

# Yael and Eyal mind their language in a fun way

BY ZOE COHEN

ISRAELI-born authors Yael Breuer and Eyal Shavit have written a book that makes learning Hebrew fun.

Modern language teacher Yael said of *Hilarious Hebrew*: "Each word is taught through a sentence written in English that takes the pronunciation of the word in Hebrew, with the meaning through the contents of the sentence."

"For example 'What a lovely house, I think I'm going to buy it'. The Hebrew word for house is bayit."

Yael has been teaching Hebrew for 20 years, but has used this method for longer.

## Brighton has a small Jewish community

"My friend Eyal thought they were so funny that he started coming up with more," Yael added.

"Eventually we had about 300 jokes all together so decided to put them in a book for people to learn from".

*Hilarious Hebrew* also includes illustrations on every page to accompany each sentence, but finding the right illustrator was a long process for the pair.

She said: "It took ages to find the right illustrator. We eventually found a local illustrator called Aubrey Smith.



FUN WAY TO LEARN: Yael Breuer and Eyal Shavit



My favourite band is HAIM. I will probably love them for LIFE!

The Hebrew word for 'life' is... chah'yim חַיִם

### PICTURE THIS: Examples of Yael and Eyal's style of teaching

"He had never been in contact with any Hebrew so it was nice to see someone learn and enjoy the language as they go along."

Yael and Eyal live in Brighton, but were raised in Israel. They became friends once they moved to the English seaside resort.

Yael said: "Brighton has a small Jewish community of around 1,000 people.

"There are four active synagogues — one Reform, two Orthodox, and one Progressive.

"Once a week all the Israelis meet in the pub for a chat in Hebrew.

"We all come from different backgrounds so it is great for meeting new people from our home country."

Yael is a musician from Kibbutz Kfar Szold, northern Israel, while Yael is from Rehovot.

She moved to Brighton when she met her English husband David. Together they have three children, 22-year-old Guy, Daniel, 18, and 11-year-old Mia.

Yael has always been passionate about the Hebrew language.

She said: "The language is very simple to learn. The grammar is simple, unlike French and German."

"It may not sound as beautiful as the French or Italian language, but there is so much



The Rolling Stones were given a class on how to use a KEYBOARD.  
MICK LED IT

The Hebrew word for 'keyboard' is... mik'leh'det מִקְלֶדֶת

history to it..."

The book is divided into 16 chapters, with 235 jokes in total.

Chapters include eating, going out, animals and 'It's a Jewish Thing'.

An example of a joke in the Jewish theme section is 'I've

## It was not a pleasant atmosphere

found the perfect yarmulke, it's a keeper' (kippa).

The book has been endorsed by writer Julie Burchill.

Yael explained: "I have been teaching Julie Hebrew for many years.

"She is extremely enthusiastic about learning Hebrew and has been a great subject for testing the jokes out on."

"It is wonderful to see that non-Jewish people love learning the language."

Brighton was the scene of anti-Israel demonstrations in the summer during Israel's conflict with Gaza.

The Ecostream shop was the target of the demonstrators.

"I used to go down to see what was going on," Yael said. "It was not a pleasant atmosphere."

"Of course, everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but some people seemed to be very hateful. But Brighton is a tolerant city."

Yael hopes to put together more books in the same format as there are many more ideas to be shared.

She said: "There were so many that we couldn't fit them all in the book, so we plan to start a Facebook page where we can post more of them and we would like people to suggest more."

"It would be great if we could collate people's ideas and write another book in the future."

[www.hilarioushebrew.com](http://www.hilarioushebrew.com)



WINNER: Zeruya Shalev celebrates

## Terror survivor Zeruya wins top French book prize

ISRAELI author Zeruya Shalev has won the 2014 Prix Femina Étranger, a French literary prize for foreign novels, for her book *What Remains of Life*. The book tells the story of

relationships in Israel throughout several generations.

Shalev is the second Hebrew novelist to win the prize, following Amos Oz, who was awarded it in 1988 for

his novel *Black Box*. *What Remains of Life* is Shalev's fifth novel.

It has been translated into English, Italian, German, Turkish, Romanian, Polish and Dutch.

In January, 2004, Shalev was injured in a terrorist attack in central Jerusalem when she passed a bus which was blown up by a Palestinian suicide bomber.

Despite the attack, Shalev

refuses to use literature for political manifestos.

She says she writes "books that examine the human, universal soul, that often talk about the war of the sexes, but not people's wars."