

Learning Hebrew: Pronouns

PRONOUNS

In Hebrew pronouns function like pronouns in English . that is, a word that replaces a noun. The pronoun refers back to a noun that is called the antecedent.

INDEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns can be first, second, or third person and either singular or plural.

First person pronouns refer to the person speaking. These pronouns are .common. because they are not gender-based.

I – אֲנִי, אֲנִי

We – אֲנַחְנוּ

Second person pronouns refer to the person being spoken to. These pronouns are gender-based.

You (masculine) אַתָּה (singular) אַתְּם (plural)

You (feminine) אַתְּ (singular) אַתְּנָה (plural)

Third person pronouns refer to the person or thing being spoken of. These pronouns are genderbased.

He/It (masculine) הוּא They הֵם, הֵמָּה

She/It (feminine) הִיא They הֵן, הֵמָּה

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS AND ADJECTIVES

Demonstratives increase a word.s specificity (example: *a* woman becomes *the* woman). Hebrew demonstratives work just like English demonstratives.

Masculine . This הַזֶּה (singular) These אֵלֶּה (plural)

Feminine . This הַזֹּאת (singular) These אֵלֶּה (plural)

Masculine . That הַהוּא (singular) Those הֵמָּה, הֵם (plural)

Feminine . That הַהִיא (singular) Those הֵמָּה, הֵן (plural)

When a demonstrative is used as an adjective, it follows the modified noun and agrees in gender, number, and definite article with the noun (Example: הַזֶּה הַשֵּׁשׁ).

When a demonstrative is used as a pronoun, it precedes the modified noun and agrees in gender and number, but not the definite articles (Example: אֵלֶּה הַבָּנִים).

The modifying adjective is placed between the modified noun and the adjective. It agrees in gender, number, and definite article with the noun (Example: הַטוֹבִים הַהֵם).

RELATIVE PRONOUN

A relative pronoun (who, that which) introduces a relative clause that modifies a noun. This pronoun (אֲשֶׁר) appears after the noun (Example: הַגֵּן - אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ).

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

These pronouns are used to ask a question. The main pronouns are מִי (who) and מָה or מַה (what).

מִי - אֵתָהּ
מָה - מִוּ שׁ
מַה - עֲשִׂיתָ

INTERROGATIVE PARTICLE

The interrogative particle is prefixed to the first word of the sentence to indicate a question (Example: הַנְּבִיִּים - אֵת הַמְּלָךְ).

This particle is spelled three ways:

Prefixed to most consonants: הַ

Prefixed to a guttural consonant or consonant with a sheva: הֶ

Prefixed to a guttural consonant followed by a kamets: הֵ

Sources:

The First Hebrew Primer, Third Edition by Simon, Resnikoff, and Motzkin

Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar by Pratico and Van Pelt