

## FAQs – Chapter 2

### What are the *vowel letters*, or *matres lectionis*, and how do they differ from consonants?

The most common vowel letters are י and ו. These were used by the Masoretes to indicate i/e and o/u sounds respectively. When vowel pointing was added to the Hebrew text, these vowel letters were created:

י	יְ
	יֵ
	יִ
	יּ
ו	וּ
	וֹ

When י and ו are functioning as vowel letters, they are not considered consonants. This is important for syllabification and pronunciation. For example, a word that is spelled with a Hireq Yod is not pronounced with a “y” sound.