

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

Special cases:

- If the two letters are לַכ 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)
The Qamatz changes to a Sheva if a longer ending moves the stress to the left: יִבְיֵאִים from בוא
- Tzere under the prefix >> Qal stem, usually first Yod, rarely final Heh
(examples: יִדַע from ידע, יִבְךָ 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 "o" after the prefix >> Hifil stem, first Yod (example: יִישַׁב from ישב)
- A vowel indicator ו "oo" after the prefix: Hofal stem, first Yod or middle Yod/Vav
- 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: יִרְאֶיךָ from ראה)
- Affix 3fs with an extra final ת before the ה ending: final Heh root (example: יִשְׁבְּתָהּ from שבה)
- Participle plural, two root letters, "o" vowel: final Heh root (example: רְאִים from ראה)
- Participle plural, two root letters, "a" or "e" vowel: middle-Vav-Yod root (example: בְּאִים 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: בּוֹא or בֵּא from בוא, קוּם from קום, שֵׁים from שים)
- Two root letters, the vowel is Zere: Qal imperative 2ms of a first Yod root (example: שֵׁב 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 (יִשְׁבֵּת from ישב)
- Two root letters+ וֹת on the end: infinitive of final Heh root (רְאוּת from ראה)
- ה or מ followed by י or ו "o" vowel indicator and two root letters: Hifil, first Yod root (יִשְׁבֵּהּ from ישב)
- ה or מ followed by ו "oo" vowel indicator and two root letters: Hofal, first Yod or middle Yod/Vav
- ה or מ followed by two root letters with a dagesh in the first: Hifil, first Nun root (נִפְּלוּ 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 (יָדַע from נכה)

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