a predicate adjective. In this sentence, the word “big” describes the dog by making a comment about the dog. In such cases, the adjective is called a *predicate*.

The attributive adjective in Hebrew

Hebrew also has *attributive* and *predicate* adjectives. Unlike English, the attributive adjective in Hebrew normally follows the noun that it modifies. Thus, the phrase “a big dog” is written as כְּלָב גָּדוֹל. Another difference from English is that Hebrew attributive adjectives must agree in gender, number, and definiteness with the noun that they modify. For example, the equivalent of “the big dog” written in Hebrew would be “the dog, the big” (הַכֶּלֶב הַגָּדוֹל). Just as is the case with indefinite attributive adjectives, the definite attributive adjective follows the noun that it modifies. The following examples illustrate different possibilities for the use of attributive adjectives: **(Example 4.03)**

“a good man” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. indefinite	אִישׁ טוֹב
“a good woman” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. indefinite	אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה
“the good man” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. definite	הָאִישׁ הַטוֹב
“the good woman” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. definite	הָאִשָּׁה הַטוֹבָה
“a big dog” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. indefinite	כְּלָב גָּדוֹל

“the big dog” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. definite	הַכֶּלֶב הַגָּדוֹל
“a big city” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. indefinite	עִיר גְּדוֹלָה
“the big city” -agrees in gender & number; both noun and adj. definite	הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה

The predicate adjective in Hebrew

Predicate adjectives describe a noun by making a comment about the noun. Since Hebrew does not have a copula (“to be” verb) in present tense, simple sentences can be constructed by putting the noun and adjective next to each other. The predicate adjective can either precede or follow the noun. The linking verb (“to be”) is understood. The following are examples of simple sentences with a noun and predicate adjective: (**Example 4.04**)

A man is good.	טוֹב אִישׁ
A man is good.	אִישׁ טוֹב
The man is good.	טוֹב הָאִישׁ
The man is good	הָאִישׁ טוֹב
the men are good	הָאֲנָשִׁים טוֹבִים
the men are good	טוֹבִים הָאֲנָשִׁים
A woman is good.	טוֹבָה אִשָּׁה
A woman is good.	אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה

How to distinguish between predicate and attributive adjectives

The student will notice that several of the examples given above for attributive and predicate adjectives are identical. That is, some examples are used for both attributive and predicate adjectives. Specifically, **טוֹב אִישׁ** can either be a phrase with an attributive adjective

and be translated as “a good man,” or **אִישׁ טוֹב** can be a simple sentence with a predicate adjective and be translated “a man is good.” While these instances can be frustrating for the beginning student, the actual practice is not that ambiguous because there are normally indicators that allow the student to distinguish between an *attributive* adjective and *predicate* adjective. The following “rules” are helpful:

1. If the Hebrew adjective does not agree in definiteness with the noun, then the adjective is a predicate. The adjective can either precede or follow the noun. **(Example 4.05)**

- **טוֹב הָאִישׁ** “The man is good”
- **טוֹב הָאִישׁ** “The man is good”
- **טוֹבִים הָאֲנָשִׁים** “The men are good”
- **טוֹבִים הָאֲנָשִׁים** “The men are good”
- **טוֹבָה הָאִשָּׁה** “The woman is good”
- **טוֹבָה הָאִשָּׁה** “The woman is good”

2. If the adjective precedes the noun, then the adjective is normally a *predicate* even if neither the noun nor the adjective is definite. **(Example 4.06)**

- **טוֹב אִישׁ** “A man is good”
- **טוֹבִים אֲנָשִׁים** “Men are good”
- **טוֹבָה אִשָּׁה** “A woman is good”

3. If both noun and adjective are definite, then the adjective is an *attributive* adjective.

(Example 4.07)

- **הַכֶּלֶב הַגָּדוֹל** “the big dog”
- **הָאִישׁ הַטוֹב** “the good man”

- הַטוֹבָה הָאִשָּׁה “the good woman”
- הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה “the great city”

4. If neither the noun nor the adjective is definite, and the adjective follows the noun, then the determination of whether the adjective is attributive or predicate is based on context.

(Example 4.08)

- אִישׁ טוֹב “a good man” or “a man is good”
- אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה “a good woman” or “a woman is good”
- אַנְשֵׁים טוֹבִים “good men” or “men are good”
- כֶּלֶב גָּדוֹל “a big dog” or “a dog is big”

As the above examples illustrate, there are some helpful rules for distinguishing between attributive and predicative adjectives, but much is left up to the context. The following table summarizes the above possibilities that must be further clarified by context: **(Example 4.09)**

Possible translation (not preferred)	translation	Hebrew phrase
a man is good	a good man	אִישׁ טוֹב
n/a	a man is good	טוֹב אִישׁ
men are good	good men	אַנְשֵׁים טוֹבִים
n/a	men are good	טוֹבִים אַנְשֵׁים
n/a	the men are good	הָאֲנָשִׁים טוֹבִים
n/a	the men are good	טוֹבִים הָאֲנָשִׁים
n/a	the good men	הָאֲנָשִׁים הַטוֹבִים

Three: the definite direct object (DDO) marker ׀תּ

Hebrew sentences typically have a particle that marks a definite, direct object (DDO). The particle (׀תּ [with a *maqeph*] or less frequently תּ [without a *maqeph*]) is not translated but simply identifies the direct object of the sentence. If the direct object is not definite (does not have a definite article or is a proper name), then there is no particle to mark the object. The following examples illustrate that usage of this particle: (**Example 4.10**)

“The king loves the people” תּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־הָעָם

“The king loves Bathsheba” תּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־בֵּת־שֶׁבַע

If there are multiple direct objects that are definite, then the DDO may be repeated for each object. (**Example 4.11**)

“The LORD makes the heavens and earth” עֲשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ

“The king loves Bathsheba and the people” תּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־בֵּת־שֶׁבַע וְאֶת־הָעָם

Four: Prefixed prepositions (cont.)

As discussed above in Chapter 2, the prefixed prepositions (כִּי “like, as,” לְ “to, towards,” and בְּ “in, on”) are simply added to indefinite nouns, and the vowel underneath the prefixed preposition is a *šwā* (ֹ). However, there is an exception to this rule if the noun that the prefixed preposition is attached to begins with a vocal *šwā* (ֹ). In these instances, the **rule of *šwā*** (ֹ) comes into play.

The Rule of šěwā^ʔ (ְ): this rule simply states that two vocal šěwā^ʔs (ְ) are not tolerated in Hebrew. If a situation arises where there would have been two vocal šěwā^ʔs (ְ) without an intervening consonant, then the first vocal šěwā^ʔ (ְ) becomes a *hîreq* (ֿ) and the second šěwā^ʔ (ְ) becomes a silent šěwā^ʔ (ְ) and marks the end of the syllable.

The following examples illustrate how the **The Rule of šěwā^ʔ (ְ)** functions with the prefixed prepositions: **(Example 4.12)**

Combination	Noun starting with šěwā ^ʔ	Preposition
“to places” לְמִקְוֹמוֹת	“places” מִקְוֹמוֹת	לְ
“like kings” כְּמִלְכִים	“kings” מִלְכִים	כְּ
“in paths” בְּדַרְכִים	“paths” דַּרְכִים	בְּ
“To Samuel” לְשִׁמוֹאֵל	“Samuel” שִׁמוֹאֵל	לְ

Exceptions to the Rule of šěwā^ʔ (ְ).

There are two exceptions to the above rule.

1. If the second vocal šěwā^ʔ (ְ) is found below the consonant yod, then the second šěwā^ʔ (ְ) is dropped. **(Example 4.13)**

Combination	Noun starting with šěwā ^ʔ	Preposition
“to Judah” לְיְהוּדָה	“Judah” יְהוּדָה	לְ
“to Jerusalem” לְיְרוּשָׁלַם	“Jerusalem” יְרוּשָׁלַם	לְ

2. If the first consonant of the noun is a guttural, then the guttural will take a composite *šəwā*². In these cases, the prefixed preposition will take a vowel that corresponds to the composite *šəwā*². (Example 4.13)

Combination	Noun starting with <i>šəwā</i> ²	Preposition
“in a dream” בְּחֵלֹם	“a dream” חֵלֹם	בְּ
“in truth” בְּאֵמֶת	“truth” אֵמֶת	בְּ

Exercise 4a: Translate into English (if there are two possibilities, give both possibilities)

Exercise 4b: Translate into Hebrew

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. A good man | 7. The woman is good |
| 2. The good man | 8. The men are good |
| 3. The good men | 9. The big men are evil |
| 4. A good woman | 10. The big and good men. |
| 5. The good woman | 11. The men and the women are evil. |
| 6. The man is good | 12. The sons are big. |

Exercise 4c: Translate the following paragraph into English. (Example 4.14)

1. דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ: הוּא יֹשֵׁב בְּהִיכָל הַגְּדוֹל בִּירוּשָׁלַם: הוּא עֹשֶׂה כָּמֹה הַיָּשָׁר וְהַטוֹב
2. בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: דָּוִד שִׁפֹּט אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָתַן הוּא כֶסֶף וְזָהָב לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
3. דָּוִד אֱהָב אֶת־יְהוָה וְעָבַד הוּא אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲצֵל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר בְּעִיר דָּוִד:
4. דָּוִד יֹשֵׁב בְּבַיִת אֶחָד וַיֵּשְׁבִים הַנְּשִׂים וּבָנֵי דָוִד בְּבַיִת אֶחָד: בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
5. הָיָה בָּא דָּוִד לְגַן־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּעִיר דָּוִד אֲצֵל הַהִיכָל בְּהַר הָאֱלֹהִים:
6. וְאִזּוֹ רָאָה דָּוִד אֶת בַּת־שֶׁבַע: בַּת־שֶׁבַע הִיא אִשָּׁה יָפָה אֲשֶׁר אִשְׁתִּי אֹרִיָּה
7. הַחִתִּי: דָּוִד אֱהָב אֶת־בַּת־שֶׁבַע אִשְׁתִּי אֹרִיָּה הַחִתִּי וְהַדְּבָר הָיָה רָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה:

Translation aids: 1: הַיָּשָׁר הַטוֹב: ideas or concepts are often found with the definite article in Hebrew. Thus, “He does what is good and upright” is written as “He does what is ‘the good’ and ‘the upright.’” 2: לְבָנֵי: “to the children of.” 3: אֶחָד: one; אֶחָד: another; 5: הָיָה: was; 6: רָאָה: saw; בַּת־שֶׁבַע: Bathsheba; אִשָּׁה: wife of (in construct); אֹרִיָּה: Uriah; 7: הַחִתִּי: the Hittite;

Exercise 4d: Translate the following into Hebrew:

1. David is a good man who loves YHWH.
2. David is the king who serves God near that alter.
3. David does what is good in the eyes of YHWH.
4. David judges the men and the women who live in Israel.
5. David writes the good words in the book of God.
6. David walks to the garden which is in the great palace.
7. David says to Bathsheba: I love YHWH.
8. David sits upon the throne in the beautiful palace in Jerusalem.
9. David gives gold and silver to the people.