

The Article before Weak Letters

	Word Starts With ...	Dagesh Present	Article Vowel	Example
Dagesh Omitted ¹	מְ, יְ	No	הַ (Normal)	הַיְלָדִים
	מְ, יְ followed by ע or ה	Yes (Normal)	הַ (Normal)	הַיְהוּדִים
Implied Doubling ²	ה, ח	No	הַ (Normal)	הַחֲכָמָה, הַהֵיכָל
	הָ, חָ, חֲ	No	הֶ	הַחֲדָשִׁים, הַחֲכָם, הַהַרִים
Compensatory Lengthening ³	ר, ע, א	No	הֶ	הַרְגֵּל, הַעֵיר, הָאִישׁ
	עֶ	No	הֶ	הַעֲבִים
Harmonization ⁴	Accented ⁵ הֶ or עֶ	No	הֶ	הַעֲוֹל, הַעָם, הַהֶר, הָאָרֶץ

¹ Dagesh forte following the article is dropped. Example of the קוֹלְמֵינָן ('coal mine') rule. These letters often drop the dagesh forte when followed by a vocal shewa (see Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 83).

² Dagesh forte is dropped producing an open unstressed syllable with a short vowel. Occurs with the strong gutturals ה and ח.

³ Vowel under the article lengthens to compensate for absence of doubling of first letter. Occurs with ר and the weak gutturals א, ע.

⁴ Vowel under the first letter of the word harmonizes with the vowel under the article – usually ׀.

⁵ Hence occurs with many monosyllabics that start with הֶ or עֶ.