Learning Hebrew: Pronominal Suffixes

PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES
In Hebrew, pronominal suffixes are possessive and objective pronouns that are suffixes on nouns, prepositions, and the definite direct object marker.

When appearing on nouns, they are possessive, as in .her locker. When appearing on prepositions or the definite direct object marker, they are objective as in .to him.

There are two sets of pronominal suffixes to be learned . Type 1 (occur with singular nouns) and Type 2 (occur with plural nouns).

Singular

	Type 1	Type 2	Possessive	Objective
First Person Common	יִ	יַ	My	Me
Second Person Masculine	ךָ	יךָ	Your	You
Second Person Feminine	ךְ	יךְ	Your	You
Third Person Masculine	וֹ	יו	His/Its	Him/It
Third Person Feminine	הָ	יהָ	Her/Its	Her/It

Plural

	Type 1	Type 2	Possessive	Objective
First Person Common	נוּ	יֵנוּ	Our	Us
Second Person Masculine	כֶם	יְכֶם	Your	You
Second Person Feminine	כֶן	יְכֶן	Your	You
Third Person Masculine	הֶם	יהֶם	Their	Them
Third Person Feminine	הֶן	יהֶן	Their	Them

There are four rules that need to be learned about pronominal suffixes.

1. All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number.

2. All Type 2 suffixes have a י which will help you to distinguish between Type 1 and Type 2 suffixes.

3. The dot in the letter hey in the third person female singular suffix is a Mappiq and not a dagesh lene or dagesh forte.

4. There are alternate forms for the Type 1 suffixes and should be memorized.

	Type 1	Alternative
First Person Common	יֹ	נִי
Third Person Masculine Singular	וֹ	הוּ
Third Person Feminine Singular	הָ	הָ
Third Person Masculine Plural	הֶם	ם ָ
Third Person Female Plural	הֶן	ן ָ

MASCULINE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number. Type 1 suffixes occur with singular nouns (such as סוּסוֹ and תּוֹרָתָן) and Type 2 suffixes occur with plural nouns (such as סוּסֵינוּ and תּוֹרוֹתַי).

When pronominal suffixes are added to masculine plural nouns, the masculine plural ending (ים) is dropped.

If a feminine noun takes a masculine plural ending it will follow the masculine plural pattern. This also applies when a pronominal suffix is added.

עָרֵיכֶם - עָרִים - עִיר

FEMININE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

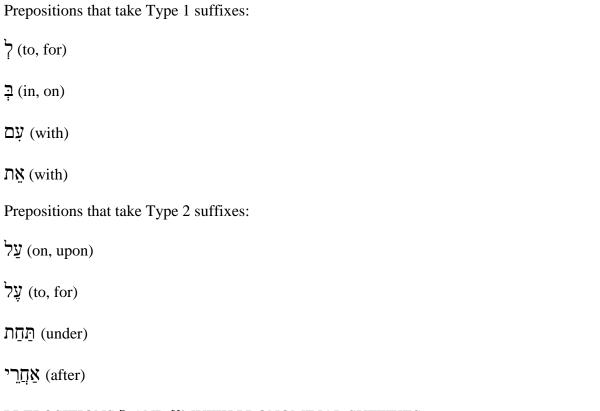When a feminine singular noun ends in הָ (as in תּוֹרָה) receives a pronominal suffix, the ה is replaced by ת (תּוֹרָת).

Unlike masculine plural nouns, feminine plural nouns retain their plural ending (וֹת).

SINGLE SYLLABLE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

The singular noun that ends with a י has a hiriq yod (אָחִיךָ). The plural noun that ends with a י never has a hiriq yod (אַחֶיךָ).

PREPOSITIONS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

In Hebrew, prepositions also take pronominal suffixes. These suffixes are objective rather than possessive.

Prepositions that take Type 1 suffixes:

לְ (to, for)

בְּ (in, on)

עִם (with)

אֵת (with)

Prepositions that take Type 2 suffixes:

עַל (on, upon)

אֶל (to, for)

תַּחַת (under)

אַחֲרֵי (after)

PREPOSITIONS כְּ AND מִן WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

With the preposition כְּ, the forms with singular and first person common plural suffixes are spelled with a longer, alternate ending (כְּמוֹ).

With the preposition מִן, the forms with singular and first person common plural suffixes are spelled with a longer, alternate ending (מִמֶּנּ).

DEFINITE DIRECT OBJECT MARKER AND THE PREPOSITIONS אֶת/אֵת WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

The definite direct object marker אֶת/אֵ takes Type 1 pronominal suffixes. It is translated as a personal pronoun in the accusative and objective case.

Sources:
The First Hebrew Primer, Third Edition by Simon, Resnikoff, and Motzkin
Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar by Pratico and Van Pelt