

## Introduction to the Hebrew Noun, Adjective and Construct

A **noun** is a person, place or thing. Ex: Abraham, Sarah, Jerusalem, Sinai, king, queen

A **pronoun** ‘stands’ for a noun. Ex: I, you, he, she, they, them, we, mine, his, theirs

(Note: a noun used in its various forms is **declined**, and the forms are called **declensions**; verbs, on the other hand, are conjugated.)

Ex: the pronoun ‘me’ declined with various prepositions. In Hebrew these are one word:

בִּי in-me; כְּמִי like-me; לִי to-me; מִמֶּנִּי from-me; עָלַי above-me; אֵלַי toward-me)

An **adjective** describes a noun. Ex: good, bad, many, few, new, old, holy, profane

A **participle** in Hebrew is a verbal noun, made from a verb that ‘participates’ in another grammar form (note: a Hebrew participle is somewhat different from a participle in English). Ex: guard/guarded-one, savior/saved-one, helper/helped-one

In Hebrew, all nouns have **p-g-n**:

**person** (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**gender** (masculine, feminine)

**number** (singular, plural).

**In Hebrew, all nouns are either masculine or feminine** (a few are used as both, as with the 1<sup>st</sup> person common pronouns, see chart below).

**There is no ‘it’ in Hebrew.**

Here is a chart of the **ten Hebrew p-g-n**, with pronoun examples

(note: the first persons, I, me; we, us, combine gender in common)

plural		singular	
1 <sup>st</sup> person common	Ex: we, us	1 <sup>st</sup> person common	Ex: I, me
2 <sup>nd</sup> person <b>masculine</b>	Ex: you-all (m)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person <b>masculine</b>	Ex: you (m)
2 <sup>nd</sup> person <b>feminine</b>	Ex: you-all (f)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person <b>feminine</b>	Ex: you (f)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person <b>masculine</b>	Ex: they, them (m)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person <b>masculine</b>	Ex: he, him
3 <sup>rd</sup> person <b>feminine</b>	Ex: they, them (f)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person <b>feminine</b>	Ex: she, her

**How to tell the difference between a masculine noun and a feminine noun:**

Most (but not all!) feminine nouns end in ך- or ת-

Most (but not all!) of the other endings are masculine.

Most (but not all!) masculine plural nouns end in ם-י

Most (but not all!) feminine plural nouns end in ת-ו

## Adjectives

On the other hand, in Hebrew, the **adjective**, which describe a noun, **always** agrees with the noun in gender, number, and if applicable, definiteness.

(These three things make a noun definite (it describes **the** noun as opposed to just **a** noun)

1. if it has **the definite article 'the'** - ה in front of it

2. it has a **possessive suffix** after it

3. it is a **proper noun**.

Ex:

הַמִּשְׁכָּן **the**-tabernacle (definite article ה)

אַחֵיךָ **your**-brethren (possessive suffix ך)

מֹשֶׁה **Moses** (proper noun))

### Adjective chart

plural	singular	
ים-	(all other endings)	masculine
ות-	ה- ת-	feminine

Ex: טוב (good)

plural	singular	
טובים	טוב	masculine
טובות	טובה	feminine

Ex: רע (bad)

plural	singular	
רעים	רע	masculine
רעות	רעה	feminine

Ex: נוֹרָא (fearsome)

plural	singular	
נוֹרָאִים	נוֹרָא	masculine
נוֹרָאוֹת	נוֹרָאָה	feminine

There are two types of adjectives:

### Descriptive adjective:

1. **simply** describes the noun (large, small, light, dark)
2. in Hebrew, **always agrees** with the noun in gender, number and definiteness
3. in Hebrew, always **comes after the noun**.

Ex:

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר, וְהַנּוֹרָא  
and-the-fearsome the-mighty the-great the-God

שַׁבָּתוֹת, תְּמִימָה  
intact Sabbaths

אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
others gods

אֲבָנִים שְׁלֵמֹת  
complete stones

### Predicate adjective:

1. **predicts** something about the noun (is-large, is-small, is-light, is-dark)
2. in Hebrew is used in a **verbless clause** (noun + implied verb + adjective)
3. the implied verb in English is a form of **'is'**
4. in Hebrew, usually (but not always) comes **before** the noun

Ex:

אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה  
the-ground (is) exposed

וְהָאִישׁ מִשֶּׁה, עָנּוּ מְאֹד  
very humble (is) Moses and-the-man

צַדִּיק וְיֹשֵׁר הוּא  
He (is) and-upright righteous

## The Construct Chain

Is a chain of describers (nouns/adjectives) strung together showing **possession**.

The first describer(s) in the chain is in **construct state (CS)**, and has the possessive word **-of** attached to it.

The last noun in the chain is called the **absolute**, and is the possessor of the previous construct state noun(s).

Ex: noun chain

a-sword-of (CS) a-worker-of (CS) a-king (absolute)

חָרֵב עֶבֶד מֶלֶךְ  
king worker-of sword-of

In the Hebrew construct chain, the masculine plural (יָ ..< - יִם) and the

feminine singular (תָּ - הָ) describers change their endings.

Ex: with descriptive adjective

kings-of great cities

מְלִכֵּי עָרִים גְּדוּלוֹת  
great cities kings-of

Ex: with predicate adjective

Torah-of Hashem is perfect

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה  
perfect (is) YHVH Torah-of

youths-of the-king are mighty

נְעָרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ גִּבּוֹרִים  
mighty (are) the-king youths-of

mighty are youths-of the-king

גִּבּוֹרִים נְעָרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
the-king youths-of (are) mighty

## Construct chart

Note: masculine plural and feminine singular **change endings when in construct state**

plural	singular	
יָ ..<	(same as adjective: all other endings)	masculine
(same as adjective) ות-	ת-	feminine

Ex: טוב (good)

plural	singular	
טובי Good(ones)-of (m)	טוב good-of (m)	masculine
טובות Good(ones)-of (f)	טובת good-of (f)	feminine

Ex: רע (bad)

plural	singular	
רעי bad(ones)-of (m)	רע bad-of (m)	masculine
רעות bad(ones)-of (f)	רעת bad-of (f)	feminine

Ex: נורא (fearsome)

plural	singular	
נוראי fearsome(ones)-of (m)	נורא fearsome-of (m)	masculine
נוראות fearsome(ones)-of (f)	נוראת fearsome-of (f)	feminine