

The Aleph-Bet - The Hebrew Alphabet

Hebrew Letter									
What it's called	Tet	Chet	Zayin	Vuv	Hey	Dulet	Gimel	Bet	Aleph
How it sounds	T	Ch As in loch	Z	V / O / OO	H	D	G	B / V	Silent letter
Hebrew Letter									
What it's called	Sumech	Final Nun	Nun	Final Mem	Mem	Lumed	Final Kuf	Kuf	Yud
How it sounds	S	N		M		L	CH / C		Y / J
Hebrew Letter									
What it's called	Tuv	Shin	Resh	Qof	Final Tzade	Tzade	Final Pey	Pey	Ayin
How it sounds	T	S / SH	R	K	Tz		P / F		Silent letter

Teachers' Notes

Transliterating from Hebrew is tricky. I have tried to spell the names of the letters as near as possible to the way they are said. (Many books will spell them differently). eg. In Dulet, Vuv, Lumed, Yud, Sumech and Tuv the u has the sound of u in sun. This sound is commonly transliterated as a (ie Dalet, Vav, Lamed, Samech, Yad, Tav).

On the other hand in Nun and Kuf the u has the sound of the oo in book.

Note that with the exception of Vuv, which can represent the vowel sounds of o (as in body) or oo (as in food) and Yud, which can be used to represent the sounds ay or eey, all the letters are consonants.

The ch sound, used in the English word chair is not used in Hebrew. When transliterating Hebrew into English characters ch is usually used to denote the sound at the end of the Scots word loch. (This sound is technically known as an unvoiced palatal fricative). Hebrew also has no use for the sounds of j or w.

Hebrew also uses the letters of the alphabet as numerals. The first 10 letters have the values 1 - 10; other letters have higher values such as 50 and 100. It works rather like the Roman system. This means that every Hebrew word has a numerical value - a fact that has been put to use in the system known as Gematria, which tries to elicit meaning by comparing the numerical values of words in a text (the assumption being that, since language is God's gift, any numerical links between words are not coincidental).

The Hebrew font I have used here is SPTiberian which you can download for free (should you want it) from <http://www.aarweb.org/fonts/default.asp> . (In fact if you have downloaded the .doc file of this document you will not see the Hebrew letters unless you have this font installed on your computer.