

Chapter 21a – Qal Infinitive Absolute

Introduction and Basic Form

The Infinitive Absolute is also a verbal noun. Like the Infinitive Construct, the Infinitive Absolute is not inflected for person, gender or number and so there is only one form to memorize. This form is easy to identify and varies little with weak verbal roots.



1. The vowel pattern of the strong verb also occurs in most weak verb types.
2. The Holem Waw stem vowel may be written defectively as Holem (קטל).
3. Unlike the Infinitive Construct, the Infinitive Absolute does not occur with prepositional prefixes or pronominal suffixes.



Chapter 21b – Qal Infinitive Absolute

Weak Verb Forms

	<i>Qal Perfect 3ms</i>	<i>Infinitive Absolute</i>
<i>I-Guttural</i>	הִלֵּךְ	הִלֵּךְ
<i>I-Guttural</i>	עָבַר	עָבַר
<i>I-א</i>	אָכַל	אָכַל
<i>II-Guttural</i>	גָּאֵל	גָּאֵל
<i>II-Guttural</i>	בָּחַר	בָּחַר
<i>III-ח</i>	נִשְׁכַּח	נִשְׁכַּח
<i>III-ע</i>	נִשְׁמַע	נִשְׁמַע
<i>III-א</i>	יֵצֵא	יֵצֵא
<i>I-נ</i>	נִפְּלַ	נִפְּלַ
<i>I-י</i>	יִדְּעַ	יִדְּעַ
<i>Geminate</i>	סָבַב	סָבַב



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III-ה Verbs

With III-ה verbs, the Infinitive Absolute may appear in one of two forms.

Verbal Root

Infinitive Absolute

עֲשֵׂה

>

עֲשֵׂה

or

עֲשׂוּ

שִׁתֵּה

>

שִׁתֵּה

or

שִׁתּוּ

רִאֵה

>

רִאֵה

or

רִאוּ

חִיֵּה

>

חִיֵּה

or

חִיּוּ



Chapter 21d – Qal Infinitive Absolute

Biconsonantal Verbs

With Biconsonantal verbs, the Infinitive Absolute appears with a Holem Waw (or Holem) stem vowel in each of the three classes.

Verbal Root

Infinitive Absolute

בוא

➤

בוא

or

בא

שים

➤

שום

קום

➤

קום



Chapter 21e – Qal Infinitive Absolute

Parsing

The Infinitive Absolute form is *not* inflected for person, gender or number. When parsing you are required to identify only stem, conjugation and lexical form.

הָלוֹךְ	Qal Infinitive Absolute	הָלֵךְ
מוֹת	Qal Infinitive Absolute	מוֹת



Chapter 21f – Qal Infinitive Absolute

Uses of the Infinitive Absolute: (1) Emphatic

The Infinitive Absolute can precede or follow a Perfect or Imperfect verbal form of the same root in order to emphasize the verbal meaning.

מוֹת תָּמוּת

you (2ms) will *certainly* die
(2 Kgs 1:16)



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Uses of the Infinitive Absolute: (2) Imperative

The Infinitive Absolute can stand by itself and function as an Imperative.

שְׁמֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

Observe the Sabbath day!
(Deut 5:12)



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Uses of the Infinitive Absolute: (3) Contemporaneous

Two Infinitive Absolutes can be used together with a Perfect or Imperfect verb to express two verbal actions occurring simultaneously.

וַיֵּלֶךְ הַלֹּךְ וְאֹכֵל

(literally)
and he walked, *walking* and *eating*

(idiomatically)
and he walked, *eating as he went*
(Judg 14:9)



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Uses of the Infinitive Absolute: (4) Complementary

The Infinitive Absolute can complement the main verb of a sentence and carry the temporal value of that main verb. In this usage, the Infinitive will translate just like a Perfect or Imperfect even though it is not an inflected form.

רָגוּם אֶתְּוּ בְּאֲבָנִים כָּל־הָעֵדָה

All of the congregation shall *stone* him with stones.
(Num 15:35)



Chapter 21j – Qal Infinitive Absolute

The Hebrew Particle יֵשׁ

Hebrew can express the *existence* of someone or something by using the particle יֵשׁ (יֵשׁ-) which translates either “(there) is” or “(there) are.”

יֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ

there is a king *or* a king *is*

אֲכֵן יֵשׁ יְהוָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה

Surely the Lord *is* in this place (Gen 28:16).

The particle יֵשׁ may also be used to express *possession* when followed by the preposition לְ (to).

יֵשׁ-לִי תִקְוָה

Literally: There is to me hope.

Idiomatically: I have hope (Ruth 1:12).



Chapter 21k – Qal Infinitive Absolute

The Hebrew Particle אֵין

Hebrew may express the *non-existence or absence* of someone or something by using the particle אֵין (אֵיִן) which translates either “(there) is not” or “(there) are not.”

אֵין-יוֹסֵף בַּבּוֹר

Joseph *was not* in the cistern (Gen 37:29).

וְאֵין-דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ

And *there is no* knowledge of God in the land (Hos 4:1).

אֵין can appear with pronominal suffixes. It may be used to negate a verbless clause or sentences with Participles used predicatively.

אֵינָם יִרְאִים אֶת-יְהוָה

They *do not* fear the Lord (2 Kgs 17:34).

אָמַר נָבֵל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים

The fool says in his heart, “*There is no* God” (Ps 53:2).

