

Rules for Determining Qametz and Qametz-Chatuph

- The vowel ָ *qametz* “a” in an open syllable or in a closed, accented syllable = a long vowel.
An open syllable is recognized as:
 - a. ordinarily recognizable open syllable, i.e. ending with a vowel (CV)
 - b. ַ *matris lectionis* is considered a vowel, so that, for instance, the final syllable of חֹכֶמָה , *choch-mah*, is open.
- The vowel ֹ is *qametz chatuf* “o” in a closed unaccented syllable, being a short vowel.
A closed unaccented syllable is recognized as:
 - a. ordinarily recognizable closed syllable (i.e., CVC)
 - b. when the *qametz* is followed by a consonant with silent sheva and the syllable is unaccented
 - c. when the consonant following the *qametz* has *dagesh forte* (doubling *dagesh*)
 - d. when the *qametz* is in a syllable that is followed by *maqeph*
- Universal rule: *A syllable which is CLOSED and UNACCENTED must have a SHORT VOWEL.*

Examples:

1. $\text{וַיָּקֹם} = \text{וַיָּ} \text{קֹם}$ – the syllable וַיָּ is open, so the *qametz* is “a”; the syllable קֹם is closed and unaccented, so the *qametz* is “o”, thus, *va-ya-qom*
2. $\text{וַיִּתְּנוּ} = \text{וַיִּ} \text{תְּנוּ}$ – the syllable וַיִּ is open, so the *qametz* is “a”; the syllable תְּנוּ is closed, so the *qametz* is “o”, thus, *va-ta-nos*
3. $\text{חֹכֶמָה} = \text{חֹ} \text{כֶמָה}$ – the syllable חֹ is closed and unaccented, so the *qametz* is “o”. The syllable כֶמָה is open and accented, so the *qametz* is “a”, thus, *choch-mah*. Note how this is distinguished from the 3rd fem perfect verb, חִכְמָה , where *meteg* accents the first syllable, thus leaving the first syllable open, thus: *cha-ch^e-mah*. Similarly we distinguish between the noun אֹכֶלָה , ‘*och-lah*, “food,” and the verb אָכַלָה , ‘*a-ch^e-lah*, “she ate.”
4. חֹנֵי-נִי - *dagesh forte* in the first נ makes this actually חֹנֵי-נִי . The *qametz* is thus in a closed unaccented syllable and is therefore “o,” thus, *chon-nei-ni*. But in the word $\text{חֹנֵי-נִי} = \text{חֹנֵי} \text{נִי}$, the *qametz* is in a syllable which, though closed, is accented, and it is therefore “a”.
5. כֹּל-אֵישׁ - The *maqef* has deprived כֹּל of its accent (enclitic), so that the *qametz* is in a closed unaccented syllable, and is therefore “o”.

Summary:

- open syllable: *qametz* = “a”
- closed, accented syllable: *qametz* = “a” (long)
- closed, unaccented syllable: *qametz* = “o” (short)