

Long vowels

a(ֹ)

e(ֵ/ֶ)

i(ִ)

o(֓/֔)

u(֕)

Short vowels

a(ֶ)

e(ִ)

i(ֶ)

o(ִ)

u(ֶ)

Notes:

1. Though categorized as a, e, i, o and u, the sounds made by the Hebrew vowels are not the English /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/. See the next chart for the actual vowel sounds. Classifying vowels as a-class, e-class, i-class, o-class and u-class is for the sake of grammar, not sound.
2. The vowels in Hebrew words will lengthen or shorten based on various conditions and rules. For that reason, it is necessary to know the categories of **Long** and **Short**.
3. The long vowels written with ֹ or ֕ and are historic long vowels. These vowels never reduce (or shorten). They are “unchangeably long.”

The name for David is written דָּוִד and also דָּוִדִּי and the *hirik* in the first instance is considered to be long (though it looks short).

Mostly[†] Modern Hebrew Vowel Pronunciation[‡]

| | Vowels | | | Diphthongs ^{††} | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| a-class | | | | | | |
| ◌ֶ | ah | <u>f</u> ather | <i>kamats</i> | יֶ◌ | eye | my עַיִן |
| ◌ַ | ah | | <i>pataḥ</i> | יְ◌ | eye | |
| ◌ְ | ah [*] | | <i>ḥatef-pataḥ</i> | יְ◌ֶ | eye | |
| | | | | יֶ◌ֶ | av | <u>l</u> ava |
| e-class | | | | | | |
| יְ◌ֶ | eh/ay [†] | g <u>e</u> t/ <u>th</u> ey | <i>tsere-yod</i> | יְ◌ֶ | ay ^{***} | <u>d</u> ay |
| ◌ֶ | eh | g <u>e</u> t | <i>tsere</i> | | | |
| ◌ֵ | eh | | <i>segol</i> | | | |
| ◌ְ | eh [*] | | <i>ḥatef-segol</i> | | | |
| i-class | | | | | | |
| יְ◌ֶ | ī/ee [†] | <u>i</u> ntrigue | <i>ḥirik-yod</i> | | | |
| ◌ֶ | ī/ee | | <i>ḥirik</i> | | | |
| o-class | | | | | | |
| ◌ֹ | o | <u>m</u> ore | <i>ḥolam-vav</i> | וְיֹ | oy | <u>t</u> oy |
| ◌ֻ | o | | <i>ḥolam [ḥaser]</i> | | | |
| ◌ֶ | o | | <i>kamats-ḥatuf</i> | | | |
| ◌ְ | aw ^{**} | <u>s</u> aw | <i>ḥatef-kamats</i> | | | |
| u-class | | | | | | |
| ◌ֹ | oo | <u>t</u> oo | <i>shuruk</i> | | | |
| ◌ֻ | oo | | <i>kubuts</i> | וְיֹ | ouee | <u>f</u> o <u>e</u> y |
| Sheva שְׁוָא | | | | | | |
| ◌ְ | ah | Vocal at the start of a syllable, silent at the end of a syllable. | | | | |

[†]Mostly Modern Hebrew... meaning that Biblical Hebrew teachers have affected some sounds. Hence, there are two sounds listed for the long e-class and i-class vowels. For the **e-class**, compare הֵיט or טֵיט with the sound made in בֵּיט. For the **i-class**, compare the final vowel of הַפְּעִיל with the pronunciation of הֵיא –which leads to the modern mnemonic, “me is who, who is he, **he** is she.” [‡]Chart adapted from Rothblum, et.al., *Hebrew Primer: A Language Course*, Behrman House: 1987. ^{††}A י is preceded by a vowel not homogenous to it, so it retains its consonantal character. ^{*}Composite Sheva, a half-vowel, is vocal and marks the start of a syllable.

^{**}The o-class composite sheva is vocal and has a nearly a-class sound. ^{***}A vowel according to Fuller’s grammar