

Write Your Name in Hebrew Characters

Follow these instructions very carefully.

If you are a boy write the following 3 things:

- your first name
- ben (ben means son of)
- your father's first name

If you are a girl write the following 3 things:

- your first name
- but (but means daughter of)
- your mother's first name

Like this:

PETER BEN PHILIP

or

SARAH BUT ALISON

- If your name has a Y or EE sound in it, like Steven or Amy add a Y to your name - like this:

PETER = PEYTER

AIMIE =AYMIEY

- If your name ends in A add an H on the end REBECCA = REBECCA H
- Now cross out all the vowels, unless they are at the beginning of the name - like this:

~~PEYTER BEN PHILIP~~

or

~~SARAH BUT ALISON~~

- Now write out the remaining letters:

PYTR BN PHLP

or

SRH BT ALSN

- Next write out the name backwards! (Because Hebrew reads from Right to Left)

PLPh NB RTYP

or

NSLA TB HRS

(Remember: Ph is one sound, so in Hebrew it will be one letter. It's the same with Ch and Sh)

- Now use the Hebrew alephbet to replace the English letters with Hebrew letters. If there is a first vowel use the letter aleph (which actually has no sound!)

פיתר בן פלפ

or

סרה בת אלשנ

Things to watch out for:

- P and PH use the same Hebrew letter (pey) פ
- For TH use tav ת
- For SH use shin ש
- For CH use kaf כ
- For J use yod י
- For vowels at the beginning of a word use aleph א
- For W and for OO sounds (as in Susan) use vav ו

Remember: Some letters have a different shape if they are at the END of a word (ie the LEFT hand end!)

Here are some examples of English names that began as Hebrew names.

English name	What it sounds like in Hebrew	How it is written in Hebrew	English name	What it sounds like in Hebrew	How it is written in Hebrew
David	Dovid	דוֹד	Sarah	Sarai	שָׂרַי
Adam	Udum	אָדָם	Rebecca	Rivkah	רִבְקָה
Benjamin	Binyamin	בְּנִימִן	Rachel	Rachel	רָחֵל

Teachers' Notes

This system gives an approximate transliteration of names (or other words) into unpointed Hebrew characters. (Points or nikkudim are a system of dots and other marks which are used to indicate the vowel sounds for the benefit of those whose Hebrew is not fluent).

Several Hebrew characters can be pronounced in more than one way according to the context of the text. In pointed text the appropriate sound will be indicated by placing a dot either inside or above the character. (see examples below)

Although the Hebrew alphabet does not have any vowels some vowel sounds are indicated. Vowel sounds ending in Y such as AY, EE and EY are spelt in Hebrew with the letter yod י ,

The letter pey פ can be pronounced either as P or as PH.

The letter shin ש can have the sound S or SH.

The letter vav ו doubles as both the sound V and the vowel sounds OO and AW and is generally also used to transliterate W, a sound that does not occur in Hebrew. (ו = V ; וּ = OO ; וֹ = OW or AW)

There are several other English sounds that are not used in Hebrew.

J - strange - you can't write the words Jew, Jewish or Judaism in Hebrew! Use yod י

CH - use kaf כ , which can have the sounds K or CH (as in loch).

TH - use tav ט (For some Jews, especially those originating from Eastern Europe, tav can be either T or S. For others it is always T)

The two silent letters (aleph א and ayin ע) will always have associated vowel sounds - hence the use of aleph for initial vowels.

Hebrew characters are best written with a broad italic nib, which approximates well to the quill pen that is traditionally used, enabling you to make broad horizontal strokes and narrow vertical strokes.

It is possible to purchase Hebrew letter stencils. Try: The Jewish Resources Centre, CREDE, Roehampton University of Surrey, Digby Stuart College, Howard Building, Room 102, Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PH (020 8392 3349)