

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.

	No 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* נקטל (which the standard grammars name Niphal), *qitel* קיטל (which the standard grammars name Piel), *qutal* קטל (which the standard grammars name Pual), *hiqtil* הקטיל (which the standard grammars name Hiphil), *hoqtal* הוקטל (which the standard grammars name Hophal), and *hithqatel* התקטל (which the standard grammars name Hithpaal). 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, 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.”

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.

An *impersonal* is a form of the action which does not inflect the subject, gender, nor number of the subject. There are two impersonal forms: an (5) impersonal *construct* is attached to a direction word, and the (6) impersonal *absolute* merely stands alone.

Inflect the action by themes.

Qatal theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קָטַלְתִּי		קָטַלְנוּ
	Second	קָטַלְתָּ	קָטַלְתְּ	קָטַלְתֶּם	קָטַלְתֶּן
	Third	קָטַל	קָטַלָּה	קָטַלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶקְטַל		נִקְטַל
	Second	תִּקְטַל	תִּקְטַלִּי	תִּקְטַלוּ	תִּקְטַלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטַל	יִקְטַלוּ	תִּקְטַלְנָה

Niqtal theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		נִקְטַלְתִּי		נִקְטַלְנוּ
	Second	נִקְטַלְתָּ	נִקְטַלְתְּ	נִקְטַלְתֶּם	נִקְטַלְתֶּן
	Third	נִקְטַל	נִקְטַלָּה	נִקְטַלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶנֶקְטַל		נִקְטַל
	Second	תִּנֶּקְטַל	תִּנֶּקְטַלִּי	תִּנֶּקְטַלוּ	נִקְטַלְנָה
	Third	יִנֶּקְטַל	תִּנֶּקְטַל	יִנֶּקְטַלוּ	תִּנֶּקְטַלְנָה

Qitel theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קָטַלְתִּי		קָטַלְנוּ
	Second	קָטַלְתָּ	קָטַלְתְּ	קָטַלְתֶּם	קָטַלְתֶּן
	Third	קָטַל	קָטַלָּה	קָטַלוּ	
Incomplete	First		אֶקְטַל		נִקְטַל
	Second	תִּקְטַל	תִּקְטַלִּי	תִּקְטַלוּ	תִּקְטַלְנָה
	Third	יִקְטַל	תִּקְטַל	יִקְטַלוּ	תִּקְטַלְנָה

Qutel theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		קטלתי		קטלנו
	Second	קטלתה	קטלת	קטלתם	קטלתן
	Third	קטל	קטלה	קטלו	
Incomplete	First		אקטל		נקטל
	Second	תקטל	תקטלי	תקטלו	תקטלנה
	Third	יקטל	תקטל	יקטלו	תקטלנה

Hiqtil theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		הקטלתי		הקטלנו
	Second	הקטלתה	הקטלת	הקטלתם	הקטלתן
	Third	הקטיל	הקטילה	הקטילו	
Incomplete	First		אקטיל		נקטיל
	Second	תקטיל	תקטילי	תקטילו	תקטילנה
	Third	יקטיל	תקטיל	יקטילו	תקטילנה

Hoqtal theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		הקטלתי		הקטלנו
	Second	הקטלת	הקטלת	הקטלתם	הקטלתן
	Third	הקטל	הקטלה	הקטלו	
Incomplete	First		אקטל		נקטל
	Second	תקטל	תקטלי	תקטלו	תקטלנה
	Third	יקטל	תקטל	יקטלו	תקטלנה

Hithqatel theme.

		Single		Multiple	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Complete	First		התקטלתי		התקטלנו
	Second	התקטלת	התקטלת	התקטלתם	התקטלתן
	Third	התקטל	התקטלה	התקטלו	
Incomplete	First		אתקטל		נתקטל
	Second	תתקטל	תתקטלי	תתקטלו	תתקטלנה
	Third	יתקטל	תתקטל	יתקטלו	תתקטלנה