

FUA 102
FOUNTAIN UNIVERSITY ARABIC II

ARABIC'S HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

During the Middle Ages, when Europe was plunged into the Dark Ages, Arab scholars and historians translated and preserved most of the works of the Greek scholars, thereby preserving some of the greatest intellectual achievements that are the cornerstone of Western civilization!

ARABIC, ARABS AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH ISLĀM

Simply put, Arabic is the mother tongue of the Arabs and the official language of Muslims. However, while it is true that muslims worldwide hold Arabic in high regards because of the fact that the Glorious Qur'ān was revealed in it and the consensus of Islamic scholars that this Holy Book is absolutely untranslatable, it is incorrect to say that "muslims regard Arabic as the only appropriate language of approach to Allāh" (Encyclopedia Americana 2006: 2\156).

The elaboration this general statement needs is that while there certain obligatory modes of Islamic worship that must be conducted in Arabic, like daily *Salāt* (obligatory or supererogatory prayer) and some aspects of *hajj*, a muslim is free to supplicate to his Lord and seek His blessings in his mother tongue or whatever language that pleases him. In a nutshell, while the *Salāt* and some rituals of *hajj* (annual holy pilgrimage to Mecca in a specific period) must be observed in Arabic, muslims are encouraged, and not compelled, to learn the language.

What is more accurate on the relationship of Arabic with Islam vis-à-vis other faiths is the fact stated by another source thus:

"Classical Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. Arabic is closely associated with the religion of Islam because the Qur'an is written in the language, but it is nevertheless also spoken by Arab Christians, Mizrahi Jews and Iraqi Mandaeans. Most of the world's Muslims do not speak Arabic as their native language, but many can read the Qur'ānic script and recite the Quran. Among non-Arab Muslims, translations of the Quran are most often accompanied ... by the original text"(www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language).

On the other hand, Arabs are group of people that speak Arabic as their native language. Their language, alongside with Ethiopic, belongs to the southern group of Semitic languages. Other

members of this language family include Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic and Akkadian. "But it surpasses them all in its conservatism, copiousness of vocabulary, possibilities of syntactic distinction, and elaborateness of verbal forms- all of which combine to make Arabic the best surviving representative of the original Semitic speech" (Encyclopedia Americana 2006: 16/727). Before the spread of Islam, the term "Arab" referred to any of the largely nomadic Semitic inhabitants of the Arabia Peninsula (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007: 1/504). Some scholars assert that the name "Arab" was derived from *'Arabah* which is another name for *Tuhāmah*, a settlement in the Peninsula that the early Arabs were confined to and the social, cultural, religious and linguistic nerve of all the present-day Arabs.

English	Arabic Origin	Meaning
admiral	amir al-baHr	Ruler of the Sea
alcohol	al-kuhul	a mixture of powdered antimony
alcove	al-qubba	a dome or arch
algebra	al-jabr	to reduce or consolidate
almanac	al-manakh	a calendar
arsenal	daar As-Sinaah	house of manufacture
azure	al-laazaward	lapis lazuli
candy	qand	cane sugar
coffee	qahwa	coffee
cotton	quTun	cotton
elixir	al-iksiir	philosopher's stone
gazelle	ghazaal	gazelle
hazard	az-zahr	dice
magazine	al-makhzan	a storehouse; a place of storage
mattress	matrah	a place where things are thrown
ream	rizma	a bundle
saffron	za'fran	saffron
Sahara	SaHraa'	desert
satin	zaytuun	Arabic name for a Chinese city

As you can see from the table, Arabic has had a major influence on the English language. Some English words such as "admiral" and "arsenal" have an indirect Arabic origin, whereas others, such as "coffee" and "cotton," are exact matches! The influence runs the other way, too, especially when it comes to relatively contemporary terms. For example, the word **tilifizyuun** (*tee-lee-feezee-yoon*; television) comes straight from the word "television." As is often the case with languages, Arabic and English tend to influence each other, and that's what makes studying them so much fun!

DISCOVERING THE ARABIC ALPHABET

Unlike English and other Roman languages, you write and read Arabic from right to left. Like English, Arabic has both vowels and consonants, but the vowels in Arabic aren't actual letters. Rather, Arabic vowels are symbols that you place on top of or below consonants to create certain sounds. As for consonants, Arabic has 28 different consonants, and each one is represented by a letter. In order to vocalize these letters, you place a vowel above or below the particular consonant. For example, when you put a **fat-hah**, a vowel representing the "a" sound, above the consonant representing the letter "b," you get the sound "ba." When you take the same consonant and use a **kasrah**, which represents the "ee" sound, you get the sound "bee."

Below are the Arabic Alphabet, their English equivalents and pronunciation guides. However, Arabic learners should note that some of the letters have no direct English equivalents and mastery of their pronunciations depends largely on learning it from experts and continuous practice as each language has its own peculiarities.

Arabic
letters

ا

ب

ت

ث

ج

ح

خ

د

ز

ر

ز

س

ا

ب

ت

ث

ج

ح

خ

د

ز

ر

ز

س

Beem

Taa

Ihaa

Jeem

Ha

Kha

Daal

Dhaal

Raa

Zaa

Seen

Pronunciation
guide

Names of the letters	Pronunciation guide	Arabic letters
Aiff	a	ا
Baa	b	ب
Taa	t	ت
Thaa	th	ث
Jeem	j	ج
Ha	h	ح
Kha	kh	خ
Daal	d	د
Dhaal	dh	ذ
Raa	r	ر
Zaa	z	ز
Seen	s	س

<u>Sheen</u>	sh	ش
Saad	s	ص
Daad	d	ض
Ta	t	ط
Za	z	ظ
'Ayn	'	ع
Ghayn	gh	غ
Faa	f	ف
Qaaf	q	ق
Kaaf	k	ك
Laam	l	ل
Meem	m	م
Noon	n	ن
Haa	h	ه
Waaw	w	و
Yaa	y	ي

In a nutshell, below is the complete Arabic Alphabet. You should note and practise how each of them is pronounced and written. While some of them (like the first four) are fully written on the line of a notebook, some parts of others are slip down the lines as available in this diagram. After thorough reading, you should diligently write the Alphabet in full in your notebook three times.

ج	ث	ت	ب	ا
ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
		ي	و	هـ

الحُرُوفُ الْمُهَمَّلَةُ

DOTLESS LETTERS

إِنَّ الْحُرُوفَ الْهِجَانِيَّةَ مِنْ حِيثُ النُّقْطَةِ تَنْقِسُ إِلَى قِسْمَيْنِ وَهُما:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Dotless Letters | ا- الْحُرُوفُ الْمُهَمَّلَةُ |
| Doted Letters | ب- الْحُرُوفُ الْمُعْجَمَةُ |
- الْحُرُوفُ الْمُهَمَّلَةُ:**

هِيَ الْحُرُوفُ الَّتِي لَا تُوَجَّدُ فِيهَا النُّقْطَةُ، وَتُنْتَصَقُ بِهَا بِالرِّفْقِ وَالسُّهُولَةِ. وَعَدَدُ حُرُوفِهَا ثَلَاثَةٌ عَشَرَةً حَرْفًا. وَهِيَ:

د	ح	أ
ص	س	ر
ك	ع	ط
و	م	ل
-	ه	-

الْتَّمْرِينُ:

- | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| 1- اسْتَخْرِجِ الْحُرُوفَ الْمُهَمَّلَةَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ الْأَتِيَّةِ: | 11- الشَّوَكَةُ | 1- أَمُّ |
| 6- السِّفَارَةُ | 12- الدَّفَّتَرُ | 2- أَخٌ |
| 7- النَّوْمُ | 8- الْمَدْرَسَةُ | 3- مُسْلِمٌ |
| 9- قَلْنَسُوَةُ | 4- طَالِبٌ | |

كَوْنُ عَشَرَةَ كَلْمَاتٍ بِالْحُرُوفِ الْآتِيَّةِ:

د ر ص ع ل ط و ه م

الْحُرُوفُ الْمُعْجَمَةُ

DOTED LETTERS

الْحُرُوفُ الْمُعْجَمَةُ:

هِيَ الْحُرُوفُ الَّتِي تُوجَدُ فِيهَا النُّقْطَةُ، وَقَدْ تَكُونُ نُقْطَةً أَوْ نُقْطَتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثَ نُقَطَّ. وَكَانَتْ تُشَقَّلُ فِي
الْنُّطْقِ، وَعَدَدُهَا خَمْسَةٌ عَشَرَةَ حَرْفًا.

وَسَبَبَ وَضْعُ هَذِهِ النُّقْطَةِ عَلَى الْحُرُوفِ هُوَ لِلتَّفَرِيقِ بَيْنَ الْحُرُوفِ الْمُتَشَابِهِةِ فِي الْوَضْعِ وَالْكِتَابَةِ
الْنُّطْقِ.

وَهِيَ مَا يَلِي:

ث	ت	ب
ذ	خ	ج
ض	ش	ز
ف	غ	ظ
ي	ن	ق

:الْتَّمَرِينُ:

- كَوْنُ عَشَرَةَ كَلْمَاتٍ مُسْتَكَوِنَةٍ مِنْ الْحُرُوفِ الْمُعْجَمَةِ
- كَوْنُ الْكَلْمَاتِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ بِشَرْطِ أَنْ تَكُونَ الْحُرُوفُ الْآتِيَّةُ فِي الْبِدَائِيَّةِ / الدَّرْجِ :

كَوْنُ عَشَرَةَ كَلْمَاتٍ بِالْحُرُوفِ الْآتِيَّةِ:

د ر ص ع ل ط و ه م

الْحُرُوفُ الْمُعْجَمَةُ

DOTED LETTERS

حُرُوفُ الْمُعْجَمَةِ:

هيَ الْحُرُوفُ الَّتِي تُوجَدُ فِيهَا النُّقْطَةُ، وَقَدْ تَكُونُ نُقطَةً أَوْ نُقطَتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثَ نُقطَتِينَ. وَكَانَتْ تُثْقَلُ فِي

نُطْقِهِ، وَعَدَدُهَا خَمْسَةٌ عَشَرَةَ حَرْفًا.

وَسَبَبَ وَضْعِ هَذِهِ النُّقْطَةِ عَلَى الْحُرُوفِ هُوَ لِلتَّفَرِيقِ بَيْنَ الْحُرُوفِ الْمُتَشَاكِهِةِ فِي الْوَضْعِ وَالْكِتَابَةِ

النُّطْقِ.

وَهِيَ مَا يَلِي:

ث	ت	ب
ذ	خ	ج
ض	ش	ز
ف	غ	ظ
ي	ن	ق

الْتَّمْرِينُ:

1 - كَوْنُ عَشَرَةَ كَلْمَاتٍ مُتَكَوِّنَةٍ مِنْ أَحْرَوْفِ الْمُعْجَمَةِ

2 - كَوْنُ الْكَلْمَاتِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ بِشَرْطِ أَنْ تَكُونَ الْحُرُوفُ الْآتِيَّةُ فِي الْبِدَائِيَّةِ / الدَّرْجِ :

ب ت ث ق ف ن ض
ي ذ خ ن ج ز ش

3- إِسْتَخْرُجْ الْحُرُوفَ الْمُعْجَمَةَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْكَلْمَاتِ الْآتِيَّةِ:

1- غَرَقَ	5- مُسْتَبْشِرُونَ	9- الْقَائِمَاتُ
2- نَصَرَ	6- النَّائِبُونَ	10- مُسْتَغْفِرُونَ
3- ذَهَبَ	7- الصِّدِيقُ	11- الْقُنْبُلَةُ
4- أَبْيَضَ	8- الْقَبْقَبُ	12- الْعَسْكَرِيُّ

ARABIC VOWELS

Having known that all Arabic letters are considered consonants, there are some diacritical marks that are used alongside the letters that serve as vowels to make them pronounceable to form syllables that ultimately form words. These marks (or vowels) are either primary or secondary. The primary ones are majorly three. However, there is a fourth one that is not a full-fledged vowel as the Arabic letter its associated with is pronounced as a closed syllable. These are the three vowels alongside with the subsidiary fourth one.

o u

From the above, it can be seen that the three main Arabic vowels are:

Fat-hah: The first main vowel in Arabic is called a **fat-hah**. A **fat-hah** is the equivalent of the short “a” in “hat” or “cat.” Occasionally, a **fat-hah** also sounds like the short “e” in “bet” or “set.” Much like the other vowels, the way you pronounce a **fat-hah** depends on what consonants come before or after it. In Arabic script, the **fat-hah** is written as a small horizontal line or diagonal stroke above a consonant. In English transcription, which I use in this book, it’s simply represented by the letter “a,” as in the words **kalb** (dog) or **walad** (boy).

Kasrah: The second main vowel in Arabic is the **kasra** (*kahs-rah*), which sounds like the long “e” in “feet” or “treat.” The **kasrah** is written the same way as a **fat-hah** — as a small

horizontal line or diagonal stroke — except that it goes underneath the consonant. In English transcription, it's written as an "i," as in **bint** (*bee-neht*; girl) or **Islaam** (Islam).

Dammah: The third main Arabic vowel is the **dammah**. A **dammah** sounds like the "u" in "foot" or "book." In Arabic script, it's written like a tiny backward "e" above a particular consonant. In English transcription, it's represented by the letter "u," as in **funduq** (hotel) or **suhub** (clouds).

Sukuun: This is a subsidiary vowel. It is written like a small circle above a letter of the Arabic alphabet. When associated with a letter, all you hear is a shortened sound of the letter. So, "Jeem" becomes "j" and "Kaaf" becomes "k", etc.

Now, try to note proper pronunciations of the Arabic Alphabet alongside each of the primary vowels elaborated on above.

ج	ث	ت	ب	أ
ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
	ي		و	ه

ج	ث	ت	ب	ء
ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
	ي		و	هـ

ج	ث	ت	ب	أ
ر	ذ	د	خ	ح
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
		ي	و	ه

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ث ث ث	ت ت ت	ب ب ب	أ أ أ	إ إ إ
د د د	خ خ خ	ح ح ح	ج ج ج	خ خ خ
س س س	ز ز ز	ر ر ر	ذ ذ ذ	ز ز ز
ط ط ط	ض ض ض	ص ص ص	ش ش ش	ظ ظ ظ
ف ف ف	غ غ غ	ع ع ع	ق ق ق	ظ ظ ظ
م م م	ل ل ل	ك ك ك	ن ن ن	ه ه ه
ي ي ي	و و و	ه ه ه		

THE LONG VOWEL LETTERS

The three major Arabic vowels can be elongated or lengthened by making the letters they are associated with be followed with suitable letters. Fat-hah is lengthened with letter Alif, kasrah

is lengthened with letter Yaau while dammah is lengthened with letter Waaw. However, these long vowel letters (otherwise known as *Huruuful-Madd* in Arabic) cannot be accompanied with any vowel whenever they play this elongation or lengthening roles, unlike when they serve as independent letters like any other letter of the Arabic Alphabet. In a nutshell, Alif is used to lengthen "a" sound of fat-hah into "aa" sound, Yaau is used to lengthen "i" sound of kasrah into "ii" sound while Waaw is used to lengthen "u" sound of dammah into "u" sound.

Now, see and know how the three elongation letters are written and pronounced to play their special role with other letters and in association with themselves.

جَا	ثَا	تَا	بَا	آ
رَا	ذَا	دَا	خَا	حَا
ضَا	صَا	شَا	سَا	زَا
فَا	غَا	عَا	ظَا	طَا
نَا	مَا	لَا	كَا	قَا
		يَا	وَا	هَا

جِي	ثِي	تِي	بِي	إِي
رِي	ذِي	دِي	خِي	حِي
ضِي	صِي	شِي	سِي	زِي
فِي	غِي	عِي	ظِي	طِي
نِي	مِي	لِي	كِي	قِي
		يِي	وِي	هِي

جُو	ثُو	تُو	بُو	أُو
رو	ذُو	دُو	خُو	حو
ضُو	صُو	شُو	سو	زو
فُو	غُو	عُو	ظُو	طُو
نو	مو	لُو	کُو	قو
		يُو	وُو	هُو

TANWEEN (DOUBLING THE VOWELS)

The Arabic vowels earlier identified above (i.e. fat-hah, kasrah and dammah) can be doubled. This process is known in Arabic as *tanween*. The *tanween* automatically changes the sound of the vowel involved as additional "n" sound is added to the main vowel whenever a vowel is doubled. Thus, when fat-hah is doubled what you have is "an" sound instead of ordinary "a" you have when the vowel is written unilaterally.

A doubled fat-hah is technically known as fat-hataan. Likewise, you will have "in" sound whenever kasrah is doubled. A doubled kasrah is named ksrataan in Arabic grammar. In the same vein, you will have "un" sound whenever *tanween* occurs in the case of dammah. The grammatical (or technical) name of doubled dammah is dammataan. It is important to note that *tanween* can only occur in the last letter of Arabic letter. Also, *tanween* can only occur to in the category of noun and its subsidiaries that is better known as *ism* in Arabic. (It is imperative to note at this juncture that an *ism* is broader than what a noun connotes in English grammar as it includes adjectives, pronouns, adverbs and, in some cases, interjections). However, a fat-hataan is always supported with an *Alif* which is the first letter of the Arabic Alphabet.

Now, have a glance at the three doubled vowels as they appear unilaterally and when associated with the Arabic letters:

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2

Now, look and try to grasp how a fat-hataan is pronounced and written with the Arabic letters as illuminated in the table below. (Special attention should be paid to what is earlier stated that this doubled vowel, unlike its other sisters, is always supported with *Alif* in its written form).

جَا	ثَا	تَا	بَا	أْ
رَا	ذَا	دَا	خَا	حَا
ضَا	صَا	شَا	سَا	زَا
فَا	غَا	عَا	ظَا	طَا
نَا	مَا	لَا	كَا	قَا
		يَا	وَا	هَا

Now, see how

nasrataan looks when it accompanies the letters and practice how each of the letters are pronounced.

جِ	ثِ	تِ	بِ	إِ
رِ	ذِ	دِ	خِ	حِ
ضِ	صِ	شِ	سِ	زِ
فِ	غِ	عِ	ظِ	طِ
نِ	مِ	لِ	كِ	قِ
		يِ	وِ	هِ

Also, see how dammataan looks when it accompanies the letters and practice how each of the letters are pronounced.

ج	ث	ت	ب	أ
د	ذ	د	خ	ح
ض	ص	ش	س	ز
ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط
ن	م	ل	ك	ق
		ي	و	ه

PRACTICING PRONOUNCIATION OF THE THREE TANWEENS WITH THE LETTERS

bell جَرَسًا	pen قَلْمُونَ	boy وَلَدٌ	father أَبٌ
travel سَفَرٌ	hundred مِائَةٌ	hand يَدًا	lion أَسَدٌ
horse فَرَسًا	present هَدِيَةٌ	goat غَنْمٌ	mouth فَمٌ
ball كُرْبَةٌ	cherries كَرْزٌ	lip شَفَةٌ	never أَبَدًا
king مَلِكًا	mountain جَبَلًا	carrot جَرْرَوْنَ	brother أَخٌ
pyramid هَرَمٌ	tree شَجَرَةٌ	camel جَمَلٌ	man رَجُلًا

JOINING UP ARABIC LETTERS

most letters of other languages, most letter of Arabic alphabet change forms in a way that be difficult for the beginner to grasp if proper note is not taken. Below is illustration of changes that happen to them based on their positions in a given Arabic word.

By itself	Joined	End	Middle	Beginning
ا	ااا	ل	ل	ا
ب	ببب	ب	ب	ب
ت	تتت	ت	ت	ت
ة	تةة	ة	ة	ة
ث	ثثث	ث	ث	ث
ج	ججج	ج	ج	ج
ح	ححح	ح	ح	ح
خ	خخخ	خ	خ	خ
د	ددد	د	د	د *
ذ	ذذذ	ذ	ذ	ذ *
ر	ررر	ر	ر	ر *
ز	ززز	ز	ز	ز *
س	سس	س	س	س
ش	ششش	ش	ش	ش

By itself	Joined	End	Middle	Beginning
ص	صصص	ص	ص	ص
ض	ضضض	ض	ض	ض
ط	ططط	ط	ط	ط
ظ	ظظظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
ع	ععع	ع	ع	ع
غ	غفغ	غ	غ	غ
ف	ففف	ف	ف	ف
ق	ققق	ق	ق	ق
ك	ككك	ك	ك	ك
ل	للل	ل	ل	ل
م	ممم	م	م	م
ن	ننن	ن	ن	ن
ه	ههه	ه	ه	ه
و	wooو	و	و	و*
ي	يسي	ي	ي	ي

*The seven asterisked letters are somehow "naughty" as they cannot be joined with letters that follow them.

**Sometimes at end of a word, letter ت is written ة and is called "Taau Marbuutah" which usually indicates that the name (noun) it ends with is feminine.

PRONOUNCEMENT & WRITING PRACTICE OF SOME ARABIC VERBS

عَلِمْ عَلَمْ	سَمِعْ سَمَعْ	كَتَبْ كَتَبْ	ذَهَبْ ذَهَبْ
بَخْلَ بَخْلَ	كَرْمَ كَرْمَ	فَتَحْ فَتَحْ	فَتَحْ فَتَحْ
مَدْحَ مَدْحَ	كَبُرَ كَبُرَ	نَدْمَ نَدْمَ	نَدْمَ نَدْمَ
شَرَبْ شَرَبْ	أَكَلْ أَكَلْ	لَطَمْ لَطَمْ	لَطَمْ لَطَمْ
وَثَبْ وَثَبْ	نَدْمَ نَدْمَ	شَكَرْ شَكَرْ	شَكَرْ شَكَرْ
بَدَا بَدَا	رَضِيَ رَضِيَ	صَنَعْ صَنَعْ	خَلَقْ خَلَقْ
غَضِبْ غَضِبْ	قَرَا قَرَا	طَلَعْ طَلَعْ	مَكَثْ مَكَثْ
سَرَقْ سَرَقْ	ظَلَمْ ظَلَمْ	حَكَمْ حَكَمْ	أَيْسَنْ أَيْسَنْ
رَسَبْ رَسَبْ	نَجَحْ نَجَحْ	رَجَرْ رَجَرْ	نَصَرْ نَصَرْ
نَظَرْ نَظَرْ	نَشَرْ نَشَرْ	نَذَرْ نَذَرْ	صَدَقْ صَدَقْ
حَمَدْ حَمَدْ	فَهِمْ فَهِمْ	رَحِمْ رَحِمْ	رَحِمْ رَحِمْ
سَلَكْ سَلَكْ	خَتَمْ خَتَمْ	صَلَحْ صَلَحْ	مَلَكْ مَلَكْ
حَكَرْ حَكَرْ	وَهَبْ وَهَبْ	عَبَسْ عَبَسْ	سَقَطْ سَقَطْ
كَسَلْ كَسَلْ	ذَرَسْ ذَرَسْ	سَاجَدْ سَاجَدْ	رَكَعْ رَكَعْ
مَسَكْ مَسَكْ	وَهَبْ وَهَبْ	سَاجَدْ سَاجَدْ	مَرِضَ مَرِضَ
غَجَبْ غَجَبْ	سَأَلْ سَأَلْ	جَلَسْ جَلَسْ	سَيَمْ سَيَمْ
غَفَرْ غَفَرْ	بَسَطْ بَسَطْ	خَلَطْ خَلَطْ	خَلَطْ خَلَطْ

N.B.: Master the "joinable" & "non-joinable" letters from the above-mentioned basic Arabic verbs. Write them three times in your note.

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs in Arabic are a special category of vowels because, in essence, they're nonosyllabic sounds that begin with one vowel and "glide" into another vowel. A common example in English is the sound at the end of the word "toy." Fortunately, Arabic has only two diphthong sounds used to distinguish between the **yaau** and the **waaw** forms of long vowels. When you come across either of these two letters, one of the first questions to ask yourself is: "Is this a long vowel or a diphthong?"

There's an easy way to determine which is which: When either the **yaau** or the **waaw** is a diphthong, you see a **sukun** above the consonant. A **sukun** is similar to the main vowels in that it's a little symbol (a small circle) that you place above the consonant. However, unlike the vowels, you don't vocalize the **sukun** — it's almost like a "silent" vowel. So when a **waaw** or **yaau** has a **sukun** over it, you know that the sound is a diphthong!

Here are some few examples:

1)- **waaw** diphthongs: **yaom** (يَوْمٌ; day); **naom** (نَوْمٌ; sleep); **Saot** (صَوْتٌ; voice).

2)- **yaau** diphthongs: **baeyt** (بَيْتٌ; house); **'aeyn** (عَيْنٌ; eye); **laeyl** (لَيْلٌ; night).

These are other examples of both **waaw** and **yaau** used as diphthongs for your further understanding and practice:

مَيْلٌ، صَوْمٌ، مَيْتٌ، قَوْلٌ، لَيْثٌ، نَوْمٌ، نَيْلٌ، ثَوْرٌ، حَيْرٌ، كَوْنٌ، دَيْنٌ، رَوْضَةٌ، كَيْدٌ، بَوْلٌ، جَيْشٌ، نَوْعٌ، زَيْدٌ، صَيْدٌ، زَيْتٌ، شَوْكَةٌ، عَيْشٌ، حَوْلٌ، طَيْرٌ، لَوْمٌ، عَيْتٌ، زَوْجٌ، قَيْدٌ، كَوْثَرٌ، بَيْضَنٌ، بَوْنٌ، كَيْلٌ، دَوْقٌ، دَيْلٌ، مَوْجٌ، غَيْثٌ، قَوْمٌ، ضَيْرٌ، حَوْفٌ، حَيْلٌ، تَوْبَةٌ، لَيْمُونٌ، لَوْنٌ، جَيْبٌ، جَوْرَبٌ، زَيْثُونٌ، ثَوْبٌ.

In a nutshell, while the trio of Alif, Waaw and Yaau are used for elongating Fat-hah, Kasrah and Dammah respectively, it is only both Waaw and Yaau can be used for diphthongs in Arabic. However, the two letters can also be used as full-fledged consonants as it is evident from the likes of بَدَّ and وَسَمَّ. It should not be difficult for you that that these letters can only serve elongation purposes at the middle and end of the words while the diphthong situation is possible when in the middle only.

DOUBLING (TASHDEED) OF THE ARABIC LETTER

There is still an important Arabic "mark" known as "*Shaddah*" which is written alongside with

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orm, the letter the mark is associated is written in the double form. Some Arabic words automatically have the mark to make them intelligible as you note in the word examples that would soon come your way while it has morphological effects by adding or transforming the meanings the meanings of words in some certain circumstances. For example, while درسا ("Darasa") means "He learns" دارسا ("Darrasa") translates to "He teaches/tutors"! With this example, you will know the essence of this mark in the Arabic word as its addition or omission can make or mar the meaning.

DISCOVERING DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLES IN ARABIC

A common trait that nouns and adjectives share in the Arabic language is that both can be modified using definite article prefixes. To refresh your memory, an *article* is a part of speech that you use to indicate nouns or adjectives and specify their applications.

In English, there are two types of articles: indefinite and definite articles. The indefinite articles in English are "a" and "an," such as in "a book" or "an umbrella." The definite article is the word "the," as in "the book" or "the umbrella."

Unlike English, Arabic has no outright indefinite article in its vocabulary level. At this level instead, the indefinite article in Arabic is always implied. For example, when you say **Kitaab** (كتاب; book), you mean both "book" and "a book." Similarly, **Madrasah** (مدرسَة; school) means both "school" and "a school." You will have to note that, normally, an Arab does not always pronounce the last vowel (diacritical mark) attached to the last letter of any noun or adjective. This is the reason I do not reflect the **Dammataan** that accompanies the ب (Baa) letter in the word "**Kitaab** (كتاب)" cited as the first example. As for the case of **Madrasah** (مدرسَة; school) cited as the second example, you will observe that that word ends with a letter that seems relatively strange to you as it does not appear to belong to the Arabic Alphabet you were taught earlier.

This letter is called **Taa Marbuutah** which generally means a "closed or tied Taa". It is a special form of **Taa** (i.e. the third of the Arabic Alphabet) that always come at the end of Arabic noun or adjective. In most cases, it indicates that the noun or adjective is a feminine in either nature, usage or both. (As you would later realize, Arabic is a very gender-sensitive language as it does discriminates between a masculine and a feminine word even at the level of verbs.

Also, one thing that you should also note is the fact that every noun, whether animate or inanimate, can either be masculine or feminine). This **Taa Marbuutah**, although realistically sounds like the ordinary **Taa**, is usually not pronounced by the Arabs. They normally infer to it

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Also, one thing that you should also note is the fact that every noun, whether animate or inanimate, can either be masculine or feminine). This **Taa Marbuutah**, although realistically sounds like the ordinary **Taa**, is usually not pronounced by the Arabs. They normally infer to it

by pronouncing what sounds like a **Haa** (ح) at the end of the word that ends with it. Hence, we pronounce the Arabic word (**مadrassah**; school) as **Madrasah**.

However, when we want to distinguish between an intended definite Arabic definite noun or adjective from an indefinite one, we do so by negating the established rule that the standard practice is not to pronounce the last vowel (diacritical mark) attached to the last letter of any noun or adjective. We therefore pronounce the concerned word in full if we really want it to convey an indefinite meaning. Hence, we say **Kitaabun** (كتاب; book) in the case of the first example and **Madrasatun** (مدرسة; school) in the case of the second one. (**Note the difference between the transliteration here and what was said earlier in the case of the two words**).

However, when you want to change the word to a definite one, you add the definite article which is always used as a prefix to the concerned word and completely attached to it in a way that is somehow strange to what you are familiar with in English language.

THE RULE

The definite article in Arabic is the prefix "الـ" (al-). When you want to define a noun or adjective, you simply attach this prefix to the word. For example, "the book" is **الكتاب** which is pronounced as **al-Kitaab**, and "the school" is **المدرسة** which is pronounced as **al-Madrasah**. (One very important thing you will have to note here is the fact that every Arabic indefinite noun that are not names and every indefinite adjective always have double vowels (diacritical marks that are either **Fat-hataan**, **Kasrataan** or **Dammataan**) alongside with the last letter of the word. As for the names, some share this general rule while some defy it. However, when they become definite through the Arabic prefix "الـ" (al-) associated with them, the concerned vowel (diacritical mark that was either **Fat-hataan**, **Kasrataan** or **Dammataan**) reverts back single vowel as it would either be **Fat-hah**, **Kasrah** or **Dammah** respectively).

THE INEVITABLE EXCEPTIONS

You would note that in the examples of **al-kitaab** and **al-madrasah**, the prefix **al-** الـ retains its original form when pronouncing it. However, there are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes, the **Laam** "ل"(which is equivalent to letter "l") in the prefix **الـ** al- drops off and is replaced by a letter similar to the first letter of the word being defined. For example, the word **nuur** (نور) means "light" in Arabic. If you want to say "the light," you may assume that you simply attach the prefix **al-** and get **al-Nuur** (النور). However, that's not quite right. Instead, the appropriate way of saying "the light" in Arabic is **an-Nuur** (أنور), where, when pronouncing the definite

word, you replace the Laam "ل" (which is equivalent to letter "l") in ال al- with the first letter of the definite word, which in this case is Nuun ن (which is equivalent of letter "n." in the English parlance). Another example of this definite article exception is the word **Sabaah** (صباھ), which means "morning." When you define it, the resulting word is **as-Sabaah** (الصباھ; the morning) and not **al-Sabaah**.

THE "QAMARIYYAH" MOON AND "SHAMSIYYAH" SUN LETTERS

So, how do you know whether to use **al-** or another definite article prefix format? The answer's actually quite simple and has something to do with a really cool concept. Every single letter in Arabic falls into one of two categories: Moon (*Qamariyyah*) letters and Sun (*Shamsiyyah*) letters. Put simply, although every Arabic noun (that are not names, as said earlier) and adjective are transformed from its being in indefinite form to the definite form by adding the ال al- prefix to it, the prefix ال al- that is added to the word that begins with a moon letter is pronounced normally (as in the cases of both المدرسة الكتاب "al-Kitaab" and ال Madrasah) while the ل "l" in ال al- prefix is not pronounced but rather substituted with the first letter of the word (as in the cases of both النور الصباح "an-Nuur" and الصباھ "as-Sabaah").

How do we identify the Moon (*Qamariyyah*) letters from Sun (*Shamsiyyah*) letters? The knowledge of the two types is very simple as the twenty eight letters that constitute the Arabic Alphabet are equally shared between the two categories. To simply this knowledge for you may have to memorise an Arabic sentence which components constitute the Moon (*Qamariyyah*) letters. The statement is: أَبْغُ حَجَّكَ وَخَفَ عَقِيمَةً. The keen look and meticulous counting of the letters of the sentence which serves a formulae (something similar to Mr. "NIGER" acronym that you were probably taught as five major characteristics of living things when you were learning Biology in your secondary school) would reveal that there fourteen letters therein. Apart from these fourteen, every other letter in Arabic is automatically Sun (*Shamsiyyah*) letters! For clarification purposes, the followings are the Sun (*Shamsiyyah*) letters (you would have to read the letters from right to left in order for them to be in their sequential order as it is the tradition of Arabic):

ت، ث، د، ذ، ر، ز، س، ش، ص، ض، ط، ظ، ل، ن.

Here is a list of some common nouns and adjectives that are defined (i.e. definite) alongside with their English translations, transliterations and genders each of the words belong to (Masculine words are indicated with the letter "M" while feminine words are marked "F"). You should notice the difference between the words that begin with Moon (*Qamariyyah*) letters and the Sun (*Shamsiyyah*) letters. Also, special note should be made about the proper technical

representation of the Arabic letters that do not have direct equivalent in English. You may wish to note that most feminine words with **Taa Marbuutah** that is the most common sign of a feminine noun and adjective while some of them does not end with it.

Arabic Word	Transliteration	Translation	Gender
الكتاب	al-Kitaab	The book	M
المدرسة	al-Madrasah	The school	F
الولد	al-Walad	The boy	M
البنت	al-Bint	The girl	F
الرجل	ar-Rajul	The man	M
المرأة	al-Imra'ah	The woman	F
الصبح	as-Sabaah	The morning	M
الشمس	ash-Shams	The sun	F
القمر	al-Qamar	The moon	M
الكبير	al-Kabiir	The big (one)	M
الصغير	as-Saghiir	The small (one)	M
السريعه	as-Sarii'ah	The fast (one)	F
الشريعة	ash-Sharii'ah	The Islamic Law	F
الأزرق	al-Azraq	The blue (one)	M
الزرقاء	az-Zarqaa'	The blue (one)	F
الأصفر	al-Asfar	The yellow (one)	M
الصفراء	as-Safraa'	The yellow (one)	F
الأسمر	al-Asmar	The brown (one)	M
السمراء	as-Samraa'	The brown (one)	F
اللذيد	al-Ladhiidh	The delicious (one)	M
اللذيدة	al-Ladhiidhah	The delicious (one)	F