Introduction

<u>Learning nahw analytically</u>

1. The elevator pitch

Say you are trying to learn نحو rules or review what you have learnt, be you a native Arabic speaker or non-native. Below are two versions describing the same نحو concepts. Read each for the same amount of time. For the second version, focus simply on the **Observe** column.

<div dir="rtl">

الفاعل

الفاعل: اسمٌ أو شِبْهُهُ أُسنِدَ إليهِ فعلٌ أو شِبْهُهُ متقدمٌ تامٌّ مبنيٌّ للمعلومِ.

فقولنا: (اسمٌ أو شِبْهُهُ) أي سواء أكانَ الفاعل اسما صريحا، أو مؤولا به، مثال الصريح: قامَ زيدٌ، ومثال المؤول: يجبُ أنْ تجتهدَ، فإنَ فاعل يجبُ هو المصدر المؤول مِن أنْ المصدرية والفعل، والتقدير: يجبُ اجتهادُكَ.

وقولنا: (أُسنِدَ إليهِ فعلٌ أَو شِبْهُهُ) أي سواء أكان المسند للفاعل فعلا صريحا، أو كان بمعناه، مثال الصريح: قامَ زيدٌ، ومثال المؤول: زيدٌ قائمٌ أبوهُ، فأبوه فاعل قائم الذي هو اسم فاعل وهو بمعنى يقوم، ومثله كل اسم يعمل عمل الفعل، مثل: هيهاتَ الرجوعُ، فالرجوعَ فاعل هيهات الذي هو اسم فعل بمعنى بَعُدَ.

وقولنا: (متقدمٌ) أي أنه لا بد أن يكون الفعل متقدما على الفاعل، فإن قلتَ في قامَ زيدٌ: زيدٌ قامَ، فزيدٌ: مبتدأ، وقامَ: فعل ماض وفاعله مستتر تقديره هو يعود على زيد، والجملة من الفعل والفاعل المستتر في محل رفع خبر.

وقولنا: (تامٌّ) فلو كانَ ناقصا مثل: كانَ الرجلُ نائمًا، كانَ الرجلُ اسمًا لكانَ لا فاعلا.

وقولنا: (مبنيٌّ للمعلومِ) فلو كان مبنيا للمجهول مثل: ضُرِبَ اللصُّ، كانَ اللصُّ نائبا عن الفاعل لا فاعلا.

واعلم أن الفاعل قد يكون محدثا للفعل مثل: قامَ زيدٌ، وقد يكون قائما به مثل: ماتَ زيدٌ، فإن الموتَ حل بزيد ولم يصدر منه.

</div>

1. What can (and cannot be) a فاعل؟

Definition	Infer	Observe ①
...اسمٌ أو شِبْهُهُ	1. فاعل can be: a. صريح: i.e. an اسم ... b. or... اسم مؤول	الصريح ✓ قامَ **زيدٌ** المؤول ✓ يجبُ **أنْ تَجْتَهِدَ** = يجبُ اجتهادُك
...مبنيٌّ للمعلوم	2. فاعل is not a نائب الفاعل	✗ ضُرِبَ **زَيدٌ**
...تامّ	3. كانَ زيدٌ اسما لكانَ لا فاعلا	✗ كانَ **زيدٌ** نائمًا Sentence is correct but زيد is not فاعل

2. What can govern the فاعل؟ i.e. be المسند للفاعل

Definition	Infer	Observe ①
...أُسنِدَ إليهِ فعلٌ أو شِبْهُهُ	4. It (المسند للفاعل) can be: a. فعل صريح or b. فعل مؤول: Those that act like فعل	الصريح ✓ **قامَ** زيدٌ المؤول ✓ **هيهاتَ** الرجوعُ = بَعُدَ ✓ زيدٌ **قائمٌ** أبوهُ = يَقُومُ

Regardless of your Arabic proficiency, which version:
- Leads to a deeper understanding in the same amount of time?
- Conveys the concept behind the rules quicker?
- Conveys the rule hierarchy?
- Allows easier comparison of rules?
- Is easier to review with?
- Is easier to teach with?

2. What these notes can (and cannot) help you achieve

These are based on my experiences as a non-native early-intermediate level student and a teacher, not on empirical proof.

Students

- ✓ Recalling concepts and examples far quicker — than when using a reference book. This is the primary purpose of these notes.

- ✓ A deeper understanding of نحو rules — compared to a reference book, given identical time investment

- ✗ Cover all minutiae of نحو — I am not that qualified. Out of scope. The objective is to convey the core concepts.

- ✗ Providing numerous examples for each case — Out of scope
- ✓ Learning the rules conceptually
- ✗ Learning precise definitions — Use reference books for this
- ✓ Expose gaps in your knowledge so you can fill them in — because you cannot deduce the rule from examples till you know the core underlying concepts

- ✓ Make it easier to understand a classical sharh afterwards

- ✓ Proficiency in recognizing their usage in other texts — when practiced with other texts and examples

- ✗ Writing or speaking proficiently — as it requires more than just knowing نحو rules

Teachers (untested, expected outcome)
- ✓ Teach Arabic grammar in a more engaging manner
- ✓ Less time spent structuring content ⇒ more time on delivering content
- ✓ Student-centric ⇒ Less lecturing ⇒ Less draining ⇒ More time for research *wink*

3. Can I self learn with these notes?

The primary purpose of these notes is for reviewing what you have already learnt. However, if you meet the below prerequisites, then yes, I believe you can self learn. Those who lack in certain areas may struggle in the beginning or require someone to explain it.

4. What are the prerequisites to using these notes?

A. For self learners

I assumed you already have the following skills and knowledge. Lacking some may necessitate a teacher

1. You know your sarf tables or can at least recognize sing, dual and plurals in most forms.
2. You know إعراب and its various types: الواو، الياء، الألف، كسرة، ضمة، فتحة etc.
3. You know basic roles in a sentence: فعل، فاعل، مفعول، مبتدأ، خبر
4. You are able to parse <u>basic</u> Arabic sentences into their constituent parts. مبتدأ، خبر، فاعل، مفعول معمول، حال etc. These are only mentioned where a rule cannot be deduced otherwise.
5. You can read with only the necessary diacritical marks present. Full tashkeel will be added in the future إن شاء الله
6. You have a solid beginner vocabulary. Difficult sentences are translated.

B. For teachers (untested, expected)

1. The fewer the above pre-requisites that students have met, the greater the teacher's focus and time spent on background content than on grammar-related deductions and explanations.
2. Either way, students will be compelled to fill gaps in understanding as they learn new material.

5. What are your references?

1. I used content from Baghdadi's نيل المنى and Ibn Hisham's شرح قطر الندى.

2. The Table of Contents is based on نيل المنى.
3. Examples are primarily from نيل المنى, some from شرح قطر الندى.
4. In some examples, I have changed the proper names of فاعل، مفعول، مبتدأ، خبر or the فعل to uniformize the examples for ease of understanding.

6. What's the reading order for a table?

Read Table heading → Study the **Observe** columns and hints → Try deducing rules yourself → Check against Infer column

1. When to use singular form of فعل؟

Infer	Observe ①	Observe
Regardless of فاعل being sing, dual or plural	✓ حضرَ الرجلُ	✓ قامتْ هندُ
1. If فاعل is مذكر ⇐ فعل is مفرد مذكر	✓ حضرَ الرجلان	✓ قامتْ الهِنْدان
2. If فاعل is مؤنث ⇐ فعل is مفرد مؤنث	✓ حضرَ الرجالُ	✓ قامتْ الهِنْدَاتُ
	✗ حضرا الرجلانِ	✗ قامَتَا الهِنْدان
	✗ حضروا الرجالُ	✗ قُمْنَ الهِنْداتُ
	✓ يَحْضُرُ الرجالُ	✓ تَقومُ الهِندَاتُ

1. Table heading - indicates the topic addressed and is vital to know what patterns you should focus on.
2. **Observe** columns, its examples and hints - Analyze these without looking at Infer. How to analyze **Observe** is explained in the next section.
3. Deduce as much as possible of a rule using the examples and the provided hints.
4. Infer column should be used to check your inferences and when reviewing

Activity Now try this out on the above table. It's one of the simplest ones.

REMEMBER! Focus first on Table heading and **Observe** column, not Infer column.

7. How do I 'read' the examples and hints to infer rules?

In short, by analyzing **patterns** in the examples and with assistance from the provided **hints**.

A. What kind of patterns in the examples?

Remember! First study the table heading. This is vital to know what patterns you should focus on:

a. What is the form of a particular word category? (e.g. فَاعِل أو مُكْرم for a doer)
b. What are the specific conditions of a word that causes a rule to activate?
   i. Its gender or number? مذكر، مؤنث، مفرد، جمع
   ii. Its definiteness? معرفة، نكرة، إضافة
   iii. Its role? مبتدأ، خبر، فاعل، مفعول، حال etc.
   iv. Simple or compound? مفرد، مركب
   v. Is the word being brought forward or delayed, or assumed?

Naturally, there are far too many patterns in any sentence. This is why hints are used to direct you in the right direction.

B. Types of hints
i. Indicating usage allowance, preference, and prohibition
Observe the icons in the table below.
a. **Type 1** is used for a row of examples if only correct/incorrect usage exists for them. Example: See اسم الفعل
b. **Type 2** is now self-explanatory. Example: See اسم الفاعل مؤنث

Type 1	Type 2
✓ Correct usage	✓ Preferred
	✓ Not preferred
✗ Incorrect usage	✗ Incorrect

Providing correct and incorrect usages so you can infer the rule is an oft-used technique in these notes.

ii. Highlighting

To draw your attention to a key pattern in the examples that cause the rule, ==highlighting== is used.

    a. Example: <u>what can be a فاعل</u>

iii. Multiple patterns

Sometimes, there are multiple patterns to compare and contrast in a table. In such a case, Pattern 1 and Pattern 2 will use different colors. If they occur elsewhere in the row, your attention will be called to Pattern 1, and to Pattern 2, so you can compare across them.

    a. Example: See <u>اسم التفضيل</u> on whether it should always be مفرد مذكر.

Note All highlight colors are color-blind safe and photocopy-friendly (i.e. you can differentiate between them in B&W, so color printing is not necessary).

iv. Indicating order of words

Notations are sometimes used if a rule requires it. Observe the **Notation** columns and try to infer what each notation means.

هَلْ زيدٌ قام أبوهُ

Explanation	Notation		Notation	Explanation		Notation	Explanation
هَلْ come together هَلْ زيدٌ	هَلْ + زيدٌ		هَلْ ...	هَلْ begins sentence		∴	Because
هَلْ comes after زيدٌ	هَلْ ⌢ زيدٌ		... هَلْ	does not begin it		∵	Therefore
قَامَ comes before زيدٌ	زيدٌ ⌢ قَامَ		هَلْ ... زيدٌ	قَامَ and هَلْ are not consecutive		⇐	Implies
They are equivalent	زَيدٌ قَامَ أبوهُ ⇔ قَامَ أبو زَيدٍ		زيدٌ ☞ هُ	هُ points to زيدٌ			

The above are building blocks and can be combined.

Explanation	Condition
هَلْ starts sentence, followed by زيدٌ. They are consecutive	✓ هَلْ ... | هَلْ ⌢ زيدٌ
	✗ هَلْ ==...== زيدٌ

Keep in mind that the notation is just a hint to recall a rule. Neither does it explicate the rule in its entirety, nor is it formal logic.

v. Indicating assumed words

Assumed words are grey amongst black text.

    a. Example: مَنْ أنتَ؟ أنا زيدٌ

    b. For more examples, see <u>حذف المبتدأ وجوبًا</u>

vi. Difficulty level of rule extraction

Difficulty level

① Low ② Med ③ High

Each table will have one of the above icons to indicate how difficult a rule is to extract. Note the one in the table in Section 6.

1. When to use singular form of فعل?

Infer	Observe ①	Observe
Regardless of فاعل being sing, dual or plural	✓ حضرَ الرجلُ	قامتْ هندُ
	✓ حضرَ الرجلان	قامَ المثَّالان

Difficulty depends on two factors:

1. Your background knowledge and skill
2. Limitations of the notation system to convey the complete rule (in which case, it's not your fault if you don't get it).

Use it as a barometer to either skip it, or pat yourself on the back if you get it right. Also, please remember that this is a <u>work in progress</u>, so the assigned difficulty level may be inaccurate.

8. What are the limitations of this system?

1. Currently, it has difficulty expressing miscellaneous information. Examples include:

    a. <u>How many مفعول do different variations of a فعل take?</u>

    b. لا مشبهة بليس is <u>used only in poetry</u>, not prose

    c. It is <u>a خبر only when</u> attached to a مبتدأ.

    d. <u>Misc information</u> about اسم الفعل

2. In some examples, I have intentionally not added information that fully explicate a rule. This is a conscious choice I made in case:

    a. It clutters the text

    b. It answers other aspects of a rule that you must deduce yourself

9. Great! Which page should I begin with?

The below topics are arranged from simple to complex (in terms of using the system). Work your way through them sequentially to ease into using these notes:

<div align="center">

<u>31 - الفاعل</u>

<u>45 - اسم الفاعل</u>

<u>47 - اسم التفضيل</u>

<u>42 - المستثنى</u>

<u>21 - المبتدأ والخبر</u>

<u>22 - أنواع تعدد الخبر، تقديم الخبر</u>

<u>23 - حذف المبتدأ</u>

</div>

10. I can recall the rules fairly well by looking at examples. What next?

(This below is just a theory. I will update this when I try it myself. - 8/13/22)

Try recalling the rules after

1. Removing all text highlighting
2. Ignoring small text that provides hints
3. Leaving only the correct/incorrect usage icons

11. Why make these notes?

Initially, it was simply so I could learn Arabic grammar well and review it rapidly. I tried multiple ways over the past decade, none to my satisfaction.

While studying Baghdadi's نيل المنى and Ibn Hisham's شرح قطر الندى, I realized they are wonderful reference books, but inefficient for internalizing the نحو rules and, more importantly, when reviewing them.

Remember <u>the elevator pitch</u> I mentioned above? The issues from a learner and reviewer's perspective are:

1. **Issue 1** A 'definitions and rules primary, and examples secondary' approach. This spoon-feeds rules and lifts much of the burden of rule analysis and comprehension from the reader. This is great for reference, but inefficient when learning.
2. **Issue 2** The 'know how to read Arabic to learn نحو' problem which is a somewhat chicken-and-egg problem.
3. **Issue 3** A 'wall of text' approach devoid of appropriate sectioning and layout that is time-consuming to parse rules, to compare and contrast related rules, and to visualize their hierarchy.
4. **Issue 4** It is also time consuming to revise using these books due to the wall of text. My notes from them were just another wall of text with slightly more structure.

From a teaching perspective:

1. **Issue 5** Teaching Arabic becomes lecture-centric (i.e. talking head format) which goes back to Issue 1 (listening and understanding), instead of a more engaging system (student-centric analyzing and inferring).

So I worked my way backwards from what issues I wanted to address. As I created the notes, I realized that they were worth sharing with others, and also extremely good for teaching, so I added many features such that it's accessible to the largest possible group.

12. How do these notes resolve the above issues?

Warning: This a work in progress

<u>Please tell me</u> what you feel are stumbling blocks when using these notes so I can

improve it and others can also benefit from your experience. بارك الله فيكم

A. Issue 1 (Self-analysis of examples secondary)

It is well known through [research](#) that arrival at answers through analysis (a higher-level cognitive act) leads to a deeper, quicker understanding and better retainment, as opposed to simply reading an answer (which requires simply understanding, a lower-level cognitive task). These notes seek to implement this paradigm using the following strategies

1. Icons to indicate [examples](#) of usages that are allowed, incorrect, preferred and not-preferred.
2. Using minimal commentary in [complex examples](#).
3. [Highlighting](#) words and/or إعراب to indicate critical patterns that cause a rule.
4. Ordering examples (correct and otherwise) in [a specific sequence](#) such that learners can deduce the rule.

B. Issue 2 (Knowing نحو to learn نحو)

This is only partially resolved in these notes. The symbolic design with minimal verbal commentary makes it much more language-agnostic than other learning mechanisms. It relies on the student's critical thinking skills than their Arabic (or English) reading skills.

C. Issue 3 (Wall of text)

1. Laying out related examples [side-by-side](#) such that learners can compare & contrast the rules.
2. Aligning [child or related rules](#) so they are easier to parse.
3. Using a [flowchart scheme](#) wherever possible.

The layout helps students focus on the key task of analyzing the rules rather than waste time and effort trying to parse a wall of text and deciphering its structure.

D. Issue 4 (Reviewing rapidly)

The layout acts as a quick reference mechanism that, again, lets students focus on quickly reviewing what's important - the rules themselves. Adequate space is provided around a page for a student to further annotate it.

E. Issue 5 (Teaching - untested, expected)

Explaining how to teach with these notes is out of scope. Suffice to say that the instructor now guides more than lectures. He/she engage students' critical thinking and application skills instead of just being a talking head. It leads to more effective teaching as they can isolate gaps in a student's understanding far quicker, something impossible in a lecture format.

To summarize, my intent is that by simply analyzing these examples, a student can infer most rules. However, not all rules, or all parts of a rule can always be inferred. This can happen

1. In complex cases
2. Due to lack of critical thinking effort by the student
3. Limitations of this system to convey all aspects of a rule

However, with constant revision, recalling the rules by simply glancing at the examples becomes easier.

13. Why would this work? You are not an Arabic scholar/teacher!

- Spot on, I am not an Arabic scholar! I am just an early-intermediate Arabic student, so definitely expect errors in the notes. [Please contact me in this case](#). Likewise, for suggestions on the notes' design.
- I am, however, a university professor. I have been teaching at the university level since 2005 so I have some experience in designing courses, teaching complex topics, and writing and reviewing scholarly papers.
- I designed these notes based on my experience as a teacher and as an Arabic student to address the issues I have mentioned. These notes work for me, and perhaps they will benefit you.

14. How can I help?

[Email me](#) if interested. For now, I can use help with
> 1. Gathering more examples for a companion page for each chapter
> 2. Proofreading rules and translations

15. Acknowledgements

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Creator	Zahid Syed
Title	Learning nahw analytically
Page	https://github.com/zahidsyed/learning-nahw-analytically