

Rules for Pronunciation

This page describes the rules of pronunciation, as used by the Amsterdam Portuguese community. See references below.

Some browsers do not show the punctuation correctly, therefore you can find all, including the hyperlinks to the recordings in this pdf file.

Rules for pronunciation of letters.

For ease of reading, Hebrew words are transliterated in this site, based on <http://www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm>.

[Recording](#) of the letters (JBS)

Letter	Pronunciation	Transliteration	Pronunciation Example
א	Silent	‘	
ב	B	V	בְּרוֹב berob
בּ	B	B	
ג	Ch	G	חַג chach
גּ	G	G	like in gram: גַּם gam,
ד	D	D	
ה	H	H	
ו	V	V	
ז	Z	Z	
ח	Ch	Ch	
ט	T	T	
י	Y	Y	
כ	Kh	Kh	
כּ	K	K	
ל	L	L	
מ	M	M	
נ	N	N	
ס	S	S	
ע	Ng	‘	like in wrong עָלֵינוּ ngalenu
פ	F	F	

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פ	P	P	
צ	Tz	Tz	
ק	K	K	
ר	R	R	
שׁ	Sh	Sh	
שׂ	S	S	
ת, תּ	T	T	

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Rules for Pronunciation of vowels.

[Recording](#) of the examples (JBS)

אָ אַ אֵ	A		Like in apple: Addon אָדוֹן
אָ	O		Like in hope לְאַהֲלֵיכֶם
אֵ	I		Like in “it”: Shinatata שְׁנַתָּה
אֵ	I		Like in “it”: baruch Shim בְּרוּךְ שִׁים
אֵ אֵ	I		Like in “it”: bibne בִּבְנֵי
אֵ וְ	U		Like in brute, ubjom וּבְיֹם
אֵ וְ	O		Like in hope
אֵ	Uh/silent		Like in hurt, buchor בְּכוֹר, or silent, see sheva rules below

Rules for Pronunciation of special vowels.

[Recording](#) of the examples (JBS)

Vowels	Pronunciation	Example
אָ	a	קָדָשִׁים Kadashim, אָהֲלֵיכֶם aholehem
אָ	o	(open unaccented syllable) כֶּקָרְבָּכֶם kekarobkhem
אָה	aha	Halelujaha הַלְלוּיָהּ (mapik)
אָה	aha	Nochaha נֹחָה (mapik)
אָה	ehe	Purkanehe פִּרְקָנֶה (mapik)
אָ	a	כָּמוֹ עֶשֶׂב Kamo ngeseb
אָ	Sheva is silent	וּבְיֹם ubjom
אֵ	i	וַיֵּשֶׁם viyaseem

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וּ	u	בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל buyisrael (exception on above rule)
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In 1956, Mr Jacq. Pais, the teacher of our community, made a booklet to teach the children Hebrew reading. The first 8 pages have Hebrew words transliterated to Dutch. Below I bring some examples. It shows how to pronounce the letters and the vowels for Dutch speakers.

Although the booklet's name is "שפה ברורה", it was referred to as "koe doet boe boe", the last line of the first page, see last example below.

Recording of the examples (JBS)

Dutch	transliterated
je jas zit goed	יַס זֵת גוּט
de jacht hond zit hier	דֵּ יַחַת הַנֶּט זֵת הִיר
dat gewicht is goed	דַּת גְּנֹכַת אִס זֵת
als nicht komt ga ik	אַלְס נִיגַת קֹמַת גַּ אִק
koe doet boe boe	קוֹ דוֹעַ בּוֹ בּוֹ

Sheva rules.

A short summary of the shuva rules can be found here. For a more complete list see e.g. <http://www.torahresource.com/Hebrew%20MP3/Sheva%20rules.pdf>

Sheva Na rules, as formulated by R' Eliyahu Bachur (16th cent.). It

- 1) occurs under the first letter of a word;
- 2) is the second of two Shevas in the middle of a word;
- 3) occurs after a long unaccented vowel;
- 4) occurs under a letter which has a Dagesh;
- 5) occurs between identical letters.

All other Shuvas are Nach ('silent'). The letters begad kefat normally receive a Dagesh at the beginning of a word or in the middle of a word after a Shuva Nach