What is Biblical Hebrew?
Biblical Hebrew is the foundational language of Tanach. Students approach Biblical Hebrew as a classical language, learning how to decipher its highly logical, structural, and mathematical linguistic frameworks. By mastering its unique prefix/suffix mechanics and verbal root matrices, pupils acquire the tools to translate and analytically critique ancient texts in their original form.
Why do we teach Biblical Hebrew at Hasmonean?
At Hasmonean, Biblical Hebrew serves as an academic and cultural bridge. It empowers our students with the skills required for independent, lifelong textual study, allowing them to access Jewish heritage and texts without relying on translations. Linguistically, learning a classical language develops rigorous analytical thinking, enhances English literacy through comparative syntax, and sharpens code-breaking and problem-solving skills. It encourages precision, grammatical accuracy, and literary appreciation, giving our pupils a strong academic foundation that supports success across all subjects.
How do we teach Biblical Hebrew at Key Stage 3?
At Key Stage 3, we focus on building essential vocabulary and mastering foundational grammar. Learning is highly interactive and structured to keep students engaged: Root identification: Students discover how to find the three-letter core roots within complex words, even when letters are missing. Interactive learning: We use grammar chants, mnemonics, physical flashcards, and interactive games to make structural mechanics memorable. Blended learning: Digital platforms like Quizlet support classroom teaching, giving students access to independent quizzes and tailored extension work. Textual application: By the end of Key Stage 3, students apply their skills to real, unadapted classical texts, such as the Book of Ruth.
How do we teach Biblical Hebrew at Key Stage 4?
At Key Stage 4 (Years 9–11), the curriculum transitions into a rigorous, academic GCSE course following the Pearson Edexcel (1BH0) specification. The teaching methodology branches into two core pillars: Set texts: Students closely study, translate, and critically analyze two major historical/prophetic biblical texts, learning to comment on literary style, historical context, and syntax. Unseen: Students develop the skills needed to tackle complex, unseen prose texts using advanced translation strategies. The grammar content is embedded into the set text and unseen lessons and applied practically into all elements of the curriculum.
How do we teach Biblical Hebrew at Key Stage 5?
At Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13), Biblical Hebrew is taught as a rigorous A-Level course following the AQA specification. The curriculum demands a sophisticated level of linguistic fluency and critical thinking, including: Advanced literature portfolios: Students read and critique four extensive set texts across multiple classical genres, including historical prose (e.g., Samuel and Kings) and poetic literature (e.g., Psalms and Jeremiah). Linguistic composition and synthesis: Students move beyond prose translation to study prose composition, developing the skills to translate complex English passages back into classical Biblical Hebrew prose. Synoptic textual criticism: Students learn to analyse advanced, unadapted poetry and prose, evaluating subtle changes in tone, historical context, and syntax. This preparation provides an excellent foundation for university-level study.