

Week 1: Introduction to the Arabic alphabet



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Introduction

This is the first session of a two-part pre-course of the short course [*Introduction to Arabic Language and Culture*](#) by the Open Centre for Languages and Cultures. Completing this course will take you about four hours. This course focuses on the most basic steps in learning Arabic: you will learn the alphabet, vowels, and also learn a bit about different dialects and the history of the Arabic language. At this stage, you are encouraged to listen to the audios, and practise writing.

This week you will learn the Arabic alphabet, vowels, and also a little bit about the history of the Arabic language.

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- understand the Arabic writing system
- pronounce and write the Arabic alphabet
- understand the influence of Arabic on other languages.

1 Arabic alphabet

The first step to learning any language is to learn the alphabet. The Arabic alphabet consists of twenty-eight letters, which you will find in the following table with the English transliteration. Listen carefully to the audio, and repeat the letters you hear. Before you move to joining letters in the next section, learning to write independent letters is highly recommended.



Figure 1 Arabic alphabet

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Table 1 Arabic letters

Transliteration	The letter's name in English	The letter's name in Arabic	The letter (Independent)
A	alif	أَلِف	ا
B	ba'	بَاء	ب
T	ta'	تَاء	ت
Th - ṭ	Tha' - ṭa'	ثَاء	ث
J - ġ	ġīm	جِيم	ج
ḥ	ḥa'	حَاء	ح
Kh - ḫ	ḫa'	خَاء	خ
D	dāl	دَال	د
Th - ḍ	Thal - ḍāl	ذَال	ذ
R	rā'	رَاء	ر
Z	zāy	زَاي	ز

S	sīn	سِين	س
Sh - š	šīn	شِين	ش
ṣ	ṣād	صَاد	ص
ḍ	ḍād	ضَاد	ض
ṭ	ṭā'	طَاء	ط
ẓ	ẓā'	ظَاء	ظ
‘	‘ain	عَيْن	ع
Gh- ğ	ġain	غَيْن	غ
F	fā'	فَاء	ف
Q	qāf	قَاف	ق
K	kāf	كَاف	ك
L	lām	لَام	ل
M	mīm	مِيم	م
N	nūn	نُون	ن
H	hā'	هَاء	هـ
W	wāw	وَاو	و
Y	ya'	يَاء	ي

Activity 1

 20 minutes

To practise, match the letters with the correct English translation.

ب

م

ن

ي

ق

Match each of the items above to an item below.

B

M

N

Y

Q

Listen to the audio and identify the letter you heard.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 2

- ☐ ح
- ☐ ع
- ☐ ف

Listen to the audio and identify the letter you heard.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 3

- ☐ ح
- ☐ د
- ☐ ش

1.1 Letters with articulation points

There are several letters that have very close articulation points. Articulation points refer to the location in the vocal tract where a sound is produced. These letters may be a bit more difficult for beginners to pronounce, and to practice you will find these letters along with examples of words they occur in in the table below. Listen carefully and try to notice the difference. Repeat the words you hear.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 4

Table 2 Letters with close articulation points

Examples	Letters
تَلْمِيز - طَالِب	ت - ط
ثَمَرَة - ذَهَب	ث - ذ
حَدِيقَة - هَدِيَّة	ح - ه
ذُرَّة - زَرَّافَة	ذ - ز
سَيْف - صَبِيف	س - ص
ذُرَّة - ظَلِي	ذ - ظ
قَلَم - كَلَام	ق - ك

Activity 2

 15 minutes

Listen to the audio and choose which of the three words that contain a ح letter.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 5

- ☐ هَجْرَة
- ☐ حَدِيقَة
- ☐ حَمَل

Listen to the next audio and choose which of the three words contain a ق letter.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 6

- ☐ قَلِيل
- ☐ كَاتِب
- ☐ قَمَر

Listen to the audio and choose which of the following words contain a س letter.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 7

- ☐ صديق
- ☐ سفير
- ☐ سمير

2 Vowels in Arabic

Vowels in Arabic are called 'ḥarakāt'. These vowels are important, not only for reading, but also for the meaning of the sentence, as the meaning is often linked to the vowel on the last letter. For example: the following two sentences contain the same words in the same order, but the meaning is different. The only difference is the vowel above the last letter of each word.

١- سَمِعَ الطَّالِبُ الْأُسْتَاذَ

٢- سَمِعَ الطَّالِبُ الْأُسْتَاذُ

1. The student heard the teacher.
2. The teacher heard the student.

The change that occurs at the end of words in Arabic is called إعراب - *ʾrāb* (declensions). Each of these vowels is a sign of a case:

- kasra: is a sign for the genitive case which concerns nouns only.
- ḍamma: is a sign for the nominative case which concern both nouns and verbs.
- Fathā: is a sign for the accusative case which concern both nouns and verbs.
- Sukūn: is a sign for the jussive case which concern verbs only.

You are not expected to understand and apply this yet – declensions will be taught later in the [Beginners Arabic Course](#) with the Open Centre for Languages and Cultures.

In Table 3 you can find the vowels with examples. Listen carefully and repeat.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 8

Table 3 Vowels in Arabic

Examples in words	Examples with independent letters	Pronunciation	Vowels
عَلِمَ - عَقِيبَةٍ	ع - قِ	I	kasra كَسْرَة below the letter
لُبَّ - نُحُور	لُ - نُ	U	ḍamma ضَمَّة above the letter
جَهَل - تَغْلَب	ج - ثَ	A	Fathā فَتْحَة above the letter
دَفُّهُوم - عَقَل	ف - لُ	indicates the consonant	Sukūn سُكُون above the letter

In addition, there are tanwīn vowels, denoted by doubling the vowel signs (؃ , ؄ , ؅). These vowels are used for an indefinite noun or adjective for example: قَلَمٌ a pen (a definite noun would translate to “the pen”). It also comes with the last letter of the word. The pronunciation of these vowels is: in - un or an. Alif letter should be added to the end of the word when the tanwīn is double Fathā. Listen to the audio file to see how tanwīn is pronounced.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 9

- ١- طَالِبٌ - طَالِبٌ - طَالِباً
 ٢- مُعَلِّمٌ - مُعَلِّمٌ - مُعَلِّماً
 ٣- طَوِيلٌ - طَوِيلٌ - طَوِيلاً
 ٤- قَلَمٌ - قَلَمٌ - قَلْماً
 ٥- بَابٌ - بَابٌ - بَاباً

Activity 3

20 minutes

Listen to the audio and choose the letter that contains the Fathā vowel.

- ☐ ح
☐ م
☐ ب

Which of the following words contains a tanwīn?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 10

- ☐ يَغْمَلُ
☐ مَلْعَباً
☐ بَيْتٌ

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Interactive content is not available in this format.



Listen to the next audio and write the letters you hear in independent form, click 'reveal answer' to see the letters written down.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 11

Answer

Table 4 answers

1	2	3	4	5
ج	د	ش	و	ث

3 Other signs

1. Shadda الشَّدة

The sign (ـّ) is called 'shadda'. It is used to indicate doubling of consonant. In the following table you will see words contain 'shadda' in column A and see how is it pronounced in column B. Listen carefully and repeat what you hear.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 12

Table 5 Shadda

الشَّدة

A	B
الطَّالِب	الطُّطَالِب
لَقَدْ	لَقُذْد
يُذَرِّس	يُذَرِّس
حُجَّ	حُجَّج
ثُمَّ	ثُمَّم

2. Madda المَدَّة

The sign (َ) is called 'madda'. It comes only above the letter (ا) to be pronounced as (ā).

Here are some examples of 'madda'. Listen carefully and repeat.

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 13

- ١- آخذ
- ٢- الآمال
- ٣- آثر
- ٤- الآن
- ٥- ملجأ

Activity 4 20 minutes

Which of the following words contains shadda?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 14

- ☐ يُفَكِّر
- ☐ وَرَقَةٌ
- ☐ الذَّهَب

Which of the following words contains madda?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 15

- ☐ الأَمْر
- ☐ الآدَاب
- ☐ مُؤْمِن

Interactive content is not available in this format.



4 A short history of Arabic

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date of the emergence and development of the Arabic Language, but it was likely around the 7th century BC on the Arabian Peninsula. Arabic belongs to the Semitic Language Family (along with Hebrew, for example) and has been influenced by and impacted other languages over the course of its almost 3000 year long history.



Figure 2 The Ramadan Kaaba

Arabic was chosen to be the Holy Qur'an's language at the advent of Islam (622). Arabic then became an important language of all Muslims, and non-Arab Muslims started to learn it to understand the Qur'an. This situation also transformed Arabic from a language spoken in a relatively small area into a language used worldwide. The Qur'an was also central to the development of Arabic language sciences. The Qur'an as the holy text of God is seen as unlikely to contain any mistakes in linguistics, and Arab linguists therefore regard the language used in the Qur'an as a rule of linguistics based on this belief. You will find that the Qur'an is quoted in most Arabic grammar books not to primarily reinforce religious beliefs, but to teach the language.

Those who are interested in learning Arabic will find it difficult in several stages of learning the language, regardless of their first language. The majority of these difficulties are due to the quite complex grammar of Arabic. In Arabic, as was previously explained, vowels are important in determining meaning. Examples for this are that unlike many other languages, Arabic distinguishes between singular, plural and dual. Nouns, adjectives, pronouns and articles can furthermore be male and female. This is something you might know from European languages like French and German, but unlike in these languages, verbs are also gendered.

The Arabic alphabet will be new to most learners, and Arabic, unlike many other languages, is written right to left. The letters are not written separately within the word. Each letter can take three different forms depending on its position within the word.

While it is important to be aware of these potential challenges, worry not – it is by no means impossible to learn Arabic, but it will take practice!

5 Standard Arabic and dialects

The first thing that new learners often wonder about is the difference between Standard Arabic and its dialects: Where should the learner begin? What are the differences between the standard language and the dialects?

Arabic dialects are as old as the language itself. After the spread of the Arabs to different geographical regions, the dialects also developed further. The dialect of each society that emerged was affected by the languages spoken by their neighbours and from groups who already lived in the area, for example. Don't forget, the distance between each of these groups was vast – it stretched from North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and across the Asian continent.

The most important difference between standard Arabic and local dialects is that the dialects are flexible and not bound by the strict rules found in Standard Arabic. Standard Arabic is the language of writing, literature and journalism and has grammar that has not changed for centuries. This makes the Arabic language distinct from other languages, as those who know Arabic can understand the Arabic texts written more than a thousand years ago. If you would like to find out more about this, click on the links to these resources:

1. [Shou, shinou, ey: Five major Arabic dialects and what makes them unique](#)
2. [Did you know?: The Evolution of the Arabic language in the Silk Roads](#)
3. [18 Ways to Say Thank You in Arabic – Sound Like a Local](#)

The reasons that drive people to learn Arabic are varied, as it is a language with a long scientific, literary, and cultural history, and it is spoken by more than 300 million people as their mother tongue. It is also one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

You have reached this point of the course because you have a reason why you would like to learn the language. There will be 'lightbulb' moments as a learner where you are especially passionate about the language, but there will also be times when you will consider giving up on this challenging endeavour. When that day comes, it might be good to remind yourself of why Arabic is a great language to learn. Here are two resources that might be helpful:

1. [Why should you learn Arabic? An American perspective](#)
2. [Why should you learn Arabic? A British perspective.](#)

Activity 5

 15 minutes

As a last step in this first part of the course, take a few minutes to think about your expectations and motivations for learning a new language.

Why would you like to learn Arabic? How proficient would you like to be?

Provide your answer...

Answer

There is no right or wrong here, of course. It can be fun to get a basic understanding of how a language works that is very different (or also similar!) to languages you already speak, or if you have holidays booked, it is nice to demonstrate an interest

in the local culture by speaking in the local language where possible. If you would like to become fluent enough to hold a conversation, it's important that you manage your expectations. Studying alone can only get you so far, but finding a tandem learning partner, listening to music and watching films or shows with subtitles can be very helpful, too.

How much time would you like to spend on learning Arabic each week?

Provide your answer...

Answer

There is actually a magic number that the US Foreign Service Institute came up with that tells you how many hours English native speakers need to study in order to become fluent in Arabic: 2200. This means that if you studied the language for 4 hours per week, you could be fluent in 10 years – more dedicated periods or intensive courses would shorten this time, of course. As a comparison, the same institute estimates that if a native speaker of English learned French instead, they could do so in “only” 580 hours, so a quarter of the time. These are of course not reliable numbers, but they do indicate that Arabic is one of the hardest languages to learn. This should not discourage you at all, as it's highly rewarding!

This course is a pre-course for the short course [Introduction to Arabic Language and Culture](#). Based on these reasons, why do you think culture as a subject to teach is included this early on?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Language and culture cannot be seen as separate entities. Language reflects beliefs, values and worldviews of its speakership. Learning a language while considering why certain phrases and communication styles are preferred in particular contexts allows you to understand people and their ways of being better than by simply learning grammar.

6 This week's quiz

Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz.

Activity 6

 20 minutes

1. Listen to the audio and identify the letter you heard.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 16

- ☐ م
- ☐ غ
- ☐ و

2. Listen to the audio and identify the letter you heard.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 17

- ☐ ل
- ☐ ت
- ☐ ظ

3. Listen to the audio and identify the letter you heard.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 18

- ☐ ن
- ☐ ص
- ☐ ح

4. Listen to the audio and identify the letter's vowel.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 19

- ☐ كَسْرَة
- ☐ فَتْحَة
- ☐ ضَمَّة

5. Listen to the audio and identify the letter's vowel.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 20

- ☐ كَسْرَة
- ☐ فَتْحَة
- ☐ ضَمَّة

6. Which of the following information is correct about tanwīn?

- ☐ It can come with any letter of the word.
- ☐ It can come with all kinds of words including the verb.
- ☐ It comes with the last letter of the word.

7. Which of the following words contains tanwīn?

- ☐ حَسْبُ
- ☐ كُرْسِي
- ☐ وَلَدٍ

8. Which of the following words **doesn't** contain tanwīn?

- ☐ مُدِيرًا
- ☐ يَدْرُسُ
- ☐ سَافِرَ

9. Which of the following vowels is written below the letter?

- ☐ كَسْرَة
- ☐ فَتْحَة
- ☐ ضَمَّة

10. Which of the following words contain madda?

- ☐ الظُّهُور

- ☐ الدُّرُوب
- ☐ الأَمَال

Summary of Week 1

In this week you took the first steps of learning Arabic, namely learning about the alphabet and an introduction to the role vowels. You also read about reasons for learning Arabic and who speaks (or writes!) it, and how dialects differ from Standard Arabic. In Week 2 you will learn how to connect the letters, and you will have a first try at writing in Arabic.

Now go to [Week 2](#).

Week 2: Joining letters

Introduction

In this week you will learn joining letters, long vowels, interrogative particles, and the influence of Arabic on other languages.

Week 2 will be focusing on the further foundations of learning Arabic, like joining letters, long vowels, interrogative particles, and the influence of Arabic on other languages. At this stage, listening repeatedly to the audios, repeating, and writing are highly recommended. This second week forms the basis for further courses on the Arabic language – resources you discover here will prove useful as you continue learning.

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- understand the Arabic writing system
- pronounce and write the Arabic alphabet
- understand the influence of Arabic on other languages.

1 Joining letters

In Arabic, joining letters is a fundamental aspect of reading and writing. Arabic is a cursive script, meaning that letters are written in a connected manner. Joining letters correctly is essential to ensure legibility and readability of written Arabic. The first thing you should learn is that Arabic, unlike many other languages, is written from right to left. Each letter has two or three forms in joint writing in addition to its independent form, depending on their position in the word: initial (beginning of the word), medial (in the middle) and final (last). In the tables below you can find a complete list of all Arabic letters, as well as their form in each of the three possible positions in a word, as well as examples. The table is long and you are not expected to know all of it by heart after one session. We recommend that you revisit it as you learn the language. To break the table up, there are activities for you to practice with in-between.

- Meanings of words will not be given because the aim here is to focus on writing exercises.
- Some letters are not connected to the letter that follows them, so they are written in the same way in the middle of the word and at the end of the word.

Table 1 Joining letters part 1

Final	Medial	Initial	The letter (Independent)
ل	ل	ا	ا
عصا	ذهاب	الم	
ب	ب	ب	ب
حب	طبق	بقرة	
ت	ت	ت	ت
بيت	لكتب	تعلم	
ث	ث	ث	ث
حث	مثال	ثوم	
ج	ج	ج	ج
حج	يجب	جمل	
ح	ح	ح	ح
بلح	الحب	حمل	
خ	خ	خ	خ
بطيخ	يخسر	خوف	
د	د	د	د
يد	حديد	دب	

ذ ذ ذ ذ

لذيذ مذب ذهب

Activity 1

 15 minutes

How do you write the independent form of the second letter in the word بقرة ?

- ☐ ف
- ☐ ق
- ☐ غ

Which of the following words contains the خ letter?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

- ☐ يخسر
- ☐ بطيخ
- ☐ جمل

Now, try to write some of the letters yourself. Watch the videos and copy the movement on a piece of paper.

Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Table 2 Joining letters part 2

Final	Medial	Initial	The letter (Independent)
ر	ر	ر	ر
تمر	طائرة	راهب	
ز	ز	ز	ز
تلفاز	ميزان	زرافة	
س	س	س	س
شمس	السماء	سد	
ش	ش	ش	ش
عش	الشروق	شمس	

ص	ص	ص	ص
صباح	الصبح	مقص	
ض	ض	ض	ض
ضرب	حضر	أبيض	
ط	ط	ط	ط
طبيب	بطريق	خي	ط
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
ظهر	محفظة	حفظ	
ع	ع	ع	ع
علم	لعب	بائع	
غ	غ	غ	غ
غفر	الغروب	صاغ	

What is the second letter of the word حضر ? Write it in the independent form in the box below.

Provide your answer...

Answer

ض

Which of the following words contains the غ letter?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 2

- ☐ ظهر
- ☐ بائع
- ☐ الغروب

Now, try to write some of the letters yourself. Watch the videos and copy the movement on a piece of paper.

Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



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Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Video content is not available in this format.



Table 3 Joining letters part 3

Final	Medial	Initial	The letter (Independent)
ف	فـ	ف	ف
ضعيف	جفاف	فهم	
ق	قـ	قـ	ق
أغلق	صرقر	قريب	
كـ	كـ	كـ	ك
سمك	يكتب	كتاب	
لـ	لـ	لـ	ل
ليل	علم	لعب	
مـ	مـ	مـ	م
علم	ليدون	منزل	
نـ	نـ	نـ	ن
غصن	عنب	نمر	
هـ	هـ	هـ	هـ
وجه	يهتف	هذا	
وـ	وـ	وـ	و
يلهو	الوصول	وصل	
سي	يـ	يـ	ي
غني	ثمين	يلعب	

Which of the following letters cannot be connected to the next letter in writing?

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 3

- ☐ و
- ☐ ع
- ☐ ز

For this task you need a piece of paper. Below are five words, all written in independent letters only. Can you connect them? Click reveal answer to see the correct answer.

- ١- ك ت ب
- ٢- ر س م
- ٣- ي ذ ه ب
- ٤- ق ل م
- ٥- ب ي ت

Answer

- ١- ك ت ب
- ٢- رسم
- ٣- يذهب
- ٤- قلم
- ٥- بيت

Match the word written by the independent letter with the word written by the same letters in the connected form.

م ن ز ل

خ ر ي ف

ع ص ف و ر

س ن ج ا ب

ق م ي ص

Match each of the items above to an item below.

منزل

خريف

عصفور

سَنَجَاب

قَمِيص

Rewrite the following words as separate letters as in the example.

Example:

ت ف ا ح

١- طعام

٢- شراب

٣- مطبخ

٤- منزل

٥- سرير

Answer

١- ط ع ا م

٢- ش ر ا ب

٣- ن ط ب خ

٤- م ن ز ل

٥- س ر ي ر

Now, try to write some of the letters yourself. Watch the videos and copy the movement on a piece of paper.

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2 Long vowels and issues with reading and writing

In Week 1 you were introduced to Arabic vowels. In this week you will learn about long vowels in addition to 'At-Tā' al-marbūṭah' and 'Hamza', which are also crucial for reading and meaning-making. As a reminder, have a look at the table from the last week:

Table 4 Vowels in Arabic (repeated from Week 1)

Examples in words	Examples with independent letters	Pronunciation	Vowels
عَلِمَ - حَقِيقَةٌ	ع - ق	I	kasra كسرة below the letter
لُب - نُحُور	ل - ن	U	ḍamma ضمة above the letter
جَمَل - تَعَلَّب	ج - ت	A	Fatha فَتحة above the letter
مَفْهُوم - عَمَلٌ	ف - ل	indicates the consonant	Sukūn سُكُون above the letter

Long vowels:

Long vowels in Arabic can appear in three forms:

1. Fatha followed by Alif : ā
2. Kasra followed by yā': ī
3. ḍamma followed by wāw: ū

Examples: listen to the following audio and repeat to practice the long vowels in Arabic.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 4

Table 5 Examples of long vowels in Arabic

1 Fatha followed by Alif : ā	زَرَّافَةٌ - خَالِدٌ - مَاجِدٌ
2 Kasra followed by yā': ī	عَلِيمٌ - حَديدي - طَيِّبٌ
3 ḍamma followed by wāw: ū	عُزُوفٌ - ضُحُورٌ - زُحُورٌ

Activity 2

 15 minutes

Which of the following words contain a long vowel?

- ☐ حُزْن
- ☐ سَفِير
- ☐ أَجَاب

2.1 At-Tā' al-marbūṭah التَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ

This letter only appears at the end of a word, and it is written (ة) when the previous letter is connected to the letter before, and (ه) when the previous letter is written separately from the previous letter.

The most important thing to pay attention to with regard to writing is that when a word contains 'At-Tā' al-marbūṭah' and is connected to a pronoun, the 'At-Tā' al-marbūṭah' turns into a normal 'ت' letter, but is still pronounced in the same way.

For example: سَيَّارَةٌ means "a car", and when you want to say 'my car' you need to add a ي letter at the end, so the word should be written: سَيَّارَتِي

You are not expected to learn the pronouns in this early stage, the focus should be on writing.

In terms of pronunciation, this letter is pronounced 'هـ / H' when it is in the last word of the sentence or in a single word, even though it is written without change.

Listen to the following audio to learn more about the pronunciation of 'Et-Tā' al-marbūṭah'

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 5

١- سَيَّارَةٌ

٢- اشْتَرَيْتُ سَيَّارَةً جَدِيدَةً

٣- مَدْرَسَةٌ

٤- زُرْتُ الْمَدْرَسَةَ الْقَدِيمَةَ

Activity 3

 15 minutes

Interactive content is not available in this format.



Rewrite the following words and connect 'At-Tā' al-marbūṭah' with the pronoun **ي** as in the example.

Example:

حَقِيبَةٌ حَقِيبَتِي

١- مَدْرَسَةٌ

٢- طَاوِلَةٌ

٣- وَرَقَةٌ

٤- مُعَلِّمَةٌ

٥- شَجَرَةٌ

.....

Answer

١- مَدْرَسَتِي

٢- طَاوِلَتِي

٣- وَرَقَتِي

٤- مُعَلِّمَتِي

٥- شَجَرَتِي

2.2 الهمزة Al-hamzah

This sign َ which is pronounced as a glottal stop and can be written in different forms based on factors like its vowel and the vowel of the previous letter, such as: 'أ - إ - ؤ - ئ - ء - ؕ'. You don't have to memorise all of these at this stage, but you should pay close attention to the different pronunciations. Listen to the following audio and repeat what you hear.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 6

١- مَبْدَأُ

٢- شَاطِئُ

٣- الْبَرَاءَةُ

٤- الْاَكْتَبْ اب

٥- سَمَاء

٦- اَخَذَ

Activity 4 15 minutes

Interactive content is not available in this format.

**2.2 Al-Alif al-maqsūrā الألف المقصورة**

This letter only appears in the final position of some words, written (ى) when the previous letter is connected to the letter before, and (ي) when the previous letter is written separately. It is important at this stage not to confuse 'Al-Alif al-maqsūrā' which is pronounced as 'ā' with the 'ya', which is written similarly with a colon added below it (ي). Listen to the following audio and repeat what you hear.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 7

١- عَلَى

٢- هُدَى

٣- اَخْصَى

٤- فَتَى

٥- قَضَى

Activity 5 15 minutes

Which of the following words contain a long vowel?

☐ إِلَى☐ نَفَى☐ يَهْدِي

3 Interrogative particles in Arabic

Interrogative articles like when or who in English are the first step in forming a question to seek information. In the following table you will find a list of interrogative articles. In the activities that follow you will see how interrogative articles are used in a sentence. Listen carefully to the audio.

* Interrogative particles in Arabic comes first at the sentence.

Table 6 interrogative particles in Arabic

English	Arabic	Transliteration
Yes, No questions	هَلْ - أ	Hal - Aʿ
Who	مَنْ	Man
What	مَاذَا - مَا	Māḍā - Ma
Where	أَيْنَ	Ayna
When	مَتَى	Mata
Why	لِمَاذَا - لِمَ	Limāḍā - Lima
How	كَيْفَ	Kayfa
How much - how many	كَمْ	Kam
which	أَيَّ	Ayyu

4 The influence of Arabic on other languages

In Week 1 you learned a bit about the history of the Arabic language, and how its dialects are influenced by other languages. In this section, you'll learn a bit about how Eastern and Western languages were affected by Arabic. Some of these languages only adapted a few Arabic words, while some languages even adapted the Arabic alphabet in writing. These changes reflect the relationship that Arabs and locals had with each other.



Figure 1

In English for example, words that are used in the realms of politics, religion or law are usually of French origin (e.g., constitution, to baptize, judge – juge) whereas mundane words stayed Germanic (e.g. to say – sagen, hand – Hand), which reflects that following the Norman Conquest of 1066 the ruling class of Britain was French, spoke in French and only very slowly mingled with the locals.

Here are four examples of languages in which you can spot Arabic in the following sections.

4.1 The influence of Arabic on English

In addition to the influence of Arabic on the current numbering system used in English-speaking countries, when the Roman system was replaced by the Indo-Arabic numbering system, it may be surprising for some people that there are hundreds of Arabic words used in English. According to www.mothers tongue.ae there are approximately 10,000 words in English which stem from Arabic. But the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) narrowed it down to about 900 words by omitting speculative derivations and proper nouns. Often it's not just single words that are borrowed, but full phrases: For example: The expression 'Straw that Broke the Camel's Back' is a translation of the Arabic expression 'القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير'.

Activity 6 15 minutes

The following English words are of Arabic origin. Look each word up in the dictionary and write them in Arabic.

1. Lemon
2. Sugar
3. Alcohol

Answer

1. لَيْمُون - ١ / Laymōn
2. سُكَّر - ٢ / Sokkar
3. الْكُحُول - ٣ / Alkoḥol

4.2 The influence of Arabic on Spanish

Arabs ruled the Iberian Peninsula for a long period of nearly eight centuries (711–1492), and this period was full of cultural, scientific, literary and architectural achievements, some of which we are still witnessing until the present era.



Figure 2

The influence of Arabic on Spanish seems clear in many aspects, as some Spanish cities still retain their Arabic name to the present time, such as: Madrid مجريط and Valladolid بلد الوليد. In addition, Spanish uses a significant number of Arabic words - up to eight thousand.

Activity 7
 15 minutes

The following Spanish words are of Arabic origin. Look each word up in the dictionary and write them in Arabic.

1. Arroz
2. Albuhera
3. Hasta

Answer

1. أرز - ١ / Aroz
2. النخيرة - ٢ / Al-buḥayra
3. حتى - ٣ / attah

4.3 The influence of Arabic on Turkish

Naturally, the influence of Arabic on languages spoken in close geographical and cultural proximity is greater. Additional religious links are further incentives for people to learn Arabic language, as it is the language of the Holy Qur'an.

Turkish is one of the languages that was influenced by Arabic the most. The Arabic alphabet was for instance used throughout the Ottoman Empire – it was only in 1928 that Atatürk implemented reforms for the Turkish Republic that introduced Latin script as the official writing system.

According to the Turkish Language Academy, more than 6,000 words are loanwords from Arabic. For example: Saat , سَاعَة , Sa'a - Kalem قَلَم , Qalam, - Seccade , سَجَّادَة - Kitap, كِتَاب.

4.4 The influence of Arabic on Persian and Urdu

Persian and Urdu are among the languages most affected by Arabic, and they still use the Arabic alphabet to the present day. Persian is spoken in Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Urdu is mostly spoken in Pakistan. Both languages contain thousands of Arabic loanwords. For example : Silāḥ سلاح - Ta'tīr تَائِير in Persian, and Ḥawḍ حَوْض - Ṣaḥn صَحْن in Urdu.

Activity 8
 15 minutes

Are there any words of Arabic origin in your mother tongue? Give examples.

Provide your answer...

4.5 The contribution of Arab: Muslim scholars to different science fields

The influence of the Arabic language was not only confined to some words that other languages borrowed from Arabic, but the Arabic-speaking scholars made great scientific contributions, and their impact can still be felt today.



Figure 3 Map of the Arabian Peninsula

Activity 9

 15 minutes

The Guardian has named six amazing inventions from between the 9th and 15th centuries by Arab - Muslim scholars. Read [this article](#) and answer the questions next.

Who is the scholar who has a crater on the moon named after him?

- ☐ Al-Zahrawi
- ☐ Ibn Firmas
- ☐ Al-Idrisi

What does Al-Idrisi's world map contain?

Provide your answer...

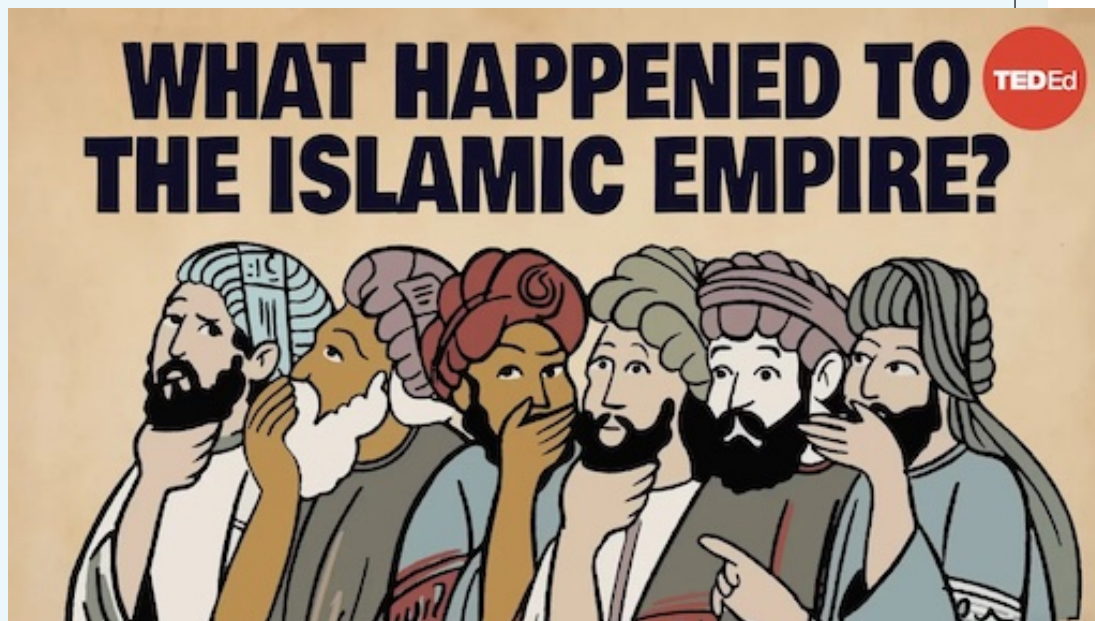
Answer

It contained detailed descriptions of the Christian north as well as the Islamic world, Africa and the Far East.

In the following video, you will see a condensed summary about 'The rise and fall of the medieval Islamic Empire'. This will give you an idea of the civilization that used Arabic as an official language. Watch the video and then answer the questions.

Video content is not available in this format.

The rise and fall of the medieval Islamic Empire: Petra Sijpesteijn & Birte Kristiansen



What is the capital of the Umayyad state? Does this city still exist or has it disappeared?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Damascus, it is the capital of Syria currently.

The Abbasids built a new capital for their state, Baghdad. In which Arab country is this city currently located?

Provide your answer...

Answer

Iraq

5 This week's quiz

Check what you've learned this week by taking the end-of-week quiz.

Activity 10

 20 minutes

1. Which of the following letters cannot be connected to the next letter in writing?

- ☐ م
- ☐ ز
- ☐ ع

2. Which of the following letters should be connected to the next and the previous letter in writing?

- ☐ ظ
- ☐ ب
- ☐ د

3. How many ك letters are there in the following sentence?

شَرِبَ الْكَغُرُ كَمَيَاتٍ كَبِيرَةً مِنَ الْمَاءِ

- ☐ 2
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 3

4. How many ع letters are there in the following sentence?

وَضَعَ الْعَامِلُ الْبِضَاعَةَ فِي الْعُلْبَةِ

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5

5. Which of the following words contain a long vowel?

- ☐ طَرِيقٌ
- ☐ مُنْذُ
- ☐ صَبَاحاً

6. Which of the following words contain 'At-Tā' al-marbūṭah'?

- ☐ كَأْسٌ
- ☐ طُفُولَةٌ
- ☐ قَلَمٌ

7. Which of the following words contain 'Hamza'?

- ☐ مَاءٌ
- ☐ تَفَقَّرَ
- ☐ الْإِمْلَاءُ

8. Fill in the blank with the appropriate interrogative particle.

سَاعَةً تَعْمَلُ فِي الْيَوْمِ؟

..... hours do you work daily?

- ☐ كَيْفَ
- ☐ مَنْ
- ☐ كَمْ

9. Fill in the blank with the appropriate interrogative particle.

اسم الكتاب الذي تَقْرَأُه؟

..... is the name of the book you are reading?

- ☐ أَيْنَ
- ☐ مَا
- ☐ لِمَاذَا

10. Which of the following languages still use the Arabic alphabet?

- ☐ Turkish
- ☐ Persian
- ☐ Urdu

Summary of Week 2

This second week covered joining letters, long vowels, and interrogative articles. Additionally, the influence of Arabic on other languages, and the history of Arabic empires and scientific achievements were introduced. To continue your journey of learning Arabic, we recommend that you practice how to write and connect letters in a vocabulary book. If you choose to continue to do the [full short course](#) with the Open Centre for Languages and Cultures, you will find it useful to continue using a notebook for new grammar rules and vocabulary, too.

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Week 2

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Activity 9 video: The rise and fall of the medieval Islamic Empire - Petra Sijpesteijn & Birte Kristiansen, TED-Ed, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

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