

# Short Vowels

The following “rules” for short vowels are reflected in the following table. Note, however, that there many words and instances in which these “rules” do not apply.

**Rule #1:** Lengthened vowels occur in accented or near open syllables (i.e., pretonic, open syllables).

**Rule #2:** Normal vowels occur in closed unaccented syllables.

**Rule #3:** Vocal shevas occur in distant open syllables.

| TYPE OF VOWEL<br>(type of syllable)                                       | A-CLASS<br>a-type   | I-CLASS<br>i- and e-type  | U-CLASS<br>u- and o-type  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>LENGTHENED**</b><br>accented or<br>near open (pretonic)                | qamets    ā<br><br>C<br>T<br><br>father                               | tsere    ē<br><br>C<br>:<br>:<br><br>pain                                 | holem    ō<br><br>C<br>:<br>:<br><br>role                         |
| <b>NORMAL</b><br>closed unaccented<br>(either pretonic<br>or propretonic) | patach    a<br><br>C<br>:<br><br>father                               | segol    e<br><br>C<br>:<br>:<br><br>pen                                  | qamets-hatuph    o<br><br>C<br>T<br><br>role                      |
|   |   | hireq    i<br><br>C<br>:<br><br>pin                                       | qibbuts    u<br><br>C<br>:<br>:<br><br>rule                       |
| <b>REDUCED</b><br>distant open<br>with gutterals                          | hateph-patach <sup>a</sup> • ā<br><br>G<br>:<br>:<br><br>semi-slurred | hateph-segol <sup>e</sup> • ē<br><br>G<br>:<br>:<br>:<br><br>semi-slurred | hateph-qamets <sup>o</sup> • ō<br><br>G<br>T:<br><br>semi-slurred |
| <b>REDUCED-MURMURED</b><br>distant open<br>with non-gutterals             | vocal sheva <sup>e</sup> • ə<br><br>C<br>:<br><br>semi-slurred        | vocal sheva <sup>e</sup> • ə<br><br>C<br>:<br><br>semi-slurred            | vocal sheva <sup>e</sup> • ə<br><br>C<br>:<br><br>semi-slurred    |

\*In this table, “C” stands for any strong non-guttural consonant, and “G” for any guttural consonant.

\*\*The vowels here termed “lengthened” are being treated as short vowels since they do not have a vowel letter. Note that some grammars treat them as long vowels though still distinguishing them from long vowels with a *matres lectionis* (a vowel letter). Here they are treated as short vowels since they can reduce in certain circumstances unlike long vowels with *matres*. Referring to them as “lengthened” is helpful since these are what normal vowels become when they go through compensatory lengthening.