

Missing letter guide -- finding the root of a "weak" verb in Biblical Hebrew by Naama Zahavi-Ely

Special cases:

- If the two letters are **לכ** the missing letter is a first **ה** and the root is **הלכ**
** Watch out for the **ל** preposition + 2nd person singular pronominal suffix!
- If the two letters are **קח** the missing letter is a first **ל** and the root is **לקח**
- If you find only **תנ** or **נת** or only **ת**, the root is **נתנ**

If not one of the special cases listed above,
the **only** possibilities are: first Yod, first Nun, middle Vav or Yod (hollow), final Heh, or geminate

Prefix form, two root letters only (all examples in 3ms):

- Qamatz under the prefix >> Qal or Hifil, middle Yod/Vav (Qal usually has "o/a" vowel, Hifil "e/ee")
(example: Qal **יָבֵא**, Hifil **יִבְיֵא**, both from the root **בוא**)
- Tzere under the prefix >> Qal stem, usually first Yod, rarely final Heh
(examples: **יִדַע** from **ידע**, **יִבְדַּךְ** from **בכה**)
- Dagesh in the first root letter you have >> Qal stem, usually first Nun, rarely first Yod
(examples: **יִפֹּל** from **נפל**, **יִצַק** from **יצק**; check lexicon to be sure)
- A vowel indicator **י** after the prefix >> Qal stem, first Yod (example: **יִירָא** from **ירא**)
- A vowel indicator **ו** after the prefix >> Hifil stem, first Yod (example: **יִוָשִׁיב** from **ישב**)
- None of the above, two root letters: final Heh (examples: **יִרָא** from **ראה**, **יִשָּׁב** from **שבה**)
- If all else fails: try geminates (identical 2nd and 3rd root letters like **סבב**)

Not prefix form, two root letters only:

- Affix 1st or 2nd person, two root letters + Yod vowel indicator after the 2nd: final Heh root
(example in 1cs: **רָאִיתִי** from **ראה**)
- Affix 3fs with an extra final **ת** before the **ה** ending: final Heh root (example: **שָׁבְתָה** from **שבה**)
- Participle plural, two root letters, "o" vowel: final Heh root (example: **רֹאִים** from **ראה**)
- Participle plural, two root letters, "a" or "e" vowel: middle-Vav-Yod root (example: **בֹּאִים** from **בוא**)
- Two root letters, the vowel is Qamatz: Qal, affix 3ms or participle ms of middle Yod/Vav root
(example: **בָּא** from **בוא**)
- Two root letters, the vowel is "o" or "ee": Qal, imperative 2ms or infinitive, middle Yod/Vav root
(examples: **בֹּא** or **בֵּא** from **בוא**, **שִׁים** from **שים**, **קוּם** from **קום**).
- Two root letters, the vowel is Zere: Qal imperative 2ms of a first Yod root (example: **שֹׁב** from **ישב**)
(exception: very few middle Yod/Vav affix 3ms/participle ms take this vowel, like **מוֹת**)
- Two root letters, segolet pattern + **ת** on the end: infinitive of first Yod root (**שָׁבְתָ** from **ישב**)
- Two root letters+ **וֹת** on the end: infinitive of final Heh root (**רֹאוֹת** from **ראה**)
- **ה** or **מ** followed by a vowel indicator (usually **ו**) and two root letters: Hifil, first Yod root (**הוֹשִׁיב** from **ישב**)
- **ה** or **מ** followed by two root letters with a dagesh in the first: Hifil, first Nun root (**הִפִּיל** from **נפל**)
- If all else fails: try geminates (identical 2nd and 3rd root letters) like **סבב**

One root letter only (example in prefix 3ms): first nun+final heh, usually Hifil (**יִנַּח** from **נכה**)

The only common root in this pattern is **נכה**; **נטה** and **נזה** are the only two others.