

Handout #6 - Overview of the Verbal System

**SEVEN MAJOR STEMS (BINYANIM)**

name	also known as	basic meaning/use
Qal	G (Grund)	basic stem
Niphal	N (for its nun prefix)	passive or reflexive
Piel	D (doppelt)	intensive
Pual		passive of piel
Hiphil	C or H (Causative / for its heh prefix)	causative
Hophal		passive of hiphil
Hithpael	tD (t infix + doppelt)	reflexive

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE STEMS**

TYPE OF ACTION	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
SIMPLE	Qal	Niphal
INTENSIVE	Piel	Pual
CAUSATIVE	Hiphil	Hophal
REFLEXIVE		Hithpael

**VERBAL CONJUGATIONS**

name	also known as	basic meaning (tense)	aspect
Perfect	perfective suffix conjugation qatal	simple or progressive past	completed action
Imperfect	imperfective prefix conjugation yiqtol	future tense modal use (should, must, could, might, etc.)	incomplete action
Imperative	————	command	
Infinitive Construct	————	verbal noun	
Infinitive Absolute	————	verbal noun	
Participle	————	verbal adjective	

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**HEBREW VERB BASICS**

- Qal is the basic (simple) stem. The other stems are called “derived stems.” Their forms are based on modifications of the qal form.
- Biblical Hebrew verbs are inflected for person, gender, and number:
  - 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person; in the case of 2nd and 3rd person either masculine or feminine; singular or plural
  - 10 possible forms for each verbal conjugation: 3ms, 3fs, 2ms, 2fs, 1cs, 3mp, 3fp, 2mp, 2fp, 1cp
- When parsing a verb, provide the following information:
  - stem, conjugation, person, gender, number, root
  - example: כתב : qal perfect 3ms כתב
- The lexical form – the form you’ll use to look up a word in the BDB – is the Qal perfect 3ms form.