

FAQs – Chapter 5

What is Virtual Doubling?

As you progress throughout the grammar, you will encounter more instances of virtual doubling. In this chapter, we have discussed virtual doubling in regard to the prefixed definite article. The definite article consists of three components: the consonant ה, the vowel Pathach and a Daghes Forte in the initial consonant of the noun. You have already learned that the gutturals and Resh are not able to accept a Daghes Forte. In the Hebrew language, this grammatical difficulty is solved by Compensatory Lengthening or Virtual Doubling.

- ① Nouns beginning with א, ר and ע undergo Compensatory Lengthening. The Pathach lengthens to a Qamets in order to compensate for the fact that the guttural consonant cannot double.
- ② For nouns beginning with ה or ח, the problem is solved differently. Although these consonants are not able to double, vowel changes are not made to compensate for this. The term Virtual Doubling is employed in order to differentiate this process from Compensatory Lengthening.