

# Write Your Name in Hebrew Characters

*Follow these instructions very carefully.*

*(You will need a copy of the Hebrew Aleph Bet)*

If you are a **boy** write the following 3 things:

- your first name
- ben (*ben means son of*)
- your father's first name

If you are a **girl** write the following 3 things:

- your first name
- bat (*bat means daughter of*)
- your mother's first name

Like this:

**PETER BEN PHILIP**

or

**SARAH BAT ALISON**

- If your name has a Y or EE sound in it, like Steven or Amy add a Y to your name - like this:

PETER = PEYTER

AIMIE = AYMIEY

- If your name ends in A add an H on the end eg. REBECCA = REBECCA**H**
- Now cross out all the vowels, *unless they are at the beginning of the name or make the sounds OO* (eg the u in Susan) or O (eg the o in Tom) - like this:

~~PEYTER BEN PHILIP~~ or

~~SARAH BAT ALISON~~

- Now write out the remaining letters and underline TH / CH / SH / PH if you have them (*for example, if you have a name like Thomas, Christine, Sharon or Philip*) - like this:

**PYTR BN PHLP**

or

**SRH BT ALSN**

*(The underlining is to remind you that they will only be one letter in Hebrew)*

- Next write out the name backwards! (Because Hebrew reads from Right to Left)

**PLPh NB RTYP**

or

**NSLA TB HRS**

- Now use the Hebrew *aleph bet* to replace the English letters with equivalent Hebrew letters. If there is a first vowel use the letter **aleph** (which actually has no sound!)

פיתר בן פלפ or סרה בת אלשנ

### Things to watch out for:

- For **PH** use the letter *pey* פ
- For **TH** use *tav* ת
- For **SH** use *shin* ש
- For **J** use *yod* י
- For *vowels at the beginning of a name* use *aleph* א
- For **CH** at the start of a name use *kaf* כ
- For **CH** in the middle or at the end of a name use *chet* ח
- For **W, O** or **OO** sounds (as in *Susan*) use *vav* ו

**Remember:** Some letters have a different shape if they are at the **END** of a word (ie the **LEFT** hand end!)

Here are some examples of English names that began as Hebrew names.

English name	What it sounds like in Hebrew	How it is written in Hebrew	English name	What it sounds like in Hebrew	How it is written in Hebrew
David	Dovid	דויד	Sarah	Sarai	שרי
Adam	Udum	אדמ	Rebecca	Rivkah	רבקה
Benjamin	Binyamin	בנימן	Rachel	Rachel	רחל
Samuel	Samuel	סמואל	Susannah	Shoshunuh	שושנה

## Teachers' Notes

Jewish tradition is for a person to have 2 names, one for religious purposes and one for secular purposes. A person's Hebrew name usually takes the form:

**<forename> <son / daughter of> <father's / mother's forename>**

In progressive communities it has become increasingly common to include the names of both parents.

This worksheet will produce an *approximate* transliteration of names (or other words) into unpointed Hebrew characters. (Points or *nikud* are a system of dots and other marks which are used to indicate the vowel sounds for the benefit of those whose Hebrew is not fluent).

Several Hebrew characters can be pronounced in more than one way according to the context of the text. In pointed text the appropriate sound will be indicated by placing a dot either inside or above the character, or by the lack of a dot (see examples below).

Although the Hebrew alphabet does not have any vowels, some vowel sounds are indicated.

The letter bet ב can be pronounced either as B (central dot) or V (no dot).

The letter כ can have the sounds K (central dot) or CH as in *loch* (no dot).

The letter pey פ can be pronounced either as P (central dot) or PH (no dot).

The letter shin ש can have the sound S (dot over the left "prong") or SH (dot over the right "prong").

The letter tav ט - For some Jews, especially those with family origins in Eastern Europe, tav can be either T (central dot) or S (no dot); for others it is always T (as it is in modern Hebrew).

Vowel sounds ending in Y such as AY, EE and EY are indicated in Hebrew with the letter yod י.

The letter vav ו doubles as both the sound V and the vowel sounds OO and AW and is generally also used to transliterate W, a sound that does not occur in Hebrew. (ו = V ; ו = OO ; ו = OW or AW).

There are several other English sounds that are not used in Hebrew.

J - It's strange, but you can't write the words Jew, Jewish or Judaism in Hebrew! Use yod י.

CH - use *khaf* כ if it's a hard sound (eg Christopher) and *chaf* ח for a soft sound (eg Charlie).

TH – use tav ט

The two silent letters (aleph א and ayin ע) will always have associated vowel sounds – hence the use of aleph for initial vowels.

Hebrew characters are best written with a broad italic nib, which approximates well to the quill pen that is traditionally used, enabling you to make broad horizontal strokes and narrow vertical strokes.

It is possible to purchase Hebrew letter stencils - search online for "Hebrew letter stencils".

