

Worksheet 3. *Examine action inflection.**There are seven action themes.*

The action inflects in seven themes. The understanding of the organization of these themes has evolved over the last few centuries, and the debate over their nuances is still under consideration, up to the current time. These themes vary in combinations of agency, causation, and transitivity.

Agency, also called *voice*, expresses the relationship between an action and its subject. Agency has three kinds, either active, passive, or reflexive. The subject is the actor in the *active* agency, for example, “he ate.” The action acts on the subject in *passive* agency, for example, “he is being eaten.” The subject acts on itself in the *reflexive* agency, for example, “he is eating himself.”

Most, if not all, actions express some effectiveness of causation. However, there are ways to express the intensity of *causation* more emphatically, for example, in English, the addition of certain words like “make” or “have”, for example, “make bread,” “have my hair cut,” or, using the suffix ‘-ize’ with an action, for example, “equalize,” “randomize,” “organize,” or “vaporize.”

Transitivity expresses whether an action operates with or without an object. *Intransitive* actions have no object, for example, “I ate.” *Transitive* actions do have an object, “I ate a bear,” or, “I ate breakfast.”

The *themes* vary in meaning by agency, causation, and transitivity.

	Simple causation	Passive causation	Active causation
Active	Qatal	Qitel	Hiqtil
Passive	Niqtal	Qutal	Hoqtal
Reflexive	Niqtal	Hithqatel	Hiqtil

The seven themes are named after their third person masculine single complete inflected forms of קטל. The seven theme names are *Qatal* קטל (which the standard grammars name Qal), *Niqtal* נִקְטַל (which the standard grammars name Niphal), *Qitel* קִטֵּל (which the standard grammars name Piel), *Qutal* קֻטַּל (which the standard grammars name Pual), *Hiqtil* הִקְטִיל (which the standard grammars name Hiphil), *Hoqtal* הֻקְטַל (which the standard grammars name Hophal), and *Hithqatel* הִתְקַטֵּל (which the standard grammars name Hithpael). The three letter root is present in each theme, but with different prefixes and vowel mark combinations.

The most prevalent theme by far is Qatal. It composes about 70 percent of all actions in the Hebrew Bible. Hiqtil makes up about 13 percent, Qitel about 9 percent, Niqtal about 6 percent, and the remainder about 1 percent each. Focus on the most frequent forms first. Once these patterns are mastered, then the others become more intuitively obvious.

There are six forms within each action theme.

Within each theme, the action inflects in six forms: three personal forms, which inflect the subject, and three non-personal forms, which do not inflect the subject.

Personal actions inflect the person.

A *personal* action may inflect the aspect, person, gender, or the number of the subject.

There are three different personal forms: two completeness aspects for personal statements which declare that something happens, and one command. A *completeness* aspect provides a different aspects for how the action performs.

A (1) *complete* statement, also called *perfect*, indicates that an action has already occurred. An (2) *incomplete* statement, also called *imperfect*, indicates that an action is unfinished. There are also (3) personal *commands*, which indicate a demand, a permission, or a wish.

The *number* of the subject describes how many members are included in the subject. If the number is one item, it is *single*, also called *singular*. If the number has many items, it is *multiple*, also called *plural*.

The *gender* describes whether the class of the subject has a *masculine* or *feminine* grammatical character. The gender does not necessarily indicate whether or not the subject is actually related to men or women. It is merely a grammatical category. Most things, modifiers, subjects, and objects inflect in just one of the two grammatical genders.

The *person* of an action describes the relationship between the narrator or author, and the subject of the action. Person has three forms, either first, second, or third person. The subject of the *first* person includes the narrator, either single, “I eat,” or multiple, “we eat.” The subject of the *second* person is the recipient, either single, “you eat,” or multiple, “you all eat.” The subject of the *third* person is some person other than the speaker or recipients, either single, “he, she, or it eats,” or multiple, “they eat.”

The complete and incomplete forms exist in every theme. The command form does not exist in the Qutal theme. Since the third person command form inflects identically to the third person incomplete form, context is the only way to identify the third person command.

Non-personal actions do not inflect the person.

A *non-personal* action does not inflect the identity of the subject. There are three non-personal forms: the participle, the impersonal construct, and the impersonal absolute.

One non-personal form is the (4) *participle*, which makes an action operate like a thing, inflecting both the gender and number, but not the person. It might borrow the sense and subject of some other nearby personal action.

The participle exists in every theme. The Qatal theme has both an active and passive participle. The meaning of the passive Qatal participle is similar to the Niqtal participle.

An *impersonal* is a form of the action which does not inflect the subject, gender, nor number of the subject. Like the English so-called infinitive, it functions as a person-less, timeless, gender-less expression of the action. There are two impersonal forms: an (5) impersonal *construct* is attached to a direction word, and the (6) impersonal *absolute* merely stands alone. The impersonal, like the participle, might also borrow the sense and subject of some nearby personal action.

The impersonal construct and impersonal absolute inflect identically in the Qitel theme. Neither forms of the impersonal exist in the Qutal theme.

Inflect the action forms by themes.

Qatal theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קָטַלְתִּי		קָטַלְנוּ
	Second	קָטַלְתָּ	קָטַלְתְּ	קָטַלְתֶּם	קָטַלְתֶּן
	Third	קָטַל	קָטַלָּה	קָטַלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶקְטֹל		נִקְטֹל
	Second	תִּקְטֹל	תִּקְטֹלִי	תִּקְטֹלוּ	תִּקְטֹלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטֹל	תִּקְטֹל	יִקְטֹלוּ	תִּקְטֹלְנָה
Command	First		אֶקְטֹלָה		נִקְטֹלָה
	Second	קְטֹל	קְטֹלִי	קְטֹלוּ	קְטֹלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטֹל	תִּקְטֹל	יִקְטֹלוּ	תִּקְטֹלְנָה
Active Participle		קָטֹל	קָטֹלִים	קָטֹלִים	קָטֹלוֹת
Passive Participle		קָטוּל	קָטוּלִים	קָטוּלִים	קָטוּלוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			קָטַל		
Impersonal Construct			קָטַל		

Niqtal theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		נִקְטָלְתִּי		נִקְטָלוּ
	Second	תִּקְטַל	נִקְטָלֶת	נִקְטָלְתֶּם	נִקְטָלְתֶּן
	Third	נִקְטָל	נִקְטָלָה	נִקְטָלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אִקְטֹל		נִקְטָלוּ
	Second	תִּקְטַל	תִּקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלוּ	נִקְטָלְתֶּן
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטָל	יִקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
Command	First		אִקְטֹלָה		נִקְטָלָה
	Second	הִקְטַל	הִקְטָלִי	הִקְטָלוּ	הִקְטָלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטָל	יִקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
Participle		נִקְטָל	נִקְטָלִים	נִקְטָלָה	נִקְטָלוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			נִקְטָל		
Impersonal Construct			הִקְטָל		

Qitel theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קִטַּלְתִּי		קִטַּלְנוּ
	Second	קִטַּלְתָּ	קִטַּלְתְּ	קִטַּלְתֶּם	קִטַּלְתֶּן
	Third	קִטַּל	קִטַּלָּה	קִטַּלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אִקְטֹל		נִקְטָלוּ
	Second	תִּקְטַל	תִּקְטָלִי	תִּקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטָל	יִקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
Command	First		אִקְטֹלָה		נִקְטָלָה
	Second	קִטַּל	קִטַּלִּי	קִטַּלוּ	קִטַּלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטָל	יִקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
Participle		נִקְטָל	נִקְטָלִים	נִקְטָלָה	נִקְטָלוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			קִטַּל		
Impersonal Construct			קִטַּל		

Qutel theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קִטַּלְתִּי		קִטַּלְנוּ
	Second	קִטַּלְתָּ	קִטַּלְתְּ	קִטַּלְתֶּם	קִטַּלְתֶּן
	Third	קִטַּל	קִטַּלָּה	קִטַּלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אִקְטֹל		נִקְטָלוּ
	Second	תִּקְטַל	תִּקְטָלִי	תִּקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטָל	יִקְטָלוּ	תִּקְטָלְנָה
Participle		מִקְטָל	מִקְטָלִים	מִקְטָלָה	מִקְטָלוֹת

Hiqtil theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		הַקְטִילְתִּי		הַקְטִילְנוּ
	Second	הַקְטִילְתָּ	הַקְטִילְתְּ	הַקְטִילְתֶּם	הַקְטִילְתֶּן
	Third	הַקְטִיל	הַקְטִילָהּ	הַקְטִילוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶקְטִיל		נֶקְטִיל
	Second	תִּקְטִיל	תִּקְטִילִי	תִּקְטִילוּ	תִּקְטִילְנָה
	Third	יִקְטִיל	תִּקְטִיל	יִקְטִילוּ	תִּקְטִילְנָה
Command	First		אַקְטִילָהּ		נִקְטִילָהּ
	Second	הַקְטֵל	הַקְטִילִי	הַקְטִילוּ	הַקְטִילְנָה
	Third	יִקְטֵל	תִּקְטֵל	יִקְטִילוּ	תִּקְטֵלְנָה
Participle		מִקְטֵל	מִקְטֵלָהּ	מִקְטִילִים	מִקְטִילוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			הַקְטֵל		
Impersonal Construct			הַקְטִיל		

Hoqtal theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		הַקְטִילְתִּי		הַקְטִילְנוּ
	Second	הַקְטִילְתָּ	הַקְטִילְתְּ	הַקְטִילְתֶּם	הַקְטִילְתֶּן
	Third	הַקְטֵל	הַקְטִילָהּ	הַקְטִילוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶקְטֵל		נֶקְטֵל
	Second	תִּקְטֵל	תִּקְטֵלִי	תִּקְטֵלוּ	תִּקְטֵלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטֵל	תִּקְטֵל	יִקְטֵלוּ	תִּקְטֵלְנָה
Participle		מִקְטֵל	מִקְטֵלָהּ	מִקְטֵלִים	מִקְטֵלוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			הַקְטֵל		
Impersonal Construct			הַקְטֵל		

Hithqatal theme.

	Person	Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		הִתְקַטִּילְתִּי		הִתְקַטִּילְנוּ
	Second	הִתְקַטִּילְתָּ	הִתְקַטִּילְתְּ	הִתְקַטִּילְתֶּם	הִתְקַטִּילְתֶּן
	Third	הִתְקַטֵּל	הִתְקַטִּילָהּ	הִתְקַטִּילוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶתְקַטֵּל		נִתְקַטֵּל
	Second	תִּתְקַטֵּל	תִּתְקַטֵּלִי	תִּתְקַטֵּלוּ	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה
	Third	יִתְקַטֵּל	תִּתְקַטֵּל	יִתְקַטֵּלוּ	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה
Command	First		אַתְקַטִּילָהּ		נִסְתַּטִּילָהּ
	Second	הִתְקַטֵּל	הִתְקַטֵּלִי	הִתְקַטֵּלוּ	הִתְקַטֵּלְנָה
	Third	יִתְקַטֵּל	תִּתְקַטֵּל	יִתְקַטֵּלוּ	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה
Participle		מִתְקַטֵּל	מִתְקַטֵּלָהּ	מִתְקַטֵּלִים	מִתְקַטֵּלוֹת
Impersonal Absolute			הִתְקַטֵּל		
Impersonal Construct			הִתְקַטֵּל		