

Rules of The Hebrew Adjective

Definitions:

Adjective - a class of words used to limit or to qualify a noun or a group of words functioning as a noun

Attributive adjective- a modifying word; an adjective that posits an attribute or expresses a quality of the noun it modifies, as in *black cat*, where *black* is an attributive adjective.

Predicative adjective- an adjective that predicates an attribute of a noun or clause; the word that makes a statement about the subject of a clause or sentence, as in *the cat is black*, where *black* is a predicative adjective.

1. The Attributive Adjective

The attributive adjective always follows the noun and agrees with the noun in number, gender and definiteness.

e.g. the good horse הסוס הטוב

(Notice that this is a phrase, not a sentence)

2. The Predicative Adjective

The predicative adjective usually precedes but sometimes follows the noun. The predicative adjective agrees with the noun in number and gender, but it is never definite (i.e. the predicative adjective never takes the article).

e.g. The horse is good. הסוס טוב or טוב הסוס

(Notice that this is a sentence, not a phrase)

Some Implications:

1. Any adjective that precedes the noun is predicative.
2. An adjective that follows the noun is probably attributive but might be predicative.
3. Any adjective with an article is attributive.
4. An adjective without an article is predicative if it precedes the noun.
5. An adjective without an article that follows a definite noun is predicative.
6. An adjective without an article that follows an indefinite noun could be either attributive or predicative.

Definite Nouns

Nouns are definite if:

1. They have an article: הַמֶּלֶךְ the king

2. They have an implied article
hidden within an inseparable preposition.

לַמֶּלֶךְ to the king

3. They are proper nouns:

שְׁמוּאֵל Samuel or יִשְׂרָאֵל Israel

4. They are suffixed by a pronominal suffix:

סוּסוֹ his horse

5. They are definite by virtue of being
part of a definite construct chain:

קוֹל-הַנְּבִיאָה the voice of the prophet

Attributive Adjectives

(Kelley, pages 43-46)

אִישׁ טוֹב	<i>a</i> good man	(a man, a good one)
הָאִישׁ הַטּוֹב	<i>the</i> good man	(the man, the good one)
לְאִישׁ טוֹב	to <i>a</i> good man	(to a man, a good one)
לְאִישׁ הַטּוֹב	to <i>the</i> good man	(to the man, the good one)
אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה	<i>a</i> good woman	(a woman, a good one)
הָאִשָּׁה הַטּוֹבָה	<i>the</i> good woman	(the woman, the good one)
שְׁמוּאֵל הַטּוֹב	<i>the</i> good Samuel	(Samuel, the good one)
עִיר טוֹבָה	<i>a</i> good city	(a city, a good one)
הָעִיר הַטּוֹבָה	<i>the</i> good city	(the city, the good one)

Predicative Adjectives

(Kelley, pages 46-47)

טוב הָאִישׁ

The man is good.

הָאִישׁ טוב

טובה הָאִשָּׁה

The woman is good.

הָאִשָּׁה טובה

אִישׁ טוב

Probably: a good man;
Perhaps: a man is good.

טובה הָעִיר לָעָם

The city is good for the people.

The Independent Personal Pronoun (Kelley, page 52)

1. Forms:	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
First person common (I/We)	אֲנִי אַנְכִי	אַתָּהֶנּוּ
Second person masc. (You)	אַתָּה	אַתֶּם
Second person fem. (You)	אַתְּ	אַתְּנָה אַתֶּן
Third person masc. (He or it/They)	הוא	הֵם הֵמָּה
Third person fem. (She or it/They)	היא	הֵן הֵנָּה

2. Usage:

- As a subject in a non-verbal sentence (a sentence that has no verb).

Example: אַתָּה הָאִישׁ You are the man.

- To emphasize the subject in a verbal sentence.

Example: הִיא נְתַנָּה לִי מִן-הָעֵץ

She has given to me from the tree.

- To function as copula (3rd person forms only). (see next page)

3rd Person Independent Pronouns as Copula

דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ טוֹב

David (is) a good king.

דָּוִד הוּא מֶלֶךְ טוֹב

David is a good king.

שָׂרָה הִיא אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה

Sarah is a fine woman.

הָאֲנָשִׁים הֵם רָעִים מְאֹד

The men are very bad.

The copula may also be placed after the predication.

הַנְּשִׂימ יְפוֹת הֵן

The women are beautiful.

The Demonstrative Adjective/Pronoun

(Kelley, pages 52-53)

The Nearer Demonstrative

Masculine Singular	זֶה (this)
Feminine Singular	זֹאת (this)
Masc. & Fem. Plural	אֵלֶּה (these)

The Remote Demonstrative

	הוא (that)
	היא (that)
Masc. Plural	הֵם הַאֵלֶּה (those)
Fem. Plural	הֵנָּה הַזֵּנָה (those)

Attributive Use

הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה	this man	הָאִישׁ הַהוּא	that man
הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת	this woman	הָאִשָּׁה הַהיא	that woman
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה	these men	הָאֲנָשִׁים הֵם	those men
הַנְּשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה	these women	הַנְּשִׂים הֵנָּה	those women

The Demonstrative Adjective/Pronoun

(Kelley, pages 53-54)

Predicative Use

The Nearer Demonstrative

זֶה הָאִישׁ

This is the man.

זֹאת הָאִשָּׁה

This is the woman.

אֵלֶּה הַאֲנָשִׁים

These are the men.

אֵלֶּה הַנְּשִׁים

These are the women.

The Remote Demonstrative

הוּא הָאִישׁ

That (he) is the man.

הִיא הָאִשָּׁה

That (she) is the woman.

הֵם הַאֲנָשִׁים

Those (they) are the men.

הֵן הַנְּשִׁים

Those (they) are the women.

The Construct Chain

(Kelley, pages 58-64)

a voice of a prophet קוֹל-נְבִיא

קוֹל

construct state (bound form)

נְבִיא

absolute state (free form)

(frequently joined by a [maqgef](#))

אִישׁ-אֱלֹהִים

a man of God

מֶלֶךְ-אֶרֶץ

a king of a land

Constructs mainly express genitive relationships and various nuances of the preposition “of”.

1. Can look exactly like absolute state:

סוּם־ מְלֶךְ־

2. Are frequently spelled differently due to loss of accent.

The most frequent alteration is vowel reduction.

Absolute

Construct

בֵּן

בֶּן־

יָד

יַד־

דְּבַר

דְּבַר־

3. The word in the construct state *never* takes the article.

Only the last word in a construct chain takes the article.

The last word in the construct chain determines definiteness.

קוֹל־הַנְּבִיא *the* voice of *the* prophet

דְּבַר־הַנְּבִיאִים *the* word of *the* prophets

4. We now have two new suffixes to learn:

masculine plural י ..

feminine singular ת _

Constructs – Gender and Number (Kelley, pages 58-64)

	<u>Abs. Sing.</u>	<u>Const. Sing.</u>	<u>Abs. Plural</u>	<u>Const. Plural</u>
Masc.	סוּם (horse)	סוּם־ (horse of)	סוּמִים (horses)	סוּמֵי־ (horses of)
Fem.	סוּסָה (mare)	סוּסַת־ (mare of)	סוּסוֹת (mares)	סוּסוֹת־ (mares of)
Masc.	דְּבָר (word)	דְּבַר־ (word of)	דְּבָרִים (words)	דְּבָרַי־ (words of)
Masc.	חָכָם (wise person)	חָכַם־ (wise person of)	חָכָמִים (wise people)	חָכָמַי־ (wise people of)
Fem.	אִשָּׁה (woman)	אִשָּׁת־ (woman of)	נָשִׁים (women)	נָשָׁי־ (women of)

Examples of Construct Chains (Kelley, pages 58-64)

קוֹל־הַנָּבִיא

the voice of *the* prophet

אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים

the man of God

(אִישׁ־אֱלֹהִים)

דְּבַר־מֹשֶׁה

the word of Moses

יַד־יְהוָה

the hand of *the* Lord

דְּבַר־יֵהוּדָה הַרְעִים

the evil words of *the* prophet

דְּבַר־הַנְּבִיאִים הַרְעִים

the word of *the* evil prophets

אִשְׁת־בֶּן־הַנָּבִיא

the wife of *the* son of *the* prophet

Rules of Forming a Construct Chain

1. Nothing comes between nouns that are in a construct relationship.
2. Definiteness is determined by the last noun (absolute).
3. Ambiguities with adjectives are often resolved by number and gender.

Spelling Rules for Constructs

(Kelley, pages 58-64)

1. Long vowels left standing in open syllables before יְ are usually reduced to ׀ (sheva) unless the vowel is unchangeable long.

בְּנִים > (בְּנִי) > בְּנִי

2. If rule #1 leaves 2 vocal shevas together, the first one is raised to a full short vowel and then the second sheva becomes silent producing a closed syllable:

אֲנִישִׁים > (אֲנִישִׁ) > אֲנִישִׁ

דְּבָרִים > (דְּבָרִי) > דְּבָרִי

Spelling Rules for Constructs (continued)

3. A similar process takes place with feminine plural.
4. Note particularly the irregular nouns in Kelley, pages 60-61.
(note especially – men, days, cities, fathers, brothers)
5. Note rules for monosyllabic, feminine, and other nouns in Kelley, pages 61-63.
(note especially – sons, names, women, houses, eyes)
6. Note rules for segholates in Kelley, page 62.

Segholates

(Kelley, pages 57-58)

1. There are three classes of segholates:

e-class אֵלֶּף

a-class מוֹתֵּן

o-class אֶחָדֹ

2. The 1st syllable is **always** accented; 2nd syllable normally .

3. Plurals fall into the regular pattern of :

Tone long, pre-tone long, propretone sheva.

בֶּקֶר becomes בְּקָרִים

עֶבֶד becomes עֲבָדִים

4. Duals look different.

אֶזְזֹן אֶזְזַנִּים

רַגְלֵי רַגְלַיִם

Plural Segholate Nouns (Kelley, pages 57-58)

	<u>a-class</u>	<u>e/i-class</u>	<u>u/o-class</u>
Absolute	מְלָכִים kings	סְפָרִים books	קְדוּשִׁים holinesses
Construct	מְלָכֵי kings of-	סְפָרֵי books of-	קְדוּשֵׁי holinesses of-
With suffixes			
1 st com. sing.	מְלָכָי my kings	סְפָרָי my books	קְדוּשָׁי my holinesses
2 nd masc. sing.	מְלָכֶיךָ your kings	סְפָרֶיךָ your books	קְדוּשֶׁיךָ your holinesses
2 nd masc. pl.	מְלָכֵיכֶם your kings	סְפָרֵיכֶם your books	קְדוּשֵׁיכֶם your holinesses

Segholate Nouns (Kelley, pages 57-58)

Singular (From original case endings to no case endings)

a-class

malku > malk > malek > melek מַלְכָּךְ

i-class

sipru > sipr > siper > sepher סֵפֶר

o-class

qudshe > qudsh > qudesh > qodesh קֹדֶשׁ

Construct

מַלְכָּךְ

מַלְכֵי kings of-

סֵפֶר

סֵפֵרֵי books of-

קֹדֶשׁ

קֹדֶשֵׁי holinesses of-

With Pronominal Suffixes

a-class מַלְכֵי malki my king

i-class סֵפֵרֵי siphri my book

u/o-class קֹדֶשֵׁי qodshi my holiness

Plural

a-class

מַלְכִים melakim kings

i-class

סֵפָרִים sepharim books

o-class

קֹדֶשִׁים qedashim holinesses