



The Arabic Script

Arabic Alphabet Basics

Arabic is written from right to left.	Unlike English, Arabic letters change form depending on their position in a word (beginning, middle, end, or isolated).
There are 28 basic letters in the Arabic alphabet.	Arabic is a cursive script; letters are generally connected.
Some letters do not connect to the following letter.	Short vowels are often not written but can be indicated with diacritics (tashkeel).
ا	Alif
ب	Ba
ت	Ta
ث	Tha

Pronunciation and Vowels

Consonants

Many Arabic consonants have no direct equivalent in English. Pay close attention to pronunciation.
Some consonants are emphatic (pronounced deeper in the throat).
Examples:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ح (Ḥa): A voiceless pharyngeal fricative, like clearing your throat. ع (ʿAyn): A voiced pharyngeal fricative, also from the throat. ق (Qāf): A voiceless uvular stop, produced at the back of the mouth.

Basic Grammar

Sentence Structure

The basic sentence structure in Arabic is Verb-Subject-Object (VSO), although Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) is also common, especially in Modern Standard Arabic.
Example (VSO):
كتب الطالب الدرس kataba al-ṭālibu al-dars
Wrote the student the lesson (The student wrote the lesson)
Example (SVO):
الطالب كتب الدرس al-ṭālibu kataba al-dars
The student wrote the lesson

Nouns and Articles

Arabic nouns have gender (masculine and feminine).	Feminine nouns often end in ة (taa marbuta).
Arabic has a definite article: ال (al-).	There is no indefinite article (like 'a' or 'an' in English).
The definite article is attached to the beginning of the noun.	Example: كتاب (kitāb) - book الكتاب (al-kitāb) - the book
Sun and Moon Letters:	When the definite article precedes a 'sun letter' (e.g., ش, ذ, ر), the 'l' sound in 'al-' assimilates to the sound of the sun letter. With 'moon letters' the 'l' sound is pronounced.

Pronouns

Arabic pronouns are essential for constructing sentences. Here are some basic pronouns:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> أنا ('anā): I أنت ('anta): You (masculine) أنتي ('anti): You (feminine) هو (huwa): He هي (hiya): She نحن (naḥnu): We أنتم ('antum): You (plural masculine) أنتن ('antunna): You (plural feminine) هم (hum): They (masculine) هن ('hunna): They (feminine)

Basic Vocabulary

Letter Forms

Initial (beginning of word)	Letter connects on the right side only.
Medial (middle of word)	Letter connects on both sides.
Final (end of word)	Letter connects on the left side only.
Isolated (alone)	Letter does not connect.
Example using the letter 'Ba' (ب):	
Initial: بـ	Medial: ببـ
Final: ـب	Isolated: ب

Vowels

Short Vowels (indicated by diacritics):	Long Vowels (letters):
◌َ (Fatha): Short 'a' sound (like in 'cat')	ا (Alif): Long 'aa' sound (like in 'father')
◌ِ (Kasra): Short 'i' sound (like in 'bit')	ي (Ya): Long 'ee' sound (like in 'see')
◌ُ (Damma): Short 'u' sound (like in 'put')	و (Waw): Long 'oo' sound (like in 'food')
Note:	Diacritics are often omitted in written Arabic, especially in newspapers and books. Learners need to infer the correct vowel sounds from context.

Greetings

السلام عليكم (as-salāmu 'alaykum)	Peace be upon you (formal greeting)
وعليكم السلام (wa 'alaykumu s-salām)	And upon you be peace (response)
مرحبا (marḥaban)	Hello (less formal)
أهلا ('ahlan)	Welcome
صباح الخير (ṣabāḥ al-khair)	Good morning
مساء الخير (masā' al-khair)	Good evening

Common Phrases

نعم (naām)	Yes
لا (lā)	No
شكرا (shukran)	Thank you
من فضلك (min faḍlik)	Please (to a male)
من فضلكي (min faḍliki)	Please (to a female)
إلى اللقاء ('ilā al-liqā')	Goodbye

Basic Questions

ما اسمك؟ (mā ismuk?) (m)	What is your name? (to a male)
ما اسمكِ؟ (mā ismuki?) (f)	What is your name? (to a female)
كيف حالك؟ (kayfa ḥāluk?) (m)	How are you? (to a male)
كيف حالكِ؟ (kayfa ḥāluki?) (f)	How are you? (to a female)
من أين أنت؟ (min 'ayna 'anta?) (m)	Where are you from? (to a male)
من أين أنتِ؟ (min 'ayna 'anti?) (f)	Where are you from? (to a female)