Using the "Forverts" (Jewish Daily Forward) for Family History
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Background
Founded in 1897, the Forverts (*Forward/Jewish Daily Forward*) was a leading Yiddish language newspaper in the United States throughout the 20th century. Most of this newspaper is available to browse digitally for free through the online Historical Jewish Press database, which is digitized as a part of the National Library of Israel. This handout includes a summary of some helpful strategies for finding your ancestors in the *Forward*.

Search/Browse Historical Jewish Press Database at National Library of Israel:
https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/search

Search/Browse *Forverts (Forward/פֿארווערטס)*:
https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/frw?&e=-------en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-------------1

Yiddish Orthography
YIVO (Yiddish Scientific Institute) was founded in 1925 in Vilna (Vilnius, Lithuania) with a mission to preserve, study and teach Eastern European Jewish culture. In 1936, YIVO consolidated a literary standard for the Yiddish language, in which the Lithuanian dialect would serve as the main model for the language's speakers and writers. The *Forward* did not adopt the YIVO orthography until the latter half of the 20th century. This is crucial to keep in mind if you know standard Yiddish or if you use a Yiddish-English dictionary to assist in your search for your ancestors in the *Forward*.

Yiddish Alphabet
If you are familiar with the Hebrew alphabet, this is a good start to searching in Yiddish. However, the Yiddish and Hebrew alphabets are noticeably different. This is a guide to the Yiddish alphabet. Six letters (highlighted in grey) are only used if the word is of Hebrew origin (as many Yiddish words are). For example, the surname Veiss is only spelled with a וו, not with a בֿ.

Letter	English Equivalent	Sounds Like	Letter	English Equivalent	Sounds Like
א	[Silent]		אַ	A	W**a**ter
אָ	O	F**or**	כ	Kh (in Hebrew worlds only)	Ba**ch**
בֿ	V (in Hebrew words only)	**V**ery	ג	G	**G**reat
ב	B	**Be**t			

ד	D	**D**ate	ה	H	**H**ere (Note: The *Forward* sometimes uses a *shtumer* (silent) *hey* at the end of words, which is not in the YIVO standard.
ו	oo	Sch**oo**l	וּ	oo	Sch**oo**l
וו	V	**V**ery	ﯨ	Oh	Sh**ow**
ז	Z	**Z**ebra	וי	Oy	T**oy**
ט	T	**T**est	ח	-Kh	Ba**ch** (in Hebrew words only)
יי	Ey	Pl**ay**	י	Y	**Y**ear
ײַ	Ay	Fl**y**	כ ך final form	Kh	Ba**ch**
פּ	Kh (in Hebrew words only)	Ba**ch**	מ	M	**M**ember
ל	L	**L**earn	נ ן Final form	N	**N**urse
ס	S	**S**end	ע	E	B**e**st
פ No final form, unlike Hebrew	P	**P**ractice	פֿ ף Final form	F	**F**rom
צ ץ final form	Tz	Ca**ts**	ק	K	**K**een
ר	R	**R**est	ש	Sh	**Sh**irt

שׁ	S (in Hebrew words only)	**S**tudent	תּ	T (in Hebrew words only)	Shabba**t**
ת	S (in Hebrew words only)	Shabba**s**	דזש	Dzh	**J**ob
זש	Zh	Bei**ge**	טש	Tsh	**Ch**arity

Common Words

This is a list of some common Yiddish words that you may see in the *Forward*. These words are written as they frequently appear in the *Forward*, and not as you will find them in most Yiddish-English dictionaries (YIVO standard). For example, the word father is פֿאָטער, but is spelled פוטער in the *Forward.* Some words have common variations, such as family (משפחה [*mishpokhe*] and פֿאמיליע [*familie*]). Since פֿאמיליע is more frequently used in the *Forward*, that is the one listed below with a note.

A/An	א, אַן
The	דער (Masculine); די (Feminine); דאָס (Neuter); די (Plural)
This	דיעזען
And	און
With	מיט
Of/From	פֿון
On	אויף
At, By	בײַ
Here	דאָ/ אַהער
Or	אָדער
But/However	אָבער
Very	זעהר
Around	ארום
Somewhere	ערגעץ
Near	לעבן
Last	לעצטע
First	ערשטער
Mr.	מר.
Mrs.	מרס.
Family	פֿאמיליע (most common variation)
Father	פוטער (most common variation)
Mother	מוטער (most common variation)
Parents	עלטערן/ עלטערען
Son	זוהן
Daughter	טאָבטער
Child/Children	קינד/קינדער
Brother	ברודער
Sister	שוועסטער
Cousin	קוזין (most common variation)

English	Yiddish
Brother-in-law	שוואגער
Sister-in-law	שוועגערין
Husband	מאן
Wife	פרוי (most common variation)
Uncle	פעטער (most common variation)
Aunt	מומע (most common variation)
Nephew	פּלימעניצע
Niece	פּלימעניק
Relatives	קרובים
My	מיין (singular); מיינע (plural)
Our	אונדזער (singular); אונדזערע (plural)
His	זיין (singular); זיינע (plural)
Her	איהר (singular); איהרע (plural)
Their	זייער; זייערע (plural)
Born	געבאָרען/ געבוירען געוואורן
To Seek	זוכן (Infinitive + Plural); זוכט (seeks); ווערט געזוכט (is sought)
To Have	האבען (Infinitive + Plural); האט (has)
To Live (Reside)	וואהנען (infinitive + plural form); וואהנט (lives); געוואואהנט (lived)
To Come	קומען (infinitive + plural form); קומט (comes); געקומען (came)
To Be	זיין (Infinitive); זענען (plural form); איז (is)