

Chapter 20a – Qal Infinitive Construct

Introduction and Basic Form

The Hebrew Infinitive Construct is a verbal noun. It is not inflected for person, gender or number. There is, therefore, only one basic form and no paradigm to memorize. The vowel pattern is consistent for all strong verbs and even for most weak verbs. Note that the basic form of the Qal Infinitive Construct is identical to the Qal Imperative 2ms (קַטֹּל).

Qal Infinitive Construct
Strong Verb

קַטֹּל



Chapter 20b – Qal Infinitive Construct

Comparison of Imperative and Infinitive Construct Forms

	<i>Imperative 2ms</i>	<i>Infinitive Construct</i>	<i>Infinitive Translation</i>
<i>Strong</i>	זָכֹר	זָכֹר	to remember
<i>I-Gutt</i>	עָזַב	עָזַב	to abandon
<i>I-א</i>	אָמַר	אָמַר	to say
<i>II-Gutt</i>	בָּחַר	בָּחַר	to choose
<i>III-ח</i>	שָׁלַח	שָׁלַח	to send
<i>III-ע</i>	שָׁמַע	שָׁמַע	to hear
<i>III-א</i>	קָרָא	קָרָא	to call



Chapter 20c – Qal Infinitive Construct

The Spelling of III-ה Verb Forms

The Infinitive Construct form of III-ה verbs ends in **ות**.

Remember that Imperfect forms end in **ה־** (except in those forms with sufformatives) and Imperative forms end in **ה־** (2ms).

Summary of III-ה Verbal Endings

	<i>Ending</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<i>Imperfect</i>	ה־	יִבְנֶה	he will build
<i>Imperative</i>	ה־	בִּנֵּה	you (2ms) build!
<i>Infinitive Construct</i>	ות	בְּנוֹת	to build, building



Chapter 20d – Qal Infinitive Construct

Examples of III-ה Infinitive Constructs

With III-ה verbs, the ה of the verbal root is dropped and ו is added. Either Vocal Shewa (or a reduced vowel with gutturals) will appear under the first root consonant.

<i>Verbal Root</i>	<i>Infinitive Construct</i>	<i>Translation</i>
בִּנָּה	בִּנוֹתְ	to build, building
בָּכָה	בָּכוֹתְ	to weep, weeping
עָלָה	עָלוֹתְ	to go up, going up
עָנָה	עָנוֹתְ	to answer, answering
עָשָׂה	עָשׂוֹתְ	to do, doing
הָיָה	הָיוֹתְ	to be, being
רָאָה	רָאוֹתְ	to see, seeing



Chapter 20e – Qal Infinitive Construct

The Spelling of I-נ Infinitive Constructs

With I-נ verbs, there are two possible forms of the Infinitive Construct. The first form conforms to the strong verb pattern. The second form drops the נ in first root position and adds ת to the end of the word.

<i>Verbal Root</i>	<i>Infinitive Construct with נ</i>	<i>Alternate Form with ת</i>
נָסַע	נָסֵעַ	סֵעַת
נָגַע	נָגֵעַ	גֵּעַת
נָטַע	נָטֵעַ	טֵעַת
נָשָׂא	נָשֵׂא	שֵׂאֵת
נָגַשׁ	נָגֵשׁ	גֵּשֵׁת
נָתַן	נָתֵן	תֵּת



Chapter 20f – Qal Infinitive Construct

The Spelling of I-י Infinitive Constructs

Most I-י verbs drop the י in first root position and add ת (just like I-נ verbs).

<i>Verbal Root</i>	<i>Infinitive Construct</i>
יִשֶׁב	שֵׁבֶת
יִרְשֶׁ	רִשֶׁת
יִלְדֶׁ	לִדֶׁת
יִרְדֶׁ	רִדֶׁת
יִדְעֶׁ	דַּעֲת
יִצָּא	צֵאת
יִהְיֶׁ	לִכְת



Chapter 20g – Qal Infinitive Construct

The Spelling of Biconsonantal Infinitive Constructs

The Infinitive Construct form of Biconsonantal verbs is the lexical form that you have been memorizing. Note that the form of the Infinitive Construct and the Imperative 2ms are identical in this weak verb class.

<i>Verbal Root</i>	<i>Infinitive Construct</i>
שׁוּב	שׁוּב
מוֹת	מוֹת
בּוֹא	בּוֹא
בוֹשׁ	בוֹשׁ
דִּין	דִּין



Chapter 20h – Qal Infinitive Construct

Parsing

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

כִּתֹּב

Qal Infinitive Construct

כִּתֹּב

אֲמַר

Qal Infinitive Construct

אֲמַר



Chapter 20i – Qal Infinitive Construct

With Pronominal Suffixes

The Infinitive Construct can take pronominal suffixes that function as either the *subject* or *object* of the verbal idea.

Note that the Qamets under the ך is Qamets Hatuf.

	<i>Suffix PGN</i>	<i>Suffix As Subject</i>	<i>Suffix As Object</i>
קָטַלְיִי	1cs	my killing	killing me
קָטַלְךָ	2ms	your killing	killing you
קָטַלְךָ	2fs	your killing	killing you
קָטַלּוּ	3ms	his killing	killing him
קָטַלְהָ	3fs	her killing	killing her
קָטַלְנוּ	1cp	our killing	killing us
קָטַלְכֶם	2mp	your killing	killing you
קָטַלְכֻן	2fp	your killing	killing you
קָטַלְהֶם	3mp	their killing	killing them
קָטַלּוּ	3fp	their killing	killing them



Chapter 20j – Qal Infinitive Construct

With Prepositional Prefixes

The inseparable prepositions לְ, בְ, and כְ may be prefixed to the Infinitive Construct with a range of uses and translation values.

לְזָכֹר

(in order) to remember

כְּשֶׁמֶר

when or while observing



Chapter 20k – Qal Infinitive Construct

With Prepositional Prefixes and Pronominal Suffixes

Both prepositional prefixes and pronominal suffixes can occur with the Infinitive Construct.

כְּשִׁמְעוֹ

when he hears

or

when he heard

Qal Infinitive Construct of שָׁמַע with
preposition כְּ and 3ms pronominal suffix וֹ



Chapter 20I – Qal Infinitive Construct

Negation

The negative particles לֹא and אֵל are not used to negate the Infinitive Construct. Rather, it is negated with בִּלְתִּי or לְבִלְתִּי meaning “not” or “in order not.”

לְבִלְתִּי קָטַל

in order not to kill

or

not to kill



Chapter 20m – Qal Infinitive Construct

Uses of the Infinitive Construct: (1) Purpose-Result

The Infinitive Construct may be used with לְ to express *purpose, intention or result*. When used in this way, the key words “to” or “in order to” may be used in your translation.

וְלֹא־נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֵב לְדַעַת וְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת
וְאָזְנִים לִשְׁמָעַ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

(But) Yahweh has not given to you a heart *to know*
or eyes *to see* or ears *to hear* until this day.
(Deut 29:3 [English 29:4]).



Chapter 20n – Qal Infinitive Construct

Uses of the Infinitive Construct: (2) Inceptive

The Infinitive Construct prefixed with לְ may be used to denote an action about to take place. This construction frequently involves the use of הָיָה (to be). When used in this way, the key words “about to” may be used in your translation.

וַיְהִי הַשַּׁעַר לִסְגּוֹר

The gate was *about to shut*.
(Josh 2:5)



Chapter 20o – Qal Infinitive Construct

Uses of the Infinitive Construct: (3) Verbal Noun

The Infinitive Construct may function like a (verbal) noun, often as the subject or object of the verbal idea. It may or may not be prefixed with the preposition לְ when used in this way.

טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה

It is good *to praise* Yahweh.
(Ps 92:2)



Chapter 20p – Qal Infinitive Construct

Uses of the Infinitive Construct: (4) Complementary

The Infinitive Construct may be used to *explain, clarify or complement a preceding action or statement*. It may or may not be prefixed with the preposition לְ. When used in this way, you can translate the Infinitive Construct with “by” plus the “-ing” form of the verb.

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֵלְכָת בְּדַרְכָּיו

And you shall observe the commandments of
Yahweh your God *by walking* in his ways.
(Deut 8:6)



Chapter 20q – Qal Infinitive Construct

Uses of the Infinitive Construct: (5) Temporal

When prefixed with the prepositions **כִּ** or **כַּ**, the Infinitive Construct may be used in a temporal clause. When used in this way, the prepositions **כִּ** and **כַּ** are translated either “when” or “while.” Frequently, in this construction, the Infinitive Construct will also have a pronominal suffix.

וַיְהִי בַשָּׂכָן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הַהוּא

When (while) Israel *dwelt* in that land ...
(Gen 35:22)



Chapter 20r – Qal Infinitive Construct

Two Important Facts

There are two important facts about the Infinitive Construct that the student must understand. First, the Infinitive Construct is *not inflected* for person, gender or number in order to indicate a verbal subject. Second, the Infinitive Construct is a *tenseless* verbal form. Because of this, issues of tense (i.e., past, present or future) and verbal subject (if any) must be taken from context. In the following examples, the temporal modifiers provide the Infinitive Construct with tense and the pronominal suffixes provide the Infinitive Construct with a verbal subject.

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמָעוֹ

and when **he** heard (past tense)

וְהָיָה כִשְׁמָעוֹ

and when **he** hears (present tense)

or

and when **he** will hear (future tense)

