

# Back-to-School Hebrew Reading Refresher



*Dear Teacher:*

*Welcome back to school!  
A new year has begun, one filled  
with promise and potential. Last spring,  
your students completed their Hebrew primer.  
Next spring they will be able to read  
complete Hebrew passages.*

*But right now, after a summer filled with camping, family trips,  
swimming, hiking, and a host of other vacation activities, your students  
need to refresh their Hebrew reading skills. The Back-to-School Hebrew  
Reading Refresher will help them get back in shape and ready to take  
the next exciting step.*

*In only three or four weeks, the Back-to-School Hebrew Reading Refresher  
will give your students the confidence they need to begin Book 1  
of their Hebrew program. The exercises are purposeful and efficient,  
and support any primer your students may have used.*

*The Refresher engages students in thorough review activities to help  
refine their decoding skills. It covers: word-part and whole-word drills,  
sound-alike and look-alike letter discrimination, final letter  
identification, basic vowel review, special vowel sounds,  
unusual endings, and other reading rules.*

*Students will practice their Hebrew writing skills as well when they  
review the alef bet on page 8, when they fill in the missing letters from  
a series of cultural words on page 32, and when they create the  
word cards suggested in the teaching techniques that follow.*

*Best wishes to you and your students for a sweet and successful year!*



## Using the Back-to-School Hebrew Reading Refresher

All of the following techniques will help motivate your students through interesting and varied reading practice and by encouraging collaboration and peer support. Feel free to adapt these activities to your personal teaching style, as well as to the needs and interests of your students.

The techniques can be used with individual students, small groups, or the entire class. Of course, you can repeat any that work especially well for you and your students.

When possible, model the reading of a word, phrase, or passage for your students to promote accuracy and fluency. When groups read aloud, read along with them to keep the pace lively and to instill confidence.

## Techniques for Hebrew Reading Practice

•**Highlighting** Ask students to color or circle the distinguishing elements of look-alike letters with a highlighting pen, or with pencils or other markers, to help them differentiate between the letters.

•**Reading Partners 1** Assign two students to each line that is to be read. Invite the pairs to take turns reading aloud the sounds or words on the line. Alternatively, divide the class in half. Ask the two halves to take turns reading in unison the sounds or words on each line.

•**Reading Partners 2** Divide the number of students in the class by two. On scrap paper, write two sets of numbers as follows: If there are 14 students write two sets of numbers from 1 through 7; if there are 10 students, write two sets of numbers from 1 through 5, etc. If you have an odd number of students in your class, make a third number 1. Place the numbers in a box or bag and ask students to draw a number. Ask those who draw matching numbers to become reading partners. Have the partners practice a reading exercise, song, or prayer, then have them read the material aloud to the class in unison and individually.

•**Voice and Echo** Organize the class into pairs of two. Assign one student in each pair to be the "Voice" and the other to be the "Echo." If there is an odd number of students, create a group of three. Have the Voices read a word, phrase, or sentence aloud and then have the Echoes repeat it. Alternatively, divide the class in two, making one half the Voice and the other the Echo. Invite the Voice to read the word, phrase, or sentence, and then have the Echo repeat it. Have the students reverse roles every other word, phrase, or sentence.



•**What's Missing?** Ask one student to read a line, phrase, or sentence, and to omit one word of his or her choosing. Call on another student to read the missing word.

•**Roll the Die** Have a student roll a die. The number that comes up determines the line number of the exercise that the student will read. Or, have one student roll the die, and another student read. Then have the two students reverse roles.

•**Tic Tac Toe** Draw a Tic Tac Toe grid on the chalkboard. Divide the class into two teams. To place an X or an O on the grid, team players must correctly read a word, phrase, or line.

•**Timed Reading, Personal Best** Time students as they read a line or selection twice. Record the shortest of their two times. You may want to hold on to the record and compare it with the students' reading times on a similar activity a week or two later.

•**Clue** Have your students open their textbook to a particular activity and ask them to look at a word on a line in a prayer selection. Tell them that you are thinking of a particular word. Present them with three clues to help them identify the correct word. (For example, see page 19, "Passover Power," line 3; *Clue 1*: The word does not end in a final letter. *Clue 2*: The word has both a silent and a sounded letter *hey*. *Clue 3*: The word has two letter-vowel sounds which are the same. Answer: [insert] )

•**Odds and Evens** Form two teams, Alef and Bet, by dividing your class in half. Have the Alef team practice the odd-numbered lines on a page and the Bet team practice the even-numbered lines. Ask the two teams to read their lines aloud in unison, one after the other: Alef, Bet, Alef, Bet, etc. Then switch and have Alef read the even numbers and Bet the odd.

•**Reading Relay** Choose three students. Ask student #1 to read three words. Have student #2 overlap by reading three words beginning with the second word read by student #1. Then ask student #3 to overlap by reading three words beginning with the third word read by student #1. (Note: This is a good technique for developing fluency in reading prayer passages.) Continue, returning to student #1, until the entire line or passage has been read. Alternatively, have the first student read the first word; the second student read the first and second words; and the third student read the first, second, and third words, etc., until the entire line or passage has been read.

•**Word Practice** For any activity based on word-parts, choose three students. Ask student #1 to read the first word-part; student #2 to read the second word-part; and student #3 to read the whole word or the complete phrase. For example, see page 11, "Rhythm Reading" and page 18, "Phrase Practice."



•**Flash Cards** Place flash card letters (or letters you write on index cards—one letter per card) face down in a box. Then have the students turn to a page of your choice in the *Refresher*. Ask each student to randomly select a letter from the box and, when they are called on by you, have them read a word-part, word, phrase, or sentence that contains the letter they selected.

•**Ball Toss** Ask students to sit on the floor, cross-legged, in a circle with the *Refresher* on their laps open to a page you specify. Announce which word or line is to be read. (Decide in advance if the students are to read a word or a line.) Toss or roll a ball to a student. After the student has correctly read the word or line, have him or her announce the next word or line to be read and toss or roll the ball to another student. Continue until the exercise has been completed or all the students have had a turn, whichever comes last.

•**Changing Patterns** For any activity that has columns of words, call on students to read down the columns instead of across rows. For example, see page 12, "Throat Exercises."

•**Reading Bee** Divide the class into two teams. Have each team stand in a line. Ask the teams to alternate, one person from each team at a time, reading a word or line from an activity. For example, the first person in Team Alef would read the first word; the first person in Team Bet would read the second; the second person in Team Alef would read the third, etc.



•**Complete the Phrase** For any activity which practices phrases, divide the class in half. Have one half read the first word in a phrase and the other half of the class read the second word. Then have the entire class read the complete phrase. For example, see page 7, "Read and Read Again" and page 19, "Words into Phrases."

•**Word Cards** Have students make word cards—writing Hebrew on one side and the English translation on the reverse side—for words from our tradition. For example, your class can take words from page 20, "Holiday Happenings" and page 29, "Word Watch." They can use their cards for vocabulary review or card games, such as "Concentration."

Enjoy using these techniques and  
developing your own.

