

ألف باء

Alif Baa

TEACHER'S EDITION

ألف باء Alif Baa

Introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds
with Website

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THIRD EDITION



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Preface to the Student

A *Ahlan wa Sahlan!* Welcome to Arabic! This textbook, *Alif Baa*, represents the first in a series of textbooks aimed at teaching Arabic to English-speaking students, followed by *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-ʿArabiyya Parts 1, 2, and 3*. The present book aims to help you learn to pronounce the sounds of Arabic and write its letters, and to begin speaking Arabic. Unit 1 will give you an overview of Arabic, and units 2 through 10 will introduce you to the letters, sounds, and symbols that make up the Arabic writing system. In addition to the sounds and letters of Arabic, *Alif Baa* will introduce and help you master over two hundred words of basic vocabulary, including important expressions for polite interaction with speakers of Arabic.

The materials are designed for you to prepare at home and come to class ready to speak, read, and write using what you have studied outside class. Everyone learns at his or her own pace, and class time is limited, so it will be much more efficient for you to prepare the material, listen, and practice at your own speed. The textbook and accompanying media are designed to give you everything you need to study and learn the sounds, letters, and vocabulary. *Alif Baa* is accompanied by audio, video, and interactive exercises available on a companion website, www.alkitaabtextbook.com, to be used outside of class. We have designed the book to work best when the companion website is fully used for practice and homework. We encourage you and your teachers to use it. The website includes all of the audio and video you need to complete the exercises in the book and online. The website can be used by independent learners or by a class, as most of the exercises are graded for immediate feedback. As you work through the book, you will see the icon , which indicates that an exercise can be found online. There are a few additional exercises and resources that are only online, as they cannot be replicated in a book. In addition, the glossary is available and fully searchable.

In addition to audio and video exercises and activities, you will watch videos of a calligrapher write the letters so that you have a model to follow as you work through them. The materials also contain some print examples of authentic or “real-life” Arabic from various sources, and we have included short cultural notes that explain some aspects of the situations that you will see in the scenes. You will find English–Arabic and Arabic–English glossaries at the end of the book that include all the words and expressions introduced in the book as active vocabulary. Please read the introductions to the glossaries before using them because each glossary is designed for specific purposes.

All of the listening and writing exercises in *Alif Baa* are designed as homework for you to do in preparation for class. This approach allows you to study and learn at your own pace and saves class time for interactive activities. A feature that is new in this third edition of the program are a number of interactive, autocorrecting exercises on the website that give you immediate feedback. It is very important that you work through all of these exercises as thoroughly as you can, and that you tell your instructor if you are having trouble with them in the form of many missed answers, or if you feel that you are just guessing and

not answering. Your instructor should collect from you and check the dictation and letter-connection exercises to check on your progress.

We believe that it is crucial for you to learn to recognize and produce Arabic sounds accurately from the outset for several reasons. First, you must learn to pronounce Arabic correctly in order to communicate effectively with Arabic speakers. Second, Arabic sounds are not very difficult. Many nonnative speakers have learned to pronounce Arabic sounds accurately as adults, and you should expect to do so as well. Third, it is important to learn the sounds correctly now when you have the time to concentrate on them; later you will be concentrating on other aspects of the language, such as vocabulary and grammar. Fourth, the Arabic language is structured around groups of consonant sounds that carry meaning, so the ability to recognize sounds accurately when you hear them will greatly enhance your ability to understand, learn, and remember vocabulary. Fifth, Arabic is largely phonetic, which means that if you learn the sounds correctly now, you will not suffer from spelling headaches later.

These materials include three different varieties of Arabic: The spoken Arabic of Cairo, the spoken Arabic of Damascus, and formal Arabic. Your instructor will decide which form or forms he or she wants you to activate, or learn to produce. You may want to listen to other varieties for exposure. You will notice that much of the vocabulary is shared but that some words differ from one variety or another. The key to dealing with the richness of variation in Arabic is to differentiate between what you recognize and what you use actively. Choose one form to use actively and leave the others for recognition. This is what native speakers do when they interact with people from other countries, and it is an important skill to develop. We hope that the following principles will help you use these materials as they were designed to be used:

(1) Study actively and interactively. Studying actively means that you are producing something, whether you are repeating sounds and words out loud, writing words, or creating sentences. Practice speaking every chance you get, with classmates, the dog, or to yourself. Most successful language learners talk out loud to themselves regularly. Study with a classmate because you are much more likely to study actively when you study with a partner. Every lesson in this book contains activities that are best done in pairs. The book and materials give you several open-ended exercises that you can do more than once, each time differently. Prepare for active participation in class too: Anticipate what you will be doing and be ready by planning and rehearsing the things you can say and do beforehand.

(2) Be an audiovisual learner. Although most of your studies now are visually oriented, you learned your native language mainly through hearing and listening rather than through reading and writing. As children, most of us watched films and television programs and had the same stories read to us over and over, and this repetition helped us to learn our native language. Each time you watch and listen you can learn something new, whether it is the way a vowel sounds with this new consonant or the way words are put together in a new sentence. As adult learners we can speed up this process with visual material as well, but the more you can integrate sound and shape and associate the two together, the faster your progress to fluency in Arabic will proceed. Engage more than one faculty at the same time: Repeat aloud while you are listening, and rather than write silently, say and repeat whatever you are writing out loud.

(3) Once is not enough. Listen to the audio and video material and practice writing the letters many times. Whether you are pronouncing new sounds, writing new letters, or studying vocabulary, you should repeat the activity until you can produce the sound or word comfortably and be able to “hear” it in your mind or write it in a shape that you are pleased with. Remember that you are training your brain and your muscles to do new things, and this takes practice.

(4) Own it. Make the words you are learning relevant to your life by using them to talk about your world. Personalizing vocabulary is the fastest way to memorize it. Own the sounds too: Once you learn them, they are not foreign sounds, they belong to you.

(5) Make the review and study of vocabulary part of your day. Language is cumulative, and while you are learning new words and expressions, it is important to integrate them with previously learned material. Pair up each new word with an old one. Using the new to review the old will take some organization, but it will pay off in greater fluency and accuracy. When you learn new words, take the opportunity to work on previously learned sounds. When you learn new letters, go back to old vocabulary to see if you can write any of them in Arabic script.

(6) Learning a language is a lot like learning to play a sport. The idea is to have fun while building skills. Both entail lots of repetition and exercises that build mental and physical strength. Expect to feel tired occasionally. Being tired is a good sign—it means that you are concentrating and learning actively.

Learning language requires exposure, time, and effort. The single most important factor in your success is your belief in your ability to learn Arabic. We wish you a successful and enjoyable learning experience!

Teacher's Guide

This textbook, and the continuing books in the *Al-Kitaab* program, are constructed around a philosophy of teaching and learning Arabic that continues to evolve. We ask that you, the instructor, read the Preface to the Student before reading this guide, that you have your students read it at home, and then discuss it with them in class so everyone understands the approach underlying the structure and contents of these materials.

It is crucial that you read through this entire book *before* teaching it so you can formulate your own vision of what the students can learn by the time they finish: What they will be able to read, write, and most importantly, say. This vision will affect the way you teach these materials. You also need to be well acquainted with the interactive materials that accompany this textbook, precisely because the students will be using them outside of class more than in class. Students will take their cue from you, the instructor, in the importance they attach to working with these materials and the way they approach them. The book is designed to work best with the companion website, www.alkitaabtextbook.com, which provides feedback to the at-home exercises that the students will complete. The website contains all of the audio and video material that you and your students need to complete the exercises in the book and at home. We encourage you to become familiar with all of the features of the website before you begin to teach.

Alif Baa consists of ten units and English–Arabic and Arabic–English glossaries. Unit 1 provides an overview of Arabic, including the transliteration system that is used to introduce vocabulary that cannot yet be written in Arabic. In this third edition of *Alif Baa*, the transliteration system has increased importance because of our decision to introduce vocabulary according to its functionality, not spelling; that is, many words are introduced to the students to be actively learned before they can write them in Arabic. Units 2 through 8 present the alphabet in groups that follow the modern Arabic order, with the exception that ي and و are presented in unit 2. Each unit contains a number of recorded listening exercises and drills on the alphabet and sound system, including reading, writing, connecting letters, and dictation. Students should complete all of the listening exercises and writing practice exercises at home. Many of the listening drills are interactive, autocorrecting exercises that the students will do on the website at home. The instructor will be able to see the students' work and progress in detail online.

In describing the sounds, we have avoided technical descriptions, opting instead for a more practical approach that uses tips and exercises that focus on the points of articulation of the sounds. Following the description of each sound, we have provided a brief explanation about the writing of the corresponding letter that is meant to accompany the video showing calligrapher Sayyid El-Shinnawi drawing each of the letters. Please encourage students to watch these videos as they work through the book. The materials are designed so that you do not have to waste time explaining the sounds and letters in class. Students should prepare at home and be ready to read and write in class.

Materials in *Alif Baa* integrate formal and spoken registers of Arabic and lay the foundation for the approach that is used throughout the *Al-Kitaab* series. This third edition of *Alif Baa* differs from the second edition in several important ways. You will notice the addition of Levantine Arabic scenes, filmed in Damascus, that run parallel to the Egyptian scenes. A more important change, however, is the way in which the colloquial materials have been incorporated into the pedagogy. In this edition spoken forms of vocabulary are presented alongside formal Arabic forms in writing, and vocabulary lists give students the option of learning a set of words in formal Arabic, Egyptian, or Levantine. In addition, many of the vocabulary exercises and activities include colloquial words and expressions, and students are given opportunities to practice and activate these forms. We believe that you will be pleased with what your students can do with Arabic by using just a few colloquial expressions and having the freedom to create with the language.

Alif Baa, third edition, gives you, the instructor, more choices. In addition to the letters and sounds, each unit contains vocabulary and dialogues designed to be prepared at home and activated in class. The vocabulary is introduced in formal Arabic as well as in two dialects, and you must choose which of these varieties you will ask students to activate. Our experience working with multiple varieties in class has demonstrated to us that students have no trouble being exposed to more than one variety of Arabic, as long as they are not held responsible for “purity”—that is, as long as you allow them flexibility to decide which form they want to use, and that you allow for a certain amount of mixing that is normal in mixed-dialect and diasporic communities. The main philosophical principles that underlie the design of these materials can be summarized as follows:

(1) Arabic is one language, rich in registers and varieties.

Each register of Arabic reflects vital parts of Arab culture, so students need to learn formal and informal varieties to understand the language and the culture. Our decision to include an introduction to colloquial Arabic is also a natural consequence of our desire to use language forms that are appropriate to context. A basic colloquial vocabulary of approximately twenty-five words out of approximately two hundred presented in this book gives learners the tools they need to begin to express and communicate with native speakers in their immediate environment who will not speak to them in formal Arabic. In this third edition you and your students have new Syrian versions of the colloquial dialogues so you can have a choice of which dialect to teach. We have included formal Arabic vocabulary for those who prefer to work in this register, but we have not recorded dialogues in formal Arabic because of its artificiality in such contexts. This is not the time to worry about the mixing of registers in speech or in writing. Students’ ability to choose appropriate vocabulary for the situation or context will evolve over time. The three crucial speaking skills to develop at this stage are pronunciation of sounds, gender agreement, and correct use (conjugation in context) of the forms of the verb we have included here.

(2) Everyone can produce Arabic sounds accurately, and it is necessary to encourage and to expect accuracy from the outset.

Not only is this an excellent opportunity for you and your students to focus all of your attention on the phonetic aspects of Arabic, it is also better to form good habits from the

start. We believe that all language skills are important and that they reinforce each other. The ability to hear the difference between, for example ق and ج is a necessary prelude to being able to produce them, and the ability to do both will aid in mastering Arabic morphology, the root and pattern system, spelling, and retaining vocabulary. Your attitude as a teacher of Arabic should be that everyone can learn to produce these sounds.

(3) It is crucial to set high expectations while maintaining an encouraging and cooperative atmosphere in class by rewarding success verbally and often.

It is our job to expect a high degree of effort from students in preparing for class, and to reward this effort by spending class time doing interactive and small-group activities that permit maximum participation from all students. The book is designed so that the students can do much of their learning outside of class, each person working at his or her own pace so differences in learning speed will not affect the class as a whole. It is also important that students realize right away that the burden of learning is on them, because this helps them to become active learners. Finally, it is essential to follow through on the expectations you set. By “teaching” them what they should have done outside of class, you might inadvertently reward students who have not prepared and punish those who have.

(4) Vocabulary is the foundation of Arabic skills.

Grammar is necessary but not difficult; more important, the grammar that a student needs at the Novice level is simple and can be activated along with vocabulary. A major shift in this edition with regard to the treatment of vocabulary is our decision to introduce words and expressions in functional rather than alphabetical order; that is, words are introduced when they can be productively used, not when they can be written in Arabic script. Please note that the vocabulary used in listening and handwriting exercises *is not active* vocabulary. The meanings of some of these words are given merely as entertainment, so the learner knows that he or she is writing meaningful words. We have used only meaningful words throughout these materials because word structure in Arabic is based on consonant–vowel patterns, and we believe that listening to a large number of words, even if one does not know their meaning, will help learners begin to internalize these patterns and facilitate learning vocabulary. Active vocabulary is introduced in the vocabulary charts and recorded for students to listen to and learn at home.

(5) The multiple varieties and registers of Arabic constitute a richness to be embraced, not feared.

Our decision to introduce vocabulary in spoken and formal Arabic may blur the boundaries between these two registers; however, the reality of Arabic today is that these boundaries are quite porous. Even in the most formal of contexts, spoken forms of Arabic are often heard mixed in with formal Arabic. Moreover, most Arabic-speaking populations living in communities outside the Arab world, or in the Gulf, are exposed to and interact with dialects different from their own on a regular basis, and in such multidialect situations, few speakers maintain “pure” dialect. We do not need to expect a level of “purity” from our students that does not exist in the community or in the world around them. If your students will interact with Palestinians, Lebanese, Egyptians, or Moroccans outside of class, they will be exposed to different words. We can embrace this variety and richness of Arabic. Students’ attitudes

toward Arabic may reflect your own, so think carefully about what you project to them.

Designing your syllabus

We believe that this material can be actively learned in approximately twenty-two class hours plus forty-four to fifty homework hours, including quizzes and a skit presentation. Students should be told from the outset to expect two hours of homework for every hour in class. We suggest the following schedule as a rule of thumb in planning your syllabus. Notice that units 4, 5, and 6 are longer than other units, in part because of the extra work needed on emphatic letters and sounds. Because of their length, these lessons have been constructed with two different sets of vocabulary and speaking work so that a balance of alphabet and speaking work can be maintained day-to-day. An extra class hour is built into unit 7 because of the large number of activities in it. This time projection rests on several key assumptions:

(1) The purpose of a textbook is to present information to the learner for acquisition outside of class, and the purpose of class time is to activate (not present or explain) the material that students have prepared at home. These materials have been designed so that students can do most of the preparation and studying of new material outside of class in order for class time to be spent doing interactive activities, practicing writing in the form of in-class dictation exercises, and practicing conversations. Assign all of the listening and writing exercises as homework so that students learn the sounds and letters at their own pace at home. In class, have them activate what they have studied through dictation practice of your own design and in-class exercises. As a new feature in this edition, the vocabulary lists include all of the expressions in the colloquial dialogues and allow students to prepare everything, even the dialogues, at home before coming to class. This approach has several important pedagogical benefits.

First, it allows students to work at their own pace and avoids the frustration that can be experienced by students of different backgrounds and abilities. Second, the steps that we have provided in these exercises will help students develop listening strategies and encourage them to think not just about what they are listening to but how they are listening. These are strategies that you can encourage and build upon in class as well. Third, it allows more class time for activation: Rather than spending half an hour listening (passively) to the dialogue, students can come to class prepared to discuss what they saw and heard with a partner, listen one more time in preparation for activation, and spend at least twenty minutes in conversation with their classmates, moving from one partner to another for variety.

(2) Class time should be distributed between two types of activities: sound and letter work in the form of dictation and paired reading exercises, and conversation and vocabulary practice in pairs and small groups. The distribution formula will depend on your goals and priorities. If you believe speaking skills are important, we suggest that you aim to have at least some interactive work during every class period, and that the time set aside for this activity increase as students learn more vocabulary so that by the time you reach the end of the book, you are spending 65% to 75% of class time with students working together speaking directly with each other. Working in pairs and small groups is essential for students to build language skills and confidence. While it is true that the instructor may sacrifice a degree of control in this kind of classroom, the success of this approach in building speaking skills is clear. You will

not be able to correct every utterance, but accuracy will improve if students see it rewarded. In the end, it is self-correction, not teacher correction, that underlies accurate speaking. Our goal is to train students to correct themselves and help each other, and our challenge is to create an atmosphere that demands accuracy in pronunciation with encouragement to create freely. We believe that it is good policy to reassure students that they will never be penalized for trying to say something new using the words they are learning.

Unit	Class Hours	Homework Hours
1	2	3
2	2	4
3	2	4-5
4	3	6-7
5	3	6-7
6	4	8
7	4	8
8	2	4-5
9	2	4
10	2	4
Total	26	51-55

(3) Homework should be corrected as it is prepared, that is, outside of class. Many of the exercises autocorrect on the interactive media, which has the advantage of giving students immediate feedback. However, the fact that you will not see this work makes it all the more important that you collect and go over the dictation and letter-connection drills to make sure that the students are making good progress. Students should devote around two hours a night to homework and class preparation. All of the listening exercises in the textbook are meant to be done at home, and the drills are all labeled *At home*, *In class*, or both.

(4) Our approach stresses dictation because we believe that the mastery of sounds and the ability to relate sounds and writing must be developed early. For in-class dictation, use your own words rather than those in the book or on the homework. In the beginning you will want to repeat words many times and have students repeat as a group to take the pressure off individual performance. It takes several repetitions of a new or unfamiliar sound in order to identify it, and several more to be able to produce it. Later, as students' skills develop, you may want to limit your repetitions to three to five times to help students develop their "active memory" listening skills. It is very important to give students feedback on their dictation skills during the activity. If you can have some or all the students write on the board, you

can check their progress most easily. It is also beneficial, if possible, to have an assistant in class who can go around the room and help students individually during dictation time. An advanced nonnative student can fill this role if your program allows it, and it is encouraging for beginning students to see nonnative peers who are successful learners of Arabic.

(5) Active learning of vocabulary is the single biggest challenge that faces the learner of Arabic. Native speakers of Arabic start their study of Arabic in school already knowing six years' worth of vocabulary; the foreign learner has none and needs to catch up before mastering the intricacies of formal Arabic syntax. In the forthcoming third editions of the other books in the *Al-Kitaab* textbook program, there will be increases in the amount of vocabulary and exercises, and this new edition of *Alif Baa* is no exception. Each unit includes at least one vocabulary section and several exercises and activities for activation, most of which are designed to be prepared at home and activated in class. You will also find interactive vocabulary activities with phrases and sentences. By unit 6 you can push the students to produce sentences (not just words), and we expect the students to have reached between Novice Mid and Novice High proficiency by the time they finish these materials. The key to this achievement is time spent activating vocabulary in context. Of course, no textbook can take the place of a good teacher. It is our hope that these materials will help you to enrich your classroom and make learning Arabic an enjoyable and productive experience for your students.

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مع خالص الشكر والتقدير لكم جميعاً



الوحدة الأولى

Unit One

In this unit:

The Arabic Alphabet

Special Characteristics of Arabic Script

Pronunciation of Arabic

Formal and Spoken Arabic

A Transliteration System

Vocabulary and Conversation:
Greetings and Introductions

New Vocabulary

Egyptian and Levantine Colloquial


Video Dialogues

Culture: Saying Hello



>> Letters and Sounds

The Arabic Alphabet














The Arabic alphabet contains twenty-eight letters, including consonants and long vowels, and fourteen symbols that function as short vowels and pronunciation markers, or as markers of certain grammatical functions. Units 2 through 10 introduce these letters and symbols individually. You will work with the workbook and the interactive media in tandem, and in the text you will see this media symbol , which indicates that you should listen to or watch the interactive media. The chart below shows the twenty-eight letters. Starting in the upper right-hand corner, the chart reads across from right to left, which is the direction Arabic is written and read.

Listening Exercise 1. Arabic letters and sounds (At home)

Watch the videos to see and hear the pronunciation of these letters.

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

The next chart shows the fourteen extra-alphabetical symbols and their names. They include short vowels, pronunciation symbols, grammatical endings, spelling variants, and a consonant that, for historical reasons, is not represented in the alphabet chart. These symbols will be introduced in units 2 through 10 along with the alphabet.

 kasra	 Damma	 fatHa
 tanwiin al-kasr	 tanwiin aD-Damm	 tanwiin al-fatH
 waSla	 shadda	 Sukuun
 dagger alif	 alif madda	 alif maqSuura
	 hamza	 taa marbuuTa

Special Characteristics of Arabic Script

The Arabic alphabet and writing system has four major characteristics that distinguish it from its European counterparts.

- (1) Arabic is written from right to left. One consequence of this directionality is that Arabic books, newspapers, and magazines are opened and read in the opposite direction from European and American printed materials.
- (2) Letters are connected in both print and script, unlike those of the Latin alphabet, which are connected only in script. The following individual letters are written one after the other. However, even though these letters occur in the correct combination and order, they do not form a word when they are written this way: **ا ل ب ا ب**

When they are connected, however, they do spell a word: **الباب** (al-baab *the door*).

Notice that not all the letters in **الباب** connect to the following letter. This is a characteristic of certain letters that you will master as you learn to write. See if you can identify the nonconnecting letters in the following words:

لذيذ السودان زين أسد مبارك

As you learn the alphabet, note which letters connect and which do not. When you write words, it is important not to lift the pen or pencil from the page until you get to a natural break at a nonconnecting letter.

- (3) Letters have slightly different shapes depending on where they occur in a word. The alphabet chart at the beginning of this unit gives the forms of the letters when they are written independently; however, these forms vary when the letters are written in initial, medial, or final position. “Initial position” means that the letter is not connected to a previous letter. “Medial position” indicates that the letter is between two other letters.

“Final position” means that the letter is connected to the preceding letter. Most letters have a particularly distinct shape when they occur in the final position, similar to the way English uses initial uppercase letters for words that begin sentences.

The chart below gives you an idea of the extent of this variation. You will see that each letter retains a basic shape throughout, which is the core of the letter. If the letter has a dot, the number and position also remain the same. Note that the last three letters, which all connect, appear to have a “tail” in their independent and final forms that drops off when they are connected and is replaced by a connecting segment that rests on the line. Look for the core shape of each letter; its dots, if any; the connecting segments; and the final tail in the following chart.

Final position	Medial position	Initial position	Independent shape
ل	ل	ا	ا
ث	ث	ث	ث
ج	ج	ج	ج
ع	ع	ع	ع

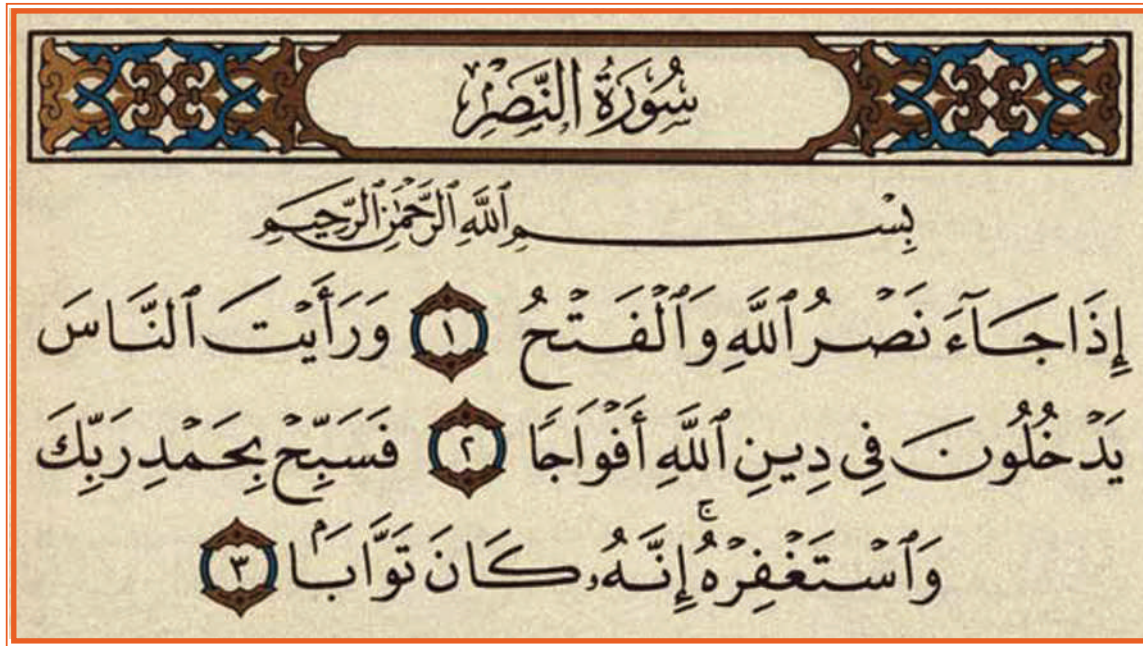
As you learn each letter of the alphabet you will learn to read and write all of its various shapes. You will be surprised how quickly you master them with a little practice! (4) Arabic script consists of two separate “layers” of writing. The basic skeleton of a word is made up of the consonants and long vowels. Short vowels and other pronunciation and grammatical markers are separated from the consonant skeleton of the word. This second layer, called *vocalization* or *vowelling*, is normally omitted in writing, and the reader recognizes words without it. Compare the following two versions of the same text, a line of poetry, the first of which represents the normal way of writing without vocalization, and the second of which has all the pronunciation markers added:

بسقط اللوى بين الدخول فحومل
بِسْقَطِ اللَّوَى بَيْنَ الدَّخُولِ فَحَوْمَلِ

(The Great Qays) من معلقة امرئ القيس

قفا نبك من ذكرى حبيب ومنزل
قِفَا نَبْكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِى حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزِلِ

Texts that are normally vocalized include elementary school textbooks, some editions of classical literary texts, and religious texts such as the Qur'an and the Bible. In scripture this precision has religious significance: The extra markings on the text leave no doubt as to the exact reading intended. Thus the texts of the Qur'an and Bible show full vocalization, as you can see in the following excerpts.



سورة النصر من القرآن الكريم

سِفْرُ التَّكْوِينِ: الْأَصْحَاحُ الْأَوَّلُ

١ فِي الْبَدْءِ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 ٢ وَكَانَتِ الْأَرْضُ خَرِبَةً وَخَالِيَةً، وَعَلَى وَجْهِ الْعَمْرِ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَرُوحُ اللَّهِ
 يَرِفُّ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْمِيَاهِ ٣ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ: "لِيَكُنْ نُورٌ"، فَكَانَ نُورٌ
 ٤ وَرَأَى اللَّهُ النُّورَ أَنَّهُ حَسَنٌ. وَفَصَلَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ النُّورِ وَالظُّلْمَةِ.
 ٥ وَدَعَا اللَّهُ النُّورَ نَهَارًا، وَالظُّلْمَةَ دَعَاهَا لَيْلًا. وَكَانَ مَسَاءً وَكَانَ صَبَاحٌ يَوْمًا وَاحِدًا.

الخدمة العربية للكراسة بالإنجيل

In schoolbooks, vowel markings are used to introduce new vocabulary and to enable the students to learn the correct pronunciation of formal Arabic with all the correct grammatical endings. The following example is taken from an elementary reader used in Qatar.



كُلُّ شَعْبٍ لَهُ مَلَابِسٌ خَاصَّةٌ بِهِ، تَخْتَلِفُ عَنِ مَلَابِسِ الشُّعُوبِ الْآخَرَى قَلِيلاً أَوْ كَثِيراً. وَالْمَلَابِسُ عَلَى اخْتِلَافِ أَشْكَالِهَا، تَحْفَظُ الْجِسْمَ مِنَ الْآذَى، وَتَحْمِيهِ مِنَ الْحَرِّ وَالْبَرْدِ وَتُعْطِيهِ مَنَظَرًا جَمِيلاً

(اللغة العربية للصف الثاني الابتدائي، الفصل الدراسي الأول، وزارة التعليم بقطر ٢٠٠٨)

Once students learn the new words, they see them in regular, unvocalized script. You will learn vocabulary the same way. Most books, magazines, and newspapers are unvocalized, like the following newspaper article.

٦٩٣ ألفاً يفقدون وظائفهم في أمريكا

- نيويورك - رويترز - أفاد تقرير أعدته أمس شركة خاصة للتوظيف ، بأن القطاع الخاص فقد ٦٩٣ ألف وظيفة في كانون الأول (ديسمبر) الماضي ، مقارنة بـ ٤٧٦ ألفاً في تشرين الثاني (نوفمبر) وبمعدل يفوق تقديرات الخبراء الاقتصاديين بشدة.
- وبلغ متوسط تقديرات ٢٠ خبيراً استطلعت وكالة "رويترز" توقعاتهم للتقرير الذي تصدره شركة "إيه دي بي" لخدمات أصحاب الأعمال ، ٤٧٣ ألفاً.

من جريدة الحياة ٢٠٠٩/١/٨

In unvocalized texts, possible ambiguities in form arise every once in a while; however, the meaning is almost always clear from the context. In the rare cases in which there may be some ambiguity, a clarifying vowel may be added. In the *Al-Kitaab* textbook program, vocalization marks will be used when new vocabulary is introduced, but thereafter you will be expected to have memorized the pronunciation of the word, and these marks will be omitted. Since Arabic speakers normally read and write without vocalization, it is best to become accustomed to reading and writing that way from the beginning.

Pronunciation of Arabic

In addition to recognizing the characteristics of the Arabic script, you should also be aware of certain features about the sounds of Arabic.

(1) Arabic has a one-to-one correspondence between sound and letter, whereas English spelling often uses one letter or combination of letters to represent several different sounds. Consider the plural marker *s* in the words *dogs* and *books*, and note that the sound of the first is actually *z*, not *s*. Compare also the two different sounds spelled as *th* as in *think* and *those*. These are two distinct sounds, and Arabic has two different letters to represent them. American English speakers sometimes confuse pronunciation and spelling without realizing it. For example, think about the word *television*. This word has been adopted into Arabic and is pronounced something like *tilivizyoon*. It is also spelled with the Arabic letter that corresponds to the sound *z* because that is the way it is pronounced. English spelling, on the other hand, requires an *s*, even though there is no *s* sound in the word. The letters we use to write English can represent different sounds, so it is better to associate Arabic sounds not with individual letters but rather with words so you can remember which sound corresponds to the Arabic sound you are learning. For example, associate the sound *th* with *three*, and *s* with *so*. This will be particularly important when you learn Arabic vowel sounds.

(2) The Arabic writing system is regularly phonetic, which means that words are generally written the way they are pronounced. If you learn to recognize and pronounce the sounds correctly from the beginning, you will avoid spelling problems and you will learn and retain vocabulary more easily.

(3) In general, sounds in Arabic use a wider range of mouth and throat positions than do sounds in English. To properly produce these sounds, be aware of the parts of the mouth and throat you must use while you are able to focus the most attention on them. You will learn to make new sounds, and to do so you must become familiar with the set of muscles that you use to make sounds like gargling or coughing but not to speak English. Your muscles are capable of making all these sounds, but you need to become conscious of what they are doing and practice constantly in the beginning.

Like sports, learning a language takes physical work along with mental focus. Just as you train your arm through repeated practice to hit a tennis ball, you must train your mouth to produce new sounds and combinations of sounds, and this takes constant repetition. Just like you keep your eye on the ball in tennis, you must also keep your mind on the sounds you are making at all times. An investment of time and effort into developing your pronunciation habits during the first month of learning Arabic will pay off later in that you will be able to learn, pronounce, and spell vocabulary more easily; you will understand other people better; and people will also understand you, which in turn will encourage them to speak with you in Arabic rather than in English.

Formal and Spoken Arabic

Every language has different registers (levels of formality) and varieties (dialects) that vary according to speaker or writer and situation or function. For example, *I dunno* is rarely written, except for special effect, and *I do not know* is rarely used in speech. *Hoagie*, *submarine*, *sub*, *wedge*, and *hero* are names that all refer to the same sandwich, and American southerners often distinguish between singular *you* and plural *y'all*. Americans, Britons, and Australians learn to understand each other's accents merely by being exposed to them.

With its long history, rich heritage, and wide geographical distribution, Arabic naturally encompasses greater variation in its written and spoken forms than English. These differences present challenges to native speakers as well as to students of Arabic. You will need to learn some pronunciation variation, but these are easy to learn with listening practice. Sometimes you will need to learn two different words for the same concept. However, the more Arabic you learn, the more you will see that the overwhelming body of vocabulary and expressions are shared among most or all forms of Arabic.

Arabic consists of two registers, formal and spoken. Formal Arabic, also called Modern Standard or Classical Arabic, is learned in school rather than at home and is more a written than an oral register. It is highly respected and constitutes the “intellectual” register of Arabic. It is impossible to speak about topics of public interest, such as politics, economics, or even popular culture without using the vocabulary of formal Arabic. Hence, you will hear formal Arabic on news broadcasts and in other public contexts. However, educated speakers will often mix formal and spoken forms even in formal situations, because interacting with others in formal Arabic can seem impersonal.

Varieties of spoken Arabic, or colloquial dialects, are often designated by city, country, or region, such as Cairene, Moroccan, or Levantine (a term that refers to the Levant, and includes Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Jordanian dialects, which share

most vocabulary and structure). However, some variations are social and might signal class or sectarian identity, whereas others distinguish rural and urban communities. The greatest variation in spoken Arabic is found in the most commonly used words in daily life, and what we call “accent”—the way certain sounds (especially vowels) are pronounced and words are stressed. For some examples of the similarities and differences in spoken Arabic, listen to four different regional varieties in Listening Exercise 2.

Listening Exercise 2. Dialect variation in Arabic (At home)

Listen to the sample phrases from four different dialects of Arabic. You will hear “good morning,” “how are you?” “good,” and “good-bye” each spoken in Tunisian, Egyptian, Lebanese, and Omani. Then you will hear each person say “I love Tunisia/Egypt/Lebanon/Oman.” Which phrases sound similar across dialects? Which sound completely different?

To be fluent in Arabic, you must have control of both the formal and spoken registers, including the mix that naturally occurs in academic and other intellectual discussions. As you learn more and more Arabic, you will see that the majority of words and structures are shared among varieties and registers, and you will learn to transfer knowledge from one variety to another.

In this textbook program we will introduce both formal and spoken forms of Arabic. The interactive media contain Egyptian dialogues filmed in Cairo and Levantine dialogues filmed in Damascus. In addition, the vocabulary and expressions that these dialogues contain are presented in Egyptian, Levantine, and formal Arabic. There are no dialogues in formal Arabic because this register is not used for social interaction in real life. The materials thus permit both learners and instructors to choose the variety they want to activate. Listening to two or even to all three forms will help you understand more Arabic, but with the guidance of your instructor, you should choose one variety as the one you will learn to use actively. In this way you will build both recognition and production skills. Both skills are important, and distinguishing between words you will recognize and those you will actively use will make the wealth of material more manageable.

A Transliteration System

It takes about twenty-five class hours plus at least fifty homework hours to master the Arabic alphabet and sound system introduced in this curriculum. We want you to spend a lot of this time learning and practicing basic greetings and expressions so that you can start speaking right away. In the beginning you will need a system of

transliteration, or way of representing Arabic sounds and words in the Latin alphabet, so that you can start to study the vocabulary. We have devised a simplified system that we use for words that you cannot write in Arabic because you have not yet learned all the letters in them. We recommend that you learn and use this system unless you are a trained linguist and have another system you prefer. However, using transliteration should be a temporary, transitional stage. You should start writing words in Arabic script as soon as you learn all the letters. It will take longer to write words using Arabic script at first, but using it is the only way to develop proficiency in reading and writing, and with practice your writing speed will pick up.

The key to a good transliteration system is that each different sound should have its own unique symbol. Contrast this to English spelling, in which one letter represents many sounds, like *s* in *sun*, *prism*, and *treasure*, or one sound can be represented by different letters, like the sound *f*, also spelled *gh* in *laugh* and *ph* in *philosophy*. English vowel sounds and spellings are particularly fraught with ambiguities: the *u* in *but* sounds quite different from the *u* in *duty*, and *o* sounds quite different in *dot*, *one*, *OK*, and *office*. English uses the combination *th* to spell two different sounds, whereas these are distinct letters in Arabic. The following exercise will help you learn to distinguish these two sounds and learn to separate sound from English spelling.

Drill 1. Differentiating the *th* sounds (At home)

Distinguish between the sound *th* in the word *three* and *th* in the word *other*. These are two different sounds, and in Arabic they are written with different letters. Look at the list of words and repeat each one out loud several times to determine whether *th* sounds like *three* or *that*, and assign the word to the appropriate box.

they	thumb	teeth	there	throb	thus
although	think	through	brother	together	thought
weather	bother	theft	then	depth	rather
<u>three</u>			<u>that</u>		

Most of the transliteration systems in use among specialists contain special symbols to indicate distinctly Arabic sounds (the Library of Congress system is one example of these). The technologies of texting and chatting mean that more and more Arabic speakers are communicating in Arabic with Latin script, and new transliteration patterns are emerging that include numerals. Can you see why the following correspondences have become popular?

3 ع 6 ط 7 ح

The transliteration system used in these materials is shown in the following charts. We developed this system to be simple, and the main difference between it and other systems is that it uses uppercase letters rather than dots and symbols to represent emphatic sounds, and we use doubled vowels *aa*, *ee*, *ii*, *oo*, and *uu* to represent long vowels. Listen to the pronunciation of letters on the alphabet videos again as you go through the consonant sounds in the first chart below.

Consonants:

Transliteration symbol and sound		Arabic letter	Transliteration symbol and sound		Arabic letter
Z	as in <i>zip</i>	ز	b	as in <i>bet</i>	ب
S	as in <i>sip</i>	س	t	as in <i>tip</i>	ت
sh	as in <i>she</i>	ش	th	as in <i>three</i>	ث
S	emphatic S similar to <i>s</i> in <i>subtle</i>	ص	j	j or g, varies according to region	ج
D	emphatic D close to the <i>d</i> in <i>duh!</i>	ض	H	a raspy, breathy <i>h</i>	ح
T	emphatic T similar to <i>t</i> in <i>bottle</i>	ط	kh	like a German or Hebrew <i>ch</i>	خ
DH	emphatic DH close to <i>th</i> in <i>thy</i>	ظ	d	as in <i>dip</i>	د
c	a sound produced deep in the throat	ع	dh	th in <i>the</i> and <i>other</i>	ذ
gh	like French or Hebrew <i>r</i>	غ	r	like Spanish or Italian <i>r</i>	ر

Transliteration symbol and sound		Arabic letter	Transliteration symbol and sound		Arabic letter
n	as in <i>neat</i>	ن	f	as in <i>fun</i>	ف
h	as in <i>aha!</i>	هـ	q	like <i>k</i> but deeper in the throat	ق
w	as in <i>wow!</i>	و	k	as in <i>keep</i>	ك
y	as in <i>yes</i>	ي	l	like Spanish or Italian <i>l</i>	ل
,	the sound you hear between vowels in <i>uh-oh!</i> (glottal stop)	ء	m	as in <i>mat</i>	م

The next two charts give the vowel sounds. Formal Arabic has only three vowel sounds that are normally represented as *a*, *i*, and *u*, and each can be short or long. However, spoken Arabic has an expanded system that includes two additional vowel qualities, which we will indicate with *e* and *o*. In addition, Levantine pronunciation sometimes uses a *schwa* sound, which we will indicate with the *schwa* symbol, ə, which indicates a very short, unstressed vowel sound. Arabic distinguishes between short and long vowel sounds, and we will indicate length by repeating the vowel, as the chart shows. Pay particular attention to vowel sounds because they help you to distinguish emphatic consonants from their nonemphatic counterparts.

Vowels:

Transliteration symbol and sound	Arabic letter			
	Short	Long	Short	Long
ranges from <i>e</i> in <i>bet</i> to <i>a</i> in <i>father</i>	a	aa	اَ	اِ
<i>i</i> as in <i>bit</i> (short) <i>ie</i> as in <i>piece</i> (long)	i	ii	يَ	يِ
<i>oo</i> as in <i>poodle</i>	u	uu	وَ	وِ

Additional vowel sounds in spoken Arabic (not written):

French <i>é</i> as in <i>fiancé</i>	e	ee
<i>o</i> similar to <i>à la mode</i>	o	oo
<i>e</i> in <i>listen</i> (schwa)	ə	-

This transliteration system will be used to introduce words in new vocabulary lists while you are learning the letters. The only words that are transliterated are those that contain letters you have not yet learned. Remember that transliteration does not take the place of listening to the vocabulary on the interactive media. By listening and repeating new words several times, you will learn them well.

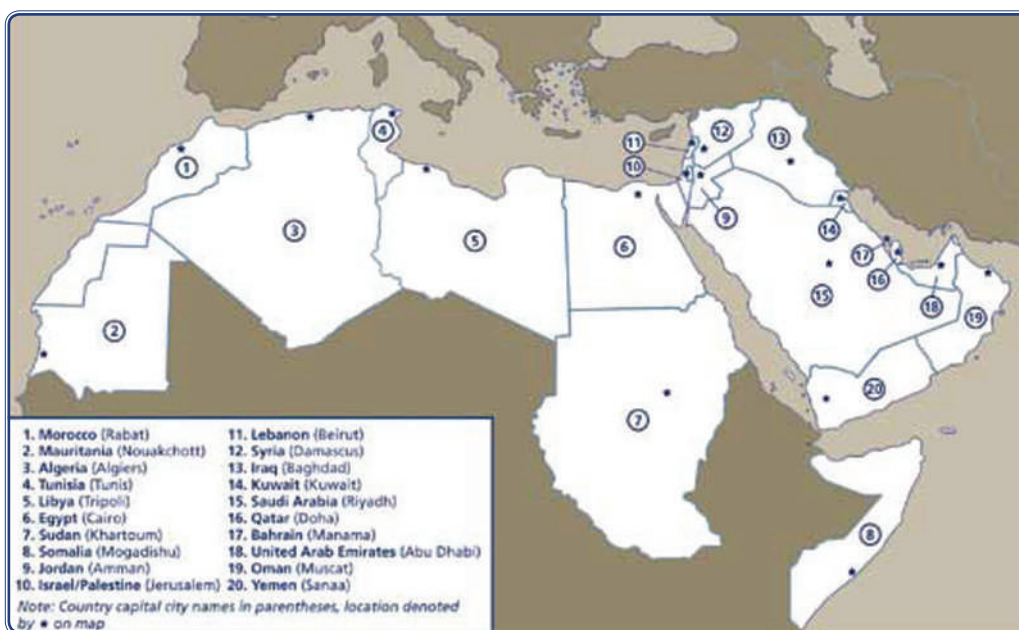
Drill 2. Reading in transliteration (In class)

The words in the following list are names of places you should be familiar with. With a partner, sound them out and identify as many as you can.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. amriika | 2. afghaanistaan | 3. lubnaan |
| 4. faransa | 5. as-sa^ʿuudiyya | 6. al-yaabaan |
| 7. al-kuwayt | 8. tuunis | 9. ruusiyaa |
| 10. as-suudaan | 11. briiTaaniyaa | 12. al-^ʿiraaq |
| 13. al-hind | 14. ^ʿumaan | 15. ifriiqiyaa |
| 16. al-maksiik | 17. al-yaman | 18. iiTaaliyaa |
| 19. abuu DHabii | 20. isbaaniyaa | 21. al-urduunn |

Drill 3. Where is Arabic spoken? (At home)

The map shows countries where Arabic is the main language of education and where it is widely spoken in everyday life. You will see the names of the Arab countries and their capitals in English. Listen to the audio to hear the name and capital of each country in Arabic, and choose ten to write out using our transliteration system.





Vocabulary and Conversation: Greetings and Introductions

At least one section in each unit of *Alif Baa* is devoted to building vocabulary and speaking skills. Vocabulary is presented in the interactive media as well as in the book. You will refer to the vocabulary list in the book from time to time, but it is essential that you first learn it by using the interactive media so that you can hear and copy accurate pronunciation. You will remember vocabulary more readily if you repeat it out loud several times rather than read silently or listen passively. A good rule of thumb is to say each word out loud as many times as it takes to make it feel comfortable in your mouth and for you to be able to “hear” yourself say it.

Egyptian and Levantine Colloquial

The decision to include three varieties of Arabic in these materials rests on our conviction that competence in Arabic necessarily entails mastery of both spoken and formal registers. We have chosen Egyptian and Levantine because they are the most widely understood dialects across the Arab world. Levantine is a collection of dialects with many local flavors, but the pronunciation differences are small compared with the large amount of shared vocabulary and structure. The “flavor” of Levantine that you will hear in the dialogues is that of Damascus. Egyptian is represented by the dialect of Cairo, which is well-known from the films and music from the largest entertainment industry in the Arab world.

Each vocabulary chart contains three columns: formal, Levantine colloquial (or shaami), and Egyptian colloquial (or maSri). The shaami and maSri words are indicated in different colors throughout the materials. Our intention is for you to choose one spoken variety to master, but you might want to listen to the other dialect once to develop passive comprehension and recognition skills.

You will notice that most of the words you will learn are shared among all three varieties, sometimes with a slight shift in accent or a vowel. You will soon develop a sense of the characteristics that identify each dialect. For Egyptian, these include the hard *g* sound in place of the *j* of other dialects, and a distinctive accent pattern that emphasizes the second-to-last syllable. Levantine dialects are distinguished by a final *e* vowel sound on certain nouns and adjectives where other dialects have *a*, and their own distinctive intonation.

New Vocabulary (At home)

Listen to these greetings and repeat each one many times until you can say it easily. Choose one greeting and prepare to use it in class, and prepare to introduce yourself to others.

Meaning	maSri (Egyptian)	shaami (Levantine)	Formal /written
Greetings! (Islamic greeting)	السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ issalaamu ‘alaykum	السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ assalaamu ‘alaykum	السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ assalaamu ‘alaykum
Hello! or Hi! (used more in Egypt than in the Levant)	أَهْلًا ahlan	أَهْلًا ahla	أَهْلًا ahlan
Hello!	أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا ahlan wa sahan	أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا ahla w sahla	أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا ahlan wa sahan
Hello! (used in the Levant)		مَرْحَبًا marHaba	مَرْحَبًا marHaban
I	أَنَا ana	أَنَا ana	أَنَا ana
my name	إِسْمِي ismi	إِسْمِي ismi	إِسْمِي ismii
from	مِنْ min	مِنْ min	مِنْ min
the city of ...	مَدِينَةٍ midiinit	مَدِينَةٍ madiinit	مَدِينَةٍ madiinat
in	فِي fi	بِ bi	فِي fii

Video Dialogues

In every unit there will be at least one video dialogue in both Egyptian and Levantine Arabic. We recommend that you choose one to learn actively, though you may choose to watch both varieties for the exposure and for comprehension practice. It is important to study the vocabulary from these dialogues before watching them, and to watch them at home before coming to class. The dialogues have three purposes: (a) to give you some speech models to imitate so you can start speaking; (b) to show you some aspects of polite interaction in Arab culture; and (c) to develop listening comprehension skills that you will use in class and in the real world, skills that help you understand what people are saying without knowing all the words they are using. You will find instructions for steps to take as you listen to these dialogues, and these steps are meant to help you reactivate and exploit the same listening strategies you used subconsciously to learn your native language. Each time you listen, you will get more out of the dialogue, especially if you set some specific goals and expectations for each “listen” (“listen,” as usual, here is meant as a step; you will find it helpful to listen more than once at each stage, especially in the beginning). The final listen should take place after you have understood all you can, and it is the “activation” listen, in which you pay attention not to what is being said (because you presumably already know that), but rather to how it is being said, in pronunciation, vocabulary, and structure. In this activity, which should take place in class, you are preparing to use material from the dialogue in your own interactions with your classmates. Drill 4 below introduces the first dialogue. For this time only, listen to it in class with your instructor.

Drill 4. Scene 1: Ahlan wa sahan (Formal and Colloquial) (In class)

In scene 1, people from across the Arab world introduce themselves. There are two versions, one formal Arabic and one spoken Arabic. Choose one to start with and watch it several times according to the following steps:

1. Before listening, ask yourself, “What do I expect to hear?”
2. First listen: Listen to see if your expectations are met. What do you hear?
3. Second listen: Which greetings do you recognize?
4. Third listen: What kinds of information do the speakers give? How do they express it, and what do you notice about the phrasing?
5. Fourth listen: Activate some of what you learned by introducing yourself to some of your classmates.
6. After you have understood and activated the variety you chose to begin with, listen to the other variety. What similarities and differences do you notice?

Culture: Saying Hello

Polite behavior requires you to say hello to everyone in a room or place you enter. The same principle also applies to a loosely defined “space” that someone regularly occupies, such as an outdoor work area or a guard’s position outside a building. When you enter a space that is occupied, you must say hello. Whether or not you greet a guard or shopkeeper as you pass by depends primarily on your gender. In general, women do not say hello to men they do not know if they are not conducting business with them. Practice polite behavior by always saying hello to anyone in the room when you enter your Arabic class.



الوحدة الثانية

Unit Two

In this unit:

Consonants ب ت ث

Vowels ا _ ؤ ي

Vocabulary and Conversation:
Meeting People

Culture: Shaking Hands



>> Letters and Sounds

ا aa (alif)

The name of the first letter of the Arabic alphabet is alif. Alif has two functions, the first of which will be introduced here, and the second will be discussed in unit 3. Here we are concerned with its function as a long vowel whose pronunciation ranges in sound from the *e* in *bet* to the *a* in *bat* to the *u* in *but*. Say these three words aloud and notice the difference in the quality of the vowels: the first is pronounced in the front of the mouth, the second slightly lower, and the last low in the mouth. The pronunciation of alif has a similar range; we refer to these differences in pronunciation as vowel quality. Two factors influence the vowel quality of alif: regional dialect and surrounding consonants.

In the eastern regions of the Arab world such as the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, the sound of alif is generally deeper, similar to *father*, whereas farther west, especially in North Africa, it tends to be frontal and at times it approximates the sound of *e* in *bet*. You will notice this regional variation when you interact with Arabic speakers from different countries.

The other reason for variation in the quality of alif has to do with surrounding consonants. Arabic has several “emphatic” consonant sounds that are pronounced farther back in the mouth, and these consonants deepen the sound of a neighboring alif so that it resembles the *u* in *but*. Learning to discern and produce this difference in vowel quality will help you understand, speak, and write Arabic accurately. The following exercises will get you started, but remember to keep paying attention to vowel quality as you work through this book.

Listening Exercise 1. Frontal and deep alif (At home)

To hear the frontal and deep variants of alif, listen to the following pairs of words by clicking on them. The first word in each pair contains a frontal alif that contrasts with the deep alif in the second. Listen to and repeat these sounds aloud several times until you can hear the difference clearly and produce it.

1. تاب / طاب
2. ساح / صاح
3. داني / ضاني
4. ذال / ظالم

The first word of each pair in Listening Exercise 1 begins with a consonant sound familiar to speakers of English, and the second word begins with a deeper sound that resembles the first but is pronounced with the tongue lower and farther back in the mouth. These deeper sounds are often called emphatic consonants, and they affect the pronunciation of surrounding vowel sounds. Listening for the difference between frontal and deep alif is the best way to distinguish between emphatic and nonemphatic consonants. We will discuss this point in more depth in unit 5, when you begin to learn the emphatic letters.

Drill 1. Hearing frontal and deep alif (At home)

Each word you will hear contains an alif. Say the word aloud as you listen to it and decide whether the alif is frontal or deep. Select F if the alif is frontal and D if it is deep.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. D F | 2. D F | 3. D F | 4. D F |
| 5. D F | 6. D F | 7. D F | 8. D F |
| 9. D F | 10. D F | 11. D F | 12. D F |

In addition to vowel quality, Arabic also distinguishes vowel length, and this too can affect the meaning of a word. In Listening Exercise 1, you can hear that the alif is a long vowel. In the very last word, DHaalim, you can hear the contrast in vowel length between the long alif in the first syllable and the short vowel *i* in the second. Notice that the stress or word accent in DHaalim is on the first syllable, the one with alif. Long vowels attract word stress in Arabic. We will practice hearing and pronouncing this distinction later in this unit.

Writing



The letters above are, from right to left, the independent, initial, medial, and final shapes of the letter alif. In this section you will learn to write the various shapes of the letter alif. Watch calligrapher and professor of Arabic Sayyid El-Shinnawi write the shapes of alif as you read and write this section, and learn to draw the letters using the same hand motions he does.

Alone or at the beginning of a word, the alif is written as a single stroke, drawn from top to bottom, as the arrow in the example shows. Practice on the blank lines below, copying the example on the first line, pronouncing alif as you write it as many times as you can in the space provided:



When the alif follows another letter, it is written from the bottom up. The previous letter will end in a connecting segment drawn on the line. Start with that segment, then draw the alif from the bottom up as shown:



In both cases the alif does not connect to what follows it. Always pick your pen up from the page after writing alif.

Now practice reading alif by circling all of the alifs you can find in the following sentence (taken from *1001 Nights*):

كان يا ما كان في قديم الزمان، كان تاجر كثير المال والأعمال...

ب baa

The second letter of the Arabic alphabet is pronounced like *b* in English. This consonant lends a frontal quality to vowels.

🎧 Listening Exercise 2. Pronouncing ب (At home)

Listen to and repeat the words containing ب, focusing on the frontal quality of the vowels.

1. باء 2. باب 3. لبنان 4. ليبيا 5. بيت 6. حب

🎧 Writing



The independent, initial, medial, and final shapes of the letter baa all share an initial “tooth” and a single dot below the line. Watch Professor El-Shinnawi write the shapes of this letter as you read and write this section, and imitate his hand movements. Unlike alif, this is a connecting letter, which means that it connects to any letter following it in the same word. The main parts of the letter, the initial tooth and the dot beneath the body, remain constant in all four shapes. Compare the independent and final shapes, and note that both end in a second tooth. Think of this tooth as the “tail” of the letter that is used when it occurs at the end of a word. It is not written in initial and medial positions because the letter ب always connects to the following letter in those cases.

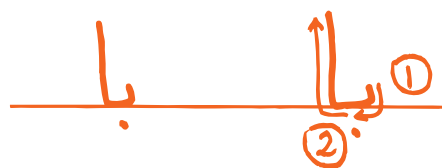
When written alone, this letter takes the independent shape shown above. Following the steps shown in the example on the first line below, trace the letter with your pencil a few times, and then write it. First, write the body: from right to left, begin with a small hook, then continue straight along the line and end with another hook for the tail. After you have finished the body, place the dot below the letter as shown (you can associate the sound *b* with the dot *below* the letter). Copy and practice:



When followed by another letter, it connects to that letter by deleting the final hook: **ب**. When writing this and other connecting dotted letters, you should place the dot more or less in vertical alignment with the initial tooth of the letter. The exact length of the body and placement of the dot may vary somewhat according to the style of the handwriting or print font; study the various styles you see and imitate the one that suits you.



Now write the first two letters of the alphabet joined together: **با**. Do not pick up the pen to cross the **ب** until you have finished writing the alif joined to it. Copy the example and pronounce it aloud:



When **ب** occurs in medial position, connecting segments link it to previous and following ones as shown. (This will become clearer when you learn a few more letters.) Copy the example:



Final **ب** resembles the independent form with the final hook. This form may be illustrated by writing two **ب**'s together: **بب**. Copy the example:



Now you can write your first word in Arabic: **باب** *door*. Practice writing this word by copying the example shown below, pronouncing it out loud as you write. Remember: Do not stop to dot the letters until you have finished the skeletal structure of the entire word.



As you work through this book, remember to pronounce the words and expressions you write out loud as you write them, preferably more than once. Develop the habit of writing and saying words out loud simultaneously rather than writing silently. This practice helps to reinforce the connection between sound and shape, to build reading skills, and to memorize vocabulary faster.

ت taa

The third letter of the alphabet is pronounced like a clear, frontal English *t*. How many different ways do you pronounce *t*? Read the following list aloud the way you would normally pronounce the words when speaking: *bottle*, *teeth*, *automatic*. Of these words, most American speakers pronounce the *t* in *teeth* forward in the mouth, against the back of the teeth. This is the correct position of the tongue (and not the flap of the tongue you use to produce *bottle* and *automatic*) for the pronunciation of this Arabic sound. Arabic ت must be pronounced with the tip of your tongue against your teeth but without aspiration.¹ Since ت is a frontal letter, the vowel sounds surrounding it are frontal too; in particular, the alif sounds like *e* as in *bet* (and not like *u* in *but*).

Listening Exercise 3. Pronouncing ت (At home)

Listen to the sound of the letter ت and repeat. Pay attention to the position of your tongue as you do so and notice the frontal quality of the vowels.

1. تاء 2. بات 3. توت 4. وتد 5. بنت 6. شتاء

Writing

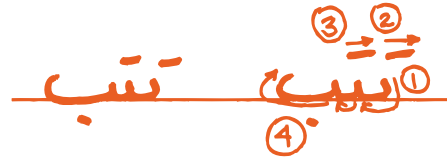
ت ت ت ت

Watch Professor El-Shinnawi and imitate his movements as you read and write this section. This letter has the same shapes as the ب in all positions, and it is also a connector. Instead of one dot underneath, however, it is written with two dots above its body ت (you can associate the sound *t* with *two dots on top*). In printed text the two dots are separated, as you see. In handwriting, however, they are often run together into a short horizontal bar (this depends in part on individual practice. Try to write two dots quickly and you will see how this handwriting form developed.) Practice writing the independent ت by copying the example:

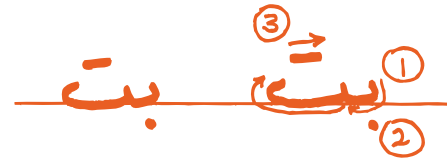


¹Aspiration refers to the breathy sound often heard with *t*, *p*, and *k*. Light a match, hold it in front of your mouth, and say, "Peter, Tom, and Kirk went to town." The flame will flicker each time you pronounce one of these letters. Arabic sounds do not have aspiration, so practice saying *t* and *k* with a lit match in front of your mouth until you can pronounce them without making the flame flicker.

Practice writing ت in initial and medial positions by copying the word تَب (tatub) as shown:



Practice writing ت in final position by copying the word بَت (bit):



🎧 Drill 2. Dictation (At home)

Watch the video and listen, then write the words you hear below. Watch as many times as necessary.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

ث thaa

The fourth letter of the alphabet is pronounced like *th* in *fourth*, and also like *th* in *three* (which matches the number of dots on this letter). Do not associate this sound with the English letters *th*, because the English spelling represents two quite distinct sounds, each of which has an Arabic equivalent. In unit 1 you practiced distinguishing between the sounds in *three* and *that*; now you begin to put that skill into practice. The letter ث represents the sound in *three*, and not the sound in *that*. Remember this by reminding yourself that this letter has three dots, and say *three* out loud before pronouncing or reading ث.

🎧 Listening Exercise 4. Listening to ث (At home)

Listen to the sound of the letter ث in the following words and repeat.

1. ثاء 2. ثابت 3. تثبت 4. اثاث 5. بث

🎧 Listening Exercise 5. Contrasting th and dh (At home)

Listen to the difference between the sound ث and the sound ذ (dh) in the following words. Listen to each pair several times until you can hear the difference clearly. Note also the frontal quality of both sounds.

1. ثاب/ذاب 2. بثور/بذور 3. آثار/آذار
4. تثوب/تذوب 5. جث/جذ

🎧 Writing

ث ث ث ث

This letter is a connector and is written just like ب and ت in all positions, except that it has three dots above. Watch Professor El-Shinnawi write ث and imitate his writing. Notice that he connects the three dots as a caret. In print the three dots appear as you see above but in handwriting the three dots are usually connected and written as a caret-shaped mark (which can be slightly rounded) as shown in the example below. Practice writing and saying independent ث :



Copy and practice initial ث in the male name ثابت (thaabi):



Practice writing medial **ث** in the word **ثَبِتْ** (*tathbut*):



Write final **ث** by copying the word **تَبْتُ** (*tabuth*):



Drill 3. Word recognition (At home)

Listen to the audio to hear a word, then decide which of the two words in each pair that you heard and select that word.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. بات / باب | 2. بتات / ثبات | 3. تاب / ثاب |
| 4. بث / تب | 5. ثابت / باثث | 6. تبث / ثبت |

برافو! Bravo! You have learned the first four letters of the Arabic alphabet. The next letters in sequence will be presented in unit 3. Now we will skip ahead to the other two long vowels and the symbols for the corresponding short vowels

و uu

This letter represents the second of the three long vowels in Arabic. It is pronounced like the exclamation of delight: ooooo! Practice saying this sound and stretch it out, just like you would say the exclamation. Don't be afraid to exaggerate vowel length—it will help you get used to thinking about vowel length. **Remember that the pronunciation of و, like that of alif, should be twice as long as normal English vowels.**

🎧 Listening Exercise 6. Listening to and pronouncing و (At home)

Listen to and repeat the words containing و. Give its full length in pronunciation.

1. توت 2. تابوت 3. ثبوت 4. تونس 5. تحبو

🎧 Writing

و و و و

Like alif, this letter does not connect to any following letter, and therefore its shapes do not vary much. To write independent or initial و, start on the line, loop clockwise to the left and up, then swing down into the tail, which should dip well below the line. Watch Professor El-Shinnawi and copy the example:



When writing و connected to a previous letter, the joining segment leads into the beginning point of the loop. Copy the example:



Now practice writing and pronouncing the word توت (mulberries):

توت توت



🎧 Drill 4. Dictation (At home)

Watch the video and listen, then write the words you hear below. Watch as many times as necessary.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

ي ii

This letter represents the last of the three long vowels, the sound of *ee* in *beep*. Remember that this is a long vowel; pronounce this sound for twice as long as you would pronounce *ee* in words like *beep*, *street*. Practice by imitating the sound of a honking car horn: beeeeee! Exaggerate it to focus on hearing and pronouncing vowel length.

🎧 Listening Exercise 7. Hearing and pronouncing ي (At home)

Listen to and repeat the words containing ي, giving it full length in pronunciation.

1. توبي
2. تثبيت
3. ليبي
4. تثبيتي

🎧 Writing

ي ي ي ي

As you can see above, the independent and final forms of ي differ slightly from the initial and medial forms. Like ب, ت, and ث, which it resembles in its initial and

medial shapes, this letter is a connecting one. All shapes of **ي** retain the two dots below, but in handwriting, the two dots underneath are usually drawn as a short horizontal bar, just like the dots on top of **ت**.

To write independent **ي**, start above the line and curve slightly upwards and around in an s-like shape. Continue below the line into a wide, flat curve as shown, and make sure to bring the tail all the way back up over the line:



In final position start from the connecting segment on the line, and then make a small hook into the body. In this position the letter is almost entirely below the line and has only a small curved hook before dipping into the wide, flat curve. Practice copying and pronouncing **ي** and bring the tail all the way back up above the line:



When **ي** occurs at the beginning or in the middle of a word, it takes the same shape as **ت**, except that its two dots are below the body of the letter. Copy the example of initial **ي**:



Now practice writing medial **ي** in the word **تثبيت** (*tathbiit*):



Drill 5. Dictation (At home)

Watch and listen to the video, then write below the words you hear.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____





Short Vowels



Each of the long vowels **ا**, **و**, and **ي** has a short vowel that corresponds to it. These short vowels are shown above, where you can easily see and hear the correspondence: *aa* (alif) is the long vowel corresponding to *a* (fatHa), *uu* to *u* (Damma), and *ii* to *i* (kasra). The length of these short vowels corresponds to the length of most English vowels, and the length of the long vowels should be at least twice that of a short vowel. English has no long vowels so Arabic long vowels should sound and feel extra long to you. Do not worry about pronouncing a long vowel “too long”—stretch it out so that you can hear the difference. It is important to learn to distinguish between the two lengths in listening and in speaking because vowel length often makes a difference in meaning, or, if mispronounced, renders the word unintelligible.

Short vowels are indicated in Arabic script by symbols written above or below the consonant skeleton and dots. **Remember:** syllables in Arabic always begin with a consonant; by convention, short vowels are written above or below the consonant they follow. Writing vowels is the third and final step in writing a word, after both the consonant skeleton and the dots have been completed. Of course, as you learned in unit 1, short vowels are usually not written at all; you have been writing words without them so far. Remember that vowel length affects word stress. Syllables with long vowels are almost always accented (emphasized in pronunciation).²

The following exercises will help you learn to hear and produce the distinction between long and short vowels; work through them carefully and repeat until you are comfortable hearing this distinction.

Listening Exercise 8. Hearing vowel length (At home)

Listen to and pronounce the differences in vowel length in the pairs of words you hear. The first word in each pair contains a long vowel and the second word contains a short vowel.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. سَد / ساد | 2. توب / تُب | 3. شاب / شَب |
| 4. بير / بِر | 5. تقول / تَقُل | |

²For those with some linguistic training, note that in general, Arabic word stress falls on “heavy” syllables: syllables with a long vowel or consonant-vowel-consonant (as opposed to just consonant-short vowel). Word accent or stress will fall on the heavy syllable closest to the end of the word. If there is no heavy syllable, stress varies according to regional dialect. Egyptian word stress patterns are quite distinctive and usually fall on the penultimate syllable.

Drill 6. Distinguishing between long and short vowels (At home)

Listen to each pair of words and repeat several times until you can hear the difference between the long and short vowels. Select the letter that corresponds to the word that contains a long vowel.

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. a b | 2. a b | 3. a b |
| 4. a b | 5. a b | 6. a b |

Drill 7. Identifying long and short vowels (At home)

Listen to the audio to hear a selection of words. For each question, select L if you hear one of the long vowels **ا**, **و**, or **ي**, or S if the word has only short vowels (fatHa, Damma, or kasra).

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. L S | 2. L S | 3. L S | 4. L S |
| 5. L S | 6. L S | 7. L S | 8. L S |
| 9. L S | 10. L S | 11. L S | 12. L S |

a (fatHa)

The short vowel that corresponds to alif is called fatHa. Like its long counterpart alif, fatHa ranges in quality from frontal to deep, depending on the quality of the consonants surrounding it. In its most frontal position, fatHa sounds like English *e* as in *bet*. Deep fatHa sounds like English *u* in *but*. Consonants **ب**, **ت**, and **ث** are frontal ones, so they give fatHa a frontal quality, like *e* in *bet*. The name fatHa means “opening”, and refers to the shape of the mouth in pronouncing it: open. Try it and see!

Listening Exercise 9. Contrasting alif and fatHa (At home)

Listen to and repeat the words containing alif and fatHa. Pay special attention to the difference in vowel length.

- | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. ثَابَت | 2. تَابَ | 3. بَاتَت | 4. تَابَت | 5. ثَبَات |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

Writing



Arabic words consist of syllables that always begin with consonants, followed by either a short or long vowel. Short vowels are written on top of the letter that precedes them, the first letter of the syllable. FatHa is written as a short, slanted line segment above its consonant, as in the word **ثَبَّتَ**. Watch Professor El-Shinnawi write fatHa and copy the example:



Drill 8. FatHa dictation (At home)

Listen to the words and write fatHa where you hear it.

- | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 1. تثبيت | 2. بتات | 3. باتت |
| 4. ثبات | 5. ثبت | 6. ثابت |

u (Damma)

The short vowel that corresponds to **و** is called Damma and is pronounced like *oo* as in *booth* when it follows frontal consonants. When it is affected by deep consonants it is a little bit deeper, somewhat like *oo* in *wool*. Do not confuse this vowel with English *o* and *u*, which represent many different sounds, some of them closer to deep fatHa than to Damma. **Remember:** English *u* in words like *but* and *gum* actually represents the sound of a deep fatHa, not a Damma. The name Damma refers to the correct shape of the mouth in pronunciation: rounding. If you keep your mouth rounded, you will pronounce Damma correctly.

Listening Exercise 10. Hearing and pronouncing Damma

Listen to and repeat the words containing Damma, rounding your mouth as you do so. Listen for two words that contain both Damma and waaw and practice the difference in vowel length.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| 1. ثُبُّ | 2. بُثْ | 3. ثُبُوت |
| 4. حُبُوب | 5. صُبْ | 6. ثَثُبْتُ |

Writing

و

Damma is written like a miniature و on top of the letter that precedes it, as in the word ثُبُّ. Imitate the motions that Professor El-Shinnawi uses to draw Damma and practice writing و as shown:

و و
ثُبُّ ثُبُّ

ـِ i (kasra)

The short vowel that corresponds to ي is called kasra, and its pronunciation ranges from frontal *ee* as in *keep* to deep *i* as in *bit*. As with fatHa and Damma, the exact pronunciation of kasra depends on surrounding consonants. Frontal consonants like ت and ث give kasra a frontal quality. The name kasra, “break”, refers to the fact that your mouth is slightly open in pronouncing it (as opposed to the broad fatHa opening). Pronounce kasra and note that your mouth is slightly open, and not wide open.