The nouns of Modern Hebrew (MH) and Biblical Hebrew (BH) can be divided into two major classes: templatic and non-templatic. A noun is templatic if it can be decomposed into a root and a template (syllable structure+vocalization+affixes; → Mishkal). For this to be possible, either the root or the template has to be recognizable independently. For example, the very productive template QiT(T)uL can be recognized in sikuy ‘chance’, by analogy with nouns like sikun ‘danger’ or dikuy ‘oppression’, even though this is the only occurrence of the root √sky in the language (with this meaning). Conversely, the root y-n-q, apparent in the verb yanaq ‘suck’, can be recognized on semantic grounds in tinoq ‘baby’, although the very few nouns in the rare template tQToL do not form a natural class.

Non-templatic nouns are those nouns that cannot be decomposed in that manner. In this category we find primarily loanwords: recent ones, such as élefon ‘telephone’ or diléma ‘dilemma’; but also old loans, not necessarily viewed as loans by speakers, such as ēstrubal ‘pine cone’ or gizbar ‘treasurer’. To this group one may add basic words (Schwartzwald 2009), i.e., native words whose form does not easily lend itself to root- and-template decomposition, e.g., pe ‘mouth’ or pil ‘elephant’.

Stress is central in the distinction between the two groups of nouns (in this entry, stress is final unless marked elsewhere). Templatic nouns behave like verbs, in that stress is not
lexical but rather mobile (for a possible exception see below and → Segholates): the plural of סיכוי‬ 'chance' is סיכויים sikuyim. Non-templatic nouns nearly always have stable, or lexical, stress: תרקטור tráktor - תרקטורים tráktorim (see Schwartzwald (1998) for other characteristics of foreignness). As a general rule, stable stress indicates a non-templatic status, although basic nouns and old loans, which are not templatic, usually have mobile stress (תות tut but also tútim; איצטדיון ʾiṣtadyon 'stadium' - איצטדיונים ʾiṣtadyonim, but also ṕiṣtadyónim). Acronyms (see below) behave like new loans. (For formal analyses of Hebrew Stress, see Bat-El 1989, 1993; Melčuk & Podolsky 1996; Schwartzwald 1990; → Stress).

The question of the analysis of “basic” nouns aside, the division into templatic and non-templatic nouns corresponds roughly to the native vs. non-native distinction. It is nevertheless an important division for two reasons: 1) loan nouns are very common in MH, and 2) non-templatic nouns are more regular with respect to allomorphic behavior than templatic nouns, especially regarding gender and number inflection (→ Inflection, Lexicon of Modern Hebrew). On the increasingly important intermediary group of nouns derived through suffixation see below.

Nominal Templates have semantic import, although less systematically than verbal ones. This is especially true if the template is productive. For instance, the Segholate (see below) template Q0TeL includes a majority of nouns with abstract, non-concrete meaning; it is productive only with this meaning. The template maQTeL, even though it includes a word like המשבר mašber 'crisis', is productive only with a concrete instrumental meaning, viz. המשבר mašfeř 'inhalator' or המקלט maqlet 'receiver'. Some templates, e.g., feminine QiTLa, are not
productive and have no clear semantic contribution to the noun. (On this topic, see Bolozky 1999)

**Affixation and the changes in the stem induced by it:** Affixation constitutes a major word-formation device in MH (Schwartzwald 2001). Affixes, largely defined here as morphemes identifiable at the extremities of a stem, are present in all stages of Hebrew. Like unaffixed nouns, suffixes are either feminine or masculine (or simply genderless). The native feminine suffixes are -a, -(e)t, -ut, -it, iya. There are three native masculine suffixes: agentives -ay and -an, and diminutive -on (which has this role only in MH).

In MH there are also a number of non-native suffixes, such as diminutive -čik, attributives -niq and -ist, and -ásya. These may attach to native nouns (e.g., qibúšniq ‘person from the kibbutz’ or bišú’ist ‘competent, practical person’, from bišú’a ‘execution’). Like loans, these suffixes have lexical requirements with respect to stress: for example, -ist attracts stress but renders it stable (בִּשׁוּ'יִסְטִיס, bišuˈistim), and -nik is essentially pre-stressing and stable (קיבּוּשֶּנִיִּיס, kibúšniqim).

Like unaffixed words, affixed ones may also be classified according to the degree of linearity in their formation. Some affixes may be templatic, in that they impose a certain syllabic form and vocalization on their stem. Thus, agentive -an and abstract feminine -ut (and possibly -(e)t and -a(t)) can be shown to be part of the templates QaTLan and QaTLut, (as well as e.g., QaTTéLet and QoTLa), appearing on bases with a vocalization different than that of the
related free noun: *safran* ‘librarian’ (cf. *סֶפֶר* `book`, *סִּפְרָן* `book (dim.)’), *נסר* `Christianity’ (cf. *נֹּֽשְּרִי* `christian’). Still, alongside their templatic role, these suffixes can also attach to another noun without changing its form (*תַּקְלִיטָן* `DJ’). (See Berman & Clark (1984) on *-an*; Bolozky & Schwarzwald (1992) on *-ut*).

The nominal prefixes *t*- and *m*- are always part of a template in the above sense (on participial *m*- see below). Other suffixes, such as *-ay* and *-on*, never change the vocalization of the base. Suffixes of foreign origin also belong to this non-templatic group.

The vowel \[a\] is syncopated in an open syllable when two syllables away from the stressed syllable (in native nouns). This is a phonological rule, and as such applies regardless of the suffix added: *פָּקִיד* `clerk’ ⇒ *פָּקִידּוֹן* (dim.), *פָּקִידה* (f), *פָּקִידֻת* `clergy’. The exceptions to this rule, mostly among QaTaL agentive, may be explained either diachronically or by positing underlying geminates (see discussion in Ravid & Shlezinger 2001).

Other stem changes, such as *ברכה* `blessing’ - *בְּרֵכָתו* `his blessing’ are not systematic in MH.

**Segholates:** The templatic nouns known as the “Segholates” are special in that they exhibit systematic stem-allomorphy. The singular, masculine form of these nouns characteristically has an unstressed final vowel \[e\] (\([a]\) before or after a guttural) between the second and third radicals: *סֶפֶר* `book’, *נֶפֶש* `soul’, *גּוֹדֶל* `size’. But the plural forms of such
nouns have a vowel [a] in the same position: ספרים sfarim, נפשות nefṣot, גדים gdalim (the first vowel is syncopated again). The first vowel of a masculine segholate can be either [a] or [e] (or [a] before a guttural; [e] contrasts with [e] in BH segholates), never [i] or [u]; but when a suffix other than the plural suffix is added, [e] (and BH [e]) may correspond to either [i] (ספר sēfer - sifro ‘his book’) or [a] (נפש nēfeṣ - nafšo ‘his soul’). Moreover, some BH Segholates have a pausal form QāṬaL, regardless of the vowel of the stem in closed syllables (ארץ ʾāreṣ-ʾerṣ ‘earth’; שקר šāqer-šeqer ‘lie’, all penultimately stressed).

Whether the second vowel is epenthetic (the more traditional view, as discussed in Bolozky 1978) or reduced (Falk 1996) is a matter of dispute. That as may be, a “Segholation” rule turning [a] into [e] before an unstressed [e] (/nāfeṣ/ => [nēfeṣ]) is called for independently in the language, e.g., מדובר medubar - medubér (<=/medubáret/) ‘spoken (m-f)’. Segholation of [i], however, is a phenomenon attested mainly in segholates (➔ Segholates).

Feminine Segholates are nouns of the form QVTLa. Some of these nouns also exhibit stem-allomorphy before the plural suffix: סדרה sidra – sidro ‘series’, although such pairs are becoming fewer in MH, where sidrot is also possible, especially in the Construct State (see below). In BH, the latter is found when such nouns are in the CS. For feminine Segholates of the type QuTLa, QTaLot is not an option (in MH or in TH).

**Action nouns and participles:** Every verb in MH has at least two corresponding nominal forms: the participle and the action noun. The form of the participle is completely predictable from the verb. It is used to convey present tense, but also as a noun, usually with agentive
meaning (שומר 'guard', מאמן 'trainer, coach', madrix 'guide' etc.).

QoTeL participles are templatic: they are formed by mapping a root to an independent template, i.e., one that does not appear in other verbal forms. In many cases, a verb does not even exist ( сосед ‘agent’, no *saxan); in other cases, the participial form may carry an additional specialized meaning (מצץ ‘pacifier’, also participle of מצח ‘suck’).

Active participles with $m$- are only partially templatic, since their stems are always recognizable as the verbal stems, and there is always a verb with the same root, although sometimes the verbal form may exist only with a different meaning, e.g., מכשיר maxšir ‘instrument’ cf. להכשיר ‘render able, eligible’ (Schwartzwald 2009; Participle).

The same phenomenon is found among passive participles, which may have a verbal or an adjectival interpretation: מנושא manuse is either the present participle of the passive verb 'to be tried', or simply the adjective 'experienced'. Unlike active participles with $m$-, for some such passive participles there is no corresponding verb, passive or active, e.g., מעונץ me’unax ‘vertical’, no *עַנָּא, *יןָּא.

The form of the action noun is often - but not always - predictable from the verb. Action nouns tend to acquire idiosyncratic meanings and have a more opaque relation with the corresponding verb (e.g., מיתון mitun ‘recession’, מיתין miten ‘to moderate’). The verbal nouns of active verbs (principally QTiLa, QiTuL and haQTaLa) are templatic - they combine a root with a template that is not attested independently; in contrast, those of middle verbs,
(hiQaTLut and hitQaTLut) are less templatic: they are formed with clear connection to the verbal forms. None of these action nouns and participles display either stem changes or irregular plural suffixes. (Berman 1978; Ravid 1990, 1999; → Verbal Noun).

**Acronyms and Blends**: Acronyms exhibit mixed behavior: singular forms tend to be stressed along native principles (Bat-El 1994), and yet stress remains stable upon suffixation. For instance, the acronym ʿabam ‘UFO’ (from ʿésem bilti mezohé ‘unidentified object’) has the plural ʿabámim. (→ Acronyms)

Blends (Bat-El 1996) behave more like regular nouns. There are blends with stable, lexical stress (ramqol - rámqolim ‘amplifier-s’, from ram ‘high, loud’ + qol ‘voice, sound’, pl. qolot), and there are blends that preserve the stress of the second base noun, in which case stress is mobile (ramzor - ramsorim ‘traffic light-s’, from rémez ‘hint’ + ʿor ‘light’).

In BH, acronyms are not attested; but blends can be found, although mainly in proper names (e.g., יהוהיודדא). Neither acronyms nor blends are templatic, nor do they exhibit the morphological irregularities discussed above.

**Gender and number**: There are two genders, masculine and feminine. Masculine gender is unmarked. Setting aside a small group of nouns that are lexically feminine (כוס kos...
‘glass’, יָרָב gērev ‘sword’), feminine gender is overtly marked by the suffixes mentioned above: -(e)t, -a(t), -it, -ut, -iya. No exclusively masculine noun bears these suffixes.

The masculine plural marker is -im: סוס sus ‘horse-s’. The feminine plural marker -ot replaces the entire singular suffix in the case of -(e)t and -a(t): פרה par-a(t) - פרות par-ot ‘cow-s’; רכבת rakév-et - רכבות rakav-ot ‘train-s’. In the case of -it and -ut, plural -ot replaces only the t of the singular suffix: כרית kar-it - כריות kar-iy-ot ‘cushion-s’, חנות x̱an-ut - חנויות x̱an-uy-ot ‘shop-s’. Therefore, the suffixes -it and -ut are to be analyzed as i/u + t, wherein only the -t is feminine (in a handful of nouns with -it, plural -ot is added on to a feminine ending and does not replace the -t: חֹזֶית x̱azit - חֹזֶיות x̱azitot ‘façade’).

The plural suffixes -im and -ot each have at least one other minor, derivational role: -im is used to express tens (e.g., שלוש šaloš ‘three’ - שלושים šlošim ‘thirty’), while -ot is used in the formation of adverbs (e.g., عمוק ʿamoq ‘deep’ - عمוקות ʾamuqot ‘deeply’).

The historical dual suffix -áyim also functions as a plural marker, triggering plural agreement. In some nouns, most notably those denoting periods, it contrasts with -im, and therefore has a strictly dual interpretation - יומָי yom - יומָיים yamim - יומָיים yomáyim ‘day-s, two days’. In other cases, usually on nouns that have some natural dual quality, there is no
contrast, and the interpretation is plural: regel - raglāyim ‘foot-feet’ (Schwarzwald 2002: unit 12; → Dual).

Loan nouns, when ending in a, are feminine (e.g., dilēma ‘dilemma’); in all other cases - that is, even if the loan ends in it - they are masculine, e.g., qrēdit ‘credit’.

Some masculine nouns take the feminine plural suffix, but still trigger masculine agreement: xalōn - xalōnot ‘window-s’, xalōnot gdol-im ‘big windows’. This is often - though not always - related to the quality of the last vowel of the noun (Becker 2009). The same phenomenon, although to a lesser extent, can be found in some feminine nouns, e.g., dovrā - dovorim ‘bee-s’, dovorim afot ‘flying bees’ (Schwarzwald 2002: unit 12). However, it is rarely - if ever - attested in nouns of the non-templatic group or in participles and action nouns. Even among templatic nouns, no new noun exhibits this phenomenon (an exception is found in nouns of the QiT(T){a/ø}Lon template, which are masculine but take the feminine plural suffix: piqadōn - piqdonot ‘deposit-s’).

**State:** Besides the absolute/free state, every noun may also appear in what is termed the Construct State (CS). Two nouns (or more) can be joined to form one “construct noun”. This construction indicates a genitive relation, though in the broad sense of the term, so that the meaning may also be non-compositional: dov ‘bear’ nemalim ‘ants’, dov nemalim ‘anteater’ (for a syntactico-semantic classification of such complex nouns see Rosén 1977:144-152; Borer 2008). The form of some nouns changes when in the CS (דוב נמלים → דוב נמלים דבורים, דוב נמלים עפות).
A noun takes its CS form if it is any but the last noun in the string of nouns involved. These changes in form have to do with the position of stress, and therefore are very much like those found when the stress is moved as a result of suffixation. However, in suffixed nouns they are usually obligatory, whereas for nouns in the CS they systematically alternate with the unchanged form (xéder ’oxel and qacín réxev are also possible), especially in colloquial MH. Such changes never occur in non-templatic nouns.

Obligatory changes apply to the following endings of nouns in the CS: 1) plural suffix is realized as -e(y) instead of -im, and 2) feminine -a become -at. Both these changes occur in non-templatic nouns as well.

**Possessive suffixes**: MH inherited from BH a set of possessive suffixes, which are in use principally in literary and formal registers (Schwartzwald 2002: unit 6.2.10; Inflection).

The set for singular nouns is: -i (1sg.), -én (1pl.), -(e)xa (2sg.m), -ex (2sg.f), -xem/n (2pl.m.f), -o (3sg.m), -a (3sg.f; BH -ah), -am/n (3pl.ms/f). Because this construction denotes a genitive relation, it is analogous to construct nouns. The two constructions also share the masculine plural suffix -e(y): the set of suffixes used when the possessed is plural is -ay (1sg.), -é(y)nu (1pl.), -éxa (2sg.m), -díyix (2sg.f), -e(y)xem/n (2pl.m/f), -av (3sg.m), -éha (3sg.f), e(y)hem/n (3pl.m/f). Some of these forms are clearly decomposable into -ey
followed by the singular possessive, others require minute phonological analysis. In plural masculine nouns, plurality is marked only on the suffix; but in plural feminine nouns, the set of “plural” possessive suffixes is used alongside the plural marker -ot: ʂar-ot 'problems'- ʂarot-ay 'my problems’. Thus, plurality of the possessed is marked simultaneously on the noun and on the suffix. Loan nouns tend to resist taking these suffixes (דילמה דילמותו ‘his dilemma’ is most likely jocular).

**Agreement:** Within the noun phrase, a noun triggers agreement on an adjective or a demonstrative that qualifies it. Agreement is in gender, number and definiteness: (h)ילדה (h)בר (h)טוב(ה)ה (h)ילדי(ה)ים (h)ל hjyéléd (h)tov, (h)yladim (h)tovim, (h)yalda (h)tova, (h)yladot (h)tovot 'the good boy-s/girl-s’). In complex nouns, the position of the definite article varies according to register: normatively (and in preceding stages of the language), it is marked on the final noun (dov ha-nmalim); colloquially, it can appear either on the non-head or before the entire construct - הנמלים הדב ha-dov nemalim, with some semantic effects. But it can never appear in both positions: הדב הנמלים *ha-dov ha-nmalim.

**Summary:** We may summarize our review of the nominal system of MH by placing the different types of nouns on an axis of morphological complexity, with respect to the parameters discussed (leaving out “basic” nouns, which exhibit mobile stress, irregular plurals and stem changes but aren’t templatic):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of noun</th>
<th>Most unaffixed native nouns, some prefixed nouns</th>
<th>Participles, action nouns, most prefixed nouns, some suffixed nouns</th>
<th>Most suffixed nouns, old loans, some blends</th>
<th>Some blends, new loans, nouns with loan suffixes, acronyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Examples     | חרב xérev לוחה laqóax מפתיה maftéax | sikun סכן מטשר tafqid הבנות bagrut | masaʾit ממשיאת נמר ramzor | רקוליית rámqol סרח sqiq דילמה diléma קוברציאס qibuṣniq
| Mobile stress| +                                               | +                                                             | +                                        | -                                               |
| Root+Template| +                                               | +                                                             | -                                        | -                                               |
| Stem changes | +                                               | -                                                             | -                                        | -                                               |
| Irregular plural | +                                           | -                                                             | -                                        | -                                               |

**References**


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