# Basic Grammar

## Syriac, Arabic and Hebrew

Omar Chehab

# References

*Syriac course*, Notre Dame du Liban, Paris

*Introduction à la langue syriaque*, Editions Apôtres,
P. Jean Yechouh Khoury, Pr. Langues sémitiques, Université
libanaise

# Alphabet

# Roman | Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew

tsa — צ

a — ا — ܐ — א

o — و — ܘ — ן

n — ں — ܢ — נ

d — د — ܕ — ר

r — ر — ܪ — ך

z — ز — ܙ — ך

g — ج — ܓ — ג

b/v — ب — ܟ — ב

k — ك — ܕ — כ

kh — خ — ܟ — ח

K — ق — ܩ — ק

m — م — ܡ — מ

S — ص — ܨ — ס

s — س — ܣ — ש

sh — ش — ܫ — ש

3 — ع — ܥ

p/f — ف — ܦ — פ

y — ي — ܝ — י

h — ه — ܗ — ה

t — ت — ܬ — ת

T — ط — ט

th — D

# Nouns

**Feminine**, **Plural**, **Determination**

**Feminine** words end in 't'.

**Determination** ends a word with a **silent** *aleph*.

**Plurals** are signed by a *siomé* (two upper dots).

| Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew |
|---|---|---|
| القدّيس | ܩܰܕܝܫܐ | לקדושה |
| *al qaddees* | *qadeesho* | *ha qadosh* |
| القدّيسة | ܩܰܕܝܫܬܐ | להשגה |
| *al qaddeesa* | *qadeeshto* | *ha qdusha* |
| القدّيسون | ܩܰܕܝܫܐ | לקדוש |
| *al qaddeesoon* | *qadeeshé* | *ha qdushim* |
| القدّيسات | ܩܰܕܝܫܬܐ | לקדושים |
| *al qaddeesaat* | *qadeeshoto* | *ha qdushot* |

ܩܰܕܺܝܫܬܳܐ

*qadeeshto*

<span style="color:green">la</span> <span style="color:gray">saint</span><span style="color:red">e</span>

ܩܰܕܺܝܫܳܐ

*qadeesho*

<span style="color:green">le</span> <span style="color:gray">saint</span>

ܩܰܕܺܝܫܳܬܳܐ

*qadeeshoto*

<span style="color:green">les</span> <span style="color:gray">saint</span><span style="color:red">e</span><span style="color:orange">s</span>

ܩܰܕܺܝܫ̈ܶܐ

*qadeesheh*

<span style="color:green">les</span> <span style="color:gray">saint</span><span style="color:orange">s</span>

القدّيس

*al qaddees*

la saint

القدّيسة

*al qaddeesa*

la sainte

القدّيسون

*al qaddeesoon*

les saints

القدّيسات

*al qaddeesaat*

les saintes

השדושה

*ha qdusha*

la sainte

הקדוש

*ha qadosh*

le saint

הקדושת

*ha qdushot*

les saintes

הקדושים

*ha qdushim*

les saints

# Pronouns

# Singular

**1st person**
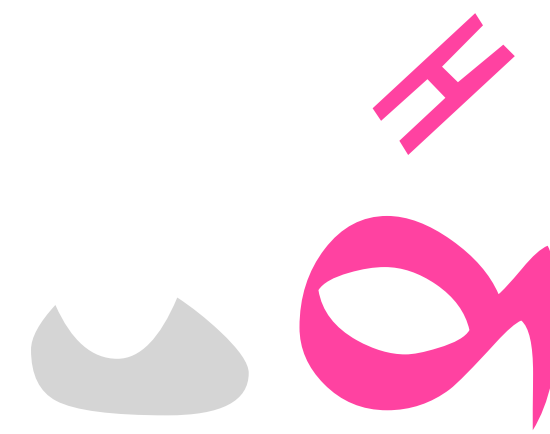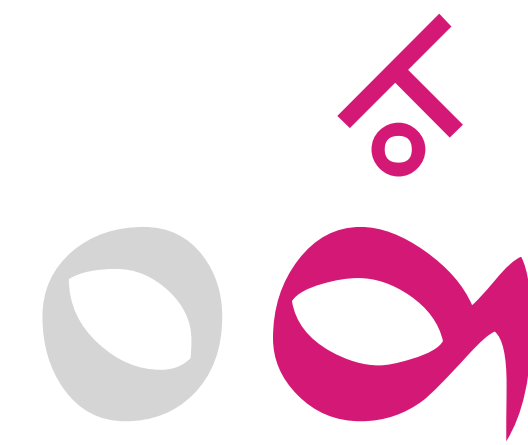
أنا

*éno*

**2nd person**

أنتَ

*at*

أنتِ

*at*

**3rd person**

هي

*hiy*

هو

*houw*

# Plural

**1st person**


7nan

**2nd person**


ateyn


atoun

**3rd person**


héneyn


hénoun

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

1st person

نَحْنُ
*na7nou*
nous

أَنَا
*ana*
je

2nd person

أَنْتُنَّ
*antounna*
vous

أَنْتُمْ
*antoum*
vous

أَنْتِ
*anti*
tu

أَنْتَ
*anta*
tu

3rd person
Plural

هُنَّ
*hounna*
elles

هُمْ
*houm*
ils

هِيَ
*hiya*
elle

هُوَ
*houwa*
il

|  | Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1st person** | أَنَا<br>*ana* |  | أَنَا<br>*éno* |
| **2nd person** | أَنْتِ<br>*anti*   أَنْتَ<br>*anta* | ܐܝܬ<br>*at* | ܐܝܬ<br>*at* |
| **3rd person** | هِيَ<br>*hiya*   هُوَ<br>*houwa* | ܗܝ<br>*hiy* | ܗܘ<br>*houw* |
|  | نَحْنُ<br>*na7nou* | ·········· n and 7 reversed ·········· | ܡܥ<br>*7nan* |
| **Plural** | أَنْتُنَّ<br>*antounna*   أَنْتُمْ<br>*antoum* | ܐܝܬܢ<br>*ateyn* | ܐܝܬܘܢ<br>*atoun* |
|  | هُنَّ<br>*hounna*   هُمْ<br>*houm* | ܗܝܢ<br>*héneyn* | ܗܢܘܢ<br>*hénoun* |

# Verbs

The Present

The **present** is marked with **prefixes**,

and **plurals** are indicated with **suffixes**.

This holds for regular *and* augmented verbs.

# Singular

## 1st person

أَكْتُبْ *éktoub*

## 2nd person

*téktbin*

تَكْتُبْ *téktoub*

## 3rd person

تَكْتُبْ *téktoub*

نَكْتُبْ *néktoub*

# Plural

1st person

*néktoub*

2nd person

*téktbon*

*téktboun*

3rd person

*néktbon*

*néktboun*

# Singular

## 1st person

أَكْتُبُ

*aktoubou*

## 2nd person

تَكْتُبِينَ

*taktoubina*

تَكْتُبُ

*taktoubou*

## 3rd person

تَكْتُب

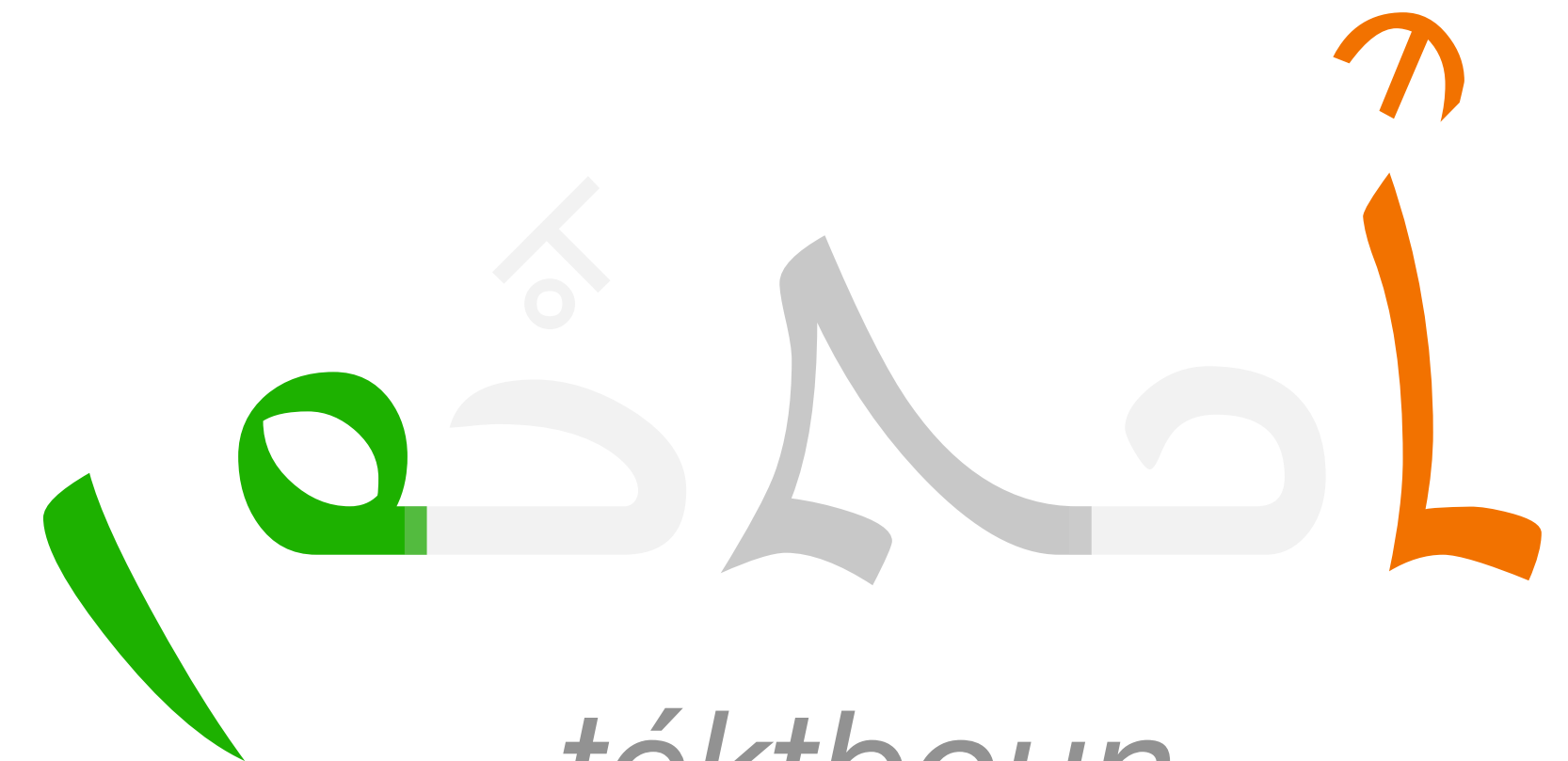*téktoub*

نَكْتُب

*néktoub*

# Plural



**1st person**

*néktoub*

**2nd person**

*téktbon*

*téktboun*

**3rd person**

*néktbon*

*néktboun*

|  | Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st person | أَكْتُب | ܐܚܘܕ | כֹּתֵבֶת וֹ |
| 2nd person | تَكْتُب / تَكْتُبينَ | ܐܚܘܕ / ܬܐܚܘܕ | כֹּתֵבֶת וֹ |
| 3rd person | يَكْتُب / تَكْتُب | ܐܚܘܕ / ܬܐܚܘܕ | כֹּתֵבֶת וֹ |
|  | نَكْتُب | ܬܐܚܘܕ | כֹּתְבוֹת וֹ |
| Plural | تَكْتُبونَ / تَكْتُبْنَ | ܐܚܘܕܘ / ܬܐܚܕܘ | כֹּתְבוֹת וֹ |
|  | يَكْتُبونَ / يَكْتُبْنَ | ܬܐܚܕܘ / ܢܐܚܕܘ | כֹּתְבוֹת וֹ |

# Verbs

The Past

The **past** is marked with **suffixes**.

This holds for regular *and* augmented verbs.

| | Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1st person** | كَتَبْتُ | ܟܬܒܬ | כָּתַבְתִּי |
| **2nd person** | كَتَبْتِ  كَتَبْتَ | ܟܬܒܬܝ  ܟܬܒܬ | כָּתַבְתְּ  כָּתַבְתָּ |
| **3rd person** | كَتَبَتْ  كَتَبَ | ܟܬܒܬ  ܟܬܒ | כָּתַב  כָּתְבָה |
| | كَتَبْنَا | ܟܬܒܢ | כָּתַבְנוּ |
| **Plural** | كَتَبْتُنَّ  كَتَبْتُمْ | ܟܬܒܬܝܢ  ܟܬܒܬܘܢ | כְּתַבְתֶּן  כְּתַבְתֶּם |
| | كَتَبْنَ  كَتَبُوا | ܟܬܒܝ  ܟܬܒܘ | כָּתְבוּ |

# Verbs

Imperative

Essentially, use the present tense without the prefix

and the last letter of the suffix.

| | Arabic | | Syriac | | Hebrew | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2nd person** | اُكْتُبِي | اُكْتُبْ | ܟ݁ܬ݂ܘܿܒ݂ | ܟ݁ܬ݂ܘܿܒ݂ | כְּתֹבִי | כְּתֹב |
| **Plural** | اُكْتُبْنَ | اُكْتُبُوا | ܟ݁ܬ݂ܘܿܒ݂ܶܝܢ | ܟ݁ܬ݂ܘܿܒ݂ܘ | כְּתֹבְנָה | כְּתֹבוּ |

# Nouns

Building nouns from a verb

*Caption*

–

The building block of Semitic languages is the **verb**. The basic **three-letter** verb can be **transformed** into different nouns.
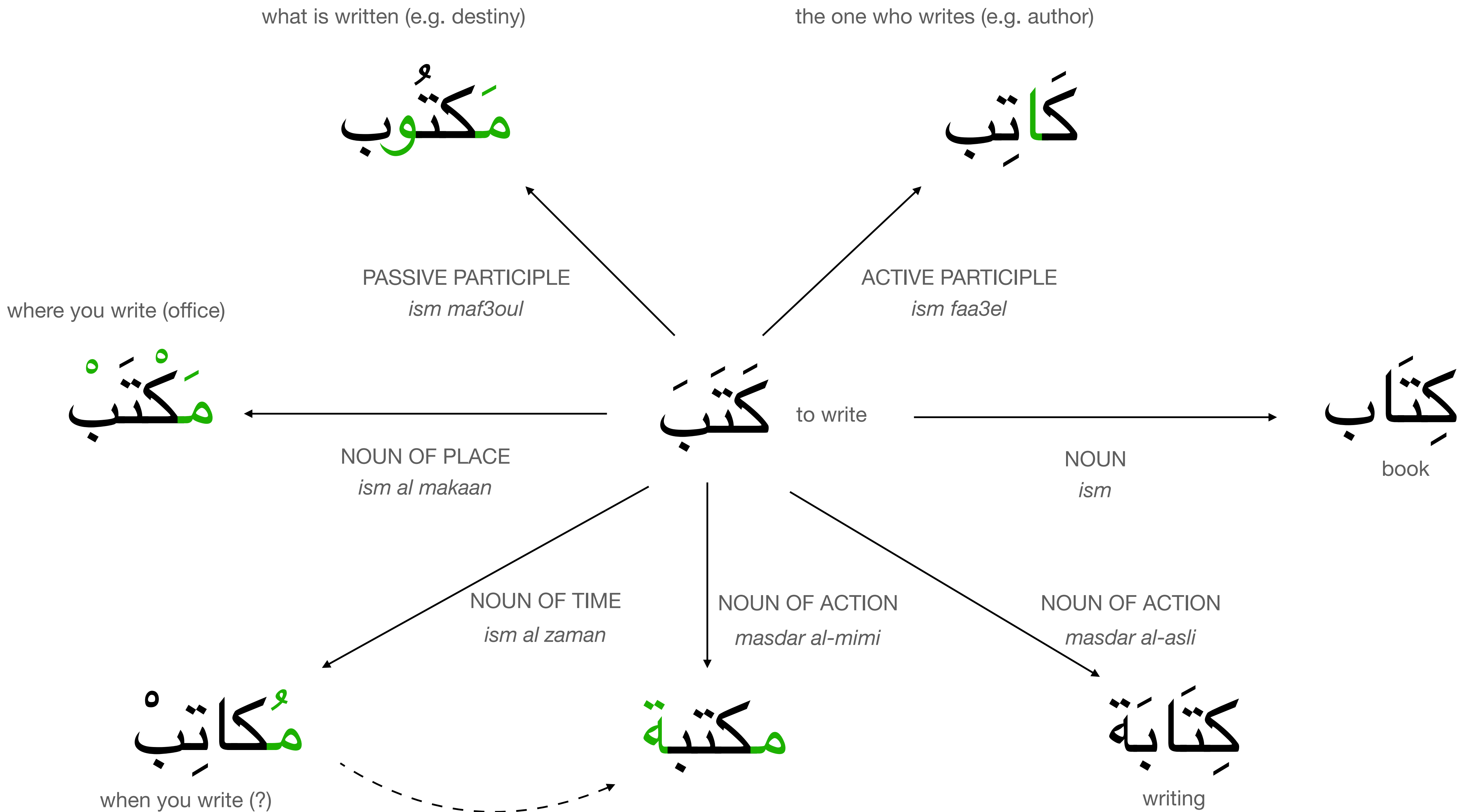
what is written (e.g. destiny)

مَكْتُوب

the one who writes (e.g. author)

كَاتِب

PASSIVE PARTICIPLE
*ism maf3oul*

ACTIVE PARTICIPLE
*ism faa3el*

where you write (office)

مَكْتَبْ

كَتَبَ
to write

كِتَاب

NOUN OF PLACE
*ism al makaan*

NOUN
*ism*

book

NOUN OF TIME
*ism al zaman*

NOUN OF ACTION
*masdar al-mimi*

NOUN OF ACTION
*masdar al-asli*

مُكَاتِبْ

مَكتبة

كِتَابَة

when you write (?)

writing

what is written (e.g. destiny)

the one who writes (e.g. author)

ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒ

ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒ

**PASSIVE PARTICIPLE**

**ACTIVE PARTICIPLE**

ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒ    to write    ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒܐ

**NOUN OF PLACE**

**NOUN**

**NOUN OF TIME**

**NOUN OF ACTION**

**NOUN OF ACTION**

ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒ

ܟ݀ܬ݁ܒܐ

what is written (e.g. destiny)          the one who writes (e.g. author)

כתוב                                      הסופר

PASSIVE PARTICIPLE                        ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

←——————————————  כתב  to write  ——————————————→

NOUN OF PLACE                             NOUN

NOUN OF TIME          NOUN OF ACTION          NOUN OF ACTION
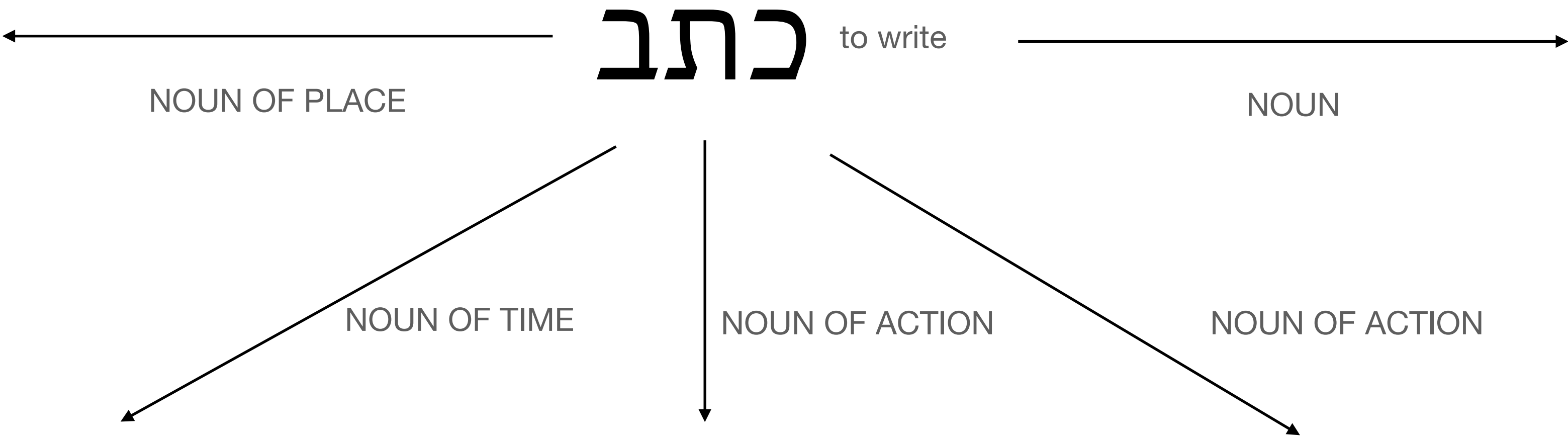
בכתב

# Pronominal suffixes

Feminine, Plural, Determination

| Arabic | Syriac | Hebrew |
|---|---|---|

**1st person**
كتابي *ana*
ܟܬܒܝ *éno*

**2nd person**
كتابكِ *anti*  كتابكَ *anta*
ܟܬܒܟ *at*
ܟܬܒܟ *at*

**3rd person**
كتابها *hiya*  كتابهُ *houwa*
ܟܬܒܗ *hiy*
ܟܬܒܗ *houw*

كتابنا *na7nou*  ·········· n and 7 reversed ··········
ܟܬܒܢ *7nan*

**Plural**
كتابكُنَّ *antounna*  كتابكُم *antoum*
ܟܬܒܟܝܢ *ateyn*
ܟܬܒܟܘܢ *atoun*

كتابهُنَّ *hounna*  كتابهُم *houm*
ܟܬܒܗܝܢ *héneyn*
ܟܬܒܗܘܢ *hénoun*

# Practice

life of    bread    (am)   I     I

(chant d'offrande)

ܘܡܢܐ    ܠܚܡܐ    ܐܢܐ    ܐܢܐ

d7ayé     la7mo     éno     éno

(am)

people among    you     Blessed are you

(Je vous salue Marie)

ܚܢܦܐ    ܐܝܡ    ܡܒܪܟܬܐ

bnéché     at     mbarakhto

sins    us    for our sake    Pray

(Je vous salue Marie)

ܚܛܝܐ    ܡܢ    ܠܚܦܝܢ    ܐܬܟܫܦ

7atoyé     7nan     7lofayn     étkachf

*Frame 1*  *Frame 2*  *?*

فَعَل — faire

فَعَّل — faire faire (a)

فَاعَل — celui qui fait, fait (a)

أَفْعَل — 

تَفَعَّل — se faire faire (a)

تَفَاعَل — 

إِنْفَعَل — 

إِفْتَعَل — se faire faire (a)

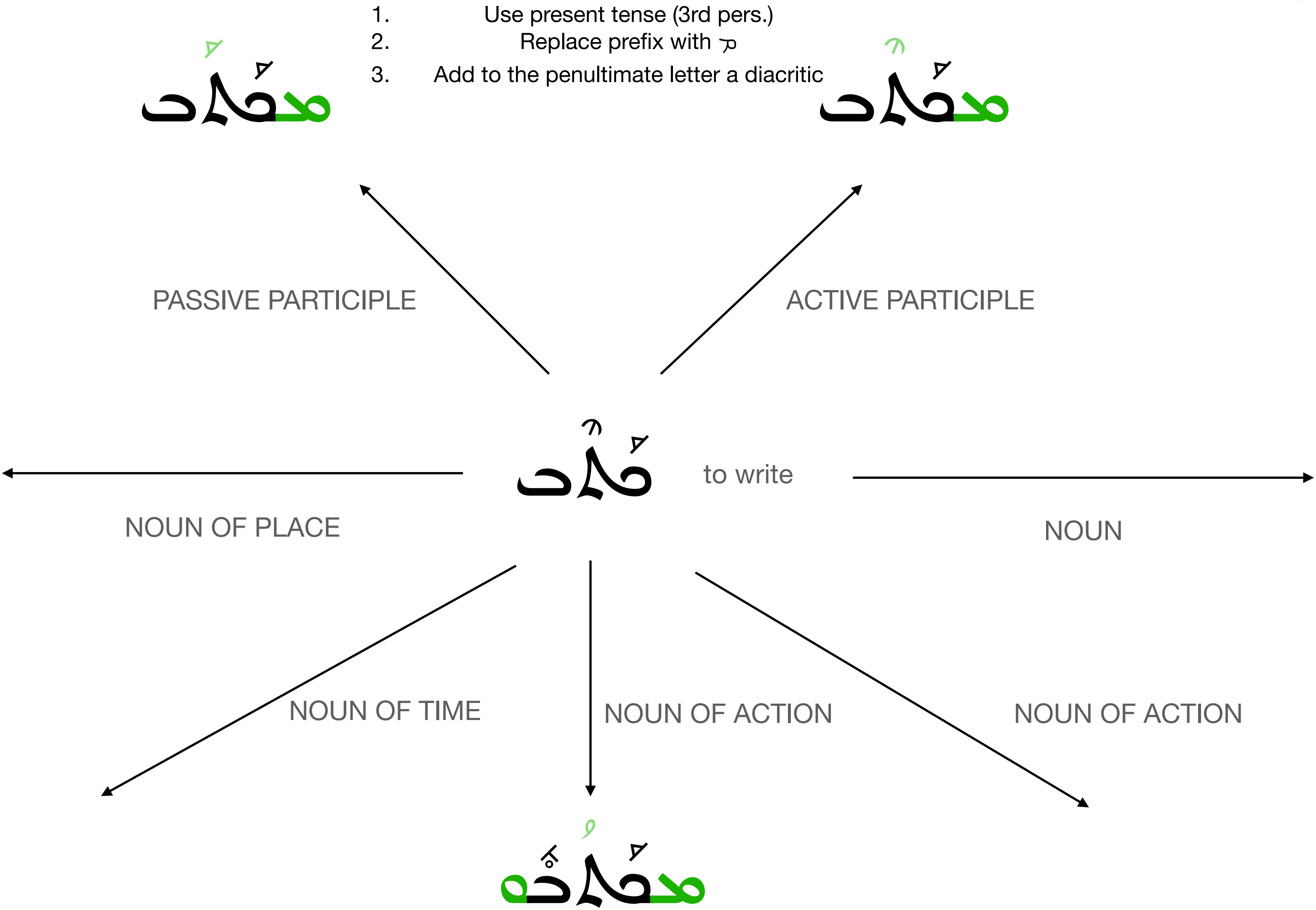إِفْعَلَّ — faire faire (a)

إِتَّفْعَل — 

*Caption*
The basic 3-letter verb can be augmented.
The 3 rules:
— 't' makes it **reflexive** (e.g. *se* reveiller)
— **x** makes it **?**
— **x** makes it **?**

participe actif: *celui qui fait, fait (a)*

pronominal: *se…*

factitif ou intensité: *faire faire (a)*

# Building nouns from an *augmented* verb

*Caption*
An augmented verb can be transformed into different nouns.

1. Use present tense (3rd pers.)
2. Replace prefix with ܡ
3. Add to the penultimate letter a diacritic

ܡܰܟܬܰܒ

ܡܰܟܬܶܒ

PASSIVE PARTICIPLE

ACTIVE PARTICIPLE

NOUN OF PLACE

ܟܰܬܶܒ to write

NOUN

NOUN OF TIME

NOUN OF ACTION

NOUN OF ACTION

ܡܰܟܬܳܒܽܘ

# Building nouns from an *augmented* verb

*Caption*
An augmented verb can be
transformed into different nouns.

— when rules exist

1.        Use present tense (3rd pers.)
2.        Replace prefix with مُ
3.   Add to the penultimate letter a diacritic

مُتَكَلَّم

مُتَكَلِّم

PASSIVE PARTICIPLE
*ism maf3oul*

ACTIVE PARTICIPLE
*ism faa3el*

تَكَلَّم

NOUN OF PLACE
*ism al makaan*

NOUN
*ism*

NOUN OF TIME
*ism al zaman*

NOUN OF ACTION
*masdar al-mimi*

NOUN OF ACTION
*masdar al-asli*

تَكَلُّم