

## PURPOSE OF ALEF BET QUEST

### Welcome to *Alef Bet Quest*, a multimedia Hebrew decoding experience!

Teaching children to read and fostering their emerging literacy is the teacher's most important task in any language or culture. Participation in Jewish holiday celebrations, communal worship, and life-cycle events often requires the ability to decode Hebrew accurately and fluently. As a teacher of Hebrew reading, you have been entrusted with a sacred responsibility. *Alef Bet Quest* will assist you in this important and challenging work.

*Alef Bet Quest* facilitates the learner's acquisition of basic Hebrew decoding skills, using the instructional sequences that researchers in Israel have found to be most effective. (For more information on this research, visit [www.AlefBetQuest.com](http://www.AlefBetQuest.com).)

All twenty lessons in *Alef Bet Quest* are designed to follow these seven steps:

1. Reviewing recently learned key words, consonants, and vowels
2. Introducing new key words, consonants, and vowels
3. Making sound-symbol associations of new letters and vowels through a multi-sensory presentation and phoneme analysis
4. Direct instruction of difficult concepts
5. Reading practice of letter and vowel combinations ("Word Building" and "I Can Read Hebrew!")
6. Completing activities
7. Assessment

If you are using the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader* in conjunction with the primer, you should consider including the optional oral Hebrew language lesson offered in the techniques for each lesson in this guide.

### HOW IS ALEF BET QUEST DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PRIMERS?

*Alef Bet Quest* is the first Hebrew primer to combine the best practices of Hebrew reading instruction with the best of today's technology, integrating phonics mastery with computerized learning. It is designed to teach young students to decode Hebrew accurately and fluently, while cutting-edge technology brings the language to life in animated computer activities and games.

*Alef Bet Quest*:

1. **Stands on a solid foundation of research on Hebrew reading instruction and second language acquisition.** All elements of instruction and drill—from the presentation of key words to the sequence of letter introduction—follow innovative methods of Hebrew reading. For example, when more than one symbol represents a single sound (such as **ד** and **דּ**—s sound), they are taught together. Researchers have found that when such symbols are introduced separately, students tend to remember one symbol but not the other. In contrast, they concluded that visually similar symbols (like **א** and **אׁ**) should be widely separated, allowing the learner to become completely at ease with one before having to make the fine visual distinction required to recognize the other. Researchers have found, too, that introducing symbols that represent *similar*, but not *identical*, sounds together (like **ב**, **בׁ**, and **בׂ**), or one right after the other, actually *increases* the likelihood that students will confuse them. These types of letters are introduced far apart to decrease this likelihood. By the same token, when a single vowel symbol is used for multiple purposes, these purposes are treated separately and are presented far apart. For example, the three different uses of the *sh'va* (**ְ**) are presented in three different lessons (Lessons 10, 13, and 20). Likewise, the two different uses of *kamatz* (**ֶ**) are taught separately (Lesson 1 and Lesson 19).

To best facilitate sound-symbol associations, letters that represent two sounds are treated as separate phonetic items. For example, **ב** and **בׁ** (a single letter that represents two sounds; in English *b* as in *ball* and *v* as in *video*) are visually similar but they do not make the same sound. They are therefore treated as two phonetic items and are introduced far apart (**ב** in Lesson 2 and **בׁ** in Lesson 10).

*Note:* *Alef Bet Quest* teaches decoding. *Decoding* is the ability to decipher Hebrew syllables, words, phrases, and sentences phonetically and accurately (translating symbols into sounds).

*Reading* is the process of translating visual symbols into meaningful language. Although the terms "decoding" and "reading" are not synonymous, in this guide they are often used interchangeably as it is more common to say "read Hebrew" than "decode Hebrew."

2. **Introduces all new Hebrew consonants and vowels through Hebrew “key words.”** Each lesson opens with between one and three key words or phrases. These words often reflect the child’s direct experience, providing young learners with Hebrew vocabulary that is immediately accessible (רָגַל, גָּשָׁם, מִשְׁפָּחָה). Some key words represent basic Jewish concepts that are connected to Jewish holidays or ritual (שִׁמְשׁ, שׁוֹפָר, בְּיָמָה). After students are introduced to a key word, they break it down into its component sounds. This is known as phoneme analysis, and it helps students to better understand the relationship between the printed Hebrew letter or vowel and its sound. Finally, the key words provide a means of verifying every component sound (phoneme), such as וֵ or ׀. If students are unsure about a particular letter or vowel, you can review the key word that contains that symbol as a way of reminding students about its sound.
3. **Uses a multi-sensory approach to introducing letters and vowels, appealing to the widest range of learners.** Students learn in different ways. The three primary modalities (or sensory pathways) of learning are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic or tactile. By employing a multi-sensory approach to decoding—in other words, students see, hear-say, and use their hands or bodies to integrate new phonic items—more students in the class are able to master the material. The multi-sensory approach, a teaching method developed by Beth Slingerland, founder of the Slingerland Institute for Literacy in Washington State, is the recommended approach in *Alef Bet Quest*. A complete description of this procedure can be found in the “Multi-Sensory Approach to Hebrew Phonics” on page 11.
4. **Is the first Hebrew primer with a fully integrated digital application.** Students will delight in using their new skills when playing online video games and searching for clues in the digital application, “The Quest for the Golden Kiddush Cup.” Students also practice their new decoding skills with computer-based, read-aloud activities (students hear both American *and* Israeli accents). The digital application, which takes the form of a treasure hunt in modern Israel, is fully integrated with the textbook. An activity or puzzle at the end of each lesson in the book (“Clue to the Quest”) provides students with clues for scoring bonus points in a computer game. Students are motivated to use the software at home—creating additional practice time and opportunities. They can even e-mail their online lesson summaries directly to you! For more about the digital application, see “Using the Digital Application” on page 13.
5. **Focuses on individual vowels and vowel patterns through tightly structured reading drills.** Phoneme analysis is followed by reading drills that encourage learners to use their newly acquired skills with a variety of practice words. In early lessons, “Word Building” activities provide students with syllable drills and syllable building. Reading drills are composed entirely of real Hebrew words (“I Can Read Hebrew!”). Both the syllable and word-reading drills focus on individual vowels and vowel patterns. They follow patterns of rhyme and rhythm that assist beginning readers in recognizing the patterns of Hebrew words.
6. **Emphasizes phrase and sentence reading.** The ability to decode individual words is just the first step in teaching students to blend fluent phrases and fluently recite passages. Every lesson contains reading practice consisting of phrases and complete sentences. Students who also complete the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader* will be able to read many of these sentences with full comprehension.
7. **Builds a bridge between Hebrew decoding and siddur reading.** Beginning in Lesson 1, many reading drills contain Hebrew words that are drawn from the siddur and maḥzor. By Lesson 12 the drills are composed largely of siddur words. The use of siddur vocabulary from the earliest stage helps students become familiar with prayer words they will encounter throughout their lives. To further bridge the gap between reading words and prayer recitation, full passages of the Shabbat blessings, Hatikvah, and the Four Questions appear in Lessons 18 and 19.
8. **Provides direct instruction for difficult reading rules.** Students learning to read Hebrew will encounter rules and exceptions that are foreign to native English readers. For example, beginning Hebrew readers often have difficulty with directionality. They forget that Hebrew is read from right to left. An activity early in Lesson 1 assists students in determining where Hebrew words begin.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PUPIL EDITION

Each of the twenty lessons in *Alef Bet Quest* contains the following features:

**Key Words** Each lesson opens with between one and three key words, each accompanied by a picture that illustrates the meaning. Children learn second language vocabulary best through direct association between a new word and the item it represents. Of the 42 key words in *Alef Bet Quest*, there are only two instances in which translations, rather than illustrations, are used.

**“What’s New?”** Immediately under the key words, this feature presents the lesson’s new letters and vowels. The names of new letters are included in English.

**“Letters You Know”** and **“Vowels You Know”** A review of all the previous letters and vowels follows (except in Lesson 1). The letters appear here in *alef-bet* order.



**“Word Building”** These drills appear only in the first four lessons and focus on individual Hebrew syllables, providing practice with Consonant-Vowel (C-V) and Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (C-V-C) syllables as well as syllable blending.



**“I Can Read Hebrew!”** Every lesson contains reading activities composed of real Hebrew words, and, in later chapters, phrases and sentences.



**“I Can Write Hebrew!”** Here students practice writing the new Hebrew letters and key words. For beginning readers, the act of writing the letter in block print provides kinesthetic reinforcement. A companion script writing workbook is also available. Visit [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com) for more information.



**“Clue to the Quest”** Each lesson ends with a reading riddle, crossword, word search, or other puzzle whose answer allows students to earn bonus points in the digital application, “The Quest for the Golden Kiddush Cup.” The integrated computer application allows you to extend classroom learning into the home with homework students like to do!

*Alef Bet Quest* also contains a variety of features that enhance student mastery of Hebrew decoding skills:

- **“Letter Hint,” “Vowel Hint,” “Letter-Vowel Hint”** These sections provide students with clues, such as mnemonics (ר is Round), for remembering the sounds of letters, vowels, and special combinations.
- **“Super Reading Secret”** Here students receive direct instruction in key aspects of Hebrew reading, such as how to break words into individual syllables.
- **“Odd Letter Out”** In early lessons, these selections incorporate general sound-symbol recognition. In later lessons, they focus on visual discrimination skills. For example, students may be asked to circle the letter that makes a different sound in the following row of items: ת ט ת ה ת ט ת
- **“Sound Check”** Students identify Hebrew homonyms (words that sound the same but are spelled differently). This is an important skill for developing Hebrew phonological awareness (a sensitivity to and understanding of the sounds of language) and phonemic awareness (the ability to recognize, isolate, and manipulate those sounds). Students may also be asked to isolate sounds within a word. This skill is known as auditory segmentation, an essential skill for learning to read phonetically.
- **“Rhyme Time”** The ability to identify words that rhyme is an important aspect of phonemic awareness, requiring beginning readers to recognize repeating patterns in print.
- **“The ‘Write’ Letter,” “The ‘Write’ Word”** Students review letters and vocabulary as they select and write the correct letters or words that match illustrations in an activity.
- **“Picture This”** Students identify the Hebrew words that describe a picture.

## STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER’S EDITION

This Teacher’s Edition contains the entire text of *Alef Bet Quest* in a reduced format. The pages are annotated with instructional techniques and suggestions for activities that correspond to features in the student book. The information and suggestions included here will assist you in developing your lesson plan. You need not follow every suggestion presented; rather, the guide provides you with several options from which you may choose. You know best what will work with your group of students and your teaching style.

Each chapter in the section beginning on page 17 of this guide contains the following sections:

### Pages in Student Text

#### Key Words

**New Letters** Whenever two letters represent a single sound, they are taught together (ת תּ ט). As a result, up to three letters may be taught in a single lesson. After Lesson 4, no more than one new consonant sound is presented in any single lesson.

**New Vowels** With the exception of Lesson 20, only one new vowel sound is introduced in any lesson. However, single vowel sounds may be represented by as many as three symbols in Hebrew (א אַ אָ). With one exception, all symbols that represent a single vowel sound are taught together. The exception is אַ, which remains controversial in North American Hebrew pronunciation. In some places, this vowel is pronounced *eh*, identical to the pronunciation of אַ and אָ. In other places, אַ is pronounced *ay*. Because אַ can take either pronunciation, we do not teach it with the other vowel signs that represent its sound. Therefore, אַ appears by itself, and teachers are directed to teach it according to the pronunciation in their community.

**Recommended Instructional Materials** This is a list of Phonics Flash Cards (numbered flash cards that contain the individual letters and vowels taught in each lesson), and Word Cards (numbered word cards that contain the key words taught in each lesson), and other materials and props for teaching the lesson. For a master list of Phonics Flash Cards and Word Cards, see page 12 in this guide. You can also find black-line masters for the cards in Appendices A and B on pages 107 and 113.

**Review** (except Lesson 1) This section describes a game or other activity that reviews previous material before presenting the new information contained in the lesson.

**Set Induction** An activity introduces and helps students relate to the central concepts in the new lesson, such as the idea that multiple symbols can represent a single sound.

**Introducing the Key Words and Deducing Their Sound-Symbol Associations** *Alef Bet Quest* promotes a multi-sensory approach to Hebrew

decoding, integrating auditory, visual, and kinesthetic or tactile information and using all three of these modalities (or sensory pathways) to help all learners master Hebrew reading. You can find a full explanation of how to use this multi-sensory approach on page 11 of this guide.



**Oral Language Lesson (Optional)** Each chapter of the guide includes a short, modern Hebrew language lesson to integrate with the key words. Although optional, the oral Hebrew language instruction is strongly recommended. Include it for any class that is also using the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader*.

**Techniques for Individual Activities** For every activity in the student text, you will find directions and, in many cases, the theoretical basis for its inclusion in the book. For example, some activities focus on training students to hear the component sounds of Hebrew words. Others are designed to help students develop the ability to distinguish between letters that look similar. As the teacher, you may find it helpful to know what skill students are practicing in order to assess students' progress and remediate when necessary.



**Clue to the Quest** In addition to providing guidance about the final activity in each lesson, this section also includes challenge questions to help heighten student interest and motivation for using the digital application at home. It will also help you follow up on students' use of the software.



**Assessment** The most important procedure in an individual assessment of Hebrew reading is listening to each student's reading of unfamiliar material and completing an error analysis. Appendix C on page 123 in this guide contains a placement test that you can use to evaluate new students who enter the program late or to provide an overall picture of the class or grade in the middle or at the end of the year. A reading assessment for each lesson follows.

It is important that you organize your time so that you can evaluate each student individually at least every three lessons. You may need to provide more frequent assessment for students who are having difficulty with the material. Complete instructions for assessment and basic error analysis are included on page 9.

There are three ways to assess students' progress in the software:

1. Log on to [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com) and click the blue "Assessment" button at the bottom left of the screen. Click on *Alef Bet Quest*. Put in your class's serial number. Review your students' results.
2. Students can print out a lesson summary when they have completed all the activities in a lesson and bring it in to class.
3. Students can e-mail the lesson summary directly to you. You may wish to set up a separate e-mail account to receive this information.

Inform your students how often you intend to assess their progress online. You may wish to check their progress each time you assign an activity or after they complete a chapter in the book.

## PACING

Many variables contribute to the pace at which a class completes an instructional program. Students have different levels of ability, teachers have different styles, and schools vary in the number of instructional hours devoted to Hebrew. You will have to decide how slowly or quickly you want your class to move through the text. However, you should plan to complete *Alef Bet Quest* within one school year.

The twenty lessons in *Alef Bet Quest* consist of four to six pages each. Certain aspects of Hebrew phonics are more complicated than others and will require more time for mastery. For example, there are different uses of ךּ, and students may need multiple sessions before they master each use. Similarly, the second pronunciation of ם (oh) is taught with ם and the double-duty dot (מִשְׁדָּה) in Lesson 19. Despite the fact that this lesson is five pages long, the complexity of the material makes it a more difficult, and therefore a more time-consuming, lesson than others of the same length.

Instructional time is the scarcest and most precious resource in Hebrew education. Deciding how you will spend your time is critical when planning lessons. Ideally, every lesson should include the following five components:

1. An activity that reviews previous material
2. An activity that introduces the new concepts or sets the tone for the lesson
3. Presentation of new material

4. Reinforcement of new material
5. A closing activity that summarizes or reinforces the lesson's content and prepares students for the next session

The amount of time you spend on each component will depend on the overall amount of time available to you for Hebrew instruction and on your goals for the lesson. Preparing your lessons in advance will help you manage your time so that you and your students can successfully meet your goals. Remember that the computer application provides you with an exceptional tool for extending class time with fun, online learning that can be completed at home.

Your lesson plans should include your goals for the lesson, the instructional materials you will need, specific activities you plan to use with time estimates for each, homework and assignments in the digital application, and any other relevant notes.

## Once-a-Week Hebrew Instruction

If your class meets one to one-and-a-half hours per week for twenty-eight to thirty weeks, you should aim to complete one lesson per week on average. Lessons 10, 13, and 17 may each require two class sessions, as the contents of those lessons are complex. Similarly, Lesson 19 includes two long reading passages, to which you may want to devote extra time for student mastery. Depending on the makeup of your class and your school's overall goals for Hebrew, you may want to use the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader* concurrently with *Alef Bet Quest*, or you may choose to reserve it until after students have mastered the basics of Hebrew phonetic decoding. It is an excellent reinforcement tool.

## Twice-a-Week Hebrew Instruction

If your class meets two or more hours per week for thirty weeks, you should allow two to three sessions per chapter. Consider incorporating the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader* as part of the regular classroom routine or use it upon completion of the primer.

## THE HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTION

A partnership between home and school can help your students reach their greatest potential. Make every effort to facilitate this partnership. A significant number of parents cannot read Hebrew and are therefore unable to assist their children with Hebrew reading homework. *Alef Bet Quest* has taken a bold and innovative approach to solving this problem: the digital application. Students will enjoy playing the interactive games, which review and practice the reading skills they have learned in class. Students can hear the reading passages read aloud—in American and Israeli accents! The activities are self-correcting. And the results are easily accessible to you. Parents can even join in the fun. They may even learn to read Hebrew themselves!

You may wish to e-mail or send home a letter after the first day of class telling parents about *Alef Bet Quest* and introducing them to the computer program. Explain that you will be able to assess their child's progress online. (See "Assessment," page 9, and "Using the Digital Application," page 13.) You can find a sample letter to parents at [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com). Click on "Educators," "In the Classroom," then "Letters to Parents about Digital Applications." The letter contains steps for using the software, including sign-on instructions, and a link to a demo site for parents to try out the digital application themselves.

## THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

### Setting the Stage

Before the first day of school decorate the classroom with Hebrew posters and an *alef-bet* chart. Label classroom objects, such as **כֶּסֶת** and **שֻׁלְחָן**, with their Hebrew names. Try to display ritual objects such as a *hanukkiyah*, a *shofar*, or a *Kiddush* cup, as well as Israeli goods and products such as a soda bottle and package labels.

On the first day of class, play a tape or CD of Hebrew songs (such as *Shiru Shalom Ivrit* or *Z'man LaShir*, both available from Behrman House) as the students enter the room and find seats.



### Oral Language Lesson (Optional)

If you are using the *Alef Bet Quest Companion Reader* or you want to enrich your program with oral language, and you are comfortable using Hebrew, begin

the first class with the following lesson. Take attendance, asking students to respond in Hebrew when you call their names. Teach them the following words:

שְׁמִי \_\_\_\_\_ שְׁלוֹם פֹּה לֹא פֹה

If a student is absent, the class can respond:

לֹא פֹה \_\_\_\_\_



### Introducing the Book and the Digital Application

Distribute the books and allow students a few minutes to examine them. Show students the cover and ask what they think the book is about. (*Hebrew, alef bet, learning to read Hebrew, Israel*) Explain that by the end of the year they will be able to read every Hebrew word in the book. They will also be able to follow along in the *siddur* during services because they will know all the Hebrew letters and vowels!

Explain that Hebrew is read from right to left, so the book opens the opposite way from English books. Direct students to open their books to page 4. Ask what they see on this page. (*a silver plate in 20 pieces*) Explain that as part of their study of Hebrew reading they will be going on a treasure hunt—a quest—using the digital application. When they complete a lesson on the computer they will write the key words and new letters and/or vowels on the corresponding piece of the plate, or color in the piece. Next, direct students to turn to page 8 and explain that at the end of each lesson they will solve a puzzle that will help them earn bonus points in the computer games.

With the approval of your education director, distribute candies, *alef-bet* sugar cookies, or some other sweet treat (you may want to have pretzels, fruit, or a sugar-free treat for students with dietary concerns). Tell students that there is a custom of eating a sweet treat on the first day of school, and especially on the first day of learning to read Hebrew. Ask students what they think the purpose of this custom is. (*study is sweet, learning to read Hebrew is a treat*) Together recite the *Sheheḥyanu*, the blessing we say when we begin something new:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַחַיִּי וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.*

## HOMEWORK

Review and practice at home will help students hone the Hebrew decoding skills and vocabulary they acquire in school. The digital application provides the ideal method for at-home practice. It extends Hebrew instructional time and allows parents to participate in their child's Hebrew studies. Students are likely to be captivated by the Hebrew computer games. It's homework they will want to do!




## ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment will help you track student mastery of the material and plan remediation as necessary. You probably will not be able to assess every student on every lesson. Therefore, the assessments provided in Appendix C on page 123 are cumulative (Lessons 1–5, 6–10, 11–15, and 16–20). Students that are having difficulty should be evaluated more frequently, at least after every other lesson.

You can use the first assessment sheet in Appendix C, "Placement Test," to assess the skills of students who join the class mid-year or unexpectedly appear to be having trouble with certain letters and/or vowels. You can also use it toward the end of the year to assess the skills of the entire class or grade.

We recommend the following procedure for assessment:

- Provide students with a master copy of the assessment sheet. On a separate copy, one for each student, make notes about student errors. Ask each individual to read all ten items without stopping. Put a check next to each word that the student reads correctly. If the student makes mistakes on the first three items, or on five items total, stop the assessment and remediate. For example, allow the student to practice these items with a classroom aide or the resource room tutor. You can also review the material in the appropriate reading passages in the book ("Word Building" or "I Can Read Hebrew!").
- Mark a slash (/) through any item on which the student makes an error and write a phonetic equivalent of the mispronunciation above the slash; for example, *mal* instead of *tal*.
- If the student skips an item, put a slash (/) through it, but without a phonetic note.
- If the student adds a sound, such as an extra vowel

at the end of a C-V-C syllable, draw a circle and write the addition inside it, for example: 

- Do not let students see what you are writing. Accept self-corrections, but do not give feedback until the student has completed the evaluation.

Assessments can also reveal areas that the class should review as a whole. If you see that several students are having difficulty with the same item—for example, confusion of look-alike or sound-alike letters—a classroom or small group review may be beneficial.

See also "Tracking Students' Digital Activities" on page 13.

## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

PAGE IN STUDENT BOOK	VOWELS	LETTERS	KEY WORDS	LESSON
5	אָ אֵ אִ	ש מ ם	שָׁמַשׁ שָׁם	1
9		א ע ב	אָבָא עָם	2
13	וּ	ל ד	שָׁלוֹם אָדָם	3
17		ה י	יָד הַיְּהוּדִים	4
21	גָּ גֵּ	ג	גִּישָׁם שָׁמַשׁ	5
25	הָ הֵּ הִּ	ה & י unvoiced	בֵּימָה אָמָא	6
30		צ ץ	מִצָּה מִיץ	7
35	רֵּ	ר	רֵגֶל בֵּינָה	8
40		ט ת ת	טָלִית תּוֹרָה	9
45	unvoiced בּ	ב ו	הַבְּדִלָּה מִצּוּה	10
50	שׁ	ס ש	סָבָא סְבִתָּא יִשְׂרָאֵל	11
54	קֵּ	כ ק	סְכָה קְדוּשׁ	12
59	voiced בּ	ז	מְזוּזָה הַלְלוּיָהּ	13
64	ךָ	ח כ ך	חֲלָה בְּרָכָה מְלָךְ	14
68	יֵּ	פ	מְשֻׁפָּחָה חַי	15
72	יָךְ	נ ן	גֵּר יֵינָן	16
78	וּ חּ		חַג שְׁמֵחַ מִצּוֹת	17
82	וּיּ	פ ף	שׁוֹפָר אֶלְף	18
87	שׁ שׂ ש׃		צְהָרִים מִשָּׁה כָּל	19
92	וּיּ וּיּ		אוּי נְאֻבוּי!	20

## MULTI-SENSORY APPROACH TO HEBREW PHONICS

Students learn in different ways. The three primary modalities for learning are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic or tactile. The most effective way for the greatest number of students to master Hebrew phonetic decoding is for you to use a multi-sensory approach in which students see, hear, and physically form the letters and vowels.

The following steps demonstrate a multi-sensory approach to Hebrew phonics using as a model the letters and vowels in Lesson 1. The approach can be used to introduce all new Hebrew letters and vowels in *Alef Bet Quest*.

### Lesson 1

**Key Words:** שָׁמַשׁ

**New Letters:** ם/מ ן

**New Vowels:** ם ם ם

1. Instruct students to repeat the key word שָׁמַשׁ and ask, "What is the last sound that you hear in this word?" (*sh*) Hold up Phonics Flash Card #1 and say *sh*. Ask students to repeat the sound with you. You may wish to create a kinesthetic link with a hand motion by placing your index finger in front of your lips as if shushing them. Ask the class to repeat the movement. Post Phonics Flash Card #1 on the board with tape, Fun-Tak, or magnetized tape.
2. Ask students to draw the new letter in the air with their index fingers. Model this action for them first, with your back to the class, so they follow the correct directionality. Then ask the class to draw the letter as they say the sound.



Make sure that students are following the proper direction.

3. Say the key word again, and ask what sound they hear at the beginning of the word. (*sha*) Hold up Phonics Flash Cards #1 and 5 and say *sha*. Ask students what vowel sound they hear in the key word. (*ah*) Show students Phonics Flash Card #5. Pass around one or more tongue depressors or Popsicle sticks and point out to students that it looks just like one of the Hebrew vowels with the *ah*

sound (◻). Show students Phonics Flash Cards # 4, 5, and 6, and tell students that all three of these vowels make the *ah* sound. Post two copies of #1 on the board, leaving a space between them. Post Phonics Flash Card #5 under the first ◻.

4. Ask students to draw the two vowels ◻ and ◻ in the air with their index fingers. Model this action for them and ask them to repeat it while saying *ah*.
5. Practice drilling the new letters and vowels. Write the combinations ◻◻ and ◻◻ on the board. Once students can easily blend these consonant-vowel (C-V) syllables, add a ◻ to the end of the syllables to create ◻◻◻ and ◻◻◻. Repeat the key word and ask the students what consonant sound they hear in the middle of the word. (*m*) Show the class Phonics Flash Card #2. Say the sound *m* and ask the class to repeat with you. You may wish to create a kinesthetic association by rubbing your stomach (as if enjoying something yummy) and saying *mmm*. Ask the class to repeat the sound and hand motion with you. Direct them to write the letter in the air as they say its sound.



Make sure that students follow the proper direction.

7. Practice drilling the new letter ן with the vowels: ן and ן. Once most students can accurately decode these syllables, create combinations that include the ן: ן and ן.
8. Hold up Word Card #1 and ask the students to read the Hebrew word. (שָׁמַשׁ) Ask a volunteer to point to the object that this word names, or to a picture.
9. Repeat this procedure for the second key word, שָׁמַשׁ. Ask students what sound they hear at the end of the word. (*m*) Show the class Phonics Flash Card #3. Say the sound *m* and ask the class to repeat it with you. Again, you may wish to create a kinesthetic association by rubbing your stomach (as if enjoying something yummy) and saying *mmm*. Ask the students to identify the other symbol that makes the sound *m*. (Phonics Flash Card # 2)
10. Ask students to draw the new letter in the air with their index fingers. Model this action, then ask the class to draw the letter as they say the sound.



Make sure that students follow the proper direction.

11. Practice drilling final *mem* with the other letters and vowels. Write the combinations מַם and מֶם on the board and have students practice decoding it.
12. Hold up Word Card #2, and ask the students to read the Hebrew word. (שָׁם) Ask a volunteer to act out the meaning of this word by pointing "there."

The following is a brief outline of the steps above:

1. Ask students to repeat the key word and to identify a specific sound in the word.
2. Hold up the Phonics Flash Card that represents that sound.
3. Ask students to repeat the sound with you.
4. Create a kinesthetic link with the sound. Ask the class to repeat the sound with an associated motion.
5. Have students draw the new letter in the air with their index fingers as they say the sound.
6. Write on the board C-V and C-V-C combinations that include the new letters and vowels, and have students practice decoding them.

NOTE: You may wish to mark this section with a paper clip or bookmark so that you always have quick and easy access to these steps.

## Phonics Flash Cards Master List

וּ .37	מֶ .19	שׁ .1
ז .38	מֵי .20	מ .2
ח .39	צ .21	ם .3
כ .40	ץ .22	מֶ .4
ך .41	ר .23	מֵ .5
פ .42	מֵי .24	מֶ .6
פֵי .43	ט .25	א .7
נ .44	ת .26	ע .8
ן .45	ת .27	ב .9
פֵי .46	ב .28	ל .10
חֵי .47	וּ .29	ד .11
וּ .48	מֶ .30	מֶ .12
פ .49	ס .31	וּ .13
ף .50	שׁ .32	ה .14
פֵי .51	מֶ .33	י .15
מֶ .52	כ .34	ג .16
פֵי .53	ק .35	מֶ .17
פֵי .54	מֶ .36	מֶ .18

## Word Cards Master List

בְּרָכָה .29	רָגַל .15	שָׁמַשׁ .1
מָלַךְ .30	בֵּיצָה .16	שָׁם .2
מִשְׁפָּחָה .31	טְלִית .17	אָבָא .3
חֵי .32	תּוֹרָה .18	עָם .4
נֵר .33	הַבְּדֵלָה .19	שָׁלוֹם .5
זֵיץ .34	מִצּוּהָ .20	אָדָם .6
חַג שְׁמֵחָ .35	סָבָא .21	יָד .7
מִצּוֹת .36	סַבְתָּא .22	הָרֵ .8
שׁוֹפָר .37	יִשְׂרָאֵל .23	גֶּשֶׁם .9
אָלֶף .38	סַכָּה .24	שָׁמַשׁ .10
צְהַרִים .39	קְדוּשָׁה .25	בֵּימָה .11
מִשָּׁה .40	מְזוּזָה .26	אָמָא .12
כָּל .41	הַלְלוּיָהּ .27	מִצָּה .13
אוּי וְאָבוּי! .42	חֵלָה .28	מֵיץ .14



## USING THE DIGITAL APPLICATION

Students will love playing the online games in the digital application, “The Quest for the Golden Kiddush Cup.” The activities reinforce the reading concepts and vocabulary introduced in the book. The digital application also expands the amount of Hebrew instruction time and extends learning into the home. The computer becomes your teaching assistant! With the software, parents can help their children even if they cannot read Hebrew themselves.

When presenting the digital application to the students focus on the fun that they will have playing the computer games, and remind them that they will be able to score even more points by using the Hebrew they learn in class. When introducing the digital application to parents, emphasize the ways it can help their children, such as hearing Hebrew syllables, words, and sentences read aloud in American and Israeli accents, practicing their new decoding skills in online games, and taking a virtual trip through Israel. Tell parents their children can even e-mail their online scores directly to you!

### Introducing the Digital Application

Ask students if they have ever gone on a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt. Ask what they did to find the “treasure,” and discuss what made this activity fun. Ask students what the word “quest” means. (*a search or pursuit to find something, an adventurous expedition*) Tell them to turn to the back inside cover, and explain that this book comes with a built-in computer treasure hunt called “The Quest for the Golden Kiddush Cup.” They will go on a virtual trip through Israel, collecting clues at every stop that will help them solve the mystery of the missing golden Kiddush Cup. After students complete a lesson in the book, they will play games on their computer to practice what they have learned in class.

Before you assign activities in the *Alef Bet Quest* digital application for the first time, tell students, and have them note, the class serial number. Or write the class’s serial number on each CD wallet. Every student in the class will use the same serial number to become a member of the *Alef Bet Quest* digital database. You will use that serial number to track the class’s progress online. After entering the class’s serial number in their computer, students will be asked to register by creating

their own user name and password. The students will then be members, and the database will automatically begin to track and store their results.

Make sure to record students’ user names so you have a master list in case students forget. Send the class’s serial number and the student’s user name home to his or her parents. Students can keep their passwords private.

### Tracking Students’ Digital Activities

There are three ways to assess students’ progress in the digital application:

1. Log on to [www.behrmanhouse.com](http://www.behrmanhouse.com) and click the blue “Assessment” button at the bottom left of the screen. Click on *Alef Bet Quest*. Put in your class’s serial number. Review your students’ results.
2. Students can print out a lesson summary when they have completed all the activities in a lesson and bring it in to class.
3. Students can e-mail the lesson summary directly to you. You may wish to set up a separate e-mail account to receive this information.

Inform your students how often you intend to assess their progress online. You may wish to check their progress each time you assign an activity or only after they complete a chapter in the book.

## GAMES AND REVIEW ACTIVITIES

Games can add variety and energy to your classroom. They reinforce learning and capture students’ attention through a fun, lively medium. As you plan to use the games below, or your own, keep the following in mind:

1. Choose games that contribute to improving specific skills and reading fluency—games that have pedagogic value.
2. Use games that move quickly. Don’t spend more time on a game than it deserves.
3. Stop when students’ interest begins to wane.
4. Choose age-appropriate games.
5. Use games that are easy to follow and organize. Explain rules clearly. Avoid complicated directions. You want students’ attention focused on the skills being reinforced, not on rules.
6. Maintain control of the class.
7. Make sure that all students in the class are actively involved and can experience success.

## **Around the World**

In this review game students sit in a circle facing inward. Choose one student to stand behind a seated student. Hold up a letter or vowel. Both students try to read the card first. The one who reads it first correctly continues “around the world” by standing behind the next student. The object of the game is for students to move, place by place, completely around the circle. You can also use this game to review vocabulary by showing a key-word picture and asking students to provide the correct key word, or by showing a written word that students must read.

## **Tic-Tac-Toe**

Divide the class into two teams, X and O. Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on the chalkboard or whiteboard. Depending on what you want to review, in each square write a Hebrew letter and vowel, a syllable, or a word. In order to place an X or an O in a square, a student must read the item in the square correctly. You can create a permanent tic-tac-toe grid on a piece of oak tag and use Fun-Tak to post printed flash cards in the spaces, or you can use magnetic tape on a set of cards and post them on the board if it is magnetized.

*Hint:* Place the most difficult combinations, such as C-V-C syllables, in the four corners and the center of the game.

This game can also be used to review vocabulary by placing pictures in the squares and asking students to provide the Hebrew word, or by writing Hebrew words in the squares that students must read and translate.

## **Musical Words**

Create a deck of ten or more Word Cards. Students sit or stand in a circle and pass the deck around while you play Jewish or Israeli music, such as *Z'man LaShir* and *Shiru Shalom Ivrit*. When the music stops, the student holding the deck must read and translate the top card. If that student cannot do so, the card goes to the next student. Once a student has correctly read and translated the word, he or she puts the card at the bottom of the deck and play continues.

## **Categories**

Create a set of Word Cards with one card per student. Divide the words into categories with two to five words per category. Categories can include “people,” “items in

the synagogue,” or “holiday objects.” Categories can also be words that begin with (or contain) the same sound.

Distribute the cards at random, one per student. Tell the students to walk around the room and find everyone whose card is in the same category. You should tell the students what the categories are, especially the first few times you play this game. Once the students have found their groups, redistribute the cards and play again, noting how much more quickly they complete this activity in each successive round. Conclude the game by writing the categories on a set of envelopes and asking the students to place their cards in the correct one.

## **Beginning, Middle, End**

In this game students identify the location of specific sounds within a word. This skill is known as auditory segmentation, and researchers have found that there is a strong correlation between a child’s awareness of the sounds in words and later reading achievement.

Take three paper cups. Label one “Beginning,” one “Middle,” and one “End.” Divide the class into two teams. You will also need tokens or plastic chips in two different colors, one for each team. Allow one team to go first. One at a time, students come up. Tell the team what sound they should listen for when you read a Hebrew word. The player must determine if the sound is at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the word. Read the word. The student has five or ten seconds to determine where the sound occurs and to place a token or chip in the correct cup. Feel free to repeat the word. If the student is correct, the chip remains in the cup. If the student is incorrect, remove the chip. Repeat until each member of the team has had a turn, then tally up their accumulated tokens or chips. Allow the second team to play in the same manner. You can also alternate turns between teams. The team with the highest score at the end of play wins.

*Note:* Begin with sounds that occur at the beginning of a word, then progress to those that fall at the end of a word, and only then ask students to determine sounds in the middle of the word. This is especially important the first time you play this game.

## **Letter Contest/Sound Contest**

In this game students are asked to focus on one letter at a time as they hunt for a specific letter or sound inside a paragraph or other text passage.

Give each student a copy of the text passage. Select a letter, especially one that can be confused with other letters that look similar, for example, ך and ך or ן and ן. Ask students to look closely at each letter and circle as many examples of that letter as they can in one minute. When you call time, ask the students to write down the number of examples they found. In order to “win,” each student must point out all the letters to you and the class. You can play multiple rounds of this game using different letters. Use a clean copy for each round. Alternatively, you can ask students to find all the examples of letters that make a certain sound, such as *s*, which can be made by ש and ש.

### Phonics Bingo

For this game you will need to prepare a paper Bingo card for each student, divided into twenty-five squares in five rows and five columns. The center square is free—חֶפְשִׁי (pronounced *hofshi*). The other twenty-four squares contain C-V and C-V-C syllables composed of letters and vowels that the students have learned. Be sure to write neatly and clearly. Each card may contain the same syllables, but they should be located in different squares. These syllables should also be written on index cards that you will read out to the students. Each student will need a small pile of beans, tokens, buttons, or squares of colored paper to use as Bingo markers.

Distribute Bingo cards and markers to the class. Select an index card and read the syllable written on it. Students should locate the syllable on their cards and place a marker on it. The first student who covers five squares in a row—either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally—calls out “Bingo.” He or she must then read the syllables back to you. If the student is correct, he or she wins. This game can also be used to review vocabulary using pictures or written words in the squares on the Bingo cards.

### Same or Different?

For this game you will need a pile of cards (or paper strips), each with a line drawn down the middle. Write two letters on a card, one on each side of the line. Some cards can have two of the same letter.

ש	ש
---	---

Other cards can have two different though similar-looking letters.

ש	ש
---	---

Divide the class into two teams. Each team chooses their first player. Hold up a card. The players call out “Same!” or “Different!” The student who calls out the correct answer first collects the card. At the end of play, the team with the most cards wins.

Begin with single letters, then move to two-letter and three-letter words:

שם	שם
גיר	גור

*Note:* Since the words contain no vowels, students are simply distinguishing visually between similar letters. They are not decoding the words.

### Concentration

Prepare six to twelve pairs of cards. Pairs consist of two items that match, such as a Hebrew letter or vowel and its English sound equivalent, different Hebrew letters or vowels that make the same sound, or a Hebrew word and a picture that illustrates it. Make sure that all of the cards are the same size and color, and that students will not be able to see through them.

Place the cards face down in neat rows on the table. The first player turns two cards over. If they match, the player collects the set and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, the player turns them back over in the same spot, and the next player turns two cards over. Play continues until all the cards have been matched. The winner is the player who has collected the most matches.

## TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

Children learn and develop differently; no two students will acquire Hebrew decoding skills in exactly the same way. Although students with special learning needs can bring challenges to the classroom, you can serve your students best by recognizing each child's individual strengths. Consult with your religious school director to learn about each student's specific learning needs.

*Alef Bet Quest* provides a wide variety of learning activities, such as drawing, writing, and puzzles and games, as well as animated online activities and video games that are ideal for all students, including those with learning challenges.

The techniques and modifications listed below, while designed to benefit students with specific learning needs, will be useful for all students:

- Form a bond with your students. Reach out to students before the school year starts by sending home a letter or e-mail or by calling to introduce yourself. Begin the first class with a "get-to-know-you" game. Throughout the year, show a personal interest in students and their lives. Students will learn best in a setting where they feel safe, valued, and respected.
  - Complete the review activity at the start of each chapter in *Alef Bet Quest*. This will help you determine if a student is having difficulty with the material from previous lessons. You will be able to catch problems such as students confusing look-alike letters and remediate appropriately through repetition and review.
  - Model the correct pronunciation and phrasing for letters, vowels, words, phrases, and then sentences. Repeat several times, and do not assume that all of your students will be able to read the same items fluently and accurately when they see them again later. Repetition is essential for students with special learning needs.
  - Use the "Multi-Sensory Approach to Hebrew Phonics" (see page 11) when introducing key words, letters, vowels, and their sounds. Activities that incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic or tactile modes of learning give *all* students a pathway to success using the approach that is most comfortable and effective for them.
- Encourage students to consistently use the *Alef Bet Quest* digital application. These appealing activities provide essential review and practice at students' own pace. By assessing students' progress online, you will be able to see where they are having specific difficulties, enabling you to review the corresponding lesson in class. See "Using the Digital Application" on page 13 for more information.
- For students with:
- **Attention problems:** Seat the student close to you. Repeat directions. Privately establish a refocusing system with the student, such as a gentle tap on the shoulder or moving closer to the student's desk. Assist students organizationally, for example, by sending home a sheet with the questions students should answer after completing a lesson on the computer.
  - **Auditory processing issues:** Minimize noise and classroom distractions. Have the student repeat sounds and words back to you to ensure correct pronunciation.
  - **Visual processing difficulty:** Read written directions aloud. For individual work, allow the student to work with an aide, a *madrich* or *madrichah*, or a classmate who can read directions or listen to the student read aloud. Have the student use an index card to track the line he or she is reading or cover the portion of the page not being worked on.
  - **Emotional concerns, such as shyness or lack of self-esteem:** Allow the student to participate in choral reading so he or she does not feel singled out. Assess the student individually to build confidence. Provide matter-of-fact and low-key positive reinforcement to boost self-esteem.
  - **Behavioral problems:** Set firm but reasonable expectations. Minimize transitions from one activity to another, and inform students of schedule changes. Maintain a positive relationship with parents through regular contact and open communication. Find out what types of discipline strategies work at home and in secular school and replicate wherever possible.
- By providing your students with opportunities to succeed in a nurturing, safe environment, fostering tolerance, and creating a supportive atmosphere, you will help all of them to reach their highest learning potential.