

00 - Wiki

Learning nahw analytically

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1. The elevator pitch

- 1) If you have already studied Arabic syntax (نحو): a more intuitive, rapid method for reviewing it and
- 2) If you are a teacher: a more engaging, student-centric method for teaching نحو.

A. A demonstrative example

To appreciate the benefit of these notes, below are two versions describing the same **نحو** concepts. Read each for the same amount of time and try comprehending it - viewing them from the perspective of a reviewer, and a student learning under a teacher.

First, a نحو concept from a reference book.

أنواع تعدد الخبر

تعدد الخير على نوعين:

الأول: أن يكون متعددا في اللفظ والمعنى جميعا، وعلامته صحة الاختصار على بعض الأخبار.

مثل: زيد قوي^{١٨} غني^{١٩}، فهنا لو اقتصرت على أحدهما وقلت: زيد قوي^{٢٠} صح.

وَيَجُوزُ فِي هَذَا النَّوعِ الْعَطْفُ بِأَنْ تَقُولَ: زَيْدٌ قَوِيٌّ وَغَنِيٌّ.

الثاني: أن يكون متعددا في اللفظ دون المعنى، وعلامته عدم صحة الاختصار على بعض الأخبار.

مثل: الرمانُ حلُّوٌ حامضٌ، فهنا ليس المقصود أن الرمان بعضه حلو وبعضه حامض بل المقصود أنه اجتمع فيه الوصفان معا فكان طعمه بين الحلاوة وبين الحموضة، فالخبران معا بمنزلة خبر واحد.

فهذا النوع لا يجوز فيه العطف فلا تقل الرمانُ حلواً وحامضاً لأن مجموع الخبرين بمنزلة خبر واحد.

وليس من تعدد الخبر قولك: الزيدان كاتبٌ وشاعرٌ لأن المقصود أن أحد الزيدين كاتب وشاعر، فهذا النوع يجب أن يؤتى فيه بحرف العطف فلا تقل: الزيدان كاتب شاعرٌ.

وكذلك ليس من تعدد الخبر قولك: زيدٌ طيبٌ ماهرٌ، إذا قصدت أنه ماهرٌ في الطب، فهاهنا صفة لطيب.

أما إذا قصدت أنه ماهر في أمور كثيرة فهو خير ثان.

Second, the same concept from the notes

For this version, read in this order: **Headings** → **Observe** column. Ignore the Grey text until you figure out the rule yourself.

1. أنواع تعدد الخبر - When to consider it as single or multiple خبر?

Infer	Observe cell ②	then Compare	Infer
1. Multiple words and meanings ⇒ Separate خبر	<p>الرَّيْثَانُ حُلُوٌّ حَامِضٌ ✓ A pomegranate is sweet & sour الرَّيْثَانُ حُلُوٌّ وَحَامِضٌ ✗ الريثان حُلُوٌّ ✗ الريثان حُلُوٌّ ✗</p>		2. Multiple words with single meaning ⇒ Single خبر
3. صفة is not a separate خبر	<p>Zayd is a famous doctor: زيدٌ طَبِيبٌ مَاهِرٌ ✓ زيدٌ طَبِيبٌ مَاهِرٌ ✗</p>	<p>Zayd is a doctor, famous: زيدٌ طَبِيبٌ مَاهِرٌ ✗ زيدٌ طَبِيبٌ مَاهِرٌ ✓</p>	4. Single/multiple depends on the intended meaning
5. Cannot combine خبر as one attribute for each زيد	<p>الرَّيْثَانُ كَاتِبٌ وَشَاعِرٌ ✓ الرَّيْثَانُ كَاتِبٌ شَاعِرٌ ✗</p>		

B. Discussion

Based on the design objective, these notes cater to three types of students:

Type

Purpose

1. The **reviewer** who has already studied grammar books written in Arabic and is familiar with the نحو rules.

This student can use these notes for rapidly reviewing نحو rules after studying and understanding from the grammar books written in Arabic. They save much time in this regard. This is the prime reason why I made them.

A word of advice The serious student of knowledge should NOT use this while abandoning grammar books written in Arabic. See below* for one of my teachers' comment on why doing so is detrimental in the long-term.

2. The **middling student with a teacher**.

This student is provided the student's version of the notes (I explain what this is later below) and expected to infer as much of the rule by themselves as possible. They can thus use these notes to grasp the basics of نحو under a teacher, and as a stepping stone for ultimately studying Arabic grammar books.

The teaching method is explained later below. I hope it makes for a more fun, student-centric way to teach نحو than other methods.

3. The **middling self-learner** with basic grammar skills but has not yet studied the نحو rules.

This student can use these notes to learn most of نحو without reading an Arabic grammar book IF they have basic Arabic grammar skills (mentioned later). As mentioned before, this is not the prime reason I have designed these notes.

Just as with the reviewer, I advise this student not to abandon learning to read grammar books written in Arabic.

* The (long-term) objective (for the serious student) isn't just to learn grammar, but to learn how to read grammar books because when you read the Islamic sciences as a whole, you will find grammar discussions in tafsir, hadith, fiqh (often interpreting Qur'an and hadith), and commentaries of books. Those discussions are often at a higher level than the (basic grammar) books, so students will likely need to pick up more advanced nahw books like commentaries of Alfiyya and the like, either to review the grammar or look up more advanced discussions. So if students struggle to read classical grammar texts, they will be stuck. - Ust Abdul Hakim Vazquez

For the **reviewer**, the core concepts have been laid out with just enough hints to analyze and recall the rules. I have found this to be faster than when reviewing from a reference book.

For the **middling** student (with or without a teacher), the notes provide a mechanism to apply their prior knowledge of Arabic grammar to infer new rules. Thus, the mental effort such a student exerts when reading these notes is on very different tasks compared to traditional grammar books. The typical thought process varies as follows:

With grammar books, the student:	With these notes, the student:
1. Reads and comprehends the definition given to them.	
2. Reads and comprehends the examples that are given with full إعراب and how it relates to the rule. Occasionally, an incorrect usage is provided.	1. Compares the provided examples - both correct and incorrect usages laid out for comparison 2. Using their prior knowledge and hints, grammatically parses the إعراب of key parts under discussion 3. Uses the provided hints and deduces the rule and how the examples relate to it, and also why the incorrect usage is so.
3. Mentally compares the examples as they are laid out for easy comparison.	4. Compares their understanding with the provided definition.
4. Armed with a complete explanation, circles back to re-analyze.	5. Armed with the complete explanation, circles back to re-analyze

The key difference is that, in these notes, the burden of rule analysis is placed on the student instead of spoon-feeding the definition and the explanation as is typical in many books. Given the same amount of time, the proposed method results in a deeper understanding of the rule.

There is much that the above explanation cannot convey that hopefully the prior example (or any other example in the notes) does.

Reading these notes

2. 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	حَضَرَ الرجلُ ✓	قامتُ هُندُ ✓
1. If فاعل is مذكر ⇒ مفرد مذكر is فعل	حَضَرَ الرجلانِ ✓	قامتُ الهُندانِ ✓
2. If فاعل is مؤنث ⇒ مفرد مؤنث is فعل	حَضَرَ الرجالُ ✓	قامتُ الهُنْدَاتُ ✓
	حَضَرَ الرجلانِ ✗	قامتُ الهُندانِ ✗
	حَضَرُوا الرجالُ ✗	قُمْنَ الهُنْدَاتُ ✗
	يَحْضُرُ الرجالُ ✓	تَقُومُ الهُنْدَاتُ ✓

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 the **Infer** column.

3. 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. فاعِل أو مُكْرِم 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
 - 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 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
✗ Incorrect usage	✗ Not preferred
	✗ Incorrect

Providing correct and incorrect usages 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 to indicate correct patterns or **incorrect** usages.

- a. Example: [what can be a فاعل](#)

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 [اسم التفضيل](#) on whether it should always be مفرد مذكر.

Note All highlight colors are RG-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 to hint at a rule. Observe the **Notation** columns and try to infer what each notation means.

Meaning	Notation	Notation	Meaning	Notation	Meaning
هَلْ زَيْدٌ قَامَ أَبُوهُ					
Meaning	هَلْ + زَيْدٌ	هَلْ ...	هَلْ begins sentence	∴	Because
هَلْ comes after زَيْدٌ	هَلْ ~ زَيْدٌ	هَلْ ...	does not begin it	∴	Therefore
قَامَ زَيْدٌ comes before هَلْ	زَيْدٌ ~ قَامَ	هَلْ ... زَيْدٌ	هَلْ and قَامَ are not consecutive	⇐	Implies
They are equivalent	زَيْدٌ قَامَ أَبُوهُ ⇐ قَامَ أَبُو زَيْدٍ	زَيْدٌ هُ	زَيْدٌ points to هُ		Or

The above are building blocks and can be combined.

Explanation	Condition
هَلْ starts the sentence, and is followed by زَيْدٌ. They are consecutive	✓ هَلْ ... & هَلْ ~ زَيْدٌ ✗ هَلْ ... زَيْدٌ

v. Indicating assumed words

Assumed words are grey amongst black text.

- a. Example: مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ أَنَا زَيْدٌ
b. For more examples, see [حذف المبتدأ وجوبا](#)

vi. Difficulty level of rule extraction

Note the **1** in the table

1. When to use singular form of فاعل?

Infer	Observe ①	Observe
Regardless of فاعل being sing, dual or plural	✓ حضر الرجل	✓ قَامَتْ هُنْدٌ

Each table will have one of these icons to indicate how difficult a rule is to extract.

Difficulty level

① Low ② Med ③ High

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 [work in progress](#), so the assigned difficulty level may be inaccurate.

4. 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. As for the sequence of topics to study, these notes do not come with any recommendations for it:

[31 - الفاعل](#)

[45 - اسم الفاعل](#)

[47 - اسم التفضيل](#)

[42 - المستثنى](#)

[21 - المبتدأ والخبر](#)

[22 - أنواع تعدد الخبر، تقديم الخبر](#)

[23 - حذف المبتدأ](#)

Outcomes, Pre-reqs and Teaching with these notes

5. Expected outcomes - What these notes can (and cannot) help with

A. For both reviewer and middling students

✓ Convey the concept quicker	Generally speaking, this holds true due to the concise nature of the notes.
✓ A deeper understanding of نحو rules	compared to a reference book, given identical time investment as more time is spent analyzing the examples than explanatory text.
✗ Learning precise definitions	Use reference books for this. Precise definitions are only occasionally provided.
✗ Cover all minutiae of نحو	Out of scope. The objective is to convey the core concepts. Plus, I am not that qualified.
✓ Providing numerous examples for each case	I have collated examples from ibn Hisham's شرح قطر الندى and from نيل المنى. Some topics have more examples than others.
✓ Convey rule hierarchy for easier ingestion	See Chapter 12, 37 or 42 for examples on what this means.
✓ Easier comparison of rules	The tables and the examples within are laid out so as to easily compare and contrast similar rules
✓ Expose gaps in your knowledge so you can fill them in	because you cannot deduce the rule from the examples till you know the underlying concepts
✗ Replace classical references	These notes are for either 1) reviewing or 2) a stepping stone to read classical books
✓ 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

B. For the reviewer

- ✓ Easier to review with, and make recalling concepts and examples far quicker than when using a reference book.

C. For the middling

- ✓ Learning the rules conceptually since you are expected to analyze the sentences and infer the rules.
- ✓ Expose gaps in your knowledge so you can fill them in because you cannot deduce the rule from the examples until you know the underlying concepts
- ✓ Make it easier to understand a classical sharh afterwards These notes can be used as a stepping stone for reading classical books.
- ✗ A roadmap to learn Arabic grammar, ordered from simple to complex topics These notes are provided only as content (*how* to study) without a roadmap (*what* to study first). The latter is left up to the teacher to decide. I do not have any data to recommend a roadmap.

For the self-learner, perhaps the difficulty level given for each table is one mechanism you can use to decide what to study first.

C. For the teacher

Please see the section '[How to use these notes for teaching نحو - Expected outcomes](#)'

6. What are the prerequisites to using these notes?

A. For the reviewer

All that is required is that you understand how to 'read' the tables in the notes. Please go through the related sections in the Wiki and you are set.

B. For the middling student

The more you know of the following, the easier the time you will have:

1. You know your sarf tables or can at least recognize sing, dual and plurals in the common forms.
2. You know إعراب and its various types: الالف، الياء، الواو، كسرة، ضمة، فتحة etc.
3. You are able to parse basic Arabic sentences into their constituent parts. حال، مفعول، فاعل، خبر، مبتدأ. These are only mentioned where a rule cannot be deduced otherwise.
4. You have a solid beginner vocabulary. Difficult sentences are translated.

7. How to use these notes for teaching نحو

Teaching نحو based on these notes relies on active learning. For more information about this concept, please visit: <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/active-learning> and www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0a2pKYp_fk

Please keep in mind that I have not yet used this method for teaching Arabic. However, I *have* used the same techniques and class structure in my university classes (Computer Science). The response to such a class structure is usually extremely positive, both from instructors and from students, regardless of discipline, so I expect similar results here.

A. The Student version of the notes

To implement it when teaching نحو requires two versions of these notes:

- **Instructor copy** The default version of the notes with the grey text.
- **Student copy** This is without the grey text, and perhaps even some of the hints in the small black text, and the footnotes. I am yet to make this version, but they will look similar to below in case you want to develop them yourself.

Instructor's copy

Is the gender of عدد based on معدود ؟

1. Type 1

Infer	Observe ①
1, 2 follow the معدود	هذان رجلان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اثنان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> هذه امرأة واحدة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اثنتان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Type 2

Infer	Observe ①
3-9 conflict with معدود	اشترت ثلاثة كتب وثلاث مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اشترت خمسة كتب وخمسين مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اشترت تسعة كتب وتسع مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Type 3

Infer	Observe ②	Compare with
10 conflicts w/ معدود if it's مفرد by itself follows معدود if it's compound w/ another number	Example 1 عندي عشرة كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي عشرة كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example 2 سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت ثلاثة عشر ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example 3 عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	عندي عشر كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي عشر كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت ثلاثة عشر ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Student's copy

Is the gender of عدد based on معدود ؟

1. Type 1

Infer	Observe ①
	هذان رجلان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اثنان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> هذه امرأة واحدة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اثنتان <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Type 2

Infer	Observe ①
	اشترت ثلاثة كتب وثلاث مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اشترت خمسة كتب وخمسين مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> اشترت تسعة كتب وتسع مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Type 3

Infer	Observe ②	Compare with
	Example 1 عندي عشرة كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي عشرة كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example 2 سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت ثلاثة عشر ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example 3 عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	عندي عشر كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي عشر كتب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي خمسة عشر كتاب <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت عشرة ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> سهرت ثلاثة عشر ليلة <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> عندي إحدى عشر مجلات <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

B. Teaching a topic

i. The structured part of the class

The instructor's role

- Before class** Perhaps distributes the related student's copy of the table to students who are weak in إعراب so they can prepare beforehand.
- In class** Very briefly introduces the topic under discussion, and distributes the student's copy to them.

A time limit for is set for each discussion to ensure sufficient material is covered in the class.

ii. The unstructured discussion

Here's how this part of the class may play out. Notice that the steps below are not necessarily sequential. They will occur in a manner conducive to the topic and the proficiency of the students at hand.

The students' role

The students' task is to infer the rules from the given table. Group based work is recommended for reasons mentioned below (likely 2-4 students per group).

These are the typical activities students do, not necessarily in this order:

	Activities	Note
If working as a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind each other about background knowledge that one of them does not recall. 	This immensely eases the burden on the instructor as they don't have to individually address the knowledge deficiency of every student. Students are generally more comfortable asking each other for help rather than the instructor.
Analyze examples of correct usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deduce and write down all the patterns that they judge to be the cause of the rule. 	Students may not infer all the rules, perhaps due to the notes' limitations, or more likely due to a deficiency in their background knowledge. Depending on these variables, the instructor may have to spend more time on background content. Either way, students will be compelled to fill gaps in their understanding as they learn

new material.

This will require them to grammatically parse the إعراب of the key parts under discussion.

Less experienced students may struggle to parse a sentence in the textbook fashion. However, I project that this will not be a problem so long as they can identify the concepts.

- Based on their deductions, develop a theory on what the rule might be
- Compare similar examples and verify that their theory fits all examples.

Compare and contrast correct and incorrect usages

- Using a similar process of grammatical analysis, determine why the incorrect usage is so.
- Does their theory fit all correct usages and exclude all incorrect ones?

The instructor's role

The instructor generally walks around and assesses how the groups are progressing and:

- Provides a hint or two to a group if they are stuck on a certain deduction.
- Resolves lack of background knowledge if none in the group can do so for each other.
- Take note of common mistakes that groups make.

iii. The unstructured review

Once the time limit for an activity has expired, it's time to review what the groups have come up with.

The instructor's role

Activities

- Ask some groups to present their conclusions to the class, and to question their findings

Note

This again shows the importance of students working in groups. It is less stressful for them when the instructors asks "Why did you all decide on this deduction?" as it is directed to the group even if a single student is picked out.

It is the same case when volunteering to express their findings when representing a group rather than just themselves.

This consequentially improves student participation.

- To address common mistakes that the instructor came across during discussion time

C. Expected outcomes

As I have mentioned before, I haven't yet tried this approach to teaching نحو, but based on my own experiences as a teacher, I expect these outcomes:

- ✓ A more engaging discussion-based class
At every step, the student is expected to analyze the examples and explain the rule to the best of their ability using their student copy that doesn't have the answers. The teacher thus becomes a guide rather than a talking-head. This is far more rewarding and lot more fun, both for the teacher and the student.

For those who haven't taught in a student-centric manner, this experience may at first be unnerving because it seems like the content delivery is not as rigidly structured as in a lecture and that you are losing control of the class. However, once you get the hang of it, it is immensely satisfying. My students' experience when teaching secular topics with this method has been overwhelmingly positive as has been for many of my colleagues who use it.
- ✓ Hone in on the student's weakness quicker
Asking the student to analyze the examples and detect the pattern causes any mistake in their grammatical parsing to stand out very quickly. As such, these notes are a far better mechanism to identify student weaknesses and to address them, whether by the instructor or by their group peers. When done frequently, I expect these drills will lead to much better retention of concepts than when using a lecture format.
- ✓ Increased student participation
The group discussion creates a much lower bar for students to participate, especially the shy and passive ones. Students find it less stressful when asked as a part of a group rather than individually.
- ✓ Less draining
Due to the increased student participation and unstructured learning, the teacher is not required to speak continuously, as compared to a lecture.

D. Implementing online group discussions and collaboration

Class group discussions and collaboration are naturally easier if they are in-person. It may be easier to have online students work individually. However, if you are interested in implementing group work online, please [email me at 3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com](mailto:3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com) as this topic is out of scope for this document.

Other FAQs

8. What are your references?

1. All content is from Baghdadi's *نيل المني* and Ibn Hisham's *شرح قطر الندى*.
2. The Table of Contents is based on *نيل المني*.
3. In some examples, I have changed proper names to uniformize the examples for ease of understanding (زيد to عمر, etc.).
4. In some scenarios, I have filled in implied examples (for gender, count, etc.) for complete explication.
5. I only created three examples from my own self in Table 15.4 (last row) and two in Table 33.2.C.i.

9. Why make these notes?

To really understand hadith and have any hopes to analyze them like a *فقيه* requires mastering *nahw*. After trying to dodge doing so for a while, I eventually realized there was no way out except to face the challenge. So I began reviewing my Arabic grammar notes in the summer of 2022. However, doing so rapidly was proving near impossible. I had already tried multiple note-taking methods for *نحو* over the past decade, but none were to my satisfaction.

Remember [the elevator pitch](#) I mentioned above? While studying Baghdadi's *نيل المني* 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 or when teaching with them.

These are the issues I found with most Arabic grammar books and the mechanisms I have used in my notes to address them:

A. For both reviewer and middling students

Issue

1 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.

How it is addressed in these notes

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 rule hierarchy.

B. For the reviewer

Issue

2 It is also time consuming to review using these books due to the wall of text.

How it is addressed in these notes

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.

C. For the middling

Issue

3 A 'definitions and rules primary, and examples secondary' approach. This is great for reference, but inefficient when learning because:

- A. This spoon-feeds rules and lifts much of the burden of rule analysis and comprehension from the reader.
- B. The reader spend more time deciphering the explanation than the examples.

How it is addressed in these notes

It is well known through [research](#) and common experience 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.

4 The 'know how to read Arabic to learn نحو' problem which is a somewhat chicken-and-egg problem.

This is one of the biggest challenges I experienced as a non-native adult Arabic learner - fording the gap from being a beginner student to becoming an intermediate self-learner.

This problem is only partially resolved in these notes. I do so by expressing semantic rules via examples, and via language-agnostic symbols and zero commentary in the black text. This makes this system much more reliant on the student's critical thinking skills than their Arabic (or English) reading skills, as is needed in other learning mechanisms.

5 The incredibly dry nature of learning نحو and its effect on motivation.

Learning نحو using the traditional method relies on sheer motivation to grind through all the rules (unless you are the rare person who has an intrinsic love for it). Personally, my motivation sank every time I was faced with the task of memorizing new rules with no end in sight.

Other programs might use poems on نحو for teaching it, with some poems being used since half a millennium ago. These serve (or served) their purpose well for the appropriate audience. However, for a modern-day adult non-native Arabic learner, I felt they hold little pedagogical benefit. I made no discernable progress by studying such poems.

I hope that 1) the above mentioned learning mechanisms, and 2) the change in teaching approach I have described will make the learning experience more interesting.

The planned accompanying exercise problems will hopefully make it rewarding too when students are able to apply the rules they have learnt.

6 Even modern books have similar issues as #3 and #5

D. For the teacher

Issue

How it is addressed in these notes

7 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).

In a prior section, I have described how to use these notes for teaching. It suffices here to say that the instructor now guides more than lectures, by engaging 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.

I began in Aug 2022 with the germ of the idea on how to structure my notes for quick review, and **بِقَضِي اللَّهِ** fleshed out 19 of the 52 chapters that month, beginning with those topics that I personally needed to study.

As I created the notes for my personal use, I realized that they were worth sharing with others, and also extremely good for teaching, so I added many features including this Wiki to make it accessible to others.

10. 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 minor errors in the notes.
- Every single rule, however, is from the mentioned sources and so are the examples (bar those mentioned in the 'Limitations' section). I have only re-arranged the content in an easy to learn manner.
- 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.
- It is easy to create a dry, boring, but accurate resource for a complex topic. The challenge is to create something that is effective yet fun to learn from and to teach with. I have tried to do that here. These notes work very well for me, and perhaps they will benefit you too.

11. What are the limitations of this system?

1. The Grey text is currently a mix of English and Arabic as it's geared towards English speakers with basic Arabic reading proficiency. Another version with full Arabic will be made once these notes are complete, **إن شاء الله**
2. 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
 4. However, with constant revision, recalling the rules by simply glancing at the examples becomes easier.
3. In some examples, I have intentionally not added information that fully explicate a rule. This is a conscious choice I made in case:
 1. It clutters the text
 2. It answers other aspects of a rule that you must deduce yourself
4. The system has difficulty expressing miscellaneous information. Examples include:
 1. [How many مفعول do different variations of a فعل take?](#)
 2. **لا مشبهة بليس** is [used only in poetry](#), not prose
 3. It is [a خبر only when](#) attached to a مبتدأ.
 4. [Misc information](#) about اسم الفعل

5. The tashkeel is not completely visible on some words (e.g. See [Table 52-1.2](#)). This is a software bug in OneNote. Hopefully, it will be resolved when these notes are ported to MS Word in a future update, إن شاء الله
6. I have not included differences of opinion on most topics. For example,
 1. Differences amongst Kufan and Basran schools.
 2. Differences amongst scholars on a grammatical issue. E.g. 37 - المنادى: That الفراء allowed ترخيم الثلاثيات (يَا حَكَمُ) can be abbreviated to حَكْ
 3. I list only what Baghdadi or ibn Hisham presented as the primary rule.

12. Do I need to print these notes in color? (or) I am color-blind.

Color printing will obviously help with quicker recognition as [color does matter](#). However, you can print these notes in Black & White without worrying that the highlight colors cannot be discerned. This is because I have used B&W-friendly highlight colors. They appear as discernable shades of grey in a black and white printout.

Color blind Red-green blindness affects ~8% of male and 0.4% of female population. I have used highlight colors that [will not confuse](#) this demographic.

Observe ②	Compare with	Observe ②	Compare with
<p>Example 1</p> <p>عِنْدِي عَشْرَةٌ كُتِبَ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي عَشْرٌ كُتِبَ</p> <p>يُخَالِفُ مَذْكُرُ المَعْدُودِ</p> <p>عِنْدِي خَمْسَةٌ عَشْرَةٌ كُتِبَ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي خَمْسَةٌ عَشْرٌ كُتِبَ</p> <p>يُطَابِقُ المَعْدُودِ</p> <p>Example 2</p> <p>سَهْرَتُ عَشْرٍ لَيْلَةٍ ✓ ✗ سَهْرَتُ عَشْرَةٍ لَيْلَةٍ</p> <p>سَهْرَتُ ثَلَاثَةٍ عَشْرٍ لَيْلَةٍ ✓ ✗ سَهْرَتُ ثَلَاثَةِ عَشْرَةٍ لَيْلَةٍ</p> <p>Example 3</p> <p>عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرٍ مَجَلَّاتٍ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ مَجَلَّاتٍ</p> <p>عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ مَجَلَّاتٍ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةٍ مَجَلَّاتٍ</p>		<p>Example 1</p> <p>عِنْدِي عَشْرَةٌ كُتِبَ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي عَشْرٌ كُتِبَ</p> <p>يُخَالِفُ مَذْكُرُ المَعْدُودِ</p> <p>عِنْدِي خَمْسَةٌ عَشْرَةٌ كُتِبَ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي خَمْسَةٌ عَشْرٌ كُتِبَ</p> <p>يُطَابِقُ المَعْدُودِ</p> <p>Example 2</p> <p>سَهْرَتُ عَشْرٍ لَيْلَةٍ ✓ ✗ سَهْرَتُ عَشْرَةٍ لَيْلَةٍ</p> <p>سَهْرَتُ ثَلَاثَةٍ عَشْرٍ لَيْلَةٍ ✓ ✗ سَهْرَتُ ثَلَاثَةِ عَشْرَةٍ لَيْلَةٍ</p> <p>Example 3</p> <p>عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرٍ مَجَلَّاتٍ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ مَجَلَّاتٍ</p> <p>عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ مَجَلَّاتٍ ✓ ✗ عِنْدِي إِحْدَى عَشْرَةٍ مَجَلَّاتٍ</p>	

13. I found an error, or I have a suggestion!

Either

- [Email me at 3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com](mailto:3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com) or
- Submit a bug report on the project page (<https://github.com/zahidsyed/learning-nahw-analytically/issues>).

14. How can I help?

[Email me at 3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com](mailto:3n4lw9o10@mozmail.com) if interested. For now, I can use help with proofreading rules and translations.

15. What's the roadmap of features you plan to add?

Version	Planned features
v0.00 - v0.54	Add all chapters of نيل المني
> v0.54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise template - Full Arabic text version - Port to Word for printability and working hyperlinks

16. Acknowledgements

Restricting myself to those who helped me attain Arabic reading and comprehension, beginning with the most recent:

1. My teachers at Al Salam Institute and their excellent [Alimiyyah program](#) in which I studied the reference books used here and much more. This would not be possible without the efforts each of my أساتيد - Tariq Pandor, Sabih Khwaja, Ahmad al-Barouni, Shafiur Rahman, Shahanaz Begum, Usaama al-Azami, and Umer Khan.
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3. Mufti Yusuf Mullan and his [online Arabic program](#). Hands down, the best course to learn to parse Arabic grammar that I have come across.
4. Ustadh [Ahmed bin Mahfooz](#) who taught me selflessly for years, come rain or shine, seeking no remuneration for his tremendous efforts.

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To each I owe what words can neither summarize nor do justice. I pray that your recompense is with the One who rewards بغير حساب.

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