Yiddish
An Introduction
To the Language,
Literature, and Culture
Volume I
Sheva Zucker

The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring
New York, New York
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Manufactured in the United States of America
To my husband
Sandy,
my favorite Yiddish student

To my
Parents and Teachers
who instilled in me a love of Yiddish

and to my daughter
Benna Adele,
on whose lips, I hope,
Yiddish will continue to live
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those people who helped and inspired me in the preparation of this book:

Dr. Chava Lapin, Director of The Workmen’s Circle Education Department, for her assistance in editing and publishing the manuscript. Without her this project would never have materialized;

Mr. Joseph Mlotek, Past Director of the Workmen’s Circle Education Department, for his constant support and enthusiasm;

Mr. Leybl Tencer of McGill University in Montreal, for the open-mindedness and caring with which he edited this manuscript. I valued his lengthy and painstaking letters on the minutiae of Yiddish grammar;

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Sandy Kessler, my husband, for his editorial assistance, his encouragement and his refreshing belief that this book might actually be a bestseller;

Finally, My Students who made me think that the world is waiting for YIDDISH!
INTRODUCTION

At present, there is no dearth of Yiddish textbooks for college and adult education students. The question then is "Why another one?" I embarked on this project about seven years ago, not so much because I was dissatisfied with the existing materials, but rather because, after years of teaching Yiddish, I wanted to create something new.

The purpose of this book is twofold; first, I want to introduce students to the spoken language rather than textbookese. Each unit, therefore, contains a conversation on a common topic such as health, clothing, food, work, holidays, etc., and the basic vocabulary to discuss this topic. A good number of idiomatic expressions are included so that students will get the flavor of the spoken language. Second, I want to introduce students to literature at a very early stage. Therefore, most units contain folksongs and selections by authors such as Sholem Aleichem, I.L. Peretz, I.B. Singer, Kadye Molodowsky, and Aaron Zeitlin instead of the usual foreign language textbook stories peopled by pens and notebooks, dogs and cats, and other bland albeit irreproachable characters. Although I shortened and simplified some selections, I always tried to remain as faithful as possible to the original. These readings introduce students to the richness of Yiddish literature as well as to the varieties of Yiddish syntax. Their inclusion is based on their suitability to this course and does not present a judgment on the author's importance to Yiddish literature. Many fine writers could, unfortunately, not be represented.

The book is divided into two volumes and twenty units. Volume I contains Units 1-11. Volume II, Units 12-20. After Unit 7 each unit, except those dealing with Jewish holidays, is divided into two lessons. Lesson A (라) contains a conversation. Lesson B (II) a literary, folkloristic, or historical selection on the same theme which utilizes the vocabulary of the conversation section and also introduces new vocabulary and grammar. Almost every unit contains appropriate proverbs and songs, explanations of grammar, and exercises. Some lessons contain supplementary reading selections and/or songs; any new vocabulary presented there will be reintroduced should it appear later. I hope that some students will read material not covered in class on their own. The holiday units (7, 13, and 16) are Review lessons. While they introduce some new vocabulary, they contain little or no new grammar and most of the exercises review grammar and vocabulary studied earlier. The last lesson of each volume, (Lessons 11B and 20B respectively), also includes Review Exercises.
This book is intended both for college and serious adult education classes. I cannot say how long it should take the “average” class to cover the material since there is no “average” class. I expect that college classes will cover each volume in one to two semesters depending on the frequency of meetings and the linguistic ability and background of the students. Adult education classes will probably require almost two years to do so.

A Vocabulary list gives the new words presented in each conversation, reading selection, and song. The vocabulary words have been designated Active or Passive. “Active” words are preceded by an asterisk and should be memorized when they first appear; they are used in subsequent lessons without additional explanation. “Passive” words are listed and defined again when they reappear. The Glossary at the back lists all the Yiddish words used in this text and indicates the lesson in which they first appear.

Most lessons have both Written and Oral Exercises. It is unlikely that any class will do all the exercises. Teachers and students should choose those that appear most beneficial and interesting to them. I hope classes will not skip over the Oral Exercises, particularly those that are designed to help learn word order. Only by hearing the language spoken can students develop a sense of Yiddish syntax.

The Orthography used in this textbook is Standard Yiddish Orthography. The gender of nouns is based on the norms given in Uriel Weinreich’s Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary as well as on information supplied by native Yiddish speakers.

I have tried to present a systematic study of the Yiddish language which also captures the humor and pathos of Yiddish-speaking life. The Yiddish experience is the Borsht Belt and the Holocaust and a great many things in between. I hope I have conveyed something of the essence of that experience in a way that appeals to both young and old, secular and religious.
A final word to students: This book is only the first of a two part course of study. Volume II is written, and will, I hope, be published soon. For more information about it, write to the address below. I hope these books are only the beginning of your journey into the world of Yiddish. May we meet again in a class, at a function, or in other books. Until then:

Learn and Enjoy!!

Sheva (Charlotte) Zucker

For information, comments, or suggestions, write either to Workmen's Circle Education Dept., 45 East 33rd St. New York, New York 10016 or to Dr. Sheva Zucker, 1114 Iredell St., Durham, North Carolina 27705.
Errata

The following is a short list of editorial and typographical errors which appear in this first edition. We apologize for their presence. The text will be fully emended in future editions.

1. p.3. Line 1. ד and זו switch columns
2. p.18. Vocabulary; line 10 should read: אנ/c...there is/are not
3. p.51. Vocabulary; under "Learn these words well." add:
   
   that (conj.)...az...א

4. p.54. Vocabulary; add: something; somewhat...epes...
5. p.54. Idioms and Expressions; add:
   So what's new?...Vos hert zikh epes?...
   [epes is untranslatable here]
6. p.57. Plural of Nouns; after "Ending in ש or ע," add:
   Most nouns ending in ש have plurals ending in ע.
7. p.77. teeth should be tooth
8. p.88. Vocabulary; add: to begin....learn
10. p.112. Move bracket enclosing לע/ליער, column 2, from the middle to the right to enclose all expressions ending with לע/ליער in column 1.
11. p.124. Line 1, Yiddish column should read: אנ/c ha'emet/ha'emet על
12. p.128. Correct spelling of tune [nigndi(ekh)] is ד résultats
13. p.129. Line 1. II. should read: Rewrite the sentences in exercise I in the past-tense negative (except numbers 10 & 12).
14. p.143. V 10. Change "two sisters" to "two brothers" and V 13. to:
   My (The) father gave us this (the) piece of land.
15. p.151. Correct Yiddish spelling of shirt is: (الطנק)
16. p.186. Vocabulary; add: water...
17. p.187. Vocabulary; add: exactly...just...

   and nobody, no one (pron.)...

18. p.192. Line 4 of the mid-page paragraph: after the word "infinitive" add: "The worditerator before the new clause is optional."
   Then add the word iterator in #3 after iterator and #6 after iterator.
19. p.199. In #6, replace vemא...with vemא
20. p.200. In #45, ytull should be ב.
21. p.256. Glossary; after "Learn each new expression" add:
   to begin (6)
### List of Yiddish Letters And Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINTED LETTER</th>
<th>WRITTEN LETTER</th>
<th>YIDDISH NAME</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION OF SOUND</th>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ก</td>
<td>כ</td>
<td>Shtumer Alef</td>
<td>Silent, therefore not shown</td>
<td>silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ה</td>
<td>כ</td>
<td>Pasekh Alef</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>no exact equivalent, close to A in Ma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>כ</td>
<td>Kornets Alef</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>no exact equivalent, close to O in For</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>Beyz</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ד</td>
<td>ז</td>
<td>Veyz</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ט</td>
<td>Giml</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ד</td>
<td>Daled</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ק</td>
<td>ב</td>
<td>Hey</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>ל</td>
<td>Vov</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>OO as in Hoof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>ט</td>
<td>Melupm Vov</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>נ</td>
<td>Tsvey Vovn</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>י</td>
<td>Vov Yud Yud</td>
<td>oy</td>
<td>OY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>Zayin</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ק</td>
<td>ט</td>
<td>Khes</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td>KH as in Khanukah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Note</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ס</td>
<td>Tes</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>Yud</td>
<td>i or y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ק</td>
<td>Khirek Yud</td>
<td>i</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Tsvey Yudn</td>
<td>ey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Pasekh Tsvey Yudn</td>
<td>ay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כ</td>
<td>Kof</td>
<td>k</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ק</td>
<td>Khof</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מ</td>
<td>Lange[r] Khof</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ל</td>
<td>Lamed</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מ</td>
<td>Mem</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ש</td>
<td>Shlos-Mem</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נ</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ג</td>
<td>Lange[r] Nun</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ס</td>
<td>Samekh</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>א</td>
<td>Ayin</td>
<td>e</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>פ</td>
<td>Pey</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: EE or consonant Y [used when stressed vowel precedes another vowel to show that  is in a different syllable.]

AY as in Day

Y as in Sky

K

KH as in Bach

KH as in Bach only at the end of a word.

L

M

M, only at the end of a word.

N

N, only at the end of a word.

S

short E as in Bed

P
Here is a sample of Yiddish writing. Note the size of the letters in relation
to one another.

Yiddish has no capital letters, but in transliteration, we shall capitalize the
first word of every sentence, the first word of every line of poetry, and proper
nouns such as the names of people and places.

Page xvii / Alphabet
ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THIS BOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abbreviation</td>
<td>abbr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>acc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>adj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affectionate</td>
<td>affec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Amer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article</td>
<td>art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auxiliary</td>
<td>aux.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparative</td>
<td>comp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>cond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>conj.</td>
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<tr>
<td>definite</td>
<td>def.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>dim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emphatic</td>
<td>emph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>especially</td>
<td>esp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>fam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>fem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>figurative</td>
<td>fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal</td>
<td>for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasidic</td>
<td>has.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>Heb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous</td>
<td>hum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>imp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impersonal</td>
<td>impers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indefinite</td>
<td>indef.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>indir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infinitive</td>
<td>inf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal</td>
<td>infor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>int.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intransitive</td>
<td>intrans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ironic</td>
<td>iro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literally</td>
<td>lit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>neut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>obj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle</td>
<td>part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poetic</td>
<td>poet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>pron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sarcastic</td>
<td>sarc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>sg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>something</td>
<td>stg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>subj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superlative</td>
<td>super.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
<td>trans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>v.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb transitive</td>
<td>v.t.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inadmissible in the standard language

of doubtful admissibility in the standard language

diminutive

iminitive
INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO YIDDISH! This book is designed both for students who know the Yiddish alphabet and for those who do not. We will begin our study of the language by learning to read and write (or if your teacher prefers, with the Conversation on p. 4).

In each of the first five units you will learn the names of several letters and how to print, write, and pronounce them. You will also learn some words that may be formed from these letters. This book coordinates the Reading section with the Conversation as much as possible. By Unit 3, many of the words you learn in the Reading section appear in the Conversation.

If all the students in the class already know how to read, we suggest to the teacher that the class nevertheless go through the Reading section quickly to learn the Vocabulary words.

I. LETTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>YIDDISH NAME</th>
<th>WRITTEN FORM</th>
<th>PRINTED FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consonants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Beyz</td>
<td>יב</td>
<td>יב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Daled</td>
<td>ד</td>
<td>ד</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tes</td>
<td>ת</td>
<td>ת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Reysh</td>
<td>ר</td>
<td>ר</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The Yiddish word for unit is "דער עיינס" or דער עיינס. A "פרק קפיטל" is a chapter. We have used the word we feel is most appropriate in each language.

Yiddish students in summer Yiddish program, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, 1988.
### Vowels

Has no exact English equivalent; it is close to the **A** in Ma, but shorter

Has no exact English equivalent; it is close to **O** in For

Like **OO** in Book

Like **E** in Pen

### II. VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>PRONUNCIATION</th>
<th>WRITTEN FORM</th>
<th>PRINTED FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>א.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>er</td>
<td>נ.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the (masc.) ²</td>
<td>der</td>
<td>ד. נ. ק. נ</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the father, Dad</td>
<td>der tate</td>
<td>ד. נ. ק. נ</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he begs, prays, requests</td>
<td>er bet</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work (n.)</td>
<td>arbet</td>
<td>ק. נ. ק. נ</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he works</td>
<td>er arbet</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>bobe</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he does</td>
<td>er tut</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he rests</td>
<td>er rut</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he speaks</td>
<td>er redt</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (sg. fam.)</td>
<td>du</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>here</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>נ. ק. נ. ק</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² If an abbreviation is unclear to you, see the list of abbreviations at the beginning of book, p. xviii.
there dort 14. דאָ�ר
but ober 15. אָבּער
or oder 16. אוּדר

III. READING PRACTICE

1. שָׁם וְנִשְׁפַּעְתָּנָה
2. שָׁם וְנִשְׁפַּעְתָּנָה
3. דער מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
4. דער מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
5. שָׁם וְנִשְׁפַּעְתָּנָה
6. דעיָּר מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
7. דעיָּר מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
8. דעיָּר מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
9. דעיָּר מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה
10. דעיָּר מֶסְפַּעְתָּנָה

IV. CONVERSATION

Because some of you may already know how to read Yiddish, the next few Conversations appear in both Yiddish letters and transliteration. Try covering up the transliteration when reading the Yiddish.

Those of you who do not yet know how to read – don’t panic! You are not expected to be able to read the Conversations in Yiddish until they appear only in Yiddish with no transliteration. As some of the letters should be familiar to you from the Reading sections, we suggest you try to recognize those words and letters you already know. These same principles apply wherever Yiddish and transliteration are offered.

Sholem-Aleykhem!

Motl: Sholem-aleykhem.
Fraynd Goldshtein: Aleykem-sholom.
Motl: Vi heyst ir?
Goldshtein: Ikh heys Berl.

3 Note: In the reading section, and also in the grammar, conversation, and exercises, the words are presented either in printed or in written form. This will help students get used to reading the handwriting of someone other than their teachers.

Yiddish / יידיש
גולדשטיין,رهاب את התשובה? 

מודל: אני הולך النبي דזינג'ר.

גולדשטיין: אני הולך לך
דואר את התשובה, מולי?

מודל: אני הולך النبي מיקלו דזינג'ר.

גולדשטיין: או, النبي מיקלו דזינג'ר,
אני יודע את התשובה, 
ﺀך וואנט דואר אברך גאוס, 
ואברך מיקלו דזינג'ר.

٬ו וואנט איר?

מודל: מיר וואנט איר דער רביע טפשט.

גולדשטיין: א קלאינה ועלט!

זא ישון, מולי. א גרוס

in der heyml.

מודל: זא ישון!

Proverbs

Man proposes, God disposes.

(Lit. "A person thinks and God laughs.")

(A) small world!

A world with small worlds!

4 Note: Yiddish has both a familiar and a formal form in the second person. Du יד is you singular and informal. Ir והי is both you singular formal and you plural, both formal and informal. The imperative changes as well. Zay gezunt יד is informal and Zayt gezunt יד is formal and/or plural. In this dialogue Moli is a young boy so Goldshteyn addresses him informally, while Moli addresses the stranger and grown-up Goldshteyn formally.

5 Note: In Yiddish the stress usually falls on the penultimate syllable. When it does not, we will indicate where the stress falls by an accent mark as in gezunt יד. We will also indicate the stress in all words derived from the Hebrew-Aramaic component, no matter where it falls, as in shilem-alekhem בילא שולום. We will also use it in other places that may be confusing. e.g., der student יד של נועם. The accent is given in this book as an aid to correct reading. It is never actually written in Yiddish.

Page 5 / Unit 1
VOCABULARY 6

alloy (has several correct pronunciations)  AIK\n
du  DU  you (sg. Infor.)
er  ER  he
ersht(er)  (has several correct pronunciations)

Fraynd (fraynd) 7  friend; Mr.
di gas(n)  gas (sg.; pl.; or.

 got  got  God
der grus(n)  regards, greeting

di heym(en)  home

heyan  to be called (as in "My name is...")
tkh  I

in  in, at
ir  you (pl.; sg. for.)
kenen  can, to be able; to be

acquainted with

der mentsh(n)  person
mir  mIR  we
nit/nisht  BIM/NI\n
sholem-alejkhem  hello
trakhtn  to think
un  AL\n
di welt(n)  world

6 Until you know all the Yiddish letters, the vocabulary will be arranged alphabetically, according to the English transliteration of the Yiddish word. Naturally, in the case of nouns preceded by articles, look to the first letter of the noun and not of the article for alphabetic placement.

7 Most common nouns are preceded by a definite article. It may be Der  DER for a masculine noun, Di  DI for a feminine noun, or Dos  Di  Dos for a neuter noun. This is explained in Unit 2, p. 20. Memorize each noun with its appropriate article.

8 The plural of nouns or plural endings will be given in parentheses next to the noun. The plural article for all Yiddish nouns is always Di  DI.
Idioms and Expressions

A grus in der heym
Teilnic-შლომ
Aveykhem-sholem
in der heym
Sholem-аleykhem.
Aveykhem-sholem
Vi heyst ir?
Zay gezunt!
Zayt gezunt!

Idioms

A grus in der heym
Regards [to the folks] at home
Aveykhem-sholem
→ see Sholem-Aveykhem
in der heym
at home
Sholem-аleykhem.
Hello, and the response
Aveykhem-sholem
to “Hello”
Vi heyst ir?
What’s your name? (Lit. “How are you called?”)
Zay gezunt!
Good-bye (Lit. “Be well”) (sg.
fam.)
Zayt gezunt!
Good-bye (pl. or sg. for.)

V. GRAMMAR

I. The Present Tense

The present tense of verbs in Yiddish is quite simple. In English we can say “I talk, I do talk, I am talking.” In Yiddish, this is all rendered as ikh red אַלְכָּר רעַד.

The first person singular is formed by dropping the “n” or “en” from the infinitive. Thus redn ikh red אַלְכָּר רעַד, heysn ikh hey אַלְכָּר רָאוּ אַלְכָּר רָאוּ, trakhtn ikh trakht אַלְכָּר תראַקְחַט trakht, voynen ikh voyn אַלְכָּר וואָיְנָנְה voynen. This form is the base of the verb. The endings for the other persons: du וּד٢ you (sg. & fam.), er וּר er he, zi וּז she, mir וּמוּר we, ir וּיר you (pl. & sg. for.), zey וּזֵי they, are formed by adding the appropriate endings to the base. Study the verbs on the next page. The endings are in a different font.

The infinitive9 of Yiddish verbs always ends in “n” as in redn רעַד to talk,

---

9 The infinitive is the verb form that names the action. As in English, it may or may not be preceded by “to.” For example, (to) sing, (to) dance, (to) hear.
The infinitive of a verb ends in 

if the base of the verb ends in:

- **N** ก ' as in voynen to live and kenen to know,
- **NG** ก ' as in zingen to sing – see the song on page 10,
- **NK** ก ' as in trinken to drink,
- **M**  as in kumen to come,

or a vowel as in ruen to rest.

Don't worry about this rule too much. We will refer to it later in Unit 6 when you can apply it to more verbs. In the meantime, trust your pronunciation instincts and you'll probably get it right. It's much easier to say voynen than voynn.

The singular familiar ְ is used with friends, peers, family members, children, animals, and generally with people younger than yourself. Interestingly, Jews also address God as ְ. Ir ְ is the only form of the second person plural regardless of your relationship to the people in the group. It is also used as the second person singular with older people, strangers, people of a higher status or in a position of power over you such as teachers or employers. In formal settings, both people, regardless of status, would generally use ְ when speaking to each other. Thus, the employer and the employee, the professor and the student would address each other as ְ. A hasidic rebbe, however, addresses his hasid as ְ. Sometimes the application of these rules is subjective and may vary with dialect.

### Redn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redn</th>
<th>ְ</th>
<th>ְ</th>
<th>ְ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mir redn</td>
<td>מיי red</td>
<td>�ק red</td>
<td>�ק red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir redn</td>
<td>איר redט</td>
<td>Du redSt</td>
<td>Du redSt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zey redn</td>
<td>יזי redט</td>
<td>Er redט, Zi redט</td>
<td>Er redט, Zi redט</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Voynen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voynen</th>
<th>ְ</th>
<th>ְ</th>
<th>ְ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mir voynen</td>
<td>מיי ווינט</td>
<td>�ק voyn</td>
<td>�ק voyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir voyn</td>
<td>איר ווינט</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zey voynen</td>
<td>יזי ווינט</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Note the slight irregularity in the conjugation of verbs whose infinitive ends in en ְ. The first and third person plural also end in en ְ.
Now that you’ve studied these conjugations, you’ve probably noticed that the third person singular er, zi, es, (it) is conjugated the same as the second person plural in most cases. For example: er redt and ir redt.

The first person plural mir and the third person plural zey are always conjugated the same way. For example: mir redn and zey redn. First and third person plural are almost always the same as the infinitive.

**Sample Sentences:**

1. Ikh ken Yidlish.
   I know Yiddish.

2. Du redst Yidlish.
   You do speak Yiddish.

3. Er heyst Hersh.
   His name is Hershl. Zinger.

---

11 Note the slight irregularity in the second person singular of the verb heyst and other verbs in which the base ends in s. It is du heyst and not du heyst-st. We do not add an s to the base because two s’s would be too hard to pronounce.

12 Note the slight irregularity in the third person singular and second person plural of the verb and other verbs whose base ends in s. It is making this form the same as the first person singular. Again, this is done, because two s’s (for s) would be too hard to pronounce.
4. Zi zingt a lid. She is singing a song.
5. Mir arbetn in der heym. We work at home.
6. Ir voynt af der First Street.

7. Zey trakhtn un lakhn. They think and laugh.

VI. A SONG:

AZ DER RÊBE ZINGT

Zingen ale khsidim. (2)
Bim bom bim bim bom,
Bim bom bim bim bom,
Zingen ale khsidim.

Tantsn ale khsidim. (2)
Ay day hop hop hop,
Ay day hop hop hop,
Tantsn ale khsidim.

Shlofn ale khsidim. (2)
UUU....
UUU....
Shlofn ale khsidim.

Can you make up more verses with other Yiddish verbs you know?

13 The verbs zingen and lakhn appear in the song "Az der rebe zingt" on this page.
**VOCABULARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yiddish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ale</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>az</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der khosid (khsidim)</td>
<td>hasid, follower of a hasidic rebbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakhn</td>
<td>to laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dos lid (lider)</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der rebe(s)</td>
<td>rabbi of the hasidim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shlofn</td>
<td>to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tantsn</td>
<td>to dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zingen</td>
<td>to sing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Allegretto**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Az der re-be tantst, un az der re-be tantst,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan- -t -sn a - le kha - si - dim si - dim Un</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dm</td>
<td></td>
<td>A7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| az der re-be tantst, Un az der re-be tantst tan-t -sn a - le kha-
| Dm | | A7 |
| si - dim, Un tan-tsn a - le kha - si - dim. |
```

---


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EXERCISES

If you already know the alphabet, write the answers in Yiddish. Everyone should be able to write some of the words in Yiddish. Write those words that you have not yet learned to write in Yiddish in transliteration.

I. Conjugate *lakhn* (to laugh), *heysn* (to be called), and *tantsn* (to dance).

II. Translate into Yiddish:
1. I sing.
2. You (fam.) dance.
3. We live at home.
4. Her name is Gitl. (She is called Gitl.)\(^1\)
5. Your (fam.) name is Berl.
6. They live in New York.
7. You (pl.) live here.
8. I know Yiddish.
9. She works there.
10. You (pl.) dance at home (in the home).
11. (The) father rests.

ORAL PRACTICE

III. Substitute the highlighted words with those in parentheses. Make any necessary changes. Be sure to match the numbers correctly:

For example: - *Ikh* theft Berl. *Der tate* theft Khaylm.

A) *(Du, 'Ikh')*
B) *(Er, 'Fraynd Gold')*

Answer:

A) Du theft Berl. Ikh theft Khaylm.
B) Er theft Berl. Fraynd Gold theft Khaylm.

1. *-Vu voynt Ir '?'
2. *-Voynt di bobé ' af der Ershter Gas?*

- *Mir* voyten af der Ershter Gas.

A) *(Du, 'Ikh')*
B) *(Di khsidim, 'Zey')*

- *Di bobé* voynt af der Ershter Gas.

A) *(Du, 'Ikh')*
B) *(Zey, 'Zey')*

---

\(^1\) Parentheses () in a translation exercise indicate that you should translate the word or words in parentheses even though this is not the way the sentence would be rendered in English.

ייסל 12 שלום-עליכם
I. LETTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>YIDDISH NAME</th>
<th>WRITTEN FORM</th>
<th>PRINTED FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vowels &amp; Diphthongs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like English Y. It may</td>
<td>Yud</td>
<td>'</td>
<td>'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be a vowel with a long E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sound as in Baby, or a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short I as in In, depending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the dialect. It may be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a consonant like Y in Yellow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like EY as in Grey</td>
<td>Tsvey Yudn</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>''</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of a word, the vowel Y and the diphthong &quot;Y are preceded by a silent K as in י&quot;ע beiden gentle, י&quot;ע in, י&quot;ע own (adj.), י&quot;ע before, י&quot;ע one. A diphthong is two vowels that make one sound.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consonants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Hey</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lamed</td>
<td>ל</td>
<td>ל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N only at the beginning and in the middle of a word</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>נ</td>
<td>נ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N only at the end of a word</td>
<td>Langern Nun</td>
<td>נ</td>
<td>נ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Samekh</td>
<td>ס</td>
<td>ס</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Zayin</td>
<td>ז or ב</td>
<td>ב</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 13 / Unit 2
II. VOCABULARY

Practice these letters in the words listed below. In these early lessons where the alphabet is introduced there are many words for you to practice. The teacher may want to divide students into groups or have the students practice some of the reading at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>PRONUNCIATION</th>
<th>WRITTEN FORM</th>
<th>PRINTED FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to have, he has</td>
<td>hobn, er hot</td>
<td>מַסְכָּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַסְכָּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to hear, you (pl.)</td>
<td>hern, ir hert</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the song(s)</td>
<td>dos lid,</td>
<td>מעַל, צַַַָל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to love/like</td>
<td>lib hobn</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (sg.) love/like</td>
<td>du host lib</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the student(s)</td>
<td>der studentn</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the teacher(s)</td>
<td>der lerer,</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to teach, the</td>
<td>lernen, der</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher teaches</td>
<td>lerer lernt</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to eat, you (sg.)</td>
<td>esn, du est</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it</td>
<td>es</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is</td>
<td>es is do</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before (conj.)</td>
<td>eyder</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one (num. adj.)¹</td>
<td>eyn</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
<td>מַזְּכַּל, צַַַַל צַַַָל</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ For further information on numerical adjectives see Lesson 9A, p. 153 and Lesson 15A in Vol. II.
III. READING PRACTICE

1. Der rohte. 2. Der matzehunget hament aks arbetn. 3. Di matzehunget hament aks arbetn. 4. Der linke ose dyg vayber. 5. Aks dyger sene. 6. Der linke ose dyg vayber. 7. Di baurn teym dyg

IV. MORE PRACTICE

Many people confuse the Daled (ד) and the Reyshe (ר). Here is some more practice.

Words with ד:
דואמ, דואמ, די ויידטס דער טספרטען

Words with ר:
ער, אָּבֶּר, ער רוּפ, אָּוּר ויטקֵרִיטר דיו לֶּרֶגֶר

These words have both letters:
ערְךָ, די רייפטס די לָּדֶר, אָּיִּדֶר

V. A CONVERSATION IN CLASS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Perl</th>
<th>Motl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gut-morgn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gut-yór.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vos hert zikh, Motl?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Motl: Es iz nito' kin nayes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vozhe hert zikh bay dir?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vos zol zikh hern?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Es iz nito' kin nayes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Motl: Hostu dayn Yidish bukh?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Perl: Nu, vodeń?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Motl: Un dayn heft un</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>dayn feder?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Perl: Yo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Motl: A blayer hostu?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Perl: Ikh hob nor eyn blayer,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ober ikh darf tsvey. Zať</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>azy̱ gut un gib mir a blayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>eyder der lerer kurn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Motl: Es iz do a blayer afn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>tish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Perl: Take?


23. Motl: Ntië far vos.

24. Perl: Ist ken ikh leyenen un shraybn. Ist ken

25. ich arbetn.

26. Proverb

List of words:

VOCABULARY

- afn = af dem
- bay
- der blayer(s)
- dos bukh (bikher)
- darfn
dayn
dir
eyn
di feder(s)
der ganeu (ganovim)
ganven / ganvenen
gebn
gut-morgn
gut-yor

di heft(n)

A Jewish thief steals only books.

Proverb

A Yidisher ganeu ganoen nor bikher.

2 An asterisk (*) beside a word indicates that it is part of the active vocabulary. You should memorize it now. Other words are not part of the active vocabulary, but they may be used in the exercises of that lesson. Should they recur in another lesson, they will be listed again in the vocabulary.

All the words in Units 1 and 2 thus far are part of the active vocabulary although they were not starred. They are listed in the glossary at the back as part of the active vocabulary.
A sheynem dank

Es iz nito kin nayes.

Nito far vos

Vos (zhe) hert zikh?

Vos zol zikh hern?

Zay(t) azoy gut

Thank you very much

There is nothing new.

You're welcome (Lit. "There's not for what")

(So) What's new, (So) What's happening?

Response to "Vos hert zikh?"

What should be happening?

Please (Lit. "Be so good")
VI. GRAMMAR

I. The Irregular Verbs

The verb ינות (to have) is slightly irregular. Learn the conjugation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mir</th>
<th>ikh</th>
<th>du</th>
<th>er</th>
<th>zi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>מיור</td>
<td>אני</td>
<td>דר</td>
<td>של</td>
<td>לי</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verb ינות (to be) is also irregular. Learn the conjugation. Both of these auxiliary verbs are very important because they are used to form the past tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mir zaynen/zenen</th>
<th>ikh</th>
<th>du</th>
<th>er</th>
<th>zi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>מיור⁄זאין</td>
<td>אני</td>
<td>דר</td>
<td>של</td>
<td>לי</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Both ינות (zaynen) and ינות (zenen) are correct.

II. Article and Gender

In Yiddish, a noun may belong to one of three genders. It may be either masculine, feminine, or neuter. It may also be used in one of several ways; as a subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.

The definite article (the) will change depending on how the corresponding noun is used in the sentence. Most nouns, however, do not change. (See Lesson 11A for the few exceptions.) It may help you to understand these changes in Yiddish if you realize that English pronouns change in similar ways. For example, when the first person singular is used as a subject, it is I as in "I am a woman." When the first person singular is used as a direct or indirect object, it is me as in "He sees me."

Yiddish has definite and indefinite articles. The indefinite article is א (a) or אן (an) and corresponds to the English indefinite articles "a" or "an." In Yiddish, just as in English, א is used in front of a consonant and אן is used in front of a vowel.

The definite article "the" may be either דר (der, di, dos or dem depending on whether it refers to a word that is masculine, feminine, neuter, singular or plural, subject, object, or indirect object. For now, let us concentrate...
on "the" as a subject. The subject case is also called the **nominative** case. In the following examples, the highlighted words are in the **nominative** case.

| **The father** works. | 1. דוד unfolds his papers. |
| **He** has a grandmother. | 2. נער התאום את בובץ. |
| **She** sees the students. | 3. דיעה מוסר את תלמידים. |
| **The grandfather** works here. | 4. לא קרבש עדת אברום. |

The definite article "the" for **masculine** nouns in the nominative case is **דוע**. **Masculine** nouns include all those nouns that are clearly masculine such as **דוד**, **דער מצטבר**, **דער ידוע**, **דער לברור** **טיש** (tish) and **דער בלירא** (blayer).

"The" for **feminine** nouns in the nominative case is **דולה**. **Feminine** nouns include all those nouns that are clearly feminine such as **דולה מצטבר**, **דולה ידוע** **דולה לברור** **טיש** and some inanimate objects such as **דולה בובלש** **דולה עמבש** and **דולה בלבש**.

"The" for **neuter** nouns in the nominative case is **דואלה**. Neuter nouns may be both animate objects such as **דואלה קינד** (dos kind- the child) or inanimate objects such as **דואלה לדא** (der tish) and **דואלה לדא בור** (di heft), and some inanimate objects such as **דואלה לדא בלא** (dos bukh). There are some rules for determining gender, but at this point they would confuse rather than help you. In many cases, however, there is no logical reason why a noun is **masculine**, **feminine**, or **neuter**. Each word must be memorized with its article.

"The" for **plural** nouns is always **דואלה** regardless of gender or case.

For example: **דואלה מקסטנס**, **דואלה קרבש**, **דואלה קרבש**.

**III. Idiomatic Expression** קינד **דוע**

Note the idiomatic expression קינד **דוע** which means "There is" as in the sentences:

*дж* קינד **דוע** קינד

The word קינד should never be translated by its literal meaning "here" in the phrase קינד **דוע** קינד. If you want to say, "There is a table here" you must repeat the word קינד and say קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד **דוע** קינד.
VII. A SONG:

AFN Pripetshik

Mark Warshafsky

1) Afn pripetshik brent a fayerl
   Un in shtub iz heys,
   Un der rève lernt
   Kleyne kinderlekh
   Dem alefbeyz.

2) Zogt zhe, kinderlekh,
   Gedenkt zhe, tèyere,
   Vos it lernt do.
   Zokt zhe nokh a mol
   Un take nokh a mol
   Komets-álef - o.

VOCABULARY

der alefbeyz - der prlpetsht(es)
   דר אַלְפָּビּײַס - דר פְרֵיֶפְטשֵׁיס
brenen - דְַבַּרְנֶנ
   to burn
   dem - דֵּמ
dx/der fayerl(ekh):
   דאַפּרל/דער פֶּיְרֶל(ה)
dos/der fayerl(n)
   דאַפּרל/דער פֶּיְרֶל
   fire (dim.)
gedenken - דעגְדֶּנֶקן
   to remember
   heys - הײָס
   hot
di kinderlekh - די קינדֶרלדֶס
   children (dim.)
dos kinder
   דאַס קינְדֶר
   the letter ק
   der/di komets-álef
   דאַר/דעי קומֶטס-אַלְפ
   old-fashioned stove and
   fireplace
lernun - לֶנְרֵעֲנ
   to learn
nokh a mol - נוקְחַ אַ מּוֹל
   again
prlpetshik - פְרֵיֶפְטשֵׁיס
   to say, to tell

Page 21 / Unit 2
Moderate tempo

Dm

Gy-fn pri-pe-tshik brent a lay-e-rl,

Bb

Un in shub iz heys. Un der re-be le-rrnt

[A] Dm

[1. Bb] C7 F

kley-ne kin-de-laeh Dem---- a-lef-- bayz;

2. A7

Dm Dm A

Dem---- a-lef-- bayz. Zet zhe, kin-de-laeh, ge-

[A] Dm Bb C7 F

denk-t zhe, tay-rena, Vos ir le-rnt do,

D7 Gm [Gm] Dm

Zogt zhe nokh a-mol un-te-kar nokh a-mol:

[1. Bb] C7 F [2. Gm A7 Dm]

Ko-mets---- a-lef: of Ko-mets---- a-lef: of

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COGNATES

It may comfort you to notice how similar Yiddish is to English. A word that is similar in two languages is called a "cognate." Where the cognate is not synonymous with the literal translation of the word, the cognate is given in parentheses.

Compare these words:

- brenen: to burn
- der Yiddish fayer: fire
- heys: hot
- lernen: to learn
- der alejbeyt: alphabet
- di arbet: work (arbiter)
- der student: student
- di hant: hand
- trakhtn: to think (tract)
- shlofn: to sleep
- tantsn: to dance
- zingen: to sing
- ale: all

Note the ב–V alternation. English frequently uses V where Yiddish uses ב.

Knowing this may help you figure out the meaning of a number of Yiddish words with ב, such as:

- hobn: to have
- gebn: to give
- aber: over
- libe: love

EXERCISES

I. Fill in the correct form of the verb בּלִיבָה!

1. דָּי הַבּאָבָרֶשׁ. 2. די בּאָבָרֶשׁ ליִד. 3. אייר בּיֵרְצַר. 4. מָיֵר בּיֵרְצַר. 5. דו בּיֵרְצַר. 6. דָּי בּיֵרְצַר. 7. אייר בּיֵרְצַר (lkh). 8. דו בּיֵרְצַר (lkh). 9. אייר בּיֵרְצַר (lkh). 10. דו בּיֵרְצַר (lkh).
II. Fill in the correct form of the verb גיin (zayt):
1. Ztst in der heym.
2. Af der gas.
3. In der heym.
4. Itst.
5. In
6. Mir __________ in der heym.
8. Ikh __________ a lerem.
9. Zey __________ itst in shtub.

III. Choose the correct form of the verb:
1. Mir (geyt, geyen) itst af der gas.
2. Du (voyn, voynst) af der gas.
3. Er (voyn, voynen) in der heym.
4. Ikh (voyn, voynst) in der heym.
5. Zey (zingen, zingt) a lid.
6. Der szeye (shlofst, shloft) itst.
7. Ikh (traktst, trakhte) noch a mol.
8. Ir (lemt, lemst) dem (the) alefbeyz noch a mol.
9. Du (host, hob) a bleyer, a heft, un a feder.
10. Es (iz, zay) do a bukh un a feder afn tish.
11. Fraynd Goldberg, (zay, zayt) azoy gut, git mir di bikher.
12. Vos (herst, herl) zikh? Es (iz, zay) nito kin nayes.
13. Ikh (gedenken, gedenk) dos lid.
15. Mir (leynen, leyenen) un (shrayben, shraybn) Yiddish.

IV. Fill in the correct form of the article using 'a' or 'an':
In sentences where the noun is not in the nominative case, assume that the article is the same as it is for the nominative.

...קפל... קפל... קפל... קפל... קפל... קפל...
V. Translate into Yiddish: (Write either in Yiddish or in transliteration.)

1. What’s new?  
   [There is] nothing new.

2. [There is] nothing new.

3. I have only one pencil and two books.

4. There is a pen on the (דון) table.

5. Really?

6. We remember the (דער) alphabet.

7. Please say “good morning” again.

8. The children have to (_need) think.

9. There is a fire in [the] house.

10. The students read and write now.

VI. Choose the correct word from the list at the bottom of the exercise and fill in the blanks:

1. Vos _______ slikh?

2. Du _______ dos lid.

3. Es iz _______ a fayerl in shtub.

4. Ikh hob eyn bukh ober ikh ______ tsvey.

5. A sheynem _______

6. Mir _______ redn Yidish.

7. Zey _______ a grus fun Berlen.

8. Nito _______.

dank  hert  far vos  hobn  herst  darf  do  darf

ORAL PRACTICE

VII. Substitute the highlighted words with those in parentheses. Make any necessary changes. Be sure to match the numbers correctly:

1. ¬ Vos lernen zey?¹
   ¬ Zey¹ darfn gedenken dem alefbeys.
       a) (mir¹)  b) (di kinder¹)

2. ¬ Hot der lerer¹ lib di studentn²?
   ¬ Yo, ale lerers¹ hobn lib di studentn²?
       a) (di bobe,¹ di kinderlekh²)  b) (der rebe,¹ di khshidim²)

³ In order to make a good idiomatic Yiddish sentence, omit the words in square brackets [ ] and translate the words in parentheses ( ).
VIII. Complete the dialogue:

1. Vos hert sikh?
   - Vos zol sikh hern? Ikh......

2. Hostu lib tsu tantsn?
   - Nu, voden? Ale hobn lib tsu tantsn.
   - Ikh hob lib tsu tantsn ober......

3. Du kenst dos lid "Afn prpetshik"?
   - Yo, ikh ken dos lid un hob lib dos lid. Es......

IX. Conversation Topics

1. You are choosing a roommate ("mitvoynler"). Have a conversation in which you each find out as much as you possibly can about each other.

2. You have just met a relative from another country who speaks only Yiddish. Introduce yourselves and get acquainted.

3. There is a new student in the class. Explain to him or her what you do in the class and what s/he needs to bring to class.