

Entrance Examination Study Guide: Written Exams

This is intended to help applicants identify areas of study and should not be regarded as a complete syllabus. We strongly urge applicants to seek a qualified mentor who can guide the learning process.

I. Jewish History

1. Identify the following major sovereigns of Ancient Israel and their contributions to the development of the Israelite nation
 - Saul, David, Solomon

2. Know the dates and eras of the Temples
Key Terms:
 - Kingdoms of Israel and Judah
 - 722 BCE: fall of Israel to Assyria
 - 586 BCE: Destruction of 1st Temple
 - Babylonian Exile
 - Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Hellenistic Period
 - Septuagint
 - Roman Period
 - King Herod
 - 70 CE: Destruction of 2nd Temple

3. Identify the following terms:
 - Hasmonean Dynasty/Maccabbees
 - 164 BCE: rededication of Temple
 - 73 CE: Fall of Masada
 - 132-135 CE: Bar Kochba Revolt
 - Essenes
 - Sadducees/Tzedokim
 - Pharisees/Perushim
 - Samaritans
 - Sanhedrin

4. Identify the major centers of learning in Palestine, the major chronological groupings of Rabbis and Sages who led them, and their major achievements during the Talmudic period
Key Terms:
 - Jerusalem, Yavneh, Galilee
 - Tannaim
 - Mishnah
 - Hillel and Shammai
 - Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai
 - Rabbi Gamaliel II
 - Rabbi Akiva
 - Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi

5. Identify the major centers of learning in Babylonia, the major chronological groupings of Rabbis who led them, and their major achievements during the Talmudic period

Key Terms:

- Sura, Pumbedita
- Amoraim
- Gemarah
- Geonim
- Saadia ben Joseph
- Babylonian Talmud
- Palestinian Talmud

6. Know about the Moslem conquest of Spain and Europe

Key Terms:

- 638CE: Jerusalem surrenders to Islamic Conquest
- 712CE: Moslem conquest of Spain
- Golden Age of Spain
- Judah HaLevi
- Rambam/Moses Maimonides
- Nachmanides
- Mysticism

7. Know about Jewish Oppression in the Middle Ages

Key Terms:

- Rashi
- Crusades
- Blood Libel
- Black Death
- Conversos
- 1492: Expulsion from Spain
- Sephardim
- Ashkenazim

8. Know about the resettlement of Jews in The Ottoman Empire

Key Terms:

- Safed
- Kaballah
- Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari)
- Joseph Caro
- The Maharal of Prague
- Alt-Neu Shul

9. Know about the Origins of the Ghetto in Italy

10. Know about the Jewish Settlement in Amsterdam & Hamburg

11. Know about the early Sephardim in America and their Contributions

12. Know about the rise of the Messianic Movement under Shabbetai Zevi
13. Know about the Pale of Jewish Settlement
14. Know about the rise of the Hasidim and Mitnagdim
Key Terms:
 - Baal Shem Tov
 - Schneor Zalman of Liadi
 - The Gaon of Vilna
15. Know about the Haskalah and its contributions to reform, and the centers for Religious Reform
Key Terms:
 - 1776-1800: Haskalah in Europe
 - Berlin
 - Moses Mendelssohn
 - Abraham Geiger
 - Hamburg
 - Vienna
 - Isaac Noah Mannheimer
 - Zechariah Frankel
 - Samson Raphael Hirsch
 - Isaac Mayer Wise
16. Know about the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform and its effects on all branches of Judaism at that time in America: Reform, Conservative, Orthodox
17. Know about the contributions of Gershom Mendes Seixas to American Jewry
18. Identify and have understanding about the early pioneering Conservative Rabbis in America and their contributions:
 - Alexander Kohut
 - Sabato Morais
 - Solomon Schechter
 - Louis Finkelstein
 - Mordechai Kaplan
19. Identify, have understanding about the major Conservative Rabbis who have furthered the cause of Conservative Judaism in the mid and later part of the 20th Century
 - Abraham Joshua Heschel
 - Simon Greenberg
 - David Lieber
 - Gershon Cohen
 - Joel Roth
 - Robert Gordis
 - Isaac Klein
 - Ismar Schorsch

20. Know about the principles, ideology, and Halachah that define the Conservative Movement, and compare/contrast with Reform, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist Movements

21. Know about Reform Organizations in America

Key Terms:

- UAHC
- HUC-JIR
- CCAR
- School of Sacred Music
- ACC
- NFTY

22. Know about the Conservative Organizations in America

Key Terms:

- JTS
- American Jewish University (formerly University of Judaism)
- Rabbinical Assembly
- United Synagogue of America
- Cantors Assembly
- Cantors Institute/HL Miller Cantorial School
- USY

23. Know about the following institutions:

- Hebrew College
- Yeshivah University
- Philip and Sarah Belz School
- Jewish Ministers Cantors Association of America
- Academy for Jewish Religion

24. Know about the following:

- Kristallnacht
- Warsaw ghetto
- Mordecai Anielewicz
- Partisans
- Auschwitz-Birkenau
- Treblinka
- Dachau
- Theresienstadt (Terezin)
- Anne Frank
- Eli Weisel

25. Know about the Creation of the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel

Key Terms:

- Theodore Herzl
- 1917: Britain captures Palestine from Turks
- 1917: Balfour Declaration

- 1922: Confirmation of British Mandate over Palestine
- 1948: State of Israel Founded

26. Know about the modern wars for Israel

Key Terms:

- 1948: War of Independence
- 1956: Suez Canal War
- 1967: 6 Day War
- 1973: The Yom Kippur War
- 1978: Camp David Accords
- 1993: Oslo Accords

27. Identify the following people:

- David Ben Gurion
- Chaim Weizman
- Golda Meir
- Moshe Dayan
- Menachem Begin
- Yitzhak Rabin
- Shimon Peres
- Benjamin Netanyahu
- Ariel Sharon
- Ehud Olmert

Suggested Reading:

1. Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph, *Jewish Literacy*, New York, William Morrow and Company Inc., 1991
2. Ben-Sassoon, H.H., ed. *A History of the Jewish People*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1976
3. Scheindlin, Raymond P., *A Short History of the Jewish People*, Oxford University Press, 1998

II. Jewish Music History

1. Know the instruments mentioned in Tehillim and for what purpose they were used:
 - Shofar, Nevel, Kinor, Tof, Asor, Minim, Ugav, Chatzotzra
2. Know about the role of the Leviim in the Beit Mikdash
3. Define “Shaliach Tzibbur.” What are the required qualities of the Shaliach Tzibbur as described in our tradition?

Key Sources:

- Encyclopedia Judaica entries – MUSIC, HAZZAN
- Shulchan Aruch, Orach Hayyim 53:4-5
- A.J. Heschel, “The Vocation of the Cantor”
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4. Know about the early development of cantillation and by whom, when and where that system was codified
Key Terms:
 - Chironomy
 - Masorettes/Ben Asher
 - 9th Century Teveriah
 - Ovadia Ha Ger
5. Know when the public Torah reading began
6. Know when Jewish Music became polyphonic and about the contribution of Salomone Rossi
7. Know about the major 19th (early 20th) century composers/cantors of synagogue music.
 - Solomon Sulzer
 - Samuel Naumbourg
 - Louis Lewandowski
 - Nissi Belzer
 - Emmanuel Kirschner
 - Avraham Moshe Bernstein
 - Meyer Wodak
8. Know about the following 20th century composers of synagogue music.
 - Israel Alter
 - Adolph Katchko
 - Meyer Machtenberg
 - Hugo Chaim Adler
 - Sam Adler
 - Ernest Bloch
 - Max Helfman
 - Max Janowski
 - Charles Davidson
 - Ben Steinberg
 - Shlomo Carlebach
 - Irving Srul Glick
 - Paul and Sol Zim
 - Meir Finkelstein
 - Simon Sargon
 - Michael Isaacson
 - Craig Taubman
 - Debbie Friedman
9. Know about the 19/20th century Cantor/Composers who were also Anthologists
 - Abraham Baer
 - Ahron Beer
 - Moritz Deutsch
 - Eduard Birnbaum

- Gershon Ephros
- David Putterman
- Noah Schall

10. Know about the Golden Age of Hazzanut and its “Star Cantors” of the 19/20th centuries

- Gershon Sirota
- Zavel Kwartin
- David Roitman
- Yossele Rosenblatt
- Mordechai Hershman
- Moshe Koussevitzky
- David Kusevitsky
- Pierre (Pinchas) Pinchik
- Moshe Ganchoff
- Leib Glantz
- Moishe Oysher

11. Know the outstanding scholars of Jewish music in the 20th century

- Israel Adler
- Abraham Idelson
- Abraham Wolf Binder
- Eric Werner
- Solomon Rosowsky
- Harry Coopersmith

12. Know the Composers of Yiddish Art Song in the 20th Century

- Mordechai Gebirtig
- Solomon Golub
- Lazar Weiner

13. Know about the Society for Jewish Folk Music

- Moses Milner
- Joel Engel
- Samuel Alman
- Joseph Achron
- Lazare Saminsky
- Solomon Rosowsky

14. Know about Yiddish Theatre in Europe and America, as well as the Composers of its songs

- Abraham Goldfaden
- Boris Thomaschefsky
- Joseph Rumshinsky
- Alexander Olshanetsky
- Shalom Secunda
- Abraham Ellstein

15. Know about the composers of Hebrew Art Songs in the 20th Century
 - Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
 - Paul Ben-Haim (Frankenburger)
 - Yehezkel Braun
 - Leonard Bernstein
 - Hugo Weisgall

16. Know about Composers in the style of Hebrew Folk Song in the 20th Century
 - Shlomo Carlebach
 - Naomi Shemer
 - Nurit Hirsch

17. Know about Composers who have made a significant contribution to 20th Century popular music
 - Aaron Copland
 - George Gershwin
 - Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein
 - Stephen Sondheim
 - Jules Styne
 - Sheldon Harnick & Jerome (Jerrold) Bock
 - Kurt Weill

18. Know the roles of Samuel Rosenbaum and Max Wohlberg in Jewish music and the Cantorate

Suggested Reading:

1. Idelson, Abraham Z., *Jewish Music, Its Historical Development*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1992
2. Edelman, Marsha Bryan, *Discovering Jewish Music*, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society, 2003
3. Pasternak, Velvel, *The Jewish Music Companion*, Tara Publications, 2002

III. Liturgy, Dinei T'filah and Nusach

Applicants should be able to demonstrate fluency with the nusach, customs and practices that are normally encountered in the performance of the liturgy, including but not limited to:

Liturgy and Dinei Tefillah

1. Identify the basic prayers that make up the structure of the Shabbat & Weekday service (Kabbalat Shabbat, Maariv, Shacharit and Mincha)
2. Identify what prayers are added or deleted from the above services for different occasions, for example:
 - a. When Tachanun is/is not recited
 - b. When Birkat HaHodesh is added
 - c. When it is also Rosh Hodesh or Hol HaMoed
 - d. When it is also Hanukkah/Purim/Yom HaAtzmaut
 - e. When it is also a Fast Day
3. Identify the special prayers/rituals added on the Holy Days and Festivals, and where they appear in the structure of the service, for example:
 - a. Shofar Service, Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Shofarot on Rosh Hashanah

- b. Slikhot , Seder Avodah, Neilah on Yom Kippur
 - c. Tal and Geshem
 - d. Akdamut
 - e. Yizkor
 - f. Hoshanot, Hakafot
4. Note changes to the Holy Day/Festival services when it is Shabbat vs. weekday, for example:
 - a. When Rosh Hashanah is on Shabbat, Avinu Malkeinu is not recited
 - b. Changes in Kabbalat Shabbat when it occurs during a Festival
 5. Identify which books of the Bible are recited as part of the liturgy and on what occasions, for example:
 - a. Shirat Hayam can be found in Psukei D'Zimra
 - b. Know which Megillot are chanted on which holidays
 - c. Know how Psalms are utilized throughout the service
 6. Know where well-known Torah and Maftir readings can be found, for example:
 - a. Where are the Maftir readings for Shabbat Shekalim or Shabbat Hanukkah?
 - b. From what book of the Torah is the reading for 1st/2nd day of Rosh Hashanah found?
 - c. What Haftarah is read when Shabbat is the day before Rosh Hodesh?
 7. Know how many Sifrei Torah are used on various occasions and how many aliyot are called from each, for example:
 - a. 4 aliyot from one Torah on a weekday Rosh Hodesh
 - b. 7 from the first scroll and Maftir from the second scroll on Shabbat Parah
 8. Know all the names of all the holidays in the Jewish calendar year, for example:
 - a. Shavuot is also known as Hag HaBikkurim and Z'man Matan Torateinu
 - b. Rosh Hashanah is also known as Yom T'ruah, Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaDin
 9. Know the names of the special Shabbatot before Pesach and surrounding Tisha B'Av
 10. Know about the lunar calendar and the names of the Hebrew months
 11. Know about the minor and major Fast Days, the 3 weeks, and the 9 days
 12. Know about lifecycle events, for example:
 - a. Funerals and the Laws of mourning
 - b. Weddings
 - c. Brit Milah, Simchat Bat
 - d. Pidyon HaBen

Nusach

1. Know what services are chanted using what nusach and at what times, for example
 - a. HaShem Malakh is the nusach for Kabbalat Shabbat
 - b. Magen Avot is for Arvit L'Shabbat
2. Compare/Contrast nusach depending on whether it is Shabbat, Festivals, or Weekday, for example:
 - a. The main mode for Weekday Maariv is Ahavah Rabah; for Shabbat Maariv: Magen Avot; for Festival Maariv : Festival Maariv Mode
 - b. Weekday Amidah is in pentatonic; Shabbat Shacharit Amidah is HaShem Malakh and switches to Ahavah Rabah at the Kedushah; Festival Shacharit Amidah switches to Festival minor mode at Yimloch
3. Know how many different modes are employed for Hoshanah Rabah
4. Know about Mi Sinai melodies
5. Know about the development, importance, and relevance of nusach in services

Suggested Reading:

1. Klein, Isaac, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1979
2. Milgram, Abraham Ezra, *Jewish Worship*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1971
3. Hammer, Reuven, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, New York, Schocken Books, 1994
4. Hammer, Reuven, *Entering the High Holy Days*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 2005
5. Donin, Rabbi Hayim Halevy, *To Pray as a Jew*, New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1980
6. Davidson, Charles, *Immunim III: Sefer Hadrakhah*, Pennsylvania, Ashbourne Music Publishing, 2011

IV. Tanach

Know the personalities and major events/stories concerning the following individuals, other personalities connected to them and their families where applicable:

Breishet/Genesis

Key Terms:

- Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth
- Noah & his sons
- Abraham & Sarah
- Hagar & Ishmael
- Isaac & Rebecca
- Jacob & Esau, Rachel & Leah
- Judah, Joseph and his brothers (and sister)
- Ephraim & Menashe
- The Pharaoh stories

Shmot/Exodus

Key Terms:

- Moses, Aaron, Miriam and parents
- The Plagues
- Shirat HaYam
- Amalek
- Yitro
- Aseret HaDibrot
- Sefer HaBrit
- The Golden Calf

Vayikra/Leviticus

Key Terms:

- Torat Kohanim
- The Sacrificial System
- The Holiness Code

B'Midbar/Numbers

Key Terms:

- Sefer Ha P'kudim
- The twelve scouts; Joshua & Caleb

- Korach's Rebellion
- The sin of Moses
- Parah Adumah
- Balak & Bil'am
- Pinchas
- The daughters of Zelophehad

D'Varim/Deuteronomy

Key Terms:

- Mishneh Torah
- Shema
- Asylum Cities
- Mt. Gerizim & Mt. Ebal
- Death of Moses

Early N'viim/Prophets

Key Terms:

- Joshua
- Rachav
- Conquest of Jericho
- Canaanites
- Deborah
- Yael
- Samson & Delilah
- Samuel
- Hannah
- Saul
- David & Goliath, Jonathan, Bathsheba, Nathan, Absalom
- Solomon & The Beit Mikdash
- 928 BCE: The split of the Kingdom into Israel & Judea
- Ahab and Jezebel
- Elijah & Elisha
- 722 BCE: End of the N. Kingdom/10 lost tribes
- Hezekiah
- Josiah
- Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Siege of Jerusalem
- Gedaliah
- The Babylonian Exile

Later N'viim/Prophets

Key Terms:

- Isaiah I and II
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel/Valley of the Dry Bones
- Amos
- Jonah

- Michah
- Hosea

Ketuvim/Writings

Key Terms:

- Psalms
- Job
- The 5 Megillot: Shir HaShirim, Ruth, Kohellet, Esther, Eicha

V. Hebrew Grammar and Comprehension

Applicants should be able to:

1. Identify parts of speech in a given prayer text
2. Correct words in a given prayer text to reflect correct gender and number
3. Translate short sentences into modern Hebrew
4. Write a short essay based on a given question in modern Hebrew
5. Demonstrate an ability to comprehend selections from the liturgy by answering questions (in English) about provided prayer texts

Suggested Reading:

1. Band, Ora and Bergman, Bella. *Hebrew: A Language Course*, New Jersey, Berhman House
2. Simon, Resnikoff, Motzkin. *First Hebrew Primer*, 3rd Edition, Oakland, CA EKS Publishing Co., 1992

VI. Music Theory

*Note: this exam should be taken **after** the Liturgy, Dinei T'fillah and Nusach exam*

Applicants will be asked to:

1. Identify all of the key signatures, for both major and minor keys, in both treble and bass clefs.
2. Notate a given interval from any note.
3. Build major and minor chords with a given note as the tonic
4. Harmonize or compose an accompaniment to a given melody
5. Transpose a melody to a different key.
6. Notate familiar melodies without using a piano or other instrument