Missing letter guide -- finding the root of a "weak" verb in Biblical Hebrew by Naama Zahavi-Ely

Special cases:

– If the two letters are לכ the missing letter is a first ה and the root is הלכ

   ** Watch out for the ל preposition + 2nd person singular pronominal suffix לְךָ and לָךְ !

– If the two letters are קח the missing letter is a first ל and the root is לקח

– If you find only תנ or נת or only ת, the root is נתנ

> If not one of the special cases listed above, the **only** possibilities are:
> first Yod, first Nun, middle Vav or Yod (hollow), final Heh, or geminate (same second and third letter)

Prefix form, two root letters only (all examples in 3ms):

– Qamatz under the prefix >> Qal or Hifil, middle Yod/Vav (Qal usually has "o/a" vowel, Hifil "e/ee")

   (example: Qal יָבֹא , Hifil יָבִיא, both from the root בוא)

   The Qamatz changes to a Sheva if a longer ending moves the stress to the left: יְבִיאֵם from   בוא

– Tzere under the prefix >> Qal stem, usually first Yod, rarely final Heh

   (examples: יֵדַע from ידע,   יֵבְךְּ from בכה)

– Dagesh in the first root letter you have >> Qal stem, usually first Nun, rarely first Yod

   (examples: יִפֹּל from נפל, יִצַּק from יצק ; check a lexicon to be sure)

– A vowel indicator י after the prefix >> Qal stem, first Yod (example: יִירָא   from ירא)

– A vowel indicator וֹ "o" after the prefix >> Hifil stem, first Yod (example: יוֹשִׁיב from ישב)

– A vowel indicator וּ "oo" after the prefix: Hofal stem, first Yod or middle Yod/Vav

– None of the above, two root letters: final Heh (examples: יִשְׁבְּ from שבה , ראה from יִרְא)

– If all else fails: try geminates (identical 2nd and 3rd root letters like   סבב)

Not prefix form, two root letters only:

– Affix 1st or 2nd person, two root letters + Yod vowel indicator after the 2nd: final Heh root

   (example in 1cs: רָאִיתִי from ראה)

– Affix 3fs with an extra final ת before the ה ending: final Heh root (example: שָׁבְתָה from שבה)

– Participle plural, two root letters, "o" vowel: final Heh root (example: רֹאִים from ראה)

– Participle plural, two root letters, "a" or "e" vowel: middle-Vav-Yod root (example: בָּאִים from בוא)

– Two root letters, the vowel is Qamatz: Qal, affix 3ms or participle ms of middle Yod/Vav root

   (example: בָּא from בוא)

– Two root letters, the vowel is "o" or "ee": Qal, imperative 2ms or infinitive, middle Yod/Vav root

   (examples: בּוֹא or בֹּא from בוא,   שִׂים from שים, קוּם from קום).

– Two root letters, the vowel is Zere: Qal imperative 2ms of a first Yod root (example: שֵׁב from ישב)

   (exception: very few middle Yod/Vav affix 3ms/participle ms take this vowel: מֵת from מות)

– Two root letters, segolet pattern + ת on the end: infinitive of first Yod root (שֶׁבֶת from ישב)

– Two root letters+ וֹת on the end: infinitive of final Heh root (רְאוֹת from ראה)

– ה or מ followed by י or וֹ "o" vowel indicator and two root letters: Hifil, first Yod root (הוֹשִׁיב from ישב)

– ה or מ followed by וּ "oo" vowel indicator and two root letters: Hofal, first Yod or middle Yod/Vav

- ה or מ followed by two root letters with a dagesh in the first: Hifil, first Nun root (הִפִּיל from נפל)

– If all else fails: try geminates (identical 2nd and 3rd root letters) like סבב

> **One root letter only (example in prefix 3ms):** first nun+final heh, in Hifil (יַךְ from נכה) or Qal
> The only common root in this pattern is נכה (usually Hifil); the only others used are נשה, נטה and נזה