Pronouns, Particles, and Prepositions

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of a nouns.

They can be:
- Personal (I, you, he, she, etc.)
- Possessive (his, her, my, our, etc.)
- Demonstrative (this, that, these, those)
- Relative (that, which, etc.)
- Interrogative (who, what, etc.)

Pronouns and Antecedents

Pronouns are really made up of two parts: the pronoun itself and its antecedent – that is, what it is replacing.

Moses struck the rock; *he* hit *it* with the staff.

cf. Miles V. Van Pelt, *English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew*, 47ff.

Hebrew Personal Pronouns

Like nouns, pronouns have number and gender. In addition, they also have person – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Singular

1st common	אֲנִי / אָנֹכִי	I
2nd masculine	אַתָּה	You
2nd feminine	אַתְּ	You
3rd masculine	הוּא	He / it
3rd feminine	הִיא	She / it

Hebrew Personal Pronouns

Plural

1st common	אֲנַחְנוּ	We
2nd masculine	אַתֶּם	You (Y'all)
2nd feminine	אַתֵּנָה	You (Y'all)
3rd masculine	הֵם / הֵמָּה	They
3rd feminine	הֵן / הֵנָּה	They

Note: Independent personal pronouns are *never* the object of a sentence or clause.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative Pronouns "point" to other nouns.

They can be singular and plural, and are often differentiated by being described as "near" and "far."

	Singular	Plural	
Near Masc	זֶה	אֵלֶּה	This / These
Near Fem	זֹאת	אֵלֶּה	
Far Masc	הוּא	הֵמָּה / הֵם	That / Those
Far Fem	הִיא	הֵנָּה / הֵן	

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns can also be used as adjectives.

אִישׁ זֶה   This man

אִשָּׁה זֹאת   This woman

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns introduce a question. The syntax is often very similar to English, and Logos will identify the words for you.

What?　מֶה / מַה

Who?　מִי

Why?　לָמָה

How?　אֵיכָה / אֵיךְ

Where?　אַיֵּה / אֵי

Relative Pronoun

A relative pronoun introduces a relative clause.

Ex: Deut. 5:6

אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ

"I am the Lord your God *who* brought you from the land..."

It can be translated as any of the English relative pronouns: that, which, who, whom. Context dictates which one works best.

Relative Pronoun

An alternate relative pronoun is sometime found in poetic texts – See Songs 1:7

Tell me, you whom my soul loves,

הַגִּ֫ידָה לִּי שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי

Where you pasture your flock,

אֵיכָה תִרְעֶה

Where you make it lie down at noon.

אֵיכָה תַּרְבִּיץ בַּֽצׇּהֳרָ֑יִם

Pronominal Suffixes

In addition to the independent personal pronouns we have already seen, Hebrew also has pronominal suffixes – that is, pronouns that are appended as a suffix to other words.
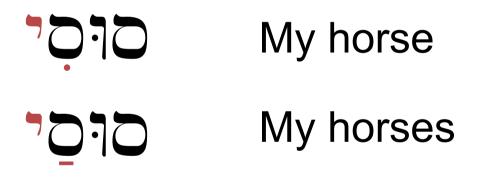
They can be added to nouns, verbs, direct object markers, and prepositions. On nouns, they act as a **genitive pronoun**, showing possession. On other words (verbs, prepositions, etc.), they act as the **object**.

Pronominal Suffixes

	Type 1	Type 2		Type 1	Type 2
1cs	יִ	יַ	1cp	נוּ	ֵינוּ
2ms	ךָ	יךָ	2mp	כֶם	יכֶם
2fs	ךְ	יךְ	2fp	כֶן	יכֶן
3ms	וֹ	יו	3mp	הֶם	יהֶם
3fs	הָ	יהָ	3fp	הֶן	יהֶן

Pronominal Suffixes

Type 1 normally go on singular
nouns, while Type 2 normally go
on plural nouns.

סוּסִי   My horse

סוּסַי   My horses

Note: Logos identifies these as
The full pronouns, suffixed.
(see 1 Kings 22:4)

Prepositions

Prepositions demonstrate relationships between various words and phrases. These relationships can be spatial, temporal, or conceptual.

- He went *into* the house.

- We gathered the fruit *after* it became ripe.

- They told us *about* their trip.

See Miles V. Van Pelt, *Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide*, pp. 26-32.

Prepositions

The most common Hebrew prepositions are the inseparable prepositions, so named because they are appended to the front of words.

בְּ   in, by, with   בְּשָׂדֶה   in a field

כְּ   like, as   כְּמֶלֶךְ   like a king

לְ   to, for   לְנַעַר   for a young man

Maqqef Prepositions

These prepositions are most often appended to words using a *maqqef*.

עַל־   on, upon, concerning

אֶל־   to, toward

עַד־   until, as far as

מִן־   from (see *BH:CG* pp. 30-32 for more uses)

Look out for אֶת

If you remember, we had an untranslated word that served to mark the direct object.

There is a preposition spelled exactly the same. It means "with" or "beside." Keep an eye out for it, and check Logos.

Independent Prepositions

There are further prepositions that stand apart from other words.

תַּחַת   Under

אַחַר   After

בֵּין   Between

Particles

Hebrew has a number of words otherwise designated as "particles." The are small words that may or may not have a correlating English counter part.

See Miles V. Van Pelt, *Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide*, pp. 70-74.

Interrogative Particle

Added to the beginning of a clause, the interrogative particle indicates that a question follows.
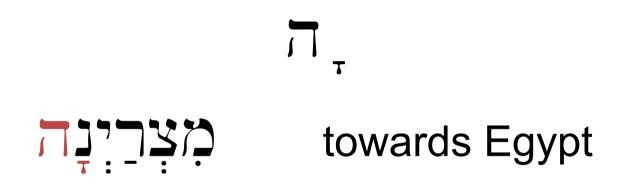
הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אָנֹכִי

Am I the one keeping my brother? (Gen 4:9)

הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ

Will you indeed rule over us? (Gen 37:8)

Directional Particle

The directional particle is a special ending added to a word to indicate motion toward.

הָ

מִצְרַיְנָה   towards Egypt

Note that it looks very much like the feminine ending on a noun. Logos will specifically identify a direction ending as such.

Demonstrative Interjection

הִנֵּה

Commonly translated, "Behold," *hinnēh* draws attention to what follows it. It is sometimes left untranslated.

Particles of Existence and Non-existence

Hebrew has two particles that reflect existence or non-existence of the concept following. In simplest terms, they translate to "there is" and "there is not," respectively.

אַךְ יֵשׁ־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפְטִים בָּאָרֶץ

Surely, there is a God who judges the earth. (Psalm 58:12 [11])

אָמַר נָבָל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Particles of Negation

Both אַל and לֹא are used to negate clauses, with varying nuances.

לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ

"You shall not eat from it..." (Gen 2:17)

אַל־תִּירָא

"Fear not..." (Gen 15:1)

Other Particles

כִּי A very common word with a variety of uses, usually introducing a subordinate clause.

(Arnold and Choi note 14 different uses, *Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*)

כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת

"...for on the day you eat of it, you will surely die." (Gen 2:17)

Other Particles

אִם   Normally introduces a conditional clause (ie. "If..."), but is used in other ways as well.

וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם־תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר

"...number the stars, if you are able to number them." (Gen 15:5)