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A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic

A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic is a comprehensive handbook on the structure of Arabic. Keeping technical terminology to a minimum, it provides a detailed yet accessible overview of Modern Standard Arabic in which the essential aspects of its phonology, morphology, and syntax can be readily looked up and understood. Accompanied by extensive carefully chosen examples, it will prove invaluable as a practical guide for supporting students’ textbooks, classroom work, or self-study and will also be a useful resource for scholars and professionals wishing to develop an understanding of the key features of the language. Grammar notes are numbered for ease of reference, and a section on how to use an Arabic dictionary is included, as well as helpful glossaries of Arabic and English linguistic terms and a useful bibliography. Clearly structured and systematically organized, this book is set to become the standard guide to the grammar of contemporary Arabic.

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I am especially indebted to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman, who generously endowed the position I occupy at Georgetown University, and whose patronage of study and research about Arabic language, literature, and culture is well known and widely respected. It is for this reason that I dedicate this book, with profound gratitude, to His Majesty.
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This basic reference grammar is intended as a handbook for the general learner – a step on the way toward greater understanding of the Arabic language. Many excellent and effective textbooks for teaching Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) exist, as well as published research on a range of topics in Arabic linguistics (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax, variation theory), but information in English on MSA grammatical topics tends to be scattered, and if a complete answer to a question regarding contemporary usage is needed, sometimes a number of sources need to be consulted.

The idea behind this reference grammar is to gather together in one work the essentials of MSA in such a way that fundamental elements of structure can be readily looked up and illustrated. It is intended primarily for learners of MSA as a practical guide for supporting their textbook lessons, classroom work, or self-study. This book is not intended in any way to supplant the exhaustive and profound analyses of classical and literary Arabic such as those by Wright (1896, reprint 1967) and Cantarino (1974–76). Those monumental books stand on their own and are irreplaceable reference works. This book is a work of considerably more modest goals and proportions.

1 Goals
This book is not designed to cover the entire field of literary or classical Arabic grammar. A comprehensive accounting of Arabic grammar is an undertaking of great complexity and depth, of competing indigenous paradigms (Basran and Kufan), of several dimensions (diachronic, synchronic, comparative), and of theoretical investigation across the spectrum of contemporary linguistic fields (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis).

The Arabic language is a vast treasure-house of linguistic and literary resources that extend back into the first millennium. Its grammatical tradition is over a thousand years old and contains resources of extraordinary depth and sophistication. Works in English such as Lane’s dictionary (1863, reprint 1984), Wehr’s dictionary (fourth edition, 1979), Wright’s grammar (1896, reprint 1967), and
Howell’s grammar (reprint 1986) are seminal contributions in English to understanding the wealth of the Arabic linguistic tradition. Yet, for the neophyte, for the average learner, or for the non-specialized linguist, easily usable reference works are still needed. This is, therefore, not a comprehensive reference grammar covering the full range of grammatical structures in both Classical and Modern Standard Arabic; rather, it centers on the essentials of modern written Arabic likely to be encountered in contemporary Arabic expository prose.

2 Methodology
The choices of explanations, examples, and layouts of paradigms in this book are pragmatically motivated rather than theoretically motivated and are not intended to reflect a particular grammatical or theoretical approach. I have been eclectic in providing descriptions of Arabic language features and structures, always with the intent of providing the most efficient access to Arabic forms and structures for English speakers. For example, I have assigned numbers to noun declensions for ease of reference. Also, I refer throughout the text to “past tense” and “present tense” verbs rather than “perfect” tense and “imperfect” tense verbs, although this has not been standard practice for Arabic textbooks or grammars.1 I refer to the “locative adverbs” (Zuruuf makaan wa-Zuruuf zamaan) as “semi-prepositions” (following Kouloughli 1994) because it captures their similarities to prepositions.2

Many Arabic terms and classifications, however, such as the “sisters of inna” and the “sisters of kaan-a” are highly useful and pragmatic ways of organizing and presenting morphological and syntactic information, even to nonnative speakers of Arabic, so they have been retained. I have endeavored to provide both English and Arabic technical terms for categorized phenomena.

There are those, both traditionalists and non-traditionalists, who will no doubt disagree with the mode of presentation and grammatical descriptions used in this book. However, since this text is aimed at learners and interested laypeople as well as linguists, I hope that the categories devised and the descriptions and examples provided will be useful, readable, and readily understandable. Transliteration is provided for all examples so that readers who do not have a grasp of Arabic script may have access to phonological structure.

3 The database
This reference grammar is based on contemporary expository prose, chiefly but not exclusively from Arabic newspapers and magazines, as the main resource for

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1 See the rationale for this choice in Chapter 21 on verb inflection, section 1.2.2.
topics and examples of current everyday Arabic writing practice. The grammatical
description that emerges therefore calibrates closely with contemporary written
usage. Media Arabic was chosen as a main source of data for this text because of
its contemporaneousness, its coverage of many different topics, and the extempo-
rary nature of daily reporting and editing. As a primary source of information
about and from the Arab world, newspaper and magazine language reflects Arab
editorial and public opinion and topics of current interest. Various subject mat-
ter and texts were covered, ranging from interviews, book reviews, feature stories,
religion and culture, and sports reports, to straight news reports and editorials. In
addition to newspapers, other sources used for data collection included contem-
porary novels and nonfiction. This is therefore strictly a descriptive grammar that
seeks to describe MSA as it is within the parameters noted above, and not to
evaluate it or compare it with earlier or more elegant and elaborate forms of the
written language.

There are doubtless those who would assert that the ordinariness of media lan-
guage causes it to lack the beauty and expressiveness of literary Arabic, and there-
fore that it is unrepresentative of the great cultural and literary achievements of
the Arabs. To those I would reply that the very ordinariness of this type of lan-
guage is what makes it valuable to learners because it represents a widely used
and understood standard of written expression. As Owens and Bani-Yasin (1987,
736) note, “the average Arab is probably more exposed to this style than to most
others, such as academic or literary writing.” In fact, it is a vital and emergent
form of written language, being created and recreated on a daily basis, covering
issues from the mundane to the extraordinary. With limited time to prepare its
presentation style, media Arabic reflects more closely than other forms of the
written language the strategies and structures of spontaneous expression.

Media Arabic is straightforward enough in its content and style to form the
basis for advanced levels of proficiency and comprehension, to expand vocabu-
larly, to create confidence in understanding a wide range of topics, and particu-

---

3 Media discourse is described by Bell and Garrett (1998, 3) as “a rich resource of readily accessible
data for research and teaching” and its usage “influences and represents people’s use of and
attitudes towards language in a speech community.” They also state that “the media reflect and
influence the formation and expression of culture, politics and social life” (1998, 4).

4 Cantarino, for example, in the introduction to his major work, The Syntax of Modern Arabic Prose,
vol. I, states that in compiling his illustrative materials, he consulted a variety of literary sources,
but “Newspapers have generally been disregarded, since Arabic journalism – like most news
writing around the world – does not necessarily offer the best or most representative standard of
literary language” (1974, 1x).

5 The discipline of “media discourse research” or “media discourse analysis” is a rapidly growing
one in linguistics. See Cotter 2001 for an overview of developments in this field. See also the
larly to provide clear reference points for issues of structural accuracy. As Widdowson has stated, students whose future contexts of use are broad and not clearly predictable need fundamental exposure to “a language of wider communication, a language of maximal generality or projection value” (1988, 7). I see media language as a cornerstone of linguistic and cultural literacy in Arabic; a medium which can be a useful goal in itself, but also a partial and practical goal for those who ultimately aim to study the Arabic literary tradition in all its elegance, diversity, and richness.

4 Contents
The book is arranged so that grammar notes are numbered and indexed for ease of reference; examples provided are based on information in the database. I have omitted or avoided names of persons and sometimes I have changed the content words to be less specific. For the most part, I have not created ad hoc examples; illustrations of syntactic structure are based on authentic usage. A section on how to use an Arabic dictionary is provided, as well as lists of Arabic and English technical terms, a bibliography that includes specialized and general works in Arabic, English, French, and German, and indexes based on Arabic terms and English terms.

Although I have tried to cover a wide range of aspects of contemporary written Arabic usage, there are bound to be lacunae, for which I am responsible. In terms of accuracy of description, the entire book has been submitted to native Arabic-speaking scholars and professional linguists for checking the grammatical descriptions and examples, but I alone am responsible for any shortcomings in that respect.

Procedures:

- Proper names have been left unwoveled on the final consonant, except where the voweling illustrates the grammatical point under discussion.
- For individual words or word groups taken out of context, the nominative case is used as the base or citation form.
- In giving English equivalents for Arabic structures, I have included in square brackets [ ] words inserted into English that are not present in the Arabic text but are necessary for understanding in English.
- I have included in parentheses and single quotes (’’) a more or less exact wording in the Arabic text that does not appear in the English equivalent.

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6 In his article “Broadcast news as a language standard,” Allan Bell discusses the central role of media in reinforcing and disseminating a prestige standard language, especially in multilingual, multi-dialectal, or diglossic societies. See Bell 1983.
• In running text, English equivalents of Arabic lexical items are referred to in single quotes ‘’.

• In giving English equivalents for Arabic lexical items, essentially synonymous English meanings are separated by commas, whereas a semicolon separates equivalents with substantially different meanings.

• For purposes of brevity, in providing English equivalents of lexical items with broad semantic ranges, I have selected only one or two common meanings. These are not meant to be full definitions, only very basic glosses.
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acc.</td>
<td>accusative</td>
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<td>adj.</td>
<td>adjective</td>
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<td>adv.</td>
<td>adverb</td>
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<td>AP</td>
<td>active participle</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>any consonant</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
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<td>comp.</td>
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<td>demons.</td>
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<td>ESA</td>
<td>Educated Spoken Arabic</td>
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<td>f./fem.</td>
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<td>Formal Spoken Arabic</td>
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<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
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<td>n.</td>
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<td>number</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>noun phrase</td>
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<td>o.s.</td>
<td>one's self</td>
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<td>obj.</td>
<td>object</td>
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<td>p./pers.</td>
<td>person</td>
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pass. passive
perf. perfect
pers. person
pl./plur. plural
plup. pluperfect
pos. positive
PP passive participle
pres. present
pron. pronoun
quad. quadriliteral
QAP quadriliteral active participle
QPP quadriliteral passive participle
refl. reflexive
rel. pron. relative pronoun
s.o. someone
s.th. something
sg./sing. singular
subj. subjunctive
superl. superlative
trans. transitive
v. verb
V any short vowel
vd. voiced
vl. voiceless
VN verbal noun (maSdar)
VP verb phrase
VV any long vowel

Other diacritics:

**boldface words** indicate key words in examples

**(in examples)**

**boldface syllables** indicate primary word stress

− morpheme boundary¹

¹ For purposes of structural clarity I have indicated inflectional morpheme boundaries within words when possible. There are points where morpheme boundaries merge (as in the endings of defective verbs and nouns); in these cases I have omitted a specific boundary marker. I have also omitted the morpheme boundary marker before the *taa* marbuṭa (*-at ~ -a*) and the sound feminine plural ending (*-aat*).
separates singular and plural forms of substantives and past/present citation forms of verbs, e.g.,
    dars/duruus ‘lesson/s’
    daras-a/ya-drus-u ‘to study’

encloses phonemic transcription

encloses glosses or translations

indicates a hypothetical or reconstructed form

‘altérnates with; or’
I am indebted to my first editor at Cambridge University Press, Kate Brett, for encouraging and shepherding this project in its initial stages. I gratefully acknowledge the support and help of my subsequent Cambridge editor, Helen Barton, who saw this project through its final stages, to Alison Powell and her production team, and to Jacque French for her careful copy editing. Deepest thanks go to Roger Allen and Mahdi Alish, to my Georgetown colleagues Mohssen Esseesy, Serafina Hager, Margaret Nydell, Irfan Shahid, and Barbara Stowasser; and especially to David Mehall, who worked closely with me in editing and providing the Arabic script of the text.

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Any gaps, omissions, errors, or other infelicities in this text are my responsibility alone.

Sincere thanks go to all the faculty and students in the Arabic Department at Georgetown University who tolerated my obsession with collecting data, drafting, and compiling the book over a number of years. And I want to thank my husband, Victor Litwinski, who through his caring support and virtuoso editing skills made it possible for me to complete this project.
Introduction to Arabic

Arabic is a Semitic language akin to Hebrew, Aramaic, and Amharic, and more distantly related to indigenous language families of North Africa. It possesses a rich literary heritage dating back to the pre-Islamic era, and during the rise and expansion of the Islamic empire (seventh to twelfth centuries, AD), it became the official administrative language of the empire as well as a leading language of international scholarly and scientific communication. It is today the native language of over 200 million people in twenty different countries as well as the liturgical language for over a billion Muslims throughout the world.

1 Afro-Asiatic and the Semitic language family
The Semitic language family is a member of a broader group of languages, termed Afro-Asiatic (also referred to as Hamito-Semitic). This group includes four subfamilies in addition to Semitic, all of which are indigenous languages of North Africa: (1) Tamazight (Berber) in the Northwest (Morocco, Mauretania, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya); (2) the Chad languages (including Hausa) in the Northwest Central area; (3) ancient Egyptian and Coptic; and (4) the Cushitic languages of Northeast Africa (Somalia, the Horn of Africa).1 The Semitic part of the family was originally based farthest East, in the Levant, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian peninsula.

Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic (including Syriac), and Amharic are living language members of the Semitic group, but extinct languages such as Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian), Canaanite, and Phoenician are also Semitic. The Semitic language family has a long and distinguished literary history and several of its daughter languages have left written records of compelling interest and importance for the history of civilization.2

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1 See Zaborski 1992 for a brief description of the Afro-Asiatic language family and its general characteristics.
2 For a general description of Arabic and the Semitic group, see Bateson 1967 (2003), 50–58 and Versteegh 1997, 9-22. For a more detailed discussion of the Semitic family and an extensive bibliography, see Hetzron 1987 and especially 1992, where he provides a list of fifty-one Semitic languages. For book-length introductions to comparative Semitic linguistic structure, see Wright 1966, Gray 1934, and especially Moscati 1969.
2 An overview of Arabic language history

The earliest stages of the Arabic language (Proto-Arabic or Old Arabic) are documented from about the seventh century BC until approximately the third century AD, but because of the paucity of written records, little is known about the nature of the language of those times. The only written evidence is in the form of epigraphic material (brief rock inscriptions and graffiti) found in northwest and central Arabia.3

The next period, the third through fifth centuries, is usually referred to as Early Arabic, a transitional period during which the language evolved into a closer semblance of Classical Arabic. There are again few literary artifacts from this age, but it is known that there was extensive commercial and cultural interaction with Christian and Jewish cultures during this time, an era of both Roman and Byzantine rule in the Levant and the Fertile Crescent.4

3 Classical Arabic

The start of the literary or Classical Arabic era is usually calculated from the sixth century, which saw a vigorous flourishing of the Arabic literary (or poetic) language, especially in public recitation and oral composition of poetry, a refined and highly developed formal oral art practiced by all Arab tribal groups and held in the highest esteem. During the sixth century, the Arabic ode, or qaṣīda, evolved to its highest and most eloquent form. It was characterized by sophisticated metrics and a “highly conventionalized scheme . . . upwards of sixty couplets all following an identical rhyme.”5

The form of language used in these odes is often referred to as the standard poetic language or the poetic koinè, and there are conflicting theories as to its nature – whether it was an elevated, distinctive, supra-tribal language shared by the leadership of the Arabic-speaking communities, or whether it was the actual vernacular of a region or tribe which was adopted by poets as a shared vehicle for artistic expression. In particular, debate has centered around the existence and use of desinential (i.e., word-final) case and mood inflection, a central feature of classical poetry but one which fell increasingly out of use in spoken Arabic, and which no longer exists in the urban vernaculars of today. Since little is

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5 Arberry 1957, 15. For further discussion of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, see Nicholson 1987. See also Zwettler 1978 for a survey and analysis of the Arabic oral poetry tradition.
known about the nature of the everyday spoken Arabic of pre-Islamic times or the different levels of linguistic formality that might have been used on different occasions, certainty has not been reached on this point, although theories abound. In the seventh century AD the Prophet Muhammad was gifted over a period of years (622–632 AD) with the revelation of verses which constituted a holy book, the Qur’ân, in Arabic, which became the key text of the new monotheistic religion, Islam. The text was rendered into an official version during the reign of the Caliph ʿUthmân (644–656 AD). From that time on, Arabic was not only a language of great poetic power and sophistication, but also permanently sacralized; as the chosen language for the Qur’ân, it became the object of centuries of religious study and exegesis, theological analysis, grammatical analysis and speculation. Throughout the European medieval period, from the seventh through the twelfth centuries, the Arabic-speaking world and the Islamic empire expanded and flourished, centered first in Mecca and Madina, then Damascus, and then Baghdad. Arabic became an international language of civilization, culture, scientific writing and research, diplomacy, and administration. From the Iberian peninsula in the West to Central and South Asia in the East stretched the world of Islam, and the influence of Arabic. The vast empire eventually weakened under the growing influence and power of emerging independent Muslim dynasties, with inroads made by the Crusades, Mongol invasions from the East, and with the expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian peninsula in the West. Arabic remained the dominant language in North Africa, the Levant, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian Peninsula, but lost ground to indigenous languages such as Persian in the East, and Spanish in the West.

The language era from the thirteenth century to the eighteenth is generally known as “Middle Arabic,” although there is some ambiguity to this term. During this time, the Classical Arabic of early Islam remained the literary language, but the spoken Arabic of everyday life shifted into regional variations, each geographical

6 On the nature of the standard poetic language and the pre-Islamic koinè, see Zwettler 1978, especially Chapter 3; Rabin 1955; Fück 1955; Corriente 1976; and Versteegh 1984, especially Chapter 1.
7 For a brief introduction to the origins of Islam and the Qur’ânic revelations, see Nicholson 1930, especially Chapter 4.
8 The main dynasties of the Caliphate are: the Orthodox Caliphs (632–661 AD); the Umayyads, based in Damascus (661–750 AD); and the Abbasids, based in Baghdad (750–1258 AD).
9 Arabic has remained the dominant language in countries where the substratum language was originally Semitic or Afro-Asiatic, but not where the substratum languages were Indo-European, such as Persia or the Iberian peninsula. Aside from nationalistic and political considerations, linguistic compatibility between Arabic and its sister languages may have enabled certain populations to adapt more easily and thoroughly to Arabic. See Bateson 1967 (2003), 72–73 on this topic.
10 Versteegh (1997, 114–29) has a cogent discussion of the issues related to “Middle Arabic.” See also Blau 1961.
area evolving a characteristic vernacular. The spoken variants of Arabic were not generally written down and therefore not preserved or anchored in any way to formalize them, to give them literary status or grammatical legitimacy. They continued to evolve along their own lively and supple paths, calibrating to the changes of everyday life over the centuries, but never reaching the status of separate languages.

4 The modern period
The modern period of Arabic dates approximately from the end of the eighteenth century, with the spread of literacy, the concept of universal education, the inception of journalism, and exposure to Western writing practices and styles such as editorials, short stories, plays, and novels. Many linguists make a distinction between Classical Arabic (CA), the name of the literary language of the previous eras, and the modern form of literary Arabic, commonly known (in English) as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Differences between CA and MSA are primarily in style and vocabulary, since they represent the written traditions of very different historical and cultural eras, from the early medieval period to the modern. In terms of linguistic structure, CA and MSA are largely but not completely similar. Within MSA, syntax and style range from complex and erudite forms of discourse in learned usage to more streamlined expression in the journalistic, broadcasting, and advertising worlds. The high degree of similarity between CA and MSA gives strong continuity to the literary and Islamic liturgical tradition.

In Arabic, both CA and MSA are referred to as al-lughah al-fuSHâللغة الفصحي، or simply, al-fuSHâالفصحي، which means “the most eloquent (language).” Badawi (1985) draws a helpful distinction between fuSHâ al-‘aSrفعشى العصر (of the modern era) (MSA) and fuSHâ al-turâthفعشى التراث (of heritage) (CA). This is by no means a clear or universally accepted delineation, and opinion in the Arab world is apparently divided as to the scope and definition of the term fuSHâفصحي.  

There is speculation that the written/spoken Arabic dichotomy began much earlier, during the ninth century. See Blau 1961, Versteegh 1984, Fück 1955. For an evaluation of the main theories of Arabic dialect evolution and an extensive bibliography on the topic, see Miller 1986 and Bateson 1967 (2003), 94–114.

This contrasts distinctively with the situation in the Scandinavian countries, for example, where a similar situation prevailed in that a mother language, known as Common Scandinavian, prevailed from about AD 550–1050, and then evolved into six official, literary languages (Danish, Dano-Norwegian, New-Norwegian, Swedish, Faroese, and Icelandic), plus many dialects. Despite the fact that the offshoots are all considered independent languages, “within this core [mainland Scandinavia] speakers normally expect to be understood [by each other] when speaking their native languages” (Haugen 1976, 23–24).

See Parkinson’s informative 1991 article for an extensive discussion of fuSHâ. In his study of Egyptian native Arabic speakers’ ability with fuSHâ, he came to the conclusion that “The important point here is that people do not agree on a term, and that further they do not agree on what specific part of the communicative continuum, i.e., what specific varieties, any particular term should refer to” (33).
5 Arabic today
The Arab world today is characterized by a high degree of linguistic and cultural continuity. Arabic is the official language of all the members of the Arab League, from North Africa to the Arabian Gulf. Although geography (including great distances and land barriers such as deserts and mountains) accounts for much of the diversity of regional vernaculars, a shared history, cultural background and (to a great extent) religion act to unify Arab society and give it a profound sense of cohesion and identity.

MSA is the language of written Arabic media, e.g., newspapers, books, journals, street signs, advertisements – all forms of the printed word. It is also the language of public speaking and news broadcasts on radio and television. This means that in the Arab world one needs to be able to comprehend both the written and the spoken forms of MSA. However, in order to speak informally with people about ordinary everyday topics, since there is no universally agreed-upon standard speech norm, Arabs are fluent in at least one vernacular form of Arabic (their mother tongue), and they understand a wide range of others. This coexistence of two language varieties, the everyday spoken vernacular and a higher literary form is referred to in linguistic terms as “diglossia.”

5.1 Diglossia
The divergence among the several vernacular forms of Arabic, and between the vernaculars as a whole and the standard written form, make the linguistic situation of the Arab world a complex one. Instead of having one universally agreed-upon standard speech norm, each major region of the Arab world (such as the Levant, the Arabian Gulf, the western Arabian peninsula, western North Africa, Egypt, and the Sudan) has as its own speech norm, a spoken vernacular coexistent with the written standard – MSA. Vernacular speech is much more flexible and mutable than the written language; it easily coins words, adapts and adopts foreign expressions, incorporates the latest cultural concepts and trends, and propagates slang, thus producing and reflecting a rich, creative, and constantly changing range of innovation. Vernacular or colloquial languages have evolved their own forms of linguistic artistry and tradition in terms of popular songs, folk songs, punning and jokes, folktales and spontaneous performance art.

14 Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Mauretania, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrein, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.
15 For more on diglossia, see Ferguson 1959a and 1996, and Walters, 1996. See also Southwest Journal of Linguistics 1991, which is a special issue devoted to diglossia. Haeri 2003 is a book-length study of the relationships among Classical Arabic, MSA, and colloquial Arabic in Egypt.
Their changeability, however, also means that Arabic vernaculars may vary substantially from one another in proportion to their geographical distance. That is, neighboring vernacular dialects such as Jordanian and Syrian are easily mutually intelligible to native Arabic speakers; however, distant regional dialects, such as Moroccan and Kuwaiti, have evolved cumulative differences which result in the need for conscious effort on the part of the speakers to accommodate each other and adjust their everyday language to a more mainstream level. Educated native Arabic speakers have enough mutual awareness of dialect characteristics that they can identify and adjust rapidly and naturally to the communicative needs of any situation.\(^\text{16}\) This spontaneous yet complex adjustment made by Arabic speakers depends on their knowledge of the vast reservoir of the mutually understood written language, which enables them to intercommunicate. Therefore, Arabic speakers share a wealth of resources in their common grasp of the literary language, MSA, and they can use this as a basis even for everyday communication.

In the re-calibration of Arabic speech to be less regionally colloquial and more formal, however, some researchers have identified another variation on spoken Arabic, an intermediate level that is termed “cultivated,” “literate,” “formal,” or “educated” spoken Arabic.\(^\text{17}\) Thus, the Arabic language situation is characterized not simply as a sharp separation between written forms and spoken forms, but as a spectrum or continuum of gradations from “high” (very literary or formal) to “low” (very colloquial), with several levels of variation in between.\(^\text{18}\) As Elgibali states (1993, 76), “we do not ... have intuition or scholarly consensus concerning the number, discreteness and/or stability of the middle level(s).”

These levels are characterized by (at least) two different sociolinguistic dimensions: first, the social function; that is, the situations in which speakers find themselves – whether those situations are, for example, religious, formal, academic, casual or intimate. Secondly, these levels are conditioned by the educational and regional backgrounds of the speakers. In this intricate interplay of speech norms, situations, and backgrounds, educated native Arabic speakers easily find their way, making spontaneous, subtle linguistic adjustments to suit the dimensions of the occasion and the interlocutors.

\(^\text{16}\) For a detailed discussion of variation in Arabic see Elgibali 1993.

\(^\text{17}\) This is known as “cultivated” speech in Arabic: لغة المثقفين or لغة المثقفين. A number of Arabic linguists have researched and discussed this phenomenon, but there is no consensus as to the nature, extent, definition, and use of this part of the Arabic language continuum. The focus of the dispute centers around the ill-defined and unstable nature of this particular form of spoken Arabic and whether or not it can be distinguished as an identifiable linguistic level of Arabic. For more discussion of this point, see Badawi 1985, Elgibali 1993, El-Hassan 1978, Hary 1996, Mitchell 1986, Parkinson 1993, and Ryding 1990 and 1991.

\(^\text{18}\) See, for example, the five levels distinguished in Badawi 1985 and the “multiglossia” of Hary 1996.
5.2 Modern Standard Arabic: MSA

MSA is the written norm for all Arab countries as well as the major medium of communication for public speaking and broadcasting.\(^{19}\) It serves not only as the vehicle for current forms of literature, but also as a resource language for communication between literate Arabs from geographically distant parts of the Arab world. A sound knowledge of MSA is a mark of prestige, education, and social standing; the learning of MSA by children helps eliminate dialect differences and initiates Arab children into their literary heritage and historical tradition. It aids in articulating the connections between Arab countries and creating a shared present as well as a shared past. Education in the Arab countries universally reinforces the teaching and maintenance of MSA as the single, coherent standard written language.

A number of excellent Western pedagogical texts have been developed over the past fifty years in which MSA is discussed, described, and explained to learners of Arabic as a foreign language.\(^{20}\) However, up to this point, there has been no comprehensive reference grammar designed for use by western students of MSA.

5.3 Arabic academies

Grammatical and lexical conservatism are hallmarks of MSA. Arabic language academies exist in several Arab capitals (Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Amman) to determine and regulate the procedures for incorporation of new terminology, and to conserve the overall integrity of MSA.\(^{21}\) Although foreign words are often borrowed into Arabic, especially for ever-expanding technical items and fields, the academies try to control the amount of borrowing and to introduce and encourage Arabic-derived equivalents, such as the Arabic word ُحَاتِفُ (pl. ُحَوَّاتِف) for ‘telephone’ (based on the Arabic lexical root ُح-ت-ف), to counteract the widespread use of the Arabized European term: ُتَلْيِفُونُ.

According to Versteegh (1997, 178) “From the start, the goal of the Academy was twofold: to guard the integrity of the Arabic language and preserve it from dialectal and foreign influence, on the one hand, and to adapt the Arabic language to the needs of modern times, on the other.” Another researcher states

> Arab academies have played a large role in the standardization of modern written and formal Arabic, to an extent that today throughout the Arab world there is more or less one modern standard variety. This is the variety used in newspapers, newsreel

\(^{19}\) For a discussion and definition of this particular term, see McLaughlin 1972.

\(^{20}\) See, for example, Abboud and McCarus 1983; Abboud, Attieh, McCarus, and Rammuny 1997; Brustad, Al-Batal, and Al-Tonsi 1995 and 1996; Cowan 1964; Middle East Centre for Arab Studies (MECAS) 1959 and 1965; Rammuny 1994; Ziadeh and Winder 1957.

broadcasting, educational books, official and legal notices, academic materials, and instructional texts of all kinds. The three academies that have had the greatest influence are those based in Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad. Among the common objectives of these academies is the development of a common MSA for all Arabic-speaking peoples. (Abdulaziz 1986, 17).

5.4 Definitions of MSA

A fully agreed-upon definition of MSA does not yet exist, but there is a general consensus that modern Arabic writing in all its forms constitutes the basis of the identity of the language. Modern writing, however, covers an extensive range of discourse styles and genres ranging from complex and conservative to innovative and experimental. Finding a standard that is delimited and describable within this great range is a difficult task; however, there is an identifiable segment of the modern Arabic written language used for media purposes, and it has been the focus of linguists’ attention for a number of years because of its stability, its pervasiveness, and its ability to serve as a model of contemporary written usage. Dissemination of a written (and broadcast) prestige standard by the news media is a widespread phenomenon, especially in multilingual, diglossic, and multi-dialectal societies.

One of the most complete descriptions of MSA is found in Vincent Monteil’s *L’arabe moderne* in which he refers to “le néo-arabe” as “l’arabe classique, ou régulier, ou écrit, ou littéral, ou littéraire, sous sa forme moderne” (1960, 25). That is, he understands “modern Arabic” to be the modern version of the old classical language. He also states that “on pourrait aussi le traiter d’arabe ‘de presse’, étant donné le rôle déterminant qu’a joué, et que joue encore, dans sa diffusion... *lughat al-jarâ’id*” (1960, 27). Defining MSA through its function as the language of the Arabic news media is a useful way to delimit it since it is not officially codified as a phenomenon separate from Classical Arabic and because Arabic speakers and Arabic linguists have differing opinions on what constitutes what is referred to as *al-lugha al-fuSHâ*. As Monteil also remarks, “s’il est exact de reconnaître... que l’arabe moderne ‘se trouve être une langue assez artificielle, une langue plus ou moins fabriquée’ plutôt qu’un ‘usage codifié,’ il faut déclarer... que ‘c’est une langue vivante’ et qui ‘correspond à un besoin vital’” (1960, 28). It is these characteristics of newspaper language, its vitality and practicality, that make it a prime example of modern written Arabic usage.

Elsaid Badawi’s phrase, *fuSHâ al-caSr*, is his Arabic term for MSA (1985, 17), which he locates on a continuum (at “level two”) between Classical Arabic (“level one”) and Educated Spoken Arabic (“level three”). As he points out, the levels “are not segregated entities,” (1985, 17) but shade into each other gradually. He identifies level two (MSA) as “mostly written” rather than spoken, and levels
two and three as essentially “in complementary distribution” with each other (1985, 19), that is, they function in separate spheres, with some overlap.

Leslie McLoughlin, in his 1972 article “Towards a definition of Modern Standard Arabic,” attempts to identify distinctive features of MSA from one piece of “quality journalism” (57) and provides the following definition which he borrows from M. F. Sa‘îd: “that variety of Arabic that is found in contemporary books, newspapers, and magazines, and that is used orally in formal speeches, public lectures, learned debates, religious ceremonials, and in news broadcasts over radio and television” (58). Whereas Sa‘îd states that MSA grammar is explicitly defined in grammar books (which would bring it close to CA), McLoughlin finds several instances in which MSA differs from CA, some of which are lexical and some of which are syntactic (72–73).

In her *Arabic Language Handbook* (1967; 2003, 84), Mary Catherine Bateson identified three kinds of change that differentiate MSA from CA: (1) a “series of ‘acceptable’ simplifications” in syntactic structures, (2) a “vast shift in the lexicon due to the need for technical terminology,” and (3) a “number of stylistic changes due to translations from European languages and extensive bilingualism.”

In the research done for this book, a wide variety of primarily expository texts, including Arabic newspaper and magazine articles, as well as other forms of MSA, were consulted and put into a database over a period of ten years. The morphological and syntactic features of the language used in these writings were then analyzed and categorized. This resulted in the finding that few structural inconsistencies exist between MSA and CA; the major differences are stylistic and lexical rather than grammatical. Particular features of MSA journalistic style include more flexible word order, coinage of neologisms, and loan translations from western languages, especially the use of the √iDaafa إضافة annexation structure to provide equivalents for compound words or complex concepts. It is just this ability to reflect and embody change while maintaining the major grammatical conventions and standards that make journalistic Arabic in particular, a lively and widely understood form of the written language and, within the style spectrum of Arabic as a whole, a functional written standard for all Arab countries.
Phonology and script

This chapter covers the essentials of script and orthography as well as MSA phonological structure, rules of sound distribution and patterning, pronunciation conventions, syllable structure, and word stress. Four features of Arabic script are distinctive: first, it is written from right to left; second, letters within words are connected in cursive style rather than printed individually; third, short vowels are normally invisible; and finally, there is no distinction between uppercase and lowercase letters. These features can combine to make Arabic script seem impenetrable to a foreigner at first. However, there are also some features of Arabic script that facilitate learning it. First of all, it is reasonably phonetic; that is, there is a good fit between the way words are spelled and the way they are pronounced. And secondly, word structure and spelling are very systematic.

1 The alphabet

There are twenty-eight Arabic consonant sounds, twenty-six of which are consistently consonants, but two of which – waaw and yaa – are semivowels that serve two functions, sometimes as consonants and other times as vowels, depending on context. For the most part, the Arabic alphabet corresponds to the distinctive sounds (phonemes) of Arabic, and each sound or letter has a name. Arabic letter shapes vary because Arabic is written in cursive style, that is, the letters within a word are systematically joined together, as in English handwriting. There is no option in Arabic for “printing” or writing each letter of a word in independent form. There is no capitalization in Arabic script and therefore no distinction between capital and small letters. Letters are instead distinguished by their position in a word, i.e., whether they are word-initial, medial, or final. This is true

1 “Certain consonants have some of the phonetic properties of vowels ... they are usually referred to as approximants (or frictionless continuants), though /w/ and /y/ are commonly called semivowels, as they have exactly the same articulation as vowel glides. Although phonetically vowel-like, these sounds are usually classified along with consonants on functional grounds” Crystal 1997, 159. See also section 4.2.2. this chapter.

2 For further reading about the Arabic alphabet and its close conformity with the phonemes of the language, see Gordon, 1970, 193–97.
both in printed Arabic and in handwriting. Handwriting is not covered in this
text, but there are several excellent books that provide instruction in it.3

Every letter has four possible shapes: word-initial, medial, final, and separate.
The following table gives the names of the sounds of Arabic listed in dictionary or
alphabetical order, along with their shapes:4

## 2 Names and shapes of the letters

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<th>Independent</th>
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4 There is an older order which is not used for organizing dictionary entries, but which is used in
presenting elements of a text in outline, much as English speakers would make points A., B., and C. That order is called the ‘abjad, and is usually recited in the form of words: ‘abjad, hawwaz,
HuTTii, kalaman, sa ‘faS, qurishat, thaxadh-un DaZagh-un (أتِجِدُ هُوَ زِحْطَيْكَ كَلِمَةً سَعْفَةً قُرِّيْشَ ثُخَذَ ضَطْعَ).
The cursive nature of Arabic script, as shown above, requires several forms for each letter. Most letters are joined to others on both sides when they are medial, but there are a few that are called “non-connectors” which are attached to a preceding letter, but not to a following letter. The non-connectors are: ’alif, daal, dhaal, raa’, zaay, and waaw, as shown in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Final</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'ayn</td>
<td>ع</td>
<td>ع</td>
<td>ع</td>
<td>ع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghayn</td>
<td>غ</td>
<td>غ</td>
<td>غ</td>
<td>غ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaa'</td>
<td>ف</td>
<td>ف</td>
<td>ف</td>
<td>ف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qaaf</td>
<td>ق</td>
<td>ق</td>
<td>ق</td>
<td>ق</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaaf</td>
<td>ك</td>
<td>ك</td>
<td>ك</td>
<td>ك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laam</td>
<td>ل</td>
<td>ل</td>
<td>ل</td>
<td>ل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miim</td>
<td>م</td>
<td>م</td>
<td>م</td>
<td>م</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuun</td>
<td>ن</td>
<td>ن</td>
<td>ن</td>
<td>ن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haa'</td>
<td>ه</td>
<td>ه</td>
<td>ه</td>
<td>ه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waaw</td>
<td>و</td>
<td>و</td>
<td>و</td>
<td>و</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaa'</td>
<td>ي</td>
<td>ي</td>
<td>ي</td>
<td>ي</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Consonants: pronunciation and description

It is impossible to provide a fully accurate description of Arabic sounds solely through written description and classification. Some sounds are very similar to English, others slightly similar, and others quite different. This section provides a phonemic chart and some general principles of pronunciation as well as
descriptions of Arabic sounds. The descriptions given here are for standard MSA pronunciation. Some sounds have allophones, or contextual variations, as noted.\(^5\)

3.1 Phonemic chart of MSA consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Interdental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Uvular</th>
<th>Pharyngeal</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stops</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>b ب</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>t ت</td>
<td>d د</td>
<td>T ط</td>
<td></td>
<td>k ك</td>
<td>q ق</td>
<td>ء</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affricates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>j ج</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>ß ß</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fricatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>f ف</td>
<td>th ث</td>
<td>s س</td>
<td></td>
<td>sh ش</td>
<td>x خ</td>
<td>H ح</td>
<td>h ه</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>dh ذ</td>
<td>Z ز</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gh غ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nasals</strong></td>
<td>m م</td>
<td>n ن</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laterals</strong></td>
<td>l ل</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flaps</strong></td>
<td>r ر</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semivowels</strong></td>
<td>w و</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y ي</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Description of Arabic consonants

These descriptions are both technical and nontechnical, with examples relating to English sounds wherever possible.\(^6\)

1. *hamza* (’) (ء) voiceless glottal stop: like the catch in the voice between the syllables of “oh-oh”;\(^7\)

2. *baa* (b) (ب) voiced bilabial stop; /b/ as in “big”;

3. *taa* (t) (ت) voiceless alveolar stop; /t/ as in “tin”;

---

\(^5\) Colloquial regional variants, such as the pronunciation of /j/ as /y/ in the Arab Gulf region, or /k/ plus front vowel as /ch/ in Iraqi colloquial, are not provided here because they are nonstandard for formal pronunciation of MSA.

\(^6\) For an in-depth, traditional account of Arabic phonetics, see Gairdner 1925. For technical analyses of Arabic phonology and its history, see Al-Ani 1970 and Semaan 1968.

\(^7\) As Gairdner points out, another good example of this in English would be the hiatus prefixed to the stressed word “our” in the sentence “It wasn’t our fault” (1925, 30).
4 thaa’ (th) (ث) voiceless interdental fricative; /θ/ or /th/ as in “thin”; 8
5 jiim (j) (ج) There are three standard regional variants:
(a) voiced alveopalatal affricate; /j/ as in “jump”;
(b) voiced alveopalatal fricative (zh): as the /z/ in “azure” or the medial sound in “pleasure”;
(c) voiced velar stop; /g/ as in “goat”; 9
6 Haa’ (H) (ح) voiceless pharyngeal fricative; a sound produced deep in the throat using the muscles involved in swallowing. Constrict these muscles while at the same time pushing breath through – as though you were trying to stage-whisper “Hey!” 10
7 xaa’ (x) (خ) voiceless velar fricative; like the /ch/ in Bach or Scottish loch; in some romanization systems it is represented by /kh/;
8 daal (d) (د) voiced alveolar stop; /d/ as in “door”;
9 dhaal (dh) (ذ) voiced interdental fricative: /ð/ or /dh/ pronounced like the /th/ in “this”;
10 raa’ (r) (ر) voiced alveolar flap or trill: as /r/ in Italian or Spanish; a good example in English is to pronounce the word “very” as “veddy”;
11 zaay (z) (ز) voiced alveolar fricative: /z/ as in zip;
12 siin (s) (س) voiceless alveolar fricative: /s/ as in sang;
13 shiin (sh) (ش) voiceless palatal fricative: /ʃ/ as in ship;
14 Saad (S) (ص) voiceless velarized alveolar fricative: /s/ but pronounced farther back in the mouth, with a raised and tensed tongue;
15 Daad (D) (ض) voiced velarized alveolar stop: /d/ but pronounced farther back in the mouth, with a raised and tensed tongue;
16 Taa’ (T) (ط) voiceless velarized alveolar stop: /t/ pronounced farther back in the mouth, with a raised and tensed tongue;

8 Arabic has two different symbols for the two phonemes or different kinds of “th” in English - the voiceless, as in “think” (often transcribed as /θ/) and the voiced interdental as in “them” (often transcribed as /ð/). Thaa’ /ð/ is the voiceless one whereas dhaal /ʒ/ is voiced. In this text, the voiceless version /θ/ is romanized as /th/, and the voiced /ð/ as /dh/.
9 The variations are essentially as follows: the first is more characteristic of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, the second more Levantine and North African, and the third specifically Egyptian and Sudanese pronunciation. Occasionally, a mixed pronunciation of jiim is found, with one variant alternating with another, especially /j/ and /zh/.
10 The nature of the pharyngeal consonants Haa’ and ‘ayn is described in detail in McCarus and Rammuny 1974, 124–34 and in Gairdner 1925, 27–29.
17 **Zaa’ (Z) (ظ)**

There are two standard variants of this phoneme:
(a) voiced velarized interdental fricative: /dh/ as in “this” pronounced farther back in the mouth, with a raised and tensed tongue;
(b) voiced velarized alveolar fricative: /z/ pronounced farther back in the mouth with a raised and tense tongue.\(^{11}\)

18 **‘ayn (‘) (ع)**

voiced pharyngeal fricative: this is a “strangled” sound that comes from deep in the throat, using the muscles used in swallowing.\(^{12}\)

19 **ghayn (gh) (غ)**

voiced velar fricative: a “gurgled” sound, much like French /r/;

20 **faa’ (f) (ف)**

voiceless labiodental fricative: as /f/ in “fine”;

21 **qaaf (q) (ق)**

voiceless uvular stop: this is made by “clicking” the back of the tongue against the very back of the mouth, where the uvula is;

22 **kaaf (k) (ك)**

voiceless velar stop: /k/ as in “king”;

23 **laam (l) (ل)**

voiced lateral: this has two pronunciations:
(a) /l/as in “well” or “full” (back or “dark” /l/ );\(^{13}\)
(b) /l/as in “lift” or “leaf” (fronted or “light” /l/ );\(^{14}\)

24 **miim (m) (م)**

voiced bilabial continuant: /m/ as in “moon”;

25 **nuun (n) (ن)**

voiced nasal continuant: /n/ as in “noon”;

26 **haa’ (h) (ح)**

voiceless glottal fricative: /h/ as in “hat”;

27 **waaw (w) or (uu) (و)**

bilabial semivowel: /w/ as in “wind” or long vowel /uu/ pronounced like the “oo” in “food”;

28 **yaa’ (y) or (ii) (ى)**

palatal semivowel: /y/ as in “yes” or long vowel /ii/ pronounced like the long /i/ in “machine.”\(^{15}\)

The notation of Arabic consonants and their use in orthography is quite straightforward, except for the following considerations, which are described in detail: the orthography and pronunciation of the letter hamza, the spelling and pronunciation variants of the the taa’ marbu‘a, and the doubling of consonant

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\(^{11}\) Pronunciation of Dhaa / Zaa’ varies regionally; the interdental and alveolar fricatives are the most widely accepted.

\(^{12}\) See note 10.

\(^{13}\) Technically, this variant of /l/ is velarized. The tongue is raised in the back of the mouth. Although primarily an allophonic variant, for a theory of its status as a separate phoneme in Arabic, see Ferguson 1956.

\(^{14}\) This variant of /l/ is more fronted and palatalized even than the light /l/ in English and is closer to French /l/ as in “belle.” See Gairdner 1925, 17–19 for discussion of “dark” and “light” /l/.

\(^{15}\) When yaa’ is the final letter of a word, it is printed without dots in Egyptian publications; elsewhere in the Arab world, it receives its two dots at all times and in all positions.
strength (gemination). The nature of the approximants (semivowels) waaw and yaa’ is also discussed at greater length under the section on vowels.

3.3 hamza rules: orthography and pronunciation

There are two kinds of hamza, strong and weak. Strong hamza is a regular consonant and is pronounced under all circumstances, whether in initial, medial, or final position in a word. Weak hamza or “elidable” hamza is a phonetic device that helps pronunciation of consonant clusters and only occurs at the beginning of a word. It is often deleted in context.

3.3.1 Strong hamza (hamzat al-qa‘T):

The Arabic letter hamza (‘) is often written with what is termed a “seat,” or “chair” (kursi كرسي in Arabic), but sometimes the hamza sits aloof, by itself. There is a set of rules to determine which chair, if any, hamza will take, depending on its position within a word, as follows:

3.3.1.1 CHAIR RULES

(1) The chairs used for hamza are identical with the letters for long vowels: ‘alif، waaw، and yaa’. When yaa’ is used as a seat for hamza, it loses its two dots.

(2) When used as chairs, the long vowels are not pronounced. They appear in the script only as seats for the hamza, not as independent sounds.

(3) The choice of which chair to use (‘alif، waaw، or yaa’) is determined by two things: position of the hamza in the word and/or the nature of the vowels immediately adjacent to hamza.

3.3.1.2 INITIAL hamza CHAIR RULES: When hamza is the initial consonant in a word, it has an ‘alif seat. When the vowel with hamza is a fatHa or Damma, the hamza is written on top of the ‘alif، and when the vowel with the hamza is kasra، the hamza is usually written under the ‘alif.16 Note that the vowel after hamza can be a short or a long one. In written Arabic، hamza in initial position is usually invisible، along with its short vowel. Here it is provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Romanization</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ًأمْ</td>
<td>’umm أمْ</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ًأسْتَاذْ</td>
<td>’ustaadh أَسْتَاذْ</td>
<td>professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ًأَيْنْ</td>
<td>’ayna أَيْنْ</td>
<td>where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أَكْبَرْ</td>
<td>’akbar أَكْبَرْ</td>
<td>bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إِسْلَامْ</td>
<td>’islaam إِسْلَامْ</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إِيرَانْ</td>
<td>’iiraan إِيرَانْ</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 In certain kinds of script، the hamza with kasra is split، with the hamza remaining on top of the ‘alif and the kasra being written below.
3.3.1.3 MEDIAL hamza When hamza occurs in the middle of a word, it normally has a seat determined by the nature of its adjacent vowels. The vowel sounds contiguous to hamza, on either side, whether short or long, have a firm order of priority in determining the seat for hamza. That order is: i-u-a. That is, the first priority in seat-determination is an /i/, /ii/, or /y/ sound, which will give hamza a yaa’ seat (yaa’ without dots). In the absence of an /i/ sound, an /u/ or /uu/ sound gives hamza a waaw seat, and this has second priority. If there is no /i/ or /u/ sound, an /a/ or /aa/ gives hamza an √ alif seat, and this has the lowest priority. This system is easier to understand with examples:

(1) yaa’ seat:

- organization: hay’a هيئة
- deputy: naa’ib نائب
- Israel: ’israa’îl إسرائيل
- well: bi’r بئر
- refuge: maw’îl موثل
- he was asked: su’îla سْئِل

(2) waaw seat:

- educator: mu’addib مؤدب
- affairs: shu’uun شُؤُون
- he composes: yu’alif يؤلف
- question: su’aal سْؤال
- feminine: mu’annath موْنث

(3) √ alif seat:

- visa: ta’shiira تأشيرة
- she asked: sa’alat سالت
- head: ra’s رأس
- late, delayed: muta’axxir متأخر

(4) Medial aloof hamza: When hamza occurs medially after waaw as long vowel /uu/, or after √ alif followed by an /a/ sound, it sits aloof. In general, Arabic script avoids having two adjacent √ alifs.
measures  
attacks  
manliness, valor  
he wondered

3.3.1.4 Final hamza: When hamza is the final letter of a word, it can either sit aloof or have a seat.

(1) Aloof: Hamza sits aloof at the end of a word when it is preceded by a long vowel:

calmness  
port  
free; innocent  

Or when it is preceded by a consonant (with sukuun):

part  
thing  
burden

(2) On a seat: Final hamza sits on a seat when it is preceded by a short vowel. The nature of the short vowel determines which seat hamza will have. A fatHa gives it an 'alif seat, a kasra gives it a yaa’ (without dots) seat, and a Damma gives it a waaw seat.

prophecy  
shore  
warm  
principle

(3) Shift of seat with suffixes: It is important to note that word-final hamza may shift to medial hamza if the word gets a suffix and hamza is no longer the final consonant. Suffixes such as possessive pronouns (on nouns) and verb inflections cause this to happen. Short vowel suffixes (case and mood-markers) normally do not influence the writing of hamza. Here are some examples:

friends (nom.)  
our friends (nom.)
our friends (gen.)  

أصدقائنا

our friends (acc.)  

أصدقائنا

he read  

قرأ

we read  

قرأنا

they (m.) read  

قرونا

you (f.) are reading  

نقرأ

3.3.2 hamza plus long /aa/ madda

A special symbol stands for hamza followed by a long /aa/ sound: /ˈaa/. The symbol is called madda (‘extension’) and looks like this: ِ. It is always written above ‘alif and is sometimes referred to as ‘alif madda. It can occur at the beginning of a word, in the middle, or at the end. Even if it occurs at the beginning of a word, the madda notation is visible, unlike the regular initial hamza.

Asia  

آسيا

final  

آخر

mirror  

آلة

minarets  

مגדל

the Qur’an  

القرآن

establishments  

منشآت

they (2 m.) began  

بدأ

3.3.3 Weak hamza (hamzat al-waSl)

Hamzat al-waSl, elidable hamza, is a phonetic device affixed to the beginning of a word for ease of pronunciation. It is used only in initial position, and is accompanied by a short vowel: /ija/, /u/, or /a/. For purposes of phonology and spelling it is necessary to know whether an initial hamza is a strong one or an elidable one, since elidable hamza drops out in pronunciation unless it is utterance-initial. When elidable hamza drops out, its ‘alif seat remains in spelling, but it gets a different symbol on top of it, called a waSta, which indicates deletion of the glottal stop and liaison between the previous vowel and the following consonant.

17 It is the style in certain Arab countries to write even the third person masculine plural with hamza sitting on ‘alif, e.g., qara’uu. Either way is correct.

18 It is a phonological rule that no word may start with a consonant cluster in Arabic, but certain morphological processes result in patterns or groupings of affixes that cause consonant clusters.

19 The technical term for this process is aphaeresis or aphesis, deletion of an initial vowel of a word and substituting for it the final vowel of the previous word, as the deletion of the initial “a” in “are” in the contraction “we’re” or the initial “i” of “is” in “she’s.”
3.3.3.1 DEFINITE ARTICLE, al-ال: The short vowel that accompanies elidable hamza of the definite article is fatHa.

(1) Sentence-initial: The sentence-initial hamza is pronounced.

الوزارة هنالك.
al-wizaarat-u hunaaka.  
The ministry is (over) there.

al-munaafasat-u qawiyyat-un.  
Competition is strong.

(2) Non-sentence-initial: The hamza and its short vowel /a/ on the definite article are deleted, although the 'alif seat remains in the spelling.

هم في الوزارة.  
hum fii l-wizaarat-i.  
They are at the ministry.

لكن المنافسة قوية.  
laakinna l-munaafasat-a qawiyyat-un.  
But the competition is strong.

3.3.3.2 CERTAIN COMMON WORDS: The short vowel that accompanies elidable hamza of this set of words is kasra.

son  ibn  ابن
name  ism  اسم
woman  imra’a  امرأة
two  ithnaan  اثنان

(1) Utterance-initial: The hamza is pronounced.

ابن مسافر.  
ibn-ii musaafir-un.  
My son is travelling.

اسم الله.  
ism-u Ilaah-i  
the name of God

(2) Non-utterance-initial: The hamza and its kasra are omitted in pronunciation. Sometimes the 'alif seat of the hamza is also omitted in these words.

مسافر مع ابني.  
saafara ma’a bn-ii.  
He traveled with my son.

باسم الله.  
bism-i-Ilaah-i  
in the name of God
3.3.3.3 FORMS VII–X VERBAL NOUNS AND PAST TENSE VERBS: The short vowel that accompanies elidable hamza of this set of words is kasra. The 'alif seat remains in spelling.

\[ 
\textit{intaxab-a} \ l-sha'b-u \ ra'iis-an \ jadiid-an. 
\]

The people elected a new president.

\[ 
\textit{wa-ntaxab-a} \ l-sha'b-u \ ra'iis-an \ jadiid-an. 
\]

And the people elected a new president.

3.3.3.4 IMPERATIVE VERBS OF FORMS I AND VII–X: The short vowel that accompanies these imperative forms is either kasra or Damma. The 'alif seat remains.

\[ 
\textit{fa-stami}^\circ. 
\]

Listen. So listen.

\[ 
\textit{wa-qra}^\circ \ haadhihi \ l-kalimaat-i. 
\]

Read these words. And read these words.

3.3.3.5 SPELLING BORROWED WORDS THAT START WITH CONSONANT CLUSTERS: Terms borrowed from other languages into Arabic and which start with consonant clusters, need a helping vowel to facilitate the onset of the pronunciation of the consonant cluster. The helping vowel is written with hamza and seated on an 'alif Tawiila. For example:

\[ 
\textit{studio} \ \textit{istuudyuu} \\
\textit{strategic} \ \textit{istraatiijiyy} \\
\textit{stable; barn} \ \textit{isTabl} 
\]

3.4 taa\(^\circ\) marbuuTa

3.4.1 Spelling

The taa\(^\circ\) marbuuTa is a spelling variant of regular taa\(^\circ\). It occurs only in word-final position on nouns and adjectives. It is not an optional variant, but determined by word meaning and morphology. In shape, it looks like a haa\(^\circ\) with two dots over it.
3.4.2 Meaning and use

In most cases, taa’ marbuuTa is a marker of feminine gender. For example, an Arabic word that refers to a person’s occupation may be either masculine or feminine, depending on whether one is referring to a man or woman (i.e., engineer, teacher, doctor, student). The masculine singular is a base or unmarked form, and the feminine singular is marked by the presence of a taa’ marbuuTa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ambassador (m./f.)</td>
<td>safiir /safiira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king/queen</td>
<td>malik/malika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prince/princess</td>
<td>ʿamiir/ʿamiira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student (m./f.)</td>
<td>Taalib/Taaliba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some nouns, however, are inherently feminine in gender and always spelled with taa’ marbuuTa. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>storm</td>
<td>ʿaaSifa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td>jaziira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>thaqaafa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flower</td>
<td>zahra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to showing feminine gender on nouns, taa’ marbuuTa also shows feminine gender on adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>munaZZama duwaliyya</td>
<td>al-Taaliba l-muslima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an international organization</td>
<td>the Muslim student (f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furSa saʿiida</td>
<td>mamlaka mustaqilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a happy occasion</td>
<td>an independent kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 Pronunciation

In pronunciation, taa’ marbuuTa sometimes has the haa’ sound and other times, taa”, so that it is a combination of taa’ and haa’ in terms of its written shape and its pronunciation. One consistent feature of taa’ marbuuTa is that it is always preceded by an /a/ sound, usually short /a/ (fatHa), but sometimes, long /aa/ (ʿalif).
ship safiina سَفِينة
apple tuffaaHa تُفْحَة
giraffe zaraafa زَرَافة
life Hayaat حِيَاة
canal; channel qanaat فَنَاة
prayer Salaat صَلَاة

3.4.3.1 FULL FORM: In full form pronunciation, the taa’ marbuuTa plus final inflectional vowel is pronounced as /t/:

شَبَكَةٌ مُعَلُومَاتِيَّةٍ
shabkat-un ma’iimaatiyyat-un
information network

فِي حِيَاةٍ طَوِيلَةٍ
fii Hayaat-in Tawiil-in
in a long lifetime

الجَامِعَةُ الوُطَنِيَّةُ
al-jaami’at-u l-waTaniyyat-u
the national university

‘آسِمَتُ إِلَى الْبَلَدِ
‘aaSimat-u l-balad-i
the capital of the country

3.4.3.2 PAUSE FORM PRONUNCIATION: In pause form, the final inflectional vowel is not pronounced, and, usually, neither is the taa’ marbuuTa. In most pause form situations, the pronunciation of taa’ marbuuTa becomes haa’. Because a final /h/ sound is hard to hear, it sounds as though the word is pronounced only with a final /a/, the fatHa that precedes the taa’ marbuuTa.20

a democratic republic jumhuuriyya dimuqraaTiyya جَمْهُورِيَّةٌ دِمَقْراَتِيَّةٌ
a large island jaziira kabiiira جَزِيرَةٌ كَبِيْرَةٌ

(1) Exceptions:
(1.1) If the taa’ marbuuTa is preceded by a long /aa/, pronunciation of the /t/ in pause form is optional:

life Hayaat or Hayaa(h) حَيَاة
young woman fataat or fataa(h) فَنَاة
equality musaawaat or musaawaa(h) مُسَاواة

20 For pronunciation of taa’ marbuuTa on the first term of an annexation phrase (‘iDaafa’), see Chapter 8, section 1.2.1.5.
(1.2) If the word ending in taa’ marbuuta is the first term of an annexation structure (‘iDaafa’), the taa’ is usually pronounced, even in pause form:

مَدِينَةَ دِمَشَقَّ ٍقَصَةَ حُبَّ
madiinat dimashq qisSat Hubb
(both words in pause form) (both words in pause form)
the city of Damascus a love story

3.5 Consonant doubling (gemination): tashdiid تَشْدِيد
Sometimes consonants are doubled in Arabic. This is both a spelling and pronunciation feature and means that the consonants are pronounced with double strength or emphasis.21 The technical term for this kind of doubling is “gemination.” In Arabic, the doubling process is called tashdiid, and instead of writing the letter twice, Arabic has a diacritical symbol that is written above the doubled consonant which shows that it is pronounced with twice the emphasis. The name of the symbol is shadda (‘intensification’), and it looks like this: ‘. Like the short vowels, shadda does not normally appear in written text, but it is necessary to know that it is there. Here are some examples of words that include doubled or geminated consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>Hurriyya</td>
<td>surgeon</td>
<td>jarraaH</td>
<td>جَرَاح</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pomegranate</td>
<td>rummaaan</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>jidd-an</td>
<td>جَدَّا</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to appoint</td>
<td>‘ayyana</td>
<td>pilgrimage</td>
<td>Hajj</td>
<td>حَجَّ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love</td>
<td>Hubb</td>
<td>to sing</td>
<td>ghannaa</td>
<td>غَنَى</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubt</td>
<td>shakk</td>
<td>to destroy</td>
<td>xarraba</td>
<td>حَرْبَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1 Reasons for gemination
Gemination can result from a lexical root that contains a doubled root consonant (such as the root H-b-b for Hubb, ‘love’), or it can result from a derivational process, that is, it can change word meaning and create words. For example, the verb stem darras means ‘to study,’ but a derived form of that verb, darras, with doubled raa’, means ‘to teach.’ The meanings are related, but not the same.

Gemination can also be the result of assimilation, the absorption of one sound into another. In these cases, the process is phonetic and not phonemic, i.e., it is a

21 In English, the spelling of a word with a double consonant does not indicate that the pronunciation of that consonant is stronger (e.g., kitten, ladder, offer). However, when an identical consonant is pronounced across word boundaries, it is pronounced more strongly. For example, in the following phrases, the last letter of the first word and the first letter of the last word combine together and result in stronger pronunciation: “shelf-full,” “good deed,” “hot tea,” or “still life.” This kind of consonant strengthening resembles the process of gemination in Arabic.
rule of pronunciation and does not affect the meaning of a word. For example, the /l/ of the definite article /al-/ is assimilated to certain consonants when they begin words (e.g., al-daftar, ‘the notebook,’ is pronounced ad-daftar).  

4 Vowels

The Modern Standard Arabic sound system has six vowel phonemes: three “long” ones and three “short”: /ii/ and /i/, /uu/ and /u/, /aa/ and /a/. The difference in length is not a difference in vowel quality, but in the length of time that the vowel is held. The distinction between short and long is similar to difference in length in musical notation, where there are quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, each one held twice as long as the other. It is possible to think of short vowels as resembling quarter notes and long vowels as half notes, the long vowels being held approximately double the length of time of the short vowels. Long vowels are represented in the Arabic alphabet by the letters ’alif (aa), waaw (uu) and yaa’ (ii). They are written into words as part of the words’ spelling. Short vowels, on the other hand, are not independent letters and are written only as diacritical marks above and below the body of the word. In actual practice, short vowels are not indicated in written Arabic text; they are invisible.

The pronunciation of vowels, especially /aa/ and /a/, varies over a rather wide range, depending on word structure and the influence of adjacent consonants, but also on regional variations in pronunciation. Moreover, the letter ’alif has several different spelling variants and the letters waaw and yaa’ function both as vowels and as consonants.

4.1 Phonemic chart of MSA vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>/ii/</td>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>/u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Long vowels

4.2.1 ’alif

4.2.1.1 PRONUNCIATION: The letter ’alif represents a long /aa/ sound. The quality of this sound varies from being fronted (as in the English word “fad”), a low
central vowel (as in “far”), or a low back vowel (as in the English word “saw.”) Here are some words with long /ɑː/: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fronted:</th>
<th>Backed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>naas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during</td>
<td>xilaal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door</td>
<td>baab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace</td>
<td>salaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruler</td>
<td>Haakim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fronted:</th>
<th>Backed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fire</td>
<td>naar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system</td>
<td>niZaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leader</td>
<td>qaa’id</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lighthouse</td>
<td>manaara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>jaar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Usually, in order to have the central or backed pronunciation, the word has a back consonant, either a velarized one (S, D, T, or Z) or a qaaf, as the ones above illustrate. The backed pronunciation is also used when ‘alif is followed immediately by raa’ (as in the words manaara, naar, and jaar). However, in certain parts of the Arab world, especially the Eastern regions (such as Iraq), the backed pronunciation is more frequent.

### 4.2.1.2 SPELLING VARIANTS OF ‘alif.

There are three variations of the letter ‘alif: ‘alif qaSiira (‘dagger’ ‘alif’), ‘alif maqSuura (‘shortened’ ‘alif’) and regular ‘alif (‘alif Tawiila – ‘tall’ ‘alif’). These variants are not optional but are determined by derivational etymology and spelling conventions.

#### 4.2.1.3 ‘alif Tawiila

This is the standard form of ‘alif. It is a non-connecting letter written into the word:

1. **‘alif Tawiila in initial position:** In initial position, ‘alif is not a vowel; it is always a seat for hamza (accompanied by a short vowel) or madda (hamza plus long /ɑː/).

1. **‘alif with hamza and short vowel:**

   - four  ‘arba’a  أربعة
   - brothers  ‘ixwaan  إخوان
   - pipe  ‘unbuub  أنبوب

2. **‘alif with madda:**

   - August  ‘aab  أب
   - instrument  ‘aala  آلة
   - other (m.)  ‘aaxar  آخر
(2) **'alif in medial position**: In medial position, 'alif Tawiila is connected to the letter that precedes it, but it does not connect to the following letter:

- north; left: *shamaal* شمَال
- she said: *qaalat* قَالَت
- side: *jaanib* جَانِب

The letter 'alif has a special relationship with a preceding laam: it sits inside the curve of the laam at an angle. This special combination of letters is called a “ligature,” and is even occasionally cited as part of the alphabet (“laam-'alif”).

- peace: *salaam* سَلَام
- Jordan: *al-'urdun* الأَرْدُن
- no: *laa* لَا

(3) **'alif Tawiila in final position:**

(3.1) **'alif as long vowel in word-final position**: At the end of a word 'alif Tawiila may occur:

- here: *hunaa* هُنَا
- Malta: *maalTaa* مَالِتَا
- this (m.): *haadhaa* هَذَا

(3.2) **'alif Tawiila with nunation**: A word-final 'alif may be written with two fatHas above it, signaling that the word is nunated, that is, marked for indefinite accusative case (and pronounced -an). In this case, the 'alif is not pronounced; it is only a seat or “chair” for the two fatHas that mark the indefinite accusative. The accusative case often indicates that a noun is an object of a transitive verb, or it may mark an adverbial function. For further description and examples of the accusative, see Chapter 7 on noun inflections. Some examples of adverbial accusatives ending with 'alif plus nunation include:

- welcome: *'ahl-an* أَهْلاَ
- tomorrow: *ghad-an* غَدَا
- thanks: *shukran* شُكْرَا
- greatly: *kathiir-an* كَثِيرًا
- very: *jidd-an* جَيْدَا
- finally: *'axtiir-an* أَخِيرًا
(3.3) silent inflectional ‘alif Tawiila: The ‘alif Tawiila is written as part of the third person masculine plural past tense inflection, but it is only a spelling convention and it is not pronounced. If a pronoun suffix is added to this verb inflection, then the silent ‘alif is deleted:23

لَاحْظُوا. كَانُوا كَذَلْكَ. حَمْلُوهَا عَلَى ُظُهُورِهِم.
They noticed. They were like that. They carried it on their backs.

4.2.1.4 “DAGGER” ‘alif: ‘alif qasiira: This form of ‘alif is a spelling convention used only with certain words. It is a reduced version of ‘alif Tawiila written above the consonant (hanging above it rather like a dagger), rather than beside it in the body of the word. As with the short vowels written above or below the word, this form of ‘alif is not normally visible in ordinary text. It is therefore necessary to know that a word is spelled with ‘alif qaSiira in order to pronounce it correctly. The words spelled with ‘alif qaSiira are not many in number, but some of them are used with great frequency. The most common ones include:

God
allaah 'الله

god
‘ilaah إِله

this (m.)
haadha فَذَا

this (f.)
haadhihi هذِه

these
haa‘ulaa’i هُؤلاء

that (m.)
dhaalika ذَلَك

thus
haakadhaa فَهَكَّا

but
laakinna لَكْنَّ

4.1.2.4 ‘alif maqSuura: The ‘alif maqSuura looks like a yaa’ without dots. This form of ‘alif occurs only at the end of a word. It is a spelling convention occurring with certain words because of their derivational etymology. Sometimes a dagger ‘alif is added above the ‘alif maqSuura to distinguish it from a final yaa’.

Some words spelled with ‘alif maqSuura are proper names, such as:

Leila laylaa لِيلَی
Mona munaa مَنِّی

Moses muusaa مُوسَی
Mustafa muSTaafa مُصْطَفی

23 This ‘alif is called ‘alif al-faaSila or “separating ‘alif.” It is also sometimes referred to as “otiose ‘alif.”
Other words ending in 'alif maqSuura may be any form class: verb, preposition, noun, adjective:

he built  
upon  
to, toward  

Sometimes, in an indefinite noun or adjective, the 'alif maqSuura is a seat for the indefinite accusative marker, fatHataan, and the word is pronounced with an /-an/ ending instead of -aa. This depends on the word's etymology. For declension and more examples of these words, see Chapter 7 on noun inflections.

hospital  
echo  
coffeehouse  

Most words spelled with final 'alif maqSuura have to change it to 'alif Tawiila if the word receives a suffix and the 'alif is no longer final:

level, status  
his status  
our villages  
he threw  
he threw it (f.)

Certain function words spelled with 'alif maqSuura shift from 'alif to a diphthongized yaa when they receive pronoun suffixes:24

with, at  
with her  
to, toward  
to them (m.)  
on, upon  
upon you (pl.)

4.2.2 Semivowels/semi-consonants waaw and yaa'

The letters waaw and yaa' have two functions. They represent the consonant sounds /w/ and /y/, respectively, and they also represent the long vowels /uu/ and /ii/. English has something similar to this because the letter “y” can act as a consonant, as in the word “yellow” or it can act as a vowel, as in the word “sky.”26 The Arabic /ii/ sound symbolized by yaa’ is like the /i/ in English “machine.” The /uu/ sound symbolized by waaw is like the /u/ in “rule.”

24 For rules and full paradigms of these prepositions, see Chapter 16 on prepositions and prepositional phrases.
25 This particle also has the sense of possession: ‘she has.’
26 See note 1.
4.2.2.1 THE SOUNDS OF waaw: The letter waaw represents either the sound of /w/ or the long vowel /uu/. For example, in the following words, it is /w/:

boy walad
season mawsim
state wilaaya
first ⡪awwal

And in the following it is /uu/:

breakfast faTuur
light nuur
entry duxuul
forbidden mamnuu

4.2.2.2 THE SOUNDS OF yaa: The letter yaa represents either the sound of /y/ as in “young” or the long vowel /ii/ as the “i” in “petite.” For example, in the following words it is /y/:

Yemen yaman
white ⡱abyaD
day yawm

In the following words it is pronounced as /ii/:

elephant fiil
dune kathiib
religion diin

4.3 Short vowels and sukuun (al-Harakaat wa l-sukuun): The set of three short vowels consists of the sounds /a/, /i/, and /u/. They are not considered part of the Arabic alphabet and are not as a rule visible in written Arabic. The short vowels are referred to in Arabic not as letters (Huruuf) but as “movements” (Harakaat). That is, they are seen as a way of moving the voice from one consonant to another.

Short vowels can be written into a text, but ordinarily they are not. Two exceptions to this are the Qur’ān and children’s schoolbooks. In the Qur’ān, the short vowels are made explicit so that readers and reciters can be absolutely certain of the correct pronunciation of the sacred text. In schoolbooks, they are inserted so that children can study and master word structure and spelling as they learn how to read MSA. As reading skill progresses, the use of short vowels in pedagogical texts is phased out. This is done because the patterning of short vowels is largely predictable and therefore marking them is considered redundant.

For learners of Arabic as a foreign language, the absence of short vowels requires extra attention to word structure and morphological patterning, and
memorization of the exact sound of the word as well as its spelling. Just because
the vowels are invisible doesn’t mean they don’t exist.

4.3.1 fatHa: فتحة short /a/
The short vowel /a/, called fatHa, ranges in pronunciation from low central (as in
“dark”) to lowered mid front (as in “best”), depending on context. The short vowel
/a/ is represented, when written, by a small diagonal mark sloping downward to
the left (‘). It is placed above the consonant that it follows in pronunciation.
Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>country</td>
<td>بِلَد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she danced</td>
<td>رَقَصَت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mint</td>
<td>نَعْنَع</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 kasra : كسرة short /i/
The short vowel /i/, called kasra, ranges in pronunciation from a high front vowel
(as in “petite”) to a lower front vowel (as in “sit”). Kasra is represented by a mark
similar to fatHa, but is written underneath the consonant it follows (‘). Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pepper</td>
<td>فِيْفِيل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skin</td>
<td>جَلْد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apricots</td>
<td>مِشْمِش</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3 Damma: ضمة short /u/
The short /u/ sound in Arabic, called Damma, ranges from a high back vowel (as in
“duke”) to a lower rounded back vowel (as in “bull”). The Damma is represented by
what looks like a small waaw, or an English apostrophe (‘). It is written above the
consonant which it follows. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cities</td>
<td>مُدْن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ear</td>
<td>أَذْن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quarter</td>
<td>رَيْب</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4 Absence of vowel: sukuun سكون
A consonant is not always followed by a vowel. Sometimes one consonant comes
immediately after another, or a consonant will end a word. In order to indicate
clearly that a consonant is not followed by a vowel, Arabic uses a diacritical mark
called a sukuun (‘silence’) which looks like a mini-zero (‘) placed directly above the
consonant.
As with the short vowel indicators, the sukuun is invisible in ordinary script. It is shown here in the following examples:

room ghurfa غرفة we drink nashrab نشرب
temple ma’bad معبَد sand raml رمل

4.3.5 Extra short or helping vowels
An epenthetic or helping vowel may be inserted at the end of a word in context in order to prevent consonant clusters and facilitate smoothness of pronunciation within a sentence. In a sentence, these helping vowels are added to words that would otherwise end with sukuun when the following word begins with a consonant cluster. The determination of the helping vowel is as follows:

4.3.5.1 HELPING VOWEL kasra: The short vowel kasra is by far the most frequent helping vowel.

\[\text{nasharat-i l-jariidat-u l-} \text{axbaar-a. hal-i ntahaa l-mu} \text{tamar-u?}\]
The newspaper published the news. Did the conference end?

4.3.5.2 HELPING VOWEL Damma: The helping vowel Damma is used with the second person plural personal pronouns and third person plural pronouns when they are spelled with Damma:

\[\text{istaqbal-at-hum-u l-bi’that-u l-rasmiyyat-u.}\]
The official delegation met them.

\[\text{ya-tabir-una-kum-u l-ruwwaad-a.}\]
They consider you (m. pl.) the pioneers.

\[\text{hal-i shtaray-tum-u l-Ta} \text{fi aam-a?}\]
Did you (m. pl.) buy the food?


28 Phonetically, hal-i shtaray-tum-u l-Ta’aam-a? There are two helping vowels here, a kasra on the question-word hal in order to prevent a consonant cluster with the past tense Form VIII verb, and Damma after the subject marker -tum affixed to the past tense verb.
4.3.5.3 LONG VOWEL waaw AS HELPING VOWEL: A special case of a long helping vowel /uu/ occurs when the object of the verb following the second person masculine plural past tense suffix /-tum/ happens to be a pronoun. A long /uu/ is inserted as a buffer between the subject marker on the verb and the object pronoun:

हैल नशेर्तूमा?
hal nashar-tum-uu-haa?
Did you (m. pl.) publish it?

4.3.5.4 HELPING VOWEL fatHa: The short vowel fatHa has restricted use as a helping vowel. With the word min ‘from,’ the helping vowel is fatHa before the definite article and otherwise, kasra.

मन कुवाईट
min-a l-kuwayt-i
from Kuwait

मन الغرب
min-a l-gharb-i
from the west

मन انتهاة الحرب
min-i ntihaa-‘i l-Harb-i
from the end of the war

मन اسمنا
min-i sm-i-naa
from our name

4.4 Diphthongs and glides
Diphthongs or glides in Arabic are combinations of short vowels and semivowels. The sequences that occur are /aw/, /ay/, /iy/, and /uw/. The sequences */iw/ and */uy/ are usually prohibited.

4.4.1 Diphthongs

4.4.1.1 /aw/ (PRONOUNCED LIKE THE “ow” IN “power”)30

above fawqa فوق almonds lawz لوز
pine-nuts Sanawbar منْوَر appointment maw‘id موعد

4.4.1.2 /ay/ (PRONOUNCED LIKE ENGLISH “eye,” OR “aye”)30

egg bayDa بيضاء car sayyaara سيارا

to change ghayyar غير night layl ليل

---

30 In less formal spoken Arabic and in colloquial Arabic, the diphthong /aw/ changes to a long vowel /oo/, pronounced like the /o/ in “note.”

30 Again, in less formal spoken Arabic and colloquial Arabic, the diphthong /ay/ changes to the long vowel /ee/, pronounced like the long /a/ in “date.”
4.4.2 Glides
Glides are vowel–consonant combinations where the vowel and consonant have very close points of articulation, such as /iy/ (high front vowel plus palatal sonant) and /uw/ (high back vowel plus rounded bilabial sonant). In most cases the glide consonant is doubled.

4.4.2.1 HIGH FRONT GLIDE /iy/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arab (f.)</th>
<th>Egyptians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘arabiyya</td>
<td>miSriyy-uun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>denied</th>
<th>yearly</th>
<th>Sanawiyy-an</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.4.2.2 HIGH BACK GLIDE /uw/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>growth</th>
<th>enemy</th>
<th>‘aduww</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>numuww</td>
<td>‘aduww</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>youth</th>
<th>height</th>
<th>‘uluww</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>futuwwa</td>
<td>‘uluww</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 MSA pronunciation styles: full form and pause form
When reading MSA formally, aloud, words are pronounced according to certain rules.

5.1 Full form
When complete voweling is observed, all vowels are pronounced, including all the short vowels that are contained in the words but not visible in the text. This also includes any word-final inflectional vowels and is called “full” form pronunciation.

HaDar-a ra’iis-u l-jumhuuriyyat-i ‘ilaQ aSaSimat-i laylat-a ‘ams-i.
The president of the republic came to the capital last night.

5.2 Pause form
There is also a standard Arabic pronunciation principle that a word-final short vowel may be left unpronounced. This is called “pause form” in English and waqf (‘stopping’) in Arabic. There are two variants of this principle:

5.2.1 Formal pause form
When reading MSA aloud, the standard practice is to use pause form on the final word of a sentence, or (if it is a long sentence) wherever there is a natural “pause” for breath.
5.2.2 Informal pause form:
When reading MSA aloud or when speaking MSA less formally, pause form is sometimes used on most or all words ending with a short vowel.

The president of the republic came to the capital last night.

5.2.2.1 PAUSE FORM FOR WORDS ENDING IN taa’ marbuuTa: A word that terminates in taa’ marbuuTa is usually pronounced as ending in -a or -ah in pause form unless it is the first term of an ’Idaafa, in which case it is pronounced as a /-t/ sound.

capital ‘aaSima
university jaami’a
organization munaZZama

jaami’at bayruut

the capital of Oman the university of Beirut

6 MSA syllable structure
There are a limited number of possible syllable sequences for MSA word structure.

First of all, no word or syllable may start with a vowel. If a word appears to start with a vowel, such as ’islaam or ’umma or ’abadan, what is actually heard is a vowel preceded by a glottal stop (hamza). English speakers tend not to hear the glottal stop because it is not phonemic (meaningful) in English. It is, however, a real consonant in Arabic.

I ’anaa أَنَا
week ’usbuu أَسْبَوع
if ’idhaa إِذَا

31 Final short vowel /i/ is unpronounced.
32 Note that in order to avoid consonant clusters and ease pronunciation, when speaking in pause form, sometimes helping vowels have to be inserted.
33 For a more detailed description of taa’ marbuuTa pronunciation, see McCarus and Rammuny 1974, 112–13. See also section 1.2 of Chapter 7, on feminine gender marking.
The second rule is that no word or syllable may begin with a consonant cluster, such as \(/sk/ or \(/br/). Consonant clusters within syllables are prohibited, except for one situation: In pause form, a word may end in a consonant cluster, such as: 

\[ f\text{äh\text{abet}t} 'I understood' \] or \[ i\text{st\text{a}m\text{a}lt} 'I used' \] Syllable structure in MSA is therefore limited to the following five combinations of consonants and vowels.

6.1 Full form pronunciation syllables

1. “Short” or “weak” syllable: CV (consonant–short vowel)
   e.g., -ma, -bi, -hu

2. “Long” or “strong” syllables: CVV (consonant–long vowel) or CVC (consonant–short vowel–consonant)
   e.g., -faa, -dii, -ras, -tab

6.2 Additional pause form pronunciation syllables

   e.g., -riim, -nuun, -sart, -rabt

These super-strong sequences occur primarily in word-final position.

7 Word stress rules

Stress rules refer to the placement of stress or emphasis (loudness) within a word. In English, stress is not fully predictable and is learned by ear or along with word spelling. Some words in English are differentiated only by stress, for example: invalid (noun and adjective), present (noun, adjective, and verb), suspect (noun and verb), conduct (noun and verb).

Stress in Modern Standard Arabic, on the other hand, is essentially predictable and adheres to some general rules based on syllable structure. Because MSA is not a spontaneously spoken language, the rules given here for stress patterns are for the way MSA is pronounced when read out loud or used in speaking from prepared texts in the Eastern Arab world. In Egypt and the Sudan, stress rules are different for MSA as well as the colloquial language. Nonetheless, the standard Eastern form is “a nearly universal norm,” acceptable and understandable throughout the Arab world.

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34 Active participles of geminate Form I verbs contain an internal CVVC sequence, for example, حَاجَّ حَاجَّ ‘pilgrim,’ مَائَداَ ‘substance,’ كَافَّةَ ‘entirety,’ سَامِ ‘poisonous,’ جَافَ ‘dry,’ عَامِ ‘public; general,’ خَاصَ ‘private; special,’ or حَارَ حَارَ ‘hot.’ Some borrowed words also contain this sequence, such as رَادِيو ‘radio.’ See Chapter 6 on participles, section 1.1.2.

35 McCarthy and Prince 1990a, 252. They also note that “there is inconsistency in the stressing of standard Arabic words between different areas of the Arab world, and no direct testimony on this subject exists from the Classical period.”
Different sets of rules are used for full form pronunciation and pause form pronunciation. They overlap to a great extent, but there are some differences. The major feature of all these stress rules is that stress placement is calculated from the end of a word – not the beginning. Note that some Arabic words are composed of several morphological elements, including case endings and pronoun suffixes of various sorts, so that the length of words may vary substantially.

7.1 Full form stress rules

7.1.1 Stress is never on the final syllable
Therefore, in words of two syllables, stress is on the first, no matter what that first syllable is like (strong or weak). Examples (stress is indicated by **boldface**):

- to, towards: **‘ilaal**
- what: **maadhaa**
- she: **hiya**

7.1.2 Stress on penult
Stress is on the second syllable from the end of the word (the penult) if that syllable is strong (CVC or CVV). Examples:

- efforts (nom.): **juhuudun**
- students (acc.): **Tullaaban**
- they taught her: **darrasuuhaa**
- they (f.) write: **yaktubna**
- you (m. pl.) worked: **‘amiltum**

7.1.3 Stress on the antepenult
If the second syllable from the end of the word is weak (CV), then the stress falls back to the third syllable from the end (the antepenult):

- a capital: **‘aaSimatun**
- all of us: **kullunaa**
- a library (nom.): **maktabatun**
- he tries: **yuHaawilu**
- Palestinian (f.): **filasTiiniyyatum**
7.1.4 Summary: word length
Therefore, in full-form pronunciation, MSA stress falls either on the second or third syllable from the end of the word. Note that if a suffix is attached to a word, it increases the number of syllables and may change the stress pattern, e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>university</td>
<td>jaami‘atun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our university</td>
<td>jaami‘atunaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>office</td>
<td>maktabun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his office</td>
<td>maktabuhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we studied</td>
<td>darasnaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we studied it (f.)</td>
<td>darasnaahaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 Pause form stress rule
The same basic set of rules applies to pause form, but there is an important additional rule for pause form pronunciation: Stress falls on the final syllable of a word if that syllable is a super-strong one (CVCC or CVVC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>minister</td>
<td>waz‘ir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boundaries</td>
<td>Huduud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions</td>
<td>mubaaHthaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried</td>
<td>Haawalt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.1 Summary
To summarize, MSA stress falls on either the second or the third syllable from the end of the word or, in pause form, on the final syllable if it is super-strong. 36

7.2.2 Other pause form conventions

7.2.2.1 PAUSE FORM nisba: Words in pause form that end with the *nisba* (relative adjective) suffix -iyy should technically have stress placed on that final syllable (CVCC), e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>MSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yemeni</td>
<td>yamaniyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>‘arabiyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>official</td>
<td>ra‘isiyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedouin</td>
<td>badawiyy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And this is done in very formal spoken MSA. However, it is often the case in spoken MSA (as in colloquial Arabic) that this ending is treated not as -iyy but simply

---

36 As McCarthy and Prince concisely note: “The stress system is obviously weight-sensitive: final syllables are stressed if superheavy CvvC or CvCC; penults are stressed if heavy Cvv or CvC; otherwise the antepenult is stressed” (1990a, 252).
as long *ii*, in which case the stress is placed as though the last syllable contained an open long vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yemeni</th>
<th>'arabii</th>
<th>official</th>
<th>ra'isii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yamani</td>
<td>عرب</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.2.2 Pause Form Change in Stress for Certain Words Spelled with *taa*’ *marbuuTa*: In pause form, *taa*’ *marbuuTa*, along with its case ending, is not pronounced, and this eliminates a syllable from the word. Therefore, stress has to be recalculated, and certain words spelled with *taa*’ *marbuuTa* shift the stress when pronounced in pause form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full form (includes case ending)</th>
<th>Pause form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>university</td>
<td>jaami’at-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td>madrasat-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecture</td>
<td>muHaaDarat-un</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shift in stress in the above examples occurs because when the *taa*’ *marbuuTa* plus case ending is deleted, the third syllable from the end becomes the second syllable from the end, and because it is weak (CV), it cannot receive the stress, so the stress shifts back to the previous syllable. There are also cases where the deletion of *taa*’ *marbuuTa* plus case ending does not alter the stress pattern. This happens if the syllable that originally had the stress is a strong syllable. In this case the strong syllable retains the stress, in keeping with the general rules.37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full form</th>
<th>Pause form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>city</td>
<td>madiinat-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dove</td>
<td>Hamaamat-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heroism</td>
<td>buTuulat-un</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37 For additional reading on Arabic word stress and generative phonology, see Brame 1970 and Abdo 1969.
8 Definiteness and indefiniteness markers

8.1 Definite article al-  ﺍِـَ~

8.1.1 Spelling
The definite article in Arabic is spelled with ’alif-laam and is attached as a prefix. This spelling convention makes a word with the prefixed definite article look like just one word. The definite article thus never occurs independently ( al- ﺍِـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَ~

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the commerce</td>
<td>at-tijaara</td>
<td>التَجَارَةَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the culture</td>
<td>ath-thaqaafa</td>
<td>النَقْآفَةَ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.2 Pronunciation
In general, the definite article is pronounced “al” but many speakers shorten the /a/ sound so that it sounds more like “el” (as in English “elbow”). It is spelled with elidable hamza (hamzat al-waSl) (see above), so if the definite article is not utterance-initial, the hamza drops out in pronunciation and the vowel pronounced with the laam of the definite article is actually the final vowel of the preceding word (see also above under hamzat al-waSl).

8.1.2.1 SUN AND MOON LETTERS
(1) Sun Letters (Huruuf shamsiyya حُرُوفٌ شَمْسِيَّةٌ): Certain sounds assimilate or absorb the sound of the laam in the definite article. These sounds or letters are called “sun letters” (Huruuf shamsiyya). When a word begins with one of these sounds, the ’alif-laam of the definite article is written, but the laam is not pronounced; instead, it is absorbed or assimilated into the first letter or sound in the word and that letter is doubled in strength. A shadda is written over the sun letter itself to show that the /l/ is assimilated into it and strengthens it, but the shadda does not show in normal printed Arabic.

The sun letters or sounds that absorb the /l/ of the definite article are as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\end{array}
\]
Moon letters (Huruf qamariyya): “Moon letters” do not absorb the /l/ of the definite article. The moon letters are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the religion</td>
<td>ad-diin</td>
<td>الدَّيْن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the gold</td>
<td>adh-dhahab</td>
<td>الْدِّهْب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lord</td>
<td>ar-rabb</td>
<td>الرَب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the flowers</td>
<td>az-zuhuur</td>
<td>الزُهْرُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the secret</td>
<td>as-sirr</td>
<td>السَرْ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the sun</td>
<td>ash-shams</td>
<td>الشَمْس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the wool</td>
<td>aS-Suuf</td>
<td>الصَوْف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the noise</td>
<td>aD-Dajja</td>
<td>الضَجْهَة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the doctor</td>
<td>aT-Tabiib</td>
<td>الطَبْبِ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the shadow</td>
<td>aZ-Zill</td>
<td>الْظَلّ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the clothing</td>
<td>al-libaas</td>
<td>الْبَلَاسِ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the light</td>
<td>an-nuur</td>
<td>النُورْ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Moon letters (Huruf qamariyya): “Moon letters” do not absorb the /l/ of the definite article. The moon letters are:

א ב ג ح خ غ ف ق ك م هو ي


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Pronounced</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>al-’islaam</td>
<td>الأِسْلَام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bedouin</td>
<td>al-badw</td>
<td>الْبَدْو</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the pocket</td>
<td>al-jayb</td>
<td>الْجَيْبِ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.1.2.2 SUMMARY: SUN AND MOON LETTERS: The Arabic alphabet, or inventory of consonant sounds, is therefore divided into two groups: sounds that assimilate the /l/ of the definite article and sounds that do not. The sounds are best learned through memorization, listening, and speaking practice. Note that in many transliteration systems (Library of Congress, for example), when written Arabic is romanized into Latin letters, the definite article is spelled “al” even though in pronunciation the /l/ may be assimilated. That is the case in the romanization in this text.

8.2 Indefinite marker: nunation (tanwiin تَنْوين)

Indefiniteness, which corresponds to the use of “a” or “an” in English, is not marked with a separate word in Arabic. Instead, it is marked with a suffix, an /n/ sound that comes at the end of a word. This /n/ sound is not written with a regular letter /nuun/. It is indicated by writing the final inflectional vowel on a word twice. In the case of Damma, nunation is often indicated by giving the Damma a “tail” or flourish at the end, rather than doubling it.38

---

38 The writing conventions for this indefinite marking are described in detail in Chapter 7, section 4.2.1.
Nunation as a marker of indefiniteness may appear on nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Certain classes of words (e.g., diptotes) are restricted from having nunation.

- a house (nominative) \( \text{bayt-u-n} \)
- a house (genitive) \( \text{bayt-i-n} \)
- a house (accusative) \( \text{bayt-a-n} \)

Note that the accusative form of nunation often needs a “seat” or “chair” which is usually \( \` \text{alif Tawiila} \).\(^{39}\) For example:

- place \( \text{makaan-an} \)
- bridge \( \text{jisr-an} \)
- many \( \text{kathiir-an} \)

In words spelled with \( \text{taa' marbuut} \), the nunation sits atop the final letter and the accusative nunation does not require an \( \` \text{alif} \) chair. This is also the case in words that end with \( \text{hamza} \) preceded by a long vowel.

- an embassy (nominative) \( \text{sifaarat-u-n} \)
- an embassy (genitive) \( \text{sifaarat-i-n} \)
- an embassy (accusative) \( \text{sifaarat-a-n} \)
- an evening (nominative) \( \text{masaa'-u-n} \)
- an evening (genitive) \( \text{masaa'-i-n} \)
- an evening (accusative) \( \text{masaa'-a-n} \)

\(^{39}\) Certain “defective” nouns use \( \` \text{alif maqSuura} \) as a seat for the \( \text{fatHataan} \) in both the nominative and the accusative cases, e.g., \( \text{ma'n} \) ‘meaning’ or \( \text{maqhan} \) ‘coffeehouse.’ See section 5.4.4 of Chapter 7 for further details of this declension.
Arabic word structure: an overview

“The Semitic root is one of the great miracles of man’s language.”

1 Morphology in general

Morphology, or word structure, pertains to the organization, rules, and processes concerning meaningful units of language, whether they be words themselves or parts of words, such as affixes of various sorts. Meaningful components and subcomponents at the word level are referred to as morphemes. Arabic morphology is different from English in some very basic respects but it is highly systematic. In fact, Arabic and the Semitic languages have had substantial influence on the development of certain key concepts in theoretical morphology.

Theories of word structure, or morphology, usually focus on two essential issues: how words are formed (derivational or lexical morphology) and how they interact with syntax (inflectional morphology, e.g., marking for categories such as gender, number, case, tense). Arab grammarians, starting in the late eighth and early ninth centuries AD, developed sophisticated analyses of Arabic morphology that differ from modern Western theories, but interrelate with them in interesting ways. Because this reference grammar is intended primarily for the use of Western readers, it is organized along the lines of traditional Western categories, with inclusion of the Arabic terminology.

Derivational or lexical morphology has to do with principles governing word formation (such as analysis of the English words “truthful” or “untruthfulness”

1 Lohmann 1972, 318.
2 Aronoff (1976, 7) gives this general definition of morphemes: “the units into which words are analyzed and out of which they are composed.” This definition is adequate as a start, although Aronoff notes that it is problematic in certain ways for morphological theory. For a general introduction to traditional morphology a good place to begin is Matthews 1974. He writes: “the morpheme is established as the single minimal or primitive unit of grammar, the ultimate basis for our entire description of the primary articulation of language. Words, phrases, etc., are all seen as larger, complex or non-primitive units which are built up from morphemes in successive stages” (1974, 78). For further developments in morphological theory see Aronoff 1976 and 1994, Anderson 1992, and Spencer 1991.
3 “It may thus well be that all Western linguistic morphology is directly rooted in the Semitic grammatical tradition” (Aronoff 1994, 3).
4 For discussion of how Arabic morphological categories interrelate with Western theories, see Ryding 1993. See also discussions in Aronoff 1994, esp. 123–64 and Anderson 1992, 57–58; Monteil (1960, 105–223) has an excellent overview of MSA morphological issues.
derived from the base word “true”).^5 Inflectional morphology describes how words vary or inflect in order to express grammatical contrasts or categories, such as singular/plural or past/present tense. Derivation, since it is the process of creating words or lexical units, is considered procedurally prior to inflection, which subsequently acts upon the word stem and modifies it, if necessary, for use in context (by affixing /-s/ in English for plural, for example, or /-ed/ for past tense). These are two fundamental categories, therefore, in approaching language structure. However, the boundaries between derivation and inflection are not as clear-cut in Arabic as they are in English because Arabic morphology works on different principles, and because Arabic morphological theory views elements of word structure and sentence structure from a different perspective.***^6***

Readers who are consulting this reference grammar for answers to specific questions may want to skip over the morphological theory and consult the paradigms (inflectional charts), and the book is designed to allow them to do so. However, those who are studying Arabic with goals of understanding the processes and categories of Arabic language structure will find that descriptions of the morphological structure are helpful not only in understanding the theoretical framework of Arabic, but also in organizing their knowledge in order to serve as a foundation for higher levels of achievement and proficiency. Moreover, without a sound grasp of Arabic morphological principles, learners will be unable to make use of Arabic dictionaries.

2 Derivation: the Arabic root-pattern system

Arabic morphology exhibits rigorous and elegant logic. It differs from that of English or other Indo-European languages because it is to a large extent based on discontinuous morphemes. It consists primarily of a system of consonant roots which interlock with patterns of vowels (and sometimes certain other consonants) to form words, or word stems. This type of operation is not unknown in English. If one looks at the consonant sequence s-ng, one knows that its meaning

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^5 In the word “untruthfulness,” for example, there are four morphemes: un-, truth, -ful, and -ness. Three of these morphemes are bound, i.e., they cannot occur on their own, and one (“truth”) is “free.”

^6 The two major categories of grammatical analysis in Arabic are Sarf صرف and nahw نحو, which are often translated as morphology and syntax, respectively. However, the boundary between them is not the same boundary as in Western grammatical theory. The category of Sarf covers many areas of derivational morphology (e.g., the ten forms of the verb) and some inflectional morphology (e.g., the past tense paradigm); but it does not include the study of case and mood. A further category of Arabic grammatical analysis, ishtiqaqaا, is often translated as ‘etymology’ but actually deals more with Arabic derivational morphology. It is etymology (the study of word origins and development) in the sense that it deals extensively with the creation of words from the lexical root system, but not in the Western diachronic sense that examines the evolution of lexical items and their meanings over time and through different, though related stages of language evolution.
has to do with vocal music. By inserting different vowels into the vowel slot between the /s-/ and the /-ng/ several different English words can be formed:

- sing (v.)
- sang (v.)
- sung (v.)
- song (n.)

All of these items are words, or stems that can have suffixes such as “sing-ing,” “song-s,” “sing-s,” “song’s,” “sing-er,” or prefixes, such as “un-sung.” As a comparison, the consonant sequence s-ng corresponds roughly to the concept of an Arabic consonantal root, whereas the vowels and affixes would correspond approximately to the Arabic concept of pattern. The procedure of differentiating meaning by means of word-internal vowel change is known technically as “ablaut” or “introflexion,” defined as a word-internal change that signals a grammatical change. Other examples in English include: man/men, foot/feet, mouse/mice, know/knew, sink/sank/sunk. In English, the change usually involves just one vowel; however, in Arabic, it can involve several, for example:

- he wrote: katab-a (v.) 
- he corresponded: kaatab-a (v.)
- it was written: kutib-a (v.)
- book: kitaab (n.)
- books: kutub (n.)
- writer; (adj.) writing: kaatib (n.)
- writers: kuttaab (n.)
- write! (2 m.s.): uktaab (v.)

These words, or stems, can have inflectional suffixes such as katab-at ‘she wrote,’ or kutub-an ‘books’ (accusative case). The root or three-consonant ordered sequence k-t-b has to do with “writing,” and most words in the Arabic language that have to do with writing are derived from that root, through modifying patterns of vowels (and sometimes also adding certain consonants). This is a typically Semitic morphological system. In Arabic, this root-pattern process has evolved extensively and very productively in order to cover a vast array of meanings associated with each semantic field (such as “writing”). A few more examples:

- office; desk: maktab (n.)
- offices; desks: makaatib (n.)
library  *maktaba* (n.) مكتبة
she writes  *ta-ktub-u* (v.) تكتب
we write  *na-ktub-u* (v.) نكتب
writing  *kitaaba* (n.) كتابة
written  *maktuub* (PP) مكتوب

As seen in the above examples, the shifting of patterns around the consonantal root accomplishes a great deal in terms of word creation (derivation) and to some extent, word inflection (e.g., pluralization). The consonant root can be viewed as a nucleus or core around which are constellated a wide array of potential meanings, depending on which pattern is keyed into the root. Roots and patterns are interacting components of word meaning and are both bound morphemes. They each convey specific and essential types of meaning, but neither one can exist independently because they are abstract mental representations.7

2.1 A definition of root

A root is a relatively invariable discontinuous bound morpheme, represented by two to five phonemes, typically three consonants in a certain order, which interlocks with a pattern to form a stem and which has lexical meaning.8

The root morpheme (for example, */k-t-b/*) is “discontinuous” because vowels can be interspersed between those consonants; however, those consonants must always be present and be in the same sequence: first */k/*, then */t/*, then */b/*. The usual number of consonants in an Arabic root is three and these constitute “by far the largest part of the language” (Haywood and Nahmad, 1962: 261). However, there are also two-consonant (biliteral), four-consonant (quadriliteral) (such as *z-l-z-l*, *b-r-h-n*, *t-r-j-m*), and five-consonant roots (quinquiliteral) (such as *b-r-n-m-j*).9

The root is said to contain lexical meaning because it communicates the idea of a real-world reference or general field denotation (such as “writing”). It is useful to think of a lexical root as denoting a semantic field because it is within that

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7 The fact that they are abstract does not diminish the fact that they are strong psychological realities for Arabic speakers. According to Frisch and Zawaydeh (2001, 92) “there is clear psycholinguistic evidence that Arabic consonantal roots are a distinct component of the Arabic mental lexicon.”

8 I am indebted to Professor Wallace Erwin for this definition.

9 Aside from the reduplicated four-consonant root, such as */w-s-w-s* or */h-m-h-m*, which is inherently Arabic, four- and five-consonant roots can be borrowings from other languages. Some have been part of the Arabic lexicon for hundreds of years; others are recent borrowings (such as */t-l-f-n* ‘to telephone’). The Arab grammarian al-Khalil ibn Ahmad (d.791) made an extensive study of Arabic lexical roots and determined which were Arabic and which were not according to rules of Arabic phonology and phonotactics. See Sara 1991 on al-Khalil’s phonology.
field that actual words come into existence, each one crystalizing into a specific lexical item. The number of lexical roots in Arabic has been estimated between 5,000 and 6,500.\textsuperscript{10}

2.2 A definition of pattern

A pattern is a bound and in many cases, discontinuous morpheme consisting of one or more vowels and slots for root phonemes (radicals), which either alone or in combination with one to three derivational affixes, interlocks with a root to form a stem, and which generally has grammatical meaning.\textsuperscript{11}

The pattern is defined as discontinuous because it intersperses itself among the root consonants (as in the word *kaatib*).\textsuperscript{12} It is useful to think of it as a kind of template onto which different roots can be mapped.\textsuperscript{13} The “derivational affixes” mentioned in the definition include the use of consonants that mark grammatical functions, such as the derivational prefix *mu*- for many participles, the prefix *ma*- for a noun of place, or the relative adjective suffix *-iyy*. Consonants that are included in Arabic pattern formation are: /\textsuperscript{a}/ (hamza), /\textsuperscript{t}/ (taa‘), /\textsuperscript{m}/ (miim), /\textsuperscript{n}/ (nuun), /\textsuperscript{s}/ (siin), /\textsuperscript{y}/ (yaa‘), and /\textsuperscript{w}/ (waaw). These consonants may be used as prefixes, suffixes or even infixes.\textsuperscript{14} One further component of patterning is gemination or doubling of a consonant. Therefore, the components of MSA pattern-formation include: six vowels (three long: /\textsuperscript{a}/, /\textsuperscript{i}/, /\textsuperscript{u}/; three short: /\textsuperscript{a}/, /\textsuperscript{i}/, and /\textsuperscript{u}/); seven consonants (\textsuperscript{a}, \textsuperscript{t}, \textsuperscript{m}, \textsuperscript{n}, \textsuperscript{s}, \textsuperscript{y}, \textsuperscript{w}); and the process of gemination.\textsuperscript{15}

Patterns are said to possess grammatical (rather than lexical) meaning because they signify grammatical or language-internal information; that is, they distinguish word types or word classes, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. They can even signal very specific information about subclasses of these categories. For example, noun patterns can readily be identified as active participle, noun of place, noun of instrument, or verbal noun, to name a few. Because patterns are

\textsuperscript{10} Kouloughli (1994, 60) cites about 6,500 lexical roots found in a dictionary of 50,000 lexical items. Greenberg (1950) bases his study of lexical root phonotactics on 3,775 verb roots found in Lane (1863) and Dozy (1881).

\textsuperscript{11} This definition is also from Professor Wallace Erwin.

\textsuperscript{12} There are a few patterns that consist of just one vowel (such as _a_, for example, *Harb* ‘war’ or *nawm* ‘sleep,’ and these patterns are not considered discontinuous. Most patterns, however, involve more than one vowel.

\textsuperscript{13} Patterns are sometimes referred to as “prosodic templates” or “stem templates” in discussions of morphological theory (see, e.g., Aronoff 1994, 134. Spencer 1994). For the concept of “templatic morphology” see McCarthy and Prince 1990.

\textsuperscript{14} Such as the taa‘ infixed between the root consonants jiim and miim in the Form VIII verb *ijtama‘-a* ‘to meet,’ for example, the root *j-m-f* ‘gathering together.’ Another example is the infixing of *waaw* in the word *shaawri*, the plural of *sharti* ‘street.’ Again, the infix is inserted between the first and second consonants of the root.

\textsuperscript{15} A traditional mnemonic device for remembering Arabic morphological components is the invented word *sa’altumawtiha* ‘you (pl.) asked me it.’
limited to giving grammatical or intralinguistic information, there are fewer Arabic patterns than roots.

### 3 Word structure: root and pattern combined

Most Arabic words, therefore, are analyzed as consisting of two morphemes – a root and a pattern – interlocking to form one word. Neither an Arabic root nor a pattern can be used in isolation; they need to connect with each other in order to form actual words. A word such as *kaatib* ‘writer,’ for example, consists of two bound morphemes: the lexical root *k-t-b* and the active participle pattern *_aa_i_* (where the slots stand for root consonants). When a root is mapped onto a pattern, they together form a word, “writer,” (“doer of the action of writing”). This word can then act as a stem for grammatical affixes such as case-markers. For example, the accusative indefinite suffix *-an*:

\[
\text{قابِلنا كتاباً.} \\
\text{qaabal-naa kaatib-an.}
\]

We met a writer.

Understanding the system of root–pattern combinations enables the learner to deduce or at least wisely guess at a wide range of word meanings through compositional semantics by putting together root and pattern meanings to yield a word meaning. This ultimately lightens the load of vocabulary learning.

### 4 Dictionary organization

Arabic dictionaries are based on lexical roots and not word spelling. Instead of relying on the exact orthography of a word, Arabic dictionaries are organized by the root or consonant core of a word, providing under that entry every word derived from that particular root. The root is therefore often called a “lexical root” because it is the actual foundation for the lexicon, or dictionary. The lexical root

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16 In their work on Arabic templatic morphology, McCarthy and Prince propose separating Arabic root and pattern components into distinct “tiers” in accordance with the “Prosodic Morphology Hypothesis” (1990, 3–6).

17 It is important to note that not all Arabic word-meanings are semantically transparent, despite the rigor of the system. Many words have come to have particular connotations due to cultural, historical, and regional factors and need to be learned through use of the dictionary. (See Bateson 2003, 1–3.) For a helpful analysis of Arabic morphology as it relates to the lexicon, see Stowasser 1981.

18 The roots in an Arabic dictionary are listed alphabetically according to the order of letters in the Arabic alphabet. For example, the root *k-t-f* comes after *k-t-b* because /f/ comes after /b/ in the alphabet. Therefore, in order to find the root, one has to know the order of the alphabet. This is dealt with further in Appendix 1. This system applies to genuinely Arabic words or words that have been thoroughly Arabized. However, loanwords – words borrowed from other languages – are listed in an Arabic dictionary by their spelling. Note that pre-modern Arabic dictionaries may have alternative arrangements of the root consonants. See Haywood 1965 on the history of Arabic lexicography.
provides a semantic field within which actual vocabulary items can be located. In this respect, an Arabic dictionary might be seen as closer to a thesaurus than a dictionary, locating all possible variations of meaning in one referential domain or semantic field under one entry. See Appendix 1 for a summary of how to use an Arabic dictionary.

5 Other lexical types

5.1 Compounding into one word (naHt نحت)

Another word-formation process exists in Arabic: compounding, composing a word by conjoining other words. There are several subprocesses or variations on this procedure, and although it is not common in traditional Arabic morphology, it is used in MSA for recently coined items and for loan-translations, especially technical terms. The classic MSA example is the word ra’smaal ‘capital’ formed from conjoining the words ra’s ‘head’ and maal ‘money.’ Another example is laa-markaziyya ‘decentralization,’ from the words laa ‘no’ and markaziyya ‘centralization.’ Sometimes only part of a word is used in the compound, as in the word for ‘supersonic,’ faw-SawTiyy, abbreviating the word for ‘above, super’ fawq to faw-, joining it with the noun SawT ‘sound,’ and suffixing the adjectival /-iyy/ ending.19

5.2 Compounding into two words (tarkiib تركيب)

Sometimes the lexical item created is not one single word in Arabic, but a noun phrase, such as ‘adam wujuud ‘non-existence’ or kiis hawaa ‘airbag,’ or a combined participle-noun phrase such as muta‘addid-u l-aTraaf, ‘multilateral.’ With the necessity for rapid translation of technical and computational terms from Western languages into Arabic, these kinds of lexical compounds have become more prevalent over the past two or three decades. See Chapter 5, section 15.2 for further detail on this type of lexical innovation.

5.3 Solid stems

Solid stems are words which cannot be reduced or analyzed into the root–pattern paradigm. They consist of primarily three sets in Arabic: pronouns, function words, and loanwords. Solid-stem words are listed in Arabic dictionaries according to their spelling.

5.3.1 Pronouns

Arabic pronoun categories include personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and relative pronouns. These categories do not fit precisely into the standard root and pattern system, although they show definite phonological relationships to

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19 See Stetkevych 1970, 48–55. See also Chapter 5, section 15.1.
each other within their categories, such as the relation between *haadhaa* ‘this (m.)’ and *haadhihi* ‘this (f.)’.

### 5.3.2 Function words

Another common subset of solid stems consists of Arabic function words – such as prepositions and conjunctions. These are high-frequency items, and in terms of their structure, they are usually short or even monosyllabic. For example: *fiī*, ‘in; at,’ *‘ila*, ‘to, towards,’ or *wa*- ‘and.’

### 5.3.3 Loanwords

There are also a number of words (primarily nouns) in MSA that are borrowed directly from other languages, and these are considered, for the most part, to have solid stems, e.g., they cannot be broken down into roots and patterns, such as the words *raadyuu* ‘radio’ and *kumbyyutir* ‘computer.’

Many proper nouns fall into this category, as well, including Middle Eastern place names such as *baghdaad*, ‘Baghdad’ and *bayruut* ‘Beirut.’ Such words are discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.

### 6 Inflection: an overview of grammatical categories in Arabic

The term “inflection” generally refers to phonological changes a word undergoes as it is being used in context. In English, some common inflectional categories are: number (singular and plural), tense (e.g., past, present), and voice (active and passive).

Generally speaking, Arabic words are marked for more grammatical categories than are English words. Some of these categories are familiar to English speakers (such as tense and number) while others, such as inflection for case or gender, are not. There are eight major grammatical categories in Arabic: tense/aspect, person, voice, mood, gender, number, case, definiteness. Six of these apply to verbs (tense/aspect, person, voice, mood, gender, number), four apply to nouns and adjectives (gender, number, case, definiteness), and four apply to pronouns (person, gender, number and – to a limited extent – case).

Here is a brief summary of these categories and their roles in Arabic. Details on all these topics are found as noted under specific reference points.

#### 6.1 Tense/Aspect

Tense and aspect can be seen as two different ways of viewing time. Tense usually deals with linear points extending from the past into the future. Aspect sees the

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20 A few words borrowed from Western languages, such as “film” and “bank” fit so well into the root–pattern system that Arabic plurals have evolved for them – *‘aflaam* and *bunuuk*, respectively.

21 These names are not originally Arabic but derive from other languages of the region such as Aramaic or Persian.
completeness of an action or state as central: is the action over with and completed, ongoing, or yet to occur? The points of view of the two terms are different: one focuses on when the action occurs and the other focuses on the action itself – whether it is complete or not. These two grammatical categories do overlap to some extent and have in practice blended into one in MSA.22

There are two basic morphological tenses in Arabic: past and present, also called perfective and imperfective, respectively. In dealing with the modern written language, many linguists and teachers find it more pragmatic to describe Arabic verbs in terms of tense, and the terms past/present (referring to time or tense) and perfect/imperfect (referring to aspect) are often used interchangeably. There is also a future tense, indicated by prefixing either sa- or sawfa to a present tense form. Other tenses exist, such as the past perfect, the future perfect, and the past continuous, but they are compound tenses involving the use of auxiliary verbs and particles.23

6.2 Person
Arabic verbs and personal pronouns inflect for three persons: first person (I, we), second person (you), and third person (she, he, they). There are differences with English, however, in the gender and number of these persons. For the Arabic first person (‘anaa, naHnu) there is no gender distinction. For the second person, there are five forms of “you”: masculine singular (‘anta), feminine singular (‘anti), dual (‘antuma), masculine plural (‘antum) and feminine plural (‘antunna). For the third person, there are six verbal distinctions and five pronoun distinctions: he (huwa), she (hiya), they-two masculine (humaa), they-two feminine (humaa), they masculine (hum) and they feminine (hunna). (See charts in Chapter 12.) Thus, the total number of person categories in Arabic is thirteen, as opposed to the seven of English (I, you, he, she, it, we, they).

6.3 Voice
The category of voice refers to whether an Arabic verb or participle is active or passive. Generally speaking, the passive is used in Arabic only if the agent or doer of the action is unknown or not to be mentioned for some reason. There are sets of

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22 In his description of “the states (tenses) of the verb” in Classical Arabic, Wright (1967, I:51) says: “The temporal forms of the Arabic verb are but two in number, the one expressing a finished act, one that is done and completed in relation to other acts (the Perfect); the other an unfinished act, one that is just commencing or in progress (the Imperfect)” (emphasis in original). On the same page he gives an indication of the complexity of Arabic tense/aspect relations when he states that “The Arabian Grammarians . . . have given an undue importance to the idea of time, in connection with the verbal forms, by their division of it into the past (al-maaDii) the present (al-Haal) the future (al-mustaqbal) and the past perfect (al-HaadDir) of the present (al-HaadDir) and the future (al-mustaqbal) the first of which they assign to the Perfect and the other two to the Imperfect.”

23 See Chapter 21 on verb inflection.
morphological inflections and syntactic constructions particular to the passive and these are dealt with in Chapter 38.

6.4 Mood
Mood or “mode” refers to verb categories such as indicative, subjunctive, imperative, or (in Arabic) jussive. These categories reflect contextual modalities that condition the action of the verb. For example, whereas the indicative mood tends to be characteristic of straightforward statements or questions, the subjunctive indicates an attitude toward the action such as doubt, desire, wishing, or necessity, and the imperative mood indicates an attitude of command or need for action on the part of the speaker.

The issue of mood marking is a central one in Arabic grammar (along with case marking). Moods fall under the topic of morphology because they are reflected in word structure; they are usually indicated by suffixes or modifications of suffixes attached to the present tense verb stem, and the phonological nature of the verb stem determines what form the suffix will take. The mood markers are often short vowel suffixes, for example, /-u/ for indicative and /-a/ for subjunctive.

In Arabic, mood marking is done only on the imperfective or present tense stem; there are no mode variants for the past tense. The Arabic moods are therefore non-finite; that is, they do not refer to specific points in time and are not differentiated by tense. Tense is inferred from context and other parts of the clause.

Mood marking is determined either by particular particles which govern or require certain moods (e.g., the negative particle lam requires the jussive mood on the following verb) or by the narrative context in general, including attitude of the speaker and intended meaning. See Chapters 34 and 35 on verb moods.

6.5 Gender
Arabic exhibits two genders: masculine and feminine. For the most part, gender is overtly marked, but there are words whose gender is covert and shows up only in agreement sequences. The gender category into which a noun falls is semantically arbitrary, except where nouns refer to human beings or other living creatures. Gender is marked on adjectives, pronouns, and verbs, as well, but is not inherent, as it is in nouns. Gender is discussed at greater length in Chapter 7.

6.6 Number
Arabic has three number categories: singular, dual, and plural. Whereas singular and plural are familiar categories to most Western learners, the dual is less

24 A very few nouns are both masculine and feminine, for example: ‘salt’ miłH and ‘spirit’ ruuH (see Chapter 7 for further discussion).
familiar. The dual in Arabic is used whenever the category of “two” applies, whether it be in nouns, adjectives, pronouns, or verbs.

The concept of plural therefore applies to three or more entities. This category interacts in specific ways with the category of gender and also with a morphological category which is peculiar to Arabic: humanness. Both gender and humanness affect the way in which a noun, participle, or adjective is pluralized.

Numerals themselves, their structural features and the grammatical rules for counting and sequential ordering, constitute one of the most complex topics in Arabic. They are discussed in Chapter 15.

6.7 Case
Arabic nouns and adjectives normally inflect for three cases: nominative, genitive, and accusative. Cases fall under the topic of morphology because they are part of word structure; they are usually suffixes attached to the word stem, and the nature of the word stem determines what form the suffix will take. In general, the case markers are short vowel suffixes: -u for nominative, -i for genitive and -a for accusative, but there are substantial exceptions to this. A case-marking paradigm is usually referred to as a *declension*; there are eight different nominal declensions in Arabic and these are discussed in Chapter 7.

Cases also fall under the topic of syntax because they are determined by the syntactic role of a noun or adjective within a sentence or clause. To indicate roughly how the system works, the nominative case typically marks the subject role (most often the agent or doer of an action); the accusative marks the direct object of a transitive verb or it may mark an adverbial function; and the genitive is used mainly in two roles: marking the object of a preposition and marking the possessor in a possessive structure. For case roles and rules, see Chapter 7, section 5.

6.8 Definiteness: determiners
Arabic has both definite and indefinite markers. The definite marker is a word (*al-*) which is not independent but is prefixed to nouns and adjectives; the definiteness marker is an affix (*-n*), normally suffixed to the case-marking vowel on nouns and adjectives; thus, *al-bayt-u* (‘the house’ – nominative, definite), but *bayt-u-n* (‘a house’ – nominative, indefinite). The suffixed /-n/ sound is not written with the

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25 In English, there are some words that refer specifically to two items such as “both” and “pair.”
26 For example, a diptote word such as *wuzaraa* ‘ministers’ will show the genitive marker as *fatHa*, not *kasra*, because of the nature of its morphological pattern: *CuCaCaa*.
27 The exceptions fall into two categories: exceptions determined by morphological rules (such as the word pattern) and exceptions determined by phonological rules (such as the rule that two vowels cannot combine).
28 Traditional Arabic grammar deals with case inflections as a category of syntax (*naHw*) rather than morphology (*Sarf*).
letter /n/ (nuun) but is indicated by modifying the short vowel case-marker (see Chapter 7, section 4). Whereas the definite article is visible in Arabic script, the indefinite marker normally is not.29

7 Distribution of inflectional categories: paradigms
In terms of the distribution of the above eight categories of inflection, Arabic verbs inflect for the first six: tense/aspect, person, voice, mood, gender, and number. Nouns and adjectives inflect for the last four: gender, number, case, and definiteness. Pronouns inflect for gender, number, and – to some extent – case. Any verb, for example, can be analyzed as being marked for six categories; any noun can be analyzed for four categories and any pronoun for three. This means that word structure in MSA is complex, and that verbs have the most complex structure of all.

Grammatical paradigms are charts or frameworks for words which show all their possible inflections.30 In traditional Western grammars, there are two major divisions of paradigms: verbs and nominals (nouns, adjectives and pronouns). A verb paradigm is called a conjugation; a nominal paradigm is called a declension. Verbs are said to “conjugate” or inflect for verbal categories of tense, person, number, gender, mood, and voice. Nominals are said to “decline,” to inflect for case, number, gender, and definiteness.

The forms or phonological realizations that these categories take in any particular word are determined by that word’s membership in an inflectional class.31

8 MSA inflectional classes
An inflectional class contains words whose inflections (either declension or conjugation) are identical, or at least highly similar.

Criteria for inflectional classes: Verbs fall into several classes by virtue of their phonological structure, which affects how they inflect (e.g., hollow verbs, defective verbs, assimilated verbs). So do nouns and adjectives (e.g., triptotes and diphtotes). In addition, nouns and/or adjectives may fall into certain classes because of their origins and etymology. In order to help learners with these many categories and the forms that they take, this reference grammar provides paradigms or

28 The exception to this is the accusative indefinite suffix -an, which is often written into the script with an ‘alif and two fatHas.

29 Carstairs-McCarthy points out that there is an abstract notion of paradigm (“the set of combinations of morphosyntactic properties or features . . . realized by inflected forms of words (or lexemes) in a given word-class (or major category or lexeme class) in a given language”) as well as a concrete one: “the set of inflectional realizations expressing [an abstract paradigm] for a given word (or lexeme) in a given language” (1994, 739).

30 I am following Aronoff’s (1994, 65) definition of inflectional class: “a set of lexemes whose members each select the same set of inflectional realizations.” Carstairs-McCarthy gives a similar definition: “a set of words (lexemes) displaying the same paradigm in a given language” (1994, 739).
inflectional charts for each inflectional class as well as descriptions of the main morphophonemic processes underlying the resulting forms.

9 Case and mood: special inflectional categories in Arabic

As can be seen in the above descriptions, there are two Arabic inflectional categories that interface with syntax: case and mood. Both of them mark this interfacing by short vowel suffixes, called in English “moods” or “modes” when they apply to verbs, and “cases” when they apply to nouns or adjectives. One of the interesting features of Arabic structure is that the nominative case (on nouns and adjectives) and the indicative marker (on verbs) are to a large extent identical: suffixed /-u/; and the accusative and subjunctive markers are largely identical as well: suffixed /-a/.

It is important for learners of Arabic to know that in Arabic grammar these two categories are referred to as one; that is, nominative and indicative are considered one category: raf’ or marfuu’, and accusative and subjunctive are considered another: naSb or manSuub.

Because of these formal similarities, case and mood are treated as categories of syntax (naHw) in traditional Arabic grammar, and for very sound and compelling reasons. Moreover, there is no theoretical distinction in Arabic between case and mood. Readers who are interested in morphological theory or in studying Arabic grammar more extensively should keep in mind that Arabic sets these categories apart, and that they are of great – even central – importance in Arabic syntactic theory. One can certainly say that these two categories are closer to the syntactic level of analysis than to the semantic or lexical level.

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32 This is, of course, a generalization. Other formal realizations of these categories exist, but this is the major one.

33 See Ryding 1993 for more on this topic. See also the entries Sarf and naHw in the Encyclopedia of Islam; and Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli 1990, especially Chapters 3 and 4.
This chapter deals with very basic sentence structure and relations among sentence elements.

1. Essential principles of sentence structure
There are two major syntactic principles that affect the structure of Arabic phrases and clauses: agreement/concord and government.

1.1 Agreement or concord (muTaabaqa مطابقة)
Agreement or concord is where words in a phrase or clause show feature compatibility, that is, they match or conform to each other, one reflecting the other’s features. For example, a verb is masculine singular if it has a masculine singular subject. A feminine singular noun takes a feminine singular adjective, and so forth. In order to undertake this matching or agreement of features, one needs to be aware of the rules for agreement, and of the categories that constitute feature compatibility.

Generally, in discussion of case systems, the term concord is used to refer to matching between nouns and their dependants (typically adjectives, other nouns, or pronouns), whereas agreement refers to matching between the verb and its subject.¹ Often, however, these terms are used synonymously. Categories of concord and agreement in Arabic include: gender, number, definiteness, and case for nouns and adjectives, and inflection for gender, number, and person for verbs and pronouns.²

1.2 Government (‘amal عمل)
Government is a syntactic principle wherein certain words cause others to inflect in particular ways — not in agreement with the “governing” word (the ‘aamil عمل), but as a result of the effect of the governing word.³

¹ See Blake 1994, 186, footnote 6.
² For a detailed historical overview of Arabic and Semitic agreement structures, see Russell 1984.
³ The term “government” as an equivalent for the Arabic term ‘amal is used extensively, but other terms such as “operation” and “regimen” are also used in English translations. All these terms refer to the power of one word, one structure, or one concept to affect the inflection of another word.

Typical “governors” (‘awaamil) in Arabic are verbs, prepositions, and particles. For example, a transitive verb takes or “governs” a direct object in the accusative case. Or a certain particle, such as the negative future marker lan, requires the subjunctive mood on the following verb; a preposition requires that its noun object be in the genitive case, and so on.

Case (on substantives) and mood (on verbs) are the two categories affected by government in Arabic.5

1.3 Dependency relations
Because of these essential principles that characterize the structure of words in phrases and clauses, Arabic can be seen as a language that has a network of dependency relations in every phrase or clause. These relations are key components of the grammatical structure of the language.

2. The simple sentence
Traditional Arabic grammatical theory divides sentences into two categories depending on the nature of the first word in the sentence. Sentences whose first word is a noun or noun phrase are termed jumal ismiyya, or ‘nominal sentences,’ and sentences whose initial word is a verb are termed jumal fi-liyya, or ‘verbal sentences.’ This first-word criterion is not based on whether the sentence contains a verb, but on whether the verb is initial or not.6

In the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language, however, a different distinction is often used for classifying Arabic sentences. This distinction is based on whether or not the sentence contains a verb. The English term “equational sentence” is used to refer to verbless predications. The term “verbal sentence” refers to predications that contain a verb. As Abboud and McCarus state, “Arabic sentences are of two types, those with verbs, called verbal sentences, and those not containing verbs, called equational sentences” (emphasis in original; 1983, Part 1:102).

Confusion sometimes arises with the term “verbal sentence” because if one uses it to refer to the traditional Arabic term, one means “sentence starting with

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4 Hasan 1987, I:441. The definition is given in an extensive footnote that describes the types of ‘aamil.
5 Sometimes the governor is an abstraction (‘aamil ma’nawiyy), such as the concept “subject of an equational sentence” (ibtidaa’. For a general outline of the Arabic theory of government in English see Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughi 1991, 57-62. See also Hasan 1987 for further description in Arabic of ‘aamil laFziiyy ‘overt governor’ and ‘aamil ma’nawiyy ‘abstract governor.’
6 This theoretical distinction, however, is disputed. See Ayoub and Bohas 1983 for a counter argument to the word-order criterion. For more on this, see Cantarino 1974, I:2.
a verb.” But if “verbal sentence” is used to refer to the distinction between verbless and verb-containing sentences, it means “sentence containing a verb.” Similarly, sometimes the terms jumla ismiyya and “equational sentence” are taken to be equivalents, but they are not. A jumla ismiyya is a sentence that starts with a noun, including those that contain verbs. An equational sentence refers to a predication that is specifically verbless. These terms are not equivalent because they are based on different criteria.

In this text, in keeping with the terms used by Abboud and McCarus, I use the term “equational” to refer to verbless sentences, and “verbal sentence” to refer to those containing a verb.

2.1 Equational sentences in general
Equational sentences are verbless. The reason these sentences are verbless is because the Arabic verb ‘to be’ (kaan-a) is not normally used in the present tense indicative; it is simply understood. These sentences consist of a subject or topic (mubtada: ‘what is begun with’) and predicate (xabar: ‘piece of information; news’). That is, they typically begin with a noun phrase or pronoun and are completed by a comment on that noun phrase or pronoun. The comment or predicate may take the form of different classes of words and phrases: nouns, predicate adjectives, pronouns, or prepositional phrases. These sentences are “equational” because the subject and predicate “equate” with each other and balance each other out in a complete proposition, or equation.

2.1.1 The structure of equational sentences
The subject or topic of an equational sentence is in the nominative case, and so is the predicate, if it is a noun or adjective. When the predicate is a noun, pronoun, or adjective, it agrees with the subject in gender and number, but not in definiteness. The subject is the first element in the sentence, but sometimes the order is reversed, and the predicate comes first.

2.1.1.1 COMMON TYPES OF EQUATIONAL SENTENCES:
(1) Noun/adjective: Here the subject is a noun with the definite article, and the predicate is an adjective (or adjective phrase) marked for indefiniteness.

العالم قرية صغيرة.  
al-әәlam-u qaryat-un Saghiirat-un.

الطريق طويل.  
al-Tariiq-u Tawiil-un.

The world [is] a small village.  The road [is] long.

7 Blake (1994, 191, note 2) gives a clear description of the subject-predicate relationship for equational sentences when he states that “the concord between a predicative noun or adjective and a subject would normally be described as concord of the predicative word with the subject, since it typically involves inherent features of the subject being marked on the predicate.”
Competition [is] strong. Cherries [are] red.

The winds [are] moderate southeasterly.

Noun phrase/adjective: Here the subject is a noun phrase and the predicate an indefinite adjective or adjective phrase.

The king’s palace [is] huge. All of them [are] political films.

Pronoun/adjective or adjective phrase:

He [is] intelligent. She [is] an American of Arab origin.

Pronoun/noun:

You (f.) [are] my friend. He [is] an expert. We [are] Arabs.

Demonstrative pronoun/noun:

This [is] my notebook. This [is] an important experiment.

Demonstrative pronoun/adjective or adjective phrase:

This [is] untrue. This [is] new.

Noun/noun or noun/noun phrase:

My wife [is] a doctor. Agriculture [is] a world language.
(8) Noun/prepositional phrase:

الحمد لله.
al-`Hamd-u l-lah-i.
Praise [be] to God.

السلام عليكم.
al-salaam-u `alay-kum.
Peace [be] upon you.

(9) Reversal of subject and predicate: Sometimes the predicate of an equa-
tional sentence will come before the subject. This most often happens when the subject lacks the definite article.

هنا حمامة.
hunaat Hammaam-u-naa.
Here [is] our bathroom.

بينهما سيدتان.
bayn-a-humaat sayyidat-aani.
Between (‘the two of’) them [are] two women.

(10) Expression of possession: Possession is usually predicated by means of a
preposition or semi-preposition, and it often is the first element of the
equational sentence. Because the predication is in the form of a
prepositional phrase, the item that is possessed is in the nominative case,
being the subject of an equational sentence.

سيديهم القدرة.
laday-him-l qudrat-u.
They have (‘at-them is’) the capability.

لها أربع أرجل.
la-`haa `arba-`u `arjul-in.
They have (‘to-them are’) four legs.

(11) Existential predications: “there is/there are”

(11.1) With hunaaka “there is; there are”:

هناك مواضيع مهمان.
hunaaka mawDub-aani muhimma-aani.
There [are] two important topics.

هناك عوامل كثيرة.
hunaaka `awaamil-u kathirat-un.
There [are] many factors.

(11.2) With thammat-a “there is; there are”:

فثمة قيمة مختلفة.
fa-thammat-a qiyam-un muxtalifat-un.
For there [are] different values.

(12) Equational sentences with definite predicates: the copula pronoun:

These require the copula or “pronoun of separation” to distinguish the
subject from the predicate. The pronoun agrees with the subject (or *mubtada*) in gender and number:

المهم هو العودة.
*al-muhimm-u huwa l-*awdat-u.
The important [thing] [is] to return (‘returning’).

المهم هو العمل.
*al-muhimm-u huwa l-*amal-u.
The important [thing] [is] work.

الأم هي نموذج كل النساء.
*al-*umm-u hiya namuudhaj-u kull-i l-nisaa*3-i.
The mother [is] the model for all women.

(13) **Equational sentence with clause as predicate:** In the following equational sentence, the subject is a compound one, and the predicate actually consists of another equational sentence “their source is one.”

المسيحية والإسلام أصلهما واحد.
*al-masiHiyyat-u wa-l-*islaam-u *aSl-u-humaa waaHid-un.
Christianity and Islam [are from] one source (‘their source is one’).

(14) **Negation of verbless sentences:** Verbless sentences are usually made negative with the use of the verb *lays-a* ‘to not be’ (see Chapter 37 for further description of *lays-a*). When *lays-a* is used, it changes the predicate of the sentence from the nominative case to the accusative case.9

(14.1) **Positive statement:**

أنت صديقنا.
*anti Sadiiqat-u-naa.
You [are] our friend.**

Negation:

لاست صديقنا.
*las-ti Sadiiqat-a-naa.
You are not our friend.**

(14.2) **Positive statement:**

هو خبير.
*huwa xabiir-un.
He [is] an expert.**

Negation:

ليس خبيرا.
*lays-a xabiir-an.
He is not an expert.**

8 Eid (1991, 33) suggests that “the copula pronoun be analyzed as a predicate expressing the relation of identity.”

9 It is therefore one of what are called the *nawaasix* or ‘converters-to-accusative’ described in Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.8.
2.2 The simple verbal sentence (*jumla ficliyya* جملة فعلية)

2.2.1 Subject as verb inflection only

The simplest verbal sentence consists of a verb and its pronoun subject. The subject pronoun is incorporated into the verb as part of its inflection. It is not necessarily mentioned separately, as it is in English.\(^\text{10}\) Past tense verbs inflect with a subject suffix; present tense verbs have subject prefix and also a suffix.

\(^{10}\) In current linguistic terms, Arabic is a “pro-drop” language. That is, its verbs incorporate their subject pronouns as part of their inflection, and separate subject pronouns are not necessary for indicating person.
2.2.2 Specification of noun subject
When a subject noun or noun phrase is specified, it usually follows the verb and is in the nominative case. The verb agrees with the specified subject in gender. The subject and verb together form a structural unit, or jumla جملة.

He returned. We are honored. She succeeded. They try.

2.2.3 Intransitive verbs (al-‘af ‘aal ghayr al-muta‘addiya; al-‘af ‘aal al-laazima الأفعال غير المتعدية الأفعال اللازمة)
If the verb is intransitive, it does not take a direct object, but it may be complemented by an adverbial or prepositional phrase:

They lived in Arab countries. Snow falls on the mountains.

2.2.4 Transitive verbs (al-‘af ‘aal al-muta‘addiya الأفعال المتعدية) If the verb is transitive, it takes a direct object, which is in the accusative case. It may be a noun, a noun phrase, or a pronoun.

I do not know anything. He encountered resistance. They conducted talks.

2.2.5 Mention of both subject and object
If both the subject and the object of the verb are specified, the word order is usually Verb–Subject–Object (VSO). This is the standard word order of verbal sentences in Arabic.
Karim opened his mouth.

Egypt signed an agreement.

The ambassador is carrying a letter.

2.3 Summary of basic sentence relations
The basic dependency relations in a simple Arabic verbal sentence are therefore as follows:

1. The subject is incorporated in the verb as part of its inflection.
2. The subject may also be mentioned explicitly, in which case it usually follows the verb and is in the nominative case. The verb agrees in gender with its subject.
3. A transitive verb, in addition to having a subject, also takes a direct object in the accusative case. This object follows the verb and any mentioned subject.
4. The basic word order is thus VSO: Verb–Subject–Object.
5. The word order may vary to SVO (Subject–Verb–Object) or even VOS (Verb–Object–Subject) under certain conditions.11

2.4 Further dependency relations
There are a few issues that add to the complexity of the basic structure of syntactic relations. These have to do with verb–subject agreement and word order.

2.4.1 Verb–subject agreement
In a verb-initial sentence or clause, the verb agrees with its subject in gender, but not always in number. If the verb precedes the subject and the subject is dual or plural, the verb remains singular.12 Thus a dual or plural noun subject when it follows the verb, does not influence verb inflection for number.13

2.4.1.1 PLURAL OR DUAL SUBJECT FOLLOWING VERB: If the subject is plural or dual, and it follows the verb, the verb inflects only for gender agreement, and not number agreement. The verb remains singular.

11 See Parkinson 1981 for a study of word-order shift in MSA.
12 This restriction on the number inflection of the Arabic verb is sometimes referred to as “agreement asymmetry.” See Bolotin 1995 for further analysis of this topic.
13 See Mohammed 1990 for extensive analysis of issues in subject–verb agreement in MSA.
The students laughed. (‘He-laughed, the students.’)

The Russians appear [as] noble and generous. (‘He-appears, the Russians . . .’)

The two presidents arrived in Damascus yesterday. (‘He-arrived, the two presidents . . .’)

The women buy bread. (‘She-buys, the women . . .’)

The cities witnessed an extensive strike. (‘She witnessed, the cities . . .’)

2.4.1.2 VARIATION IN WORD ORDER: Occasionally, the subject of a verbal sentence or clause precedes the verb. In that case the verb agrees with it in gender and in number:

(1) Subject–Verb–Object (SVO): Within the body of a text the writer may choose to start a sentence with a noun or noun phrase for stylistic reasons or for emphasis. This inverted word order also happens in embedded clauses. Moreover, certain fixed expressions are in the SVO order. When the subject precedes the verb, the verb agrees with it in gender and in number. Technically, this word order converts a jumla fi’liyya (verbal sentence) into a jumla ismiyya (nominal sentence).

The city possesses an Islamic heritage.

Happiness overwhelms me.

Note that the subject here is nonhuman, and therefore takes feminine singular agreement.

When a noun or noun phrase is sentence-initial, the sentence is considered a jumla ismiyya even if it contains a verb, in accordance with traditional Arabic grammatical theory which bases sentence categories on the nature of the sentence-initial word. See also note 6.
Many of them are traveling on an organized tour.

(2) **Headlines and topic sentences:** In Arabic newspapers it is often the case that the headline will be SVO whereas the first or lead sentence in the article, recapping the same thing, will be VSO. This shift in word order illustrates the attention-getting function of the SVO word order.16

**Headline:** SVO:

*France warns Islamic activists.*

**Lead sentence:** VSO:

*France yesterday warned Islamic extremists.*

(3) **Preposed direct object (topic and comment):** For stylistic reasons, an object of a verb or preposition may be preposed at the beginning of a sentence. In this case, a transitive verb (or prepositional phrase) requires a pronoun object to replace and refer to the preposed noun object. The pronoun object on the verb agrees with the noun it refers to in gender and number.

This opportunity can only be found in Cairo.

(‘This opportunity, we do not find it except in Cairo.’)

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16 See Watson’s (1999) article on the syntax of Arabic headlines for more on this topic.
The Arabs had a relationship with the life of Spain. (The Arabs, [there] was to-them a relationship . . . ’)

Sometimes, when this is done, the connectives ’amma . . . fa- (‘as for . . .’) are used to identify the topic and comment on parts of the sentence:

أما هذه الفرصة فلا نجدها إلا في القاهرة.

As for this opportunity, it can only be found in Cairo.

(4) Verb–Object–Subject (VOS): In some cases, the verb will come first, and the object will come before the subject of the verb. This is especially true if the object is substantially shorter than the subject. In the following sentences, the object is set in boldface type.

A number of specialists attended the meeting.

A number of professors will participate in the seminar.

(4.1) Object plus adverb: Sometimes an adverb will also be placed before the subject, especially if it is short.

An Egyptian delegation left Cairo today heading for Paris.

In this sentence, the object (al-qaahirat-a), a short adverb (l-yawm-a), and an adverbial phrase (mutawajjih-an ‘ilaa baaris) ‘heading for Paris’ have all been inserted before the subject.
The assistant minister of foreign affairs left Amman yesterday. ('Left Amman yesterday the assistant minister of foreign affairs.')

2.5 Doubly transitive verbs
There are a number of verbs in Arabic that take two objects. Both objects may be expressed as nouns or noun phrases, or one or both may be expressed as a pronoun.

2.5.1 Both objects expressed as nouns or noun phrases
This occurs especially with verbs of asking, considering, requesting, and appointing.

They asked the students many questions.

The Omanis considered this step a great historical accomplishment.

They considered the attack a type of self-defense.

2.5.2 One object expressed as noun or noun phrase, the other as pronoun

She gave them exercises.

They consider them their favorite stars.

Others consider it an assurance.

They implored him to take a role.

2.5.3 Both objects expressed as pronouns
In this case, one object pronoun is suffixed onto the verb and the other attached to the pronoun-carrier 'iyyaah-. This occurs mainly with verbs of giving and sending.
2.5.4 One object a noun or noun phrase, the other a predicate adjective

In this kind of double accusative, a definite noun serves as object of the verb and an indefinite adjective describes the state or condition of that noun.

ٍاَحِدَادُي إِيَاهُ أَهْلَ فَاطِمَةَ
'ahdā-nī ʾiyyāa-hu ʾahl-u faTimat-a.

Fatima’s family sent it to me (‘sent me it’).

أَعْطَايْنَا إِيَاهَا
aʿtānā ʾiyyāa-ha.

He gave it to us (‘gave us it’).

2.5.5 Passive constructions with doubly transitive verbs

When a doubly transitive verb is in a passive construction, one object becomes the subject of the passive verb (an in the nominative case if mentioned specifically) and the other object remains in the accusative case:

شَاهِدُ الْدُنْيَا جَمِيلَةً
shaahad-a l-dunyaa jamilat-an.

He saw the world [as] beautiful.

تَرَكَ الْبَابَ مَفْتوَحًا
tarak-a l-baab-a maftuuH-an.

He left the door open.

2.5.6 Dative movement with doubly transitive verbs

Where one of the objects of the verb is an indirect object, or beneficiary of the action, an optional structure using the dative-marking prepositions li- or ʾilaa is possible. It is only permissible, however, if the beneficiary noun follows the direct object, e.g.:

أُعِلِّيَتْ لِلنَّسَأَةَ كِتَابًاٍ
aʿIlī-i l-nassaa kitaab-an.

I gave the book to the girl.

Oَعِلِّيَتْ لِلنَّسَأَةَ كِتَابًاٍ
aʿIlī-i l-nassaa kitaab-an.

Otherwise, the beneficiary noun precedes the object noun and is in the accusative case.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^\text{18}\) These examples are taken from Ryding 1981, 19–23.
أعطته البنّى الكتاب.
3a’Tay-tu l-bint-a l-kitaab-a.
I gave the girl the book.

2.5.7 Semantic structure of doubly transitive verbs
These verbs fall into four semantic classes:

2.5.7.1 Where the second object is what would be termed an indirect object or beneficiary of the action (“I gave Noura the book,” i.e., “I gave the book to Noura”):
أعطتهم تمريناً.
3a’Tat-hum tamriinaat-in.
She gave them exercises.

2.5.7.2 Where the second object is equivalent to the first (“We consider him a great author.”) This includes evaluative verbs of deeming, judging, and considering, such as i’tabara.¹⁹
يعتبرونهم نجومهم المفضلين.
ya’tabir-uuna-hum nujuum-a-hum-u l-mufaDDal-iina.
They consider them their favorite stars.

2.5.7.3 Where the first accusative is caused to be the second (“They appointed her ambassador”) but both refer to the same entity. These verbs include actions such as making, creating, naming, and appointing.
عيّنها سفيرة.
‘ayyan-uu-ha safiirat-an.
They appointed her ambassador.

2.5.7.4 Where each object is different (“He taught the students English” = “He caused the students to learn English.”). These are usually Form II or Form IV verbs, causatives of transitive base verbs, such as (Form II) darras-a ‘to teach’ (‘to cause someone to study something’) or (Form IV) ’araa ‘to show’ (‘to cause someone to see something’).²⁰

¹⁹ This group has a special designation in Arabic called ‘af’ aal al-qalb, ‘af’ aal qalbiyya or ‘af’ aal quluub ‘verbs of the heart’ because they denote intellectual or emotional evaluations. See Chapter 7, section 5.3.3 on accusative case.
²⁰ For detailed analysis of double accusatives in MSA see Abboud and McCarus 1983, Part 2:93–96 and for Classical Arabic, see Wright 1967, II:47–53.
3. Other sentence elements

Sentence elements other than verb, subject, and object (in verbal sentences) and subject and predicate (in equational sentences) include various types of adverbials.\(^{21}\)

3.1 Placement of adverbials in basic sentences

Arabic adverbial expressions are considered “extras” in the sentence (\(fa\-Dla\ فضلة\) because they give information external to the core VS or VSO structure. They are usually quite flexible in their placement and can occur at almost any point in a clause, especially if they consist of short words. More than one may occur in a sentence.

\[
y’a-qDil layaalii-hi fii l-Salaat-i.
\]
He spends his nights in prayer.

\[
ghaadara l-qaahirat-a ‘ams-i l-safiir-u l-amriikyy-u l-jadiid-u.
\]
The new American ambassador left Cairo yesterday.

4. Compound or complex sentences

Compound or complex sentences consist of more than one predication. They contain clauses related by means of coordinating conjunctions such as \(wa\-‘and,’ \(fa\-‘and; and so,’ or \(bal\ ‘but rather.’ These conjunctions have little or no effect on the syntax or morphology of the following clause but build up the sentence contents in an additive way.

Complex sentences, on the other hand, consist of a main clause and one or more subordinate or embedded clauses. Subordinate clauses are of three main

\(^{21}\) For further discussion of this, see Chapter 11.
types – complement clauses, adverbial clauses, and relative clauses. In each case, there is usually a linking or connective element (such as ‘anna ‘that’ or li-kay ‘in order that’ or alladhi ‘who; which’) bringing the two clauses into relation with each other. Many Arabic subordinating conjunctions have a grammatical effect on the structure of the following clause. For example, ‘anna and related particles are followed by a clause whose subject is either a suffixed pronoun or a noun in the accusative; li-kay is followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood.

Specific compound and complex sentence types are dealt with in the following chapters:

Chapter 14: Relative pronouns and relative clauses
Chapter 18: Connectives and conjunctions
Chapter 19: Subordinating conjunctions: the particle ‘inna and her sisters
Chapter 34: Moods of the verb I: indicative and subjunctive
Chapter 35: Moods of the verb II: jussive and imperative
Chapter 36: Verbs of being, becoming, remaining, seeming (kaan-a wa-‘axawaat-u-haa)
Chapter 37: Negation and exception
Chapter 39: Conditional and optative expressions
Arabic noun types

Arabic nouns fall into a number of different categories depending on their morphology and their relationship to Arabic lexical roots.¹ The extensive range of noun types yields a wealth of lexical possibilities that contribute to what Charles Ferguson has called the sense of “vastness and richness of the Arabic lexicon.”² Two morphological criteria traditionally define Arabic nouns: they can take the definite article and/or they can take nunation.

Most Arabic nouns are derived from triliteral or quadriliteral lexical roots, and all nouns derived from a particular root are found in an Arabic or Arabic–English dictionary clustered under that root entry. Some nouns, however, have restricted roots; certain ones have only two root consonants, others have up to five root consonants. Yet other nouns have solid stems, unanalyzable into roots and patterns. This chapter is intended to give an overview of these noun types, with examples. It is by no means exhaustive and does not go into derivational detail within categories.³ For inflectional characteristics of nouns, see the chapter on noun inflection.

Arabic nouns are usually derived from lexical roots through application of particular morphological patterns. The use of patterns interlocking with root phonemes allows the formation of actual words or stems. Noun patterns themselves carry certain kinds of meaning, such as “place where action is done,” “doer of action,” “name of action,” or “instrument used to carry out action.” The most frequent MSA noun patterns are as follows.⁴

¹ In traditional Arabic grammar, the term *ism* ‘noun’ covers a wide range of form classes. As Abboud et al. (1997, 67) state: “Nouns are divided into five subclasses: nouns, pronouns, demonstratives, adjectives and noun-prepositions.” In this chapter, the topic is restricted to nouns per se. Note that the traditional Arabic definition of a noun is: *kalimat-un dall-at ‘alaa ma’nān fī fīn fī nafs-hī, wa-lays-a l-zaman-u juz’-ān min-hāa;* ‘a word indicating a meaning in itself and not containing any reference to time’ (‘Abd al-Latif et al. 1997, 9).

² Ferguson 1970, 377. On the same page he points to the “very complex but highly regular and symmetrical structure of the derivational system.”


⁴ Fleisch 1961, I:267 has a useful chart of noun types: “Tableau du développement morphologique en arabe.”
1 Verbal noun (al-maṣdar المصدر)

Verbal nouns are systematically related to specific verb forms and can come from triliteral or quadriliteral roots. The verbal noun or maṣdar names the action denoted by its corresponding verb, for example, ḥuṣul ‘arrival’ from the Form I verb waṣal-a ‘to arrive,’ or ʿidara ʾadāra ‘administration; management’ from the Form IV verb ʿadaara ʾadaar ‘to manage, direct.’ Each maṣdar is systematically related to a specific verb form and can be derived from triliteral or quadriliteral roots. Verbal nouns are often abstract in meaning, but some of them have specific, concrete reference e.g., ʾinna ’building’ (either the act of building, or the structure itself). In terms of their syntactic usage, verbal nouns may also express in Arabic what an infinitive expresses in English.

This section provides an outline of the typical verbal noun derivation patterns from verb forms I–X and for quadriliterals I–IV. There is further elaboration on these forms in each section devoted to the particular form and its derivations. In this section also there are examples of the typical functions of verbal nouns in context.

1.1 Triliteral root verbal nouns

These nouns name the action denoted by the forms of the verb. The Form I verbal noun patterns are abundant and hard to predict; the derived form verbal nouns are much more predictable in their patterns. These patterns and noun classes are described in detail in the chapters on the various verb forms. Examples here serve to illustrate the extent of this noun class and the types of meaning conveyed by verbal nouns.

1.1.1 Form I

The morphological patterns for creation of verbal nouns from Form I are many and not predictable. Wright lists forty-four possible verbal noun patterns for Form I or as he terms it, “the ground form” of the ordinary triliteral verb (1967, I:110–12); Ziadeh and Winder (1957, 71–72) list eighteen of the most commonly

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5 The Arabic term maṣdar/maṣadīr also means ‘source,’ an indication that the term for this type of noun refers to its essential nature as the name of an activity or state. The different schools of medieval Arabic grammatical analysis, the Basrans and Kufans, debated whether the noun or the verb is the most basic element of language, the Basrans arguing that the verbal noun is prior, and the Kufans that the verb is prior.

6 Note that the citation form of the verb in Arabic is not an infinitive but a finite, inflected verb form (third person masculine singular past tense). The maṣdar is much closer in meaning to an infinitive, but it is not used as a citation form in Arabic.

used ones in MSA. ‘Abd al-Latif, ‘Umar, and Zahran give an extensive list (in Arabic) with examples and some explanations (1997, 83–86). Following are examples of some of the most common Form I verbal noun patterns found in MSA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>swimming</td>
<td>السباحة</td>
<td>sibaaHa (fi‘aala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invitation</td>
<td>الدعوة</td>
<td>da‘wa (fa‘la)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgiveness</td>
<td>الغفران</td>
<td>ghufraan (fu‘laan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarity</td>
<td>الوضوح</td>
<td>wuDuuH (fu‘uul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bravery</td>
<td>البطولة</td>
<td>buTuula (fu‘uula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor</td>
<td>الشرف</td>
<td>sharaf (fa‘al)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glory</td>
<td>المجيد</td>
<td>majd (fa‘l)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part</td>
<td>الجزء</td>
<td>juz’ (fu‘l)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blessing</td>
<td>البركة</td>
<td>baraka (fa‘ala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge</td>
<td>المعرفة</td>
<td>ma‘rifa (maf‘ila)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.2 Form II
Patterns: taf‘iila and (for defective roots, especially) taf‘ila; occasionally taf‘iila. Less common variants include taf‘aal or tif‘aal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strengthening</td>
<td>تَزِيِّز</td>
<td>ta‘ziiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equalization</td>
<td>تَسْوِيَة</td>
<td>taswiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation</td>
<td>تَنْفِّيذ</td>
<td>tanfiidh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reminder; souvenir</td>
<td>تَذْكَار</td>
<td>tadhkaar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ticket</td>
<td>تَذْكِرَة</td>
<td>tadhkira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiment</td>
<td>تَجْرِبَة</td>
<td>tajriba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.3 Form III
Patterns: mufaa‘ala and fi‘aal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attempt</td>
<td>مَحاوَالَة</td>
<td>muHaawala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debate</td>
<td>مناقشة</td>
<td>munaaqasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>struggle</td>
<td>جِهَاد</td>
<td>jihaad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defense</td>
<td>دِفَاع</td>
<td>difaa'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 For an extensive list of Form II verbal noun variants in Classical Arabic see Wright 1967, I:115–16.
1.1.4 Form IV
Pattern: √if’aal إفعل; for hollow verb roots √ifaala إفعال; for defectives, √if’aal إفعل

exportation ³iSdaar إصدار
preparation ³i’daad إعداد
administration ³idaara إدارة
abolition ³ilghaa إلغاء

1.1.5 Form V
Pattern: √tafa’ul تفاعل; for defectives √tafa‘-in تفاعل

tension tawattur توتر
delay ta’axxur تأخر
behavior taSarruf تصرف
challenge taHadd-in تحذ
call wish, desire tamann-in تنام

1.1.6 Form VI
Pattern: √tafa‘ul تفاعل; for defectives √tafa‘-in تفاعل

disparity tafaawut تفاوت
mutual exchange tabaadul تبادل
rivalry tanaafus تنافس
meeting, encounter talaaq-in تلاق
avoidance tafaad-in تفاد

1.1.7 Form VII
Pattern: √inf’aal إنفعال; hollow verb roots, √infiyaal إنفعال; for defectives, √inf’aal إنفعال

reflection inikaas انعكاس
preoccupation inshighaal انشغال
compliance inqiyaad انقیاد
elapsing inqiDaa’ إنقضاء
1.1.8 Form VIII
Pattern: *ifti‘aal* افتُعال; hollow verb root, *iftiyaal* افتياال; defective, *ifti‘aa’* افتُعااء

- acquisition: *iktisaab* اكتساب
- election: *intixaab* انتخاب
- choosing: *ixtiyaar* اختيار
- beginning: *ibtidaa* ابتداء

1.1.9 Form IX
Pattern: *if‘ilaal* افعلَال

- greenness: *ixDiraar* اخضرار
- reddening: *iHmiraar* أحمرار
- crookedness: *i‘wijaaj* اوجِاج

1.1.10 Form X
Pattern: *istif‘aal* استفْعال; hollow root, *istifaala* استفْعالة; defective, *istif‘aa’* استفْعااء

- readiness: *isti‘daad* استداد
- investment: *istithmaar* استثمار
- benefit: *isti‘faada* استفادة
- exception: *istithnaa* استثناء

1.1.11 Forms XI–XV
These Forms of the verb are rare in MSA. For information about their structure see Chapter 33.

1.2 Quadrilateral root verbal nouns
Verbal nouns from quadrilateral verbs are primarily from Forms I, II, and IV of those verbs, as follows:

1.2.1 Form I: *fa‘lal-a* فعلْة
The most common Form I quadrilateral verbal noun patterns are: *fa‘lama* فعلْة, and *fi‘laal~fu‘laal~fa‘laal* فعلْاءـفعلْاءـفعلْاء:

- explosion: *farqa‘a* فرقعة
- somersault: *shaqlabaa* شقَلبة
1.2.2 Form II: *tafa‘l-al-a*

The Form II quadrilateral verbal noun pattern is *tafa‘lul*: 

- **oscillation**: *tadhabdhub* 
- **decline**: *tadahwur* 
- **serial**: *tasalsul*

1.2.3 Form III: *if‘anlala*

The quadrilateral Form III verbal noun pattern is: *if‘inlaal*. It is extremely rare.

1.2.4 Form IV: *if‘alalla*

The form IV verbal noun pattern is *if‘ilaal*:

- **serenity**: *iTmi‘naan* 
- **shuddering**: *ishmi‘zaaz*

1.3 Special characteristics of verbal nouns in context

The function and distribution of verbal nouns parallel that of other nouns except that in addition to those functions, the verbal noun may retain some of its verbal force. There are three ways in which verbal nouns are distinctive in their use:

1. They may serve as the equivalent of an infinitive;
2. When the verbal noun is from a transitive verb and serves as the first term in an *iDaafa* إضافَة structure, it may take an object in the accusative case;
3. They may be used as verb intensifiers in the cognate accusative (*maf‘uul muTlaq* مفعول مطلق) construction.

1.3.1 Verbal noun as equivalent to gerund or infinitive

The verbal noun may be used as the object of a verbal expression where the English equivalent would be either a gerund or an infinitive.\(^9\)

\sa‘-u-Haawil-u *ilqaa*-a Daw *-in.*

I shall try to shed/shedding light.

---

\(^9\) In such constructions, the verbal noun is normally interchangeable with the particle *‘an* plus a subjunctive verb.
She tried to break/breaking tradition.

He tried to save/saving a man’s life.

It is inescapable ('it is not possible to escape/escaping from it').

with the aim of having ('making') the graduates (f.) work in it

It grants the American side assurance.

1.3.2 Verbal nouns in ‘iDaafas or with pronoun suffix

The verbal noun may be used in any part of an ‘iDaafa, as the first or second term:

1.3.2.1 VERBAL NOUN AS FIRST TERM OF CONSTRUCT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>istithmaar-u</td>
<td>investment of billions of dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balaayin-i l-duulaaraat-i</td>
<td>the investment of billions of dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inshighaal-u</td>
<td>the preoccupation of the officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-mas’uul-iina</td>
<td>the investment of billions of dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2.2 AS SECOND TERM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ta’yin-u</td>
<td>the appointing of judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-quDaat-i</td>
<td>the appointing of judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ziyaarat-u</td>
<td>visiting the castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-qaSri</td>
<td>visiting the castle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2.3 OR EVEN AS BOTH TERMS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daf’-u l-ta’wiiD-i</td>
<td>the payment of compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l-jujuu’t-i</td>
<td>the right of asylum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.2.4 VERBAL NOUNS FROM TRANSITIVE VERBS: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS. When a verbal noun derived from a transitive verb is the first term of an ʿiDaafa, a number of possibilities exist for expressing both the doer of the action (the subject of the verb underlying the verbal noun) and the recipient of the action (the object of the underlying verb).

(1) The first term of the ʿiDaafa is a verbal noun and the second term is the subject of the underlying verb:

- استقبال الرئيس
  - the president’s reception
- مغادرة السفير
  - the departure of the ambassador

(2) The second term of the ʿiDaafa may be the object of the underlying verb. Here the first term of the ʿiDaafa is a verbal noun derived from a transitive verb and the second term is the object of the verb.

- the raising of the flag
  - رفع العلم
- entering the church
  - دخول الكنيسة
- playing a role
  - لعب دور
- by using its tail
  - باستخدام ذيله

(3) Verbal noun + subject and object: When the subject of the underlying verb is the second term of the ʿiDaafa, or when it takes the form of a pronoun suffix on the verbal noun, the object of the underlying verb may still be mentioned. It follows the ʿiDaafa or the verbal noun plus pronoun and is in the accusative case. Thus the verbal noun retains some of its verbal force in making the object noun accusative.

In most cases in the data covered for this work, the subject of the underlying verb takes the form of a pronoun suffix on the verbal noun.

- before his leaving the capital

**Arabic noun types**

دعاؤا إلى تعزيز التعاون

 autistic noun types
taʿziiz-u l-tafaahum-i
duʿaa ʿilaa taʿziiz-i l-taʿaawun-i.
strengthening of understanding

He called for strengthening cooperation.
خلال استقباله أمس وفرا من أهالي المفقودين

*xilaal-a stiqbaal-i-hi ‘ams-i waf’d-an min ‘aahaali l-mafquud-iina*

during his meeting yesterday a delegation of families of the missing

ولدى رفضهم ذلك

*wa-ladaa rafD-i-him dhaalika*

upon their refusal of that/their refusing that

منذ نيلها جائزتها الأولى

*mundh-u nayl-i-haa jaa’izat-a-haa l-‘uulaa*

since her winning her first prize

عقب إعلانه الانسحاب من الحياة العامة

*‘aqiba-r ‘i laaan-i-hi l-insiHaab-a min-a l-Hayaat-i l-‘aammat-i*

just after his announcing [his] withdrawal from public life

سماعهم الأصوات

*samaa‘-u-hum-u l-‘aSwaat-a*

their hearing the sounds

1.3.2.6 DOUBLY TRANSITIVE VERBAL NOUN: The verb underlying the verbal noun in an *‘iDaafa* may be doubly transitive, taking two objects, one of which becomes the second term of the *‘iDaafa*, and the other of which remains in the accusative case, coming after the *‘iDaafa*:

تعيين اللواء مديرًا للدائرة

*ta ‘yiin-u l-liwaa‘-i mudiir-an li-l-daa’ irat-i*

appointment of the general [as] director of the department

تعيين مراد قائدًا لقوات الأمن

*ta ‘yiin-u muraad-in qaa’id-an li-quwwaat-i l-‘amn-i*

appointing Murad [as] leader of the security forces

1.3.3 Verbal noun and preposition

If a verbal noun derives from a verb-preposition idiom, the preposition is still part of the verbal noun expression:

للفوز بالرئاسة

*li-l-fawz-i bi-l-ri‘aasat-i*

in order to win the presidency

(*faaz-a bi- = ‘to win s.th.’*)

تحويل الحلم إلى حقيقة

*taHwiil-u l-Hulm-i ‘ilaal Haqiqat-in*
transforming the dream into reality

(Hawwal-a 'ilaa = ‘to transform s.th. into s.th.’)

أكد نائب الرئيس رغبة بلاده في تحقيق السلام.

'akkad-a naa' ibu l-ra’ iis-i raghibat-a bilaad-i-hi fii taHqiq-i l-salaam-i.
The vice-president affirmed the desire of his country for achieving peace.

(raghib-a fii = ‘to desire s.th.’)

The vice-president affirmed the desire of his country for achieving peace.

They continued to search for explanations.

(baHath-a ‘an = ‘to search for s.th.’)

1.3.4 The cognate accusative: al-maf‘uul al-muTlaq

The cognate accusative emphasizes or intensifies a statement by using a verbal noun derived from the main verb or predicate (which may also be in the form of a participle or verbal noun). The verbal noun and any modifying adjectives are usually in the indefinite accusative. For more on this topic, see Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.4.

He became extremely angry. They became extremely afraid.

maSaaliH-u-naa murtabiTat-un 'irtibaat-an wathiiq-an bi-maSaaliH-i l-duwal-i l-arabiyyat-i.
Our interests are firmly entwined with the interests of the Arab states.

2 Active and passive participle (ism al-faa‘il, اسم الفاعل

ism al-maf‘uul اسم المفعول)

Arabic participles are descriptive terms derived from verbs. The active participle describes or refers to the doer of the action and the passive participle describes or refers to the object of the action. An entire chapter (Chapter 6) is devoted to these multifunctional words but they are also included briefly here in order to provide examples of yet another noun type in Arabic.

In terms of their structure, participles are predictably derived according to the ten forms of the verb and have characteristic shapes. They may occur as masculine or feminine. When participles refer to human beings, they reflect the gender of the individual referred to. Some participles have acquired specific noun meanings and may be either masculine in form (e.g., shaari ‘street’) or feminine (qaa’ima ‘list’).
Arabic verbs have both active and passive participles. This section lists examples of both, but more extensive descriptions of base and variant forms are found in Chapter 6 and in the chapters on each form (I–X) of the verb.

2.1 Form I active participle (AP): فاعل

The Form I AP has the typical pattern of faa‘il or faa‘ila. For AP nouns, the form of the plural depends on whether the AP refers to a human being or not. APs referring to humans take either a sound plural or the broken plural fu‘aal; those referring to nonhuman entities often take the fawaa‘il plural but may take other plurals as well.

rider/s raakib/rukkaab
spokesman/men naaTiq/naaTiquuna
street/s shaari‘/shawaari‘
circle/s daa‘ira/dawaa‘ir
base; rule/s qaa‘ida/qawaa‘id
suburb/s DaaHiya/DawaaHin

2.2 The extended Form II–X AP nouns

Form II–X APs are typified by having a prefix /mu-/ and a stem vowel kasra (/i/). Hollow and defective forms have special patterns described in Chapters 22–31. As a general rule, the plurals for nonhuman referents are formed with the sound feminine plural and for human referents with either the sound masculine or the sound feminine plural.

II: mufaa‘il مَعْلُ

coordinator munassiq
inspector muhattish

III: mufaa‘il مَعْلُ

assistant musaa‘id

IV: muf‘il مُعْلُ

supervisor mushrif

V: mutafa‘il مَتَعْلُ

volunteer mutaTawwi‘

For the most part, only transitive verbs have passive participles.
VI: mutafa‘īl مُتَفَاعِل
synonym mutaraadif مُتَرَادِف

VII: munfa‘īl مُنْفَعِلُ
is rarely used as a noun.

VIII: mufta‘īl مُفْتَعِلُ
listener mustami مُسْتَمِعٌ elecotor muntaxib مُنْتَخِبٌ

X: mustaf‘īl مُسْتَفَعِلُ
orientalist mustashriq مُسْتَشْرِيقٌ importer mustawrid مُسْتَوْرِدٌ

2.3 Quadriliteral AP nouns: mufa‘īl مُفْعَلٌ
Quadriliteral active participles of Form I are also characterized by a prefix /mu-/ and a stem vowel kasra (/i-}). QPPs with human referents take either the sound masculine or sound feminine plural; with those referring to nonhuman entities, the sound feminine plural is usually used. Further discussion of quadriliteral participles is found in Chapter 33.

2.4 Passive participles (PP)
Passive participles that have evolved into use as nouns have a wide range of meanings, and it is not always possible to see immediately how their form relates to their meaning. In the derived forms (II–X), the passive participle often functions as the noun of place for that particular form of the verb (e.g., Form X PP: mustashfan ‘hospital, place of healing’ or Form VIII PP: muxtabar ‘laboratory, place of experiment’).

2.4.1 Form I: maf‘uul مَفْعُوْلٍ
The PP of Form I has the typical pattern of maf‘uul or maf‘uula. The plural for non-human PP nouns in this form is often mafaa‘īl or the sound feminine plural; for human referents, the sound plural is usually used.

concept/s mafhuum/mafaahiim مَفْهُومٌ / مَفْهَامٍ
plan; project/s mashruu‘/mashaarit‘ مَشْرَوعٌ / مَشَارِيعٌ ~mashruu‘aat
2.4.2 Forms II–X
The PPs of the extended forms used as nouns have a /mu-/ prefix and fatHa (/a-/) as their stem vowel:

Form II: mufa‘al
organization muna‘Zama volume (book) mujallad

Form III: mufaa‘al is rare

Form IV: muf‘al
attaché mulHaq lexicon mu‘jam

Form V: mutafa‘al
requirements mutaTalla‘aat

Form VI: mutafaa‘al
availability; reach mutana‘awal

Form VII: munfa‘al
slope munHadar lowland munxafaD

Form VIII: mufta‘al
society mujtama‘ laboratory muxtabar

Form X: mustafa‘al
future mustaqbal hospital mustashfan

2.4.3 Quadriliteral PP nouns: mufa‘al
These PPs have the same characteristics as the derived form triliteral PPs: a prefixed /mu-/ and stem vowel fatHa (/a-/).

camp mu‘askar series musalsal

3 Noun of place (ism makaan)
Certain noun patterns refer to the place where the activity specified by the verb occurs. These nouns are systematically related to triliteral verbs.

\textsuperscript{11}Usually occurs in the plural.
3.1 Form I nouns of place: \textit{maf\textsuperscript{c}al} مفعل

For Form I, most nouns of place are of the pattern \textit{maf\textsuperscript{c}al} مفعل or \textit{maf\textsuperscript{a}la} مفعلة, or, in some cases \textit{maf\textsuperscript{i}l} مفاعل. The plural of this type of noun is most often of the \textit{mafaa\textsuperscript{c}il} مفاعيل pattern or \textit{mafaa\textsuperscript{i}l} مفاعيل pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>center</td>
<td>markaz</td>
<td>library</td>
<td>maktaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entrance</td>
<td>madxal</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>madrasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exit</td>
<td>maxraj</td>
<td>mosque</td>
<td>masjid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playground</td>
<td>mal\textsuperscript{ab}</td>
<td>(Arab) west</td>
<td>maghrib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant</td>
<td>maT\textsuperscript{am}</td>
<td>(Arab) east</td>
<td>mashriq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swimming pool</td>
<td>masbaH</td>
<td>bank</td>
<td>maSrif</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some nouns of place have both \textit{maf\textsuperscript{c}al} and \textit{maf\textsuperscript{i}l} forms:

foothold \textit{mawTi} and \textit{mawTa} موطئ / موطأ

3.2 Forms II–X nouns of place

For nouns of place from derived forms (II–X), the passive participle is used. The most common derived nouns of place are from forms VII, VIII and X. The sound feminine plural is used for the plural of these nouns.

| lowland       | munxafaD   | VII  مخفوض  |
| level         | mustawan   | VIII مَسْتوى |
| colony        | musta\textsuperscript{mara} | X  مَستعمرة |
| settlement    | mustaw\textsuperscript{Tana} | X  مَستوطنة |
| future        | mustaqbal  | X  مُستقبل |
| hospital      | mustashfan | X  مَستشفى |

4 Noun of instrument (\textit{ism al-\textsuperscript{a}ala} اسم الآلة)

A specific derivational pattern is used to denote nouns of instrument, i.e., nouns that denote items used in accomplishing a certain action. The patterns are \textit{mif\textsuperscript{c}al} مفعل, \textit{mif\textsuperscript{a}al} مفعلة, and \textit{mif\textsuperscript{i}la} مفاعل. See also section 5.2 below.
Some examples include:

- key: miftaaH
- elevator: miS′ad
- broom: miknasa
- scissors: miqaSS
- scale: miqyaas
- refinery: miSfaat

5 Nouns of intensity, repetition, profession

A special noun pattern exists to denote intensity of action or repeated action: fa′e aal.12 For human beings the nouns usually denote profession, for example:

- artist (m./f.): fannaan/fannaana
- baker (m./f.): xabbaaz/xabbaaza
- tailor (m./f.): xayyaaT/xayyaaTa
- weightlifter (m./f.): rabbaa/rabbaa

5.1 Nouns of profession

The abstract noun denoting the name of a profession is often of the verbal noun pattern fi′aala, as follows:

- beekeeping: niHaala
- carpentry: nijaara
- surgery: jiraaHa

5.2 Nouns of intensity as nouns of instrument

Occasionally, the pattern for nouns of intensity (fa′e aal or fa′e aala) is used to denote an instrument. For machines or instruments that perform specified tasks, the feminine form of the noun of intensity is often used:

- opener: fattaaHa
- dryer: nashshaafa
- washer: ghassaala

6 Common noun (al-ism)

This is a vast category. Common nouns derived from triliteral lexical roots include an extensive range of items which can be of either gender. These nouns may or may not be related to lexical roots that generate verbs.

---

12 Nouns of intensity usually have a shadda on the middle radical, just as the Form II verb doubles the middle radical in order to denote frequency or intensity. A certain iconicity appears to exist in Arabic between doubling the strength of a consonant and reference to intensity or frequency of action. For more on iconicity and sound symbolism in Arabic see E. K. Wright 2000.
7 Generic noun (ism al-jins) and noun of instance (ism al-marra)

Generic nouns refer to something in general, such as “laughter” or “agriculture.” Sometimes they refer to something that can be counted and sometimes it is not possible to pluralize the noun because it is an abstraction and a generality. It can be said that the concept of “generic” contrasts with “specific.” Examples of generic nouns in Arabic would be:

- dancing: raqS
- safety: 'amaan
- support: da‘m
- victory: fawz

Nouns that refer to actions in general, such as “laughing” or “dancing,” can be contrasted with a singular occurrence or instance of that action, such as “a short laugh” or “a traditional dance.” The generic term is often masculine singular, whereas the individual instance is often feminine singular, marked by taa’ mar-buuTa. This is a general rule, but sometimes the generic term comes to be used to refer to individual, concretized instances (e.g., binaa’ – see below).

- dancing: raqS
- a dance: raqSa
- waves: mawj
- a wave: mawja
- shipping: shaHn
- a building: binaa
- a shipment: shaHna
- a building: binaa

The plural used for counting or referring to a number of these instances of action is often the sound feminine plural, but may also be a broken plural, especially if the feminine singular is not used as the instance noun (e.g., binaa’ ‘a building’).

- many laughs: DaHkaat-un kathiirat-un
- traditional dances: raqSaat-un taqliidiyyat-un
- heat waves: mawjaat-un Haarrat-un

---

13 See Hurford 1994, 81–82, for good examples of generic nouns and noun phrases in English.
sound waves  
new buildings

There is thus a formal distinction in Arabic between a noun that denotes a generic activity or state and a semelfactive noun, that is, a noun that denotes a single occurrence or instance of that activity and which is usually feminine. The units or instances can be pluralized or counted using a plural form of the “noun of instance.”

8 Diminutive (al-taSghiir)

There are specific noun patterns used to denote smallness or endearment. These nouns can refer to small things such as a pocket dictionary, a short period of time, or to people and people’s names. The main pattern is CuCayC or CuCayyaC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duwayla</td>
<td>دوإلة</td>
<td>very small state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junayna</td>
<td>جنينة</td>
<td>little garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shujayra</td>
<td>شجيرة</td>
<td>little tree, sapling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buHayra</td>
<td>بحيرة</td>
<td>lake ('little sea')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qubayl-a</td>
<td>قُبْيل</td>
<td>a little before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuhayrib</td>
<td>كِهْرْب</td>
<td>electron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hunayhat-an</td>
<td>هنِيثْهَة</td>
<td>a little while (adv.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bunayya</td>
<td>بِنَيّة</td>
<td>little daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husayn</td>
<td>حُسَين</td>
<td>Hussein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Abstraction nouns ending with -iyya

Although many nouns with abstract meaning exist in Arabic, there is a morphological process for creating even more through suffixing the feminine nisba ending -iyya (يبة) to an already existing word stem. In this way, new concepts can be readily created, and this category is an important one in MSA. In fact, its prevalence has led the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo to declare that this type of noun may be derived from any word at all. Nouns created with this process take

---

14 The diminutive can also express contempt, but no examples of this occurred in the data.
15 For a survey of these types of nouns in modern Arabic, see Monteil 1960, 124–26.
the sound feminine plural if they are count nouns. Some examples include the following.

9.1 Derivation from a singular noun
This noun can be of any sort, derived or non-derived:
- theory → naZariyya نظرية
- Christianity → al-masiiHiyya المسيحية
- diversification → ta‘addudiyya تعدادية
- operation → ‘amaliyya عملية
- legitimacy → shar‘iyya شرعية
- terrorism → ‘irhaabiyya إرهابية
- diary → yawmiyya يومية

Sometimes from a noun stem which is otherwise not regularly in use:
- divinity → ‘uluuhiyya ألوهية
- oneness, unity → waHdaaniyya وحدانية

9.2 Derivation from a plural noun
- stardom → nujuumiyya نجمية
- horsemanship → furuusiyya فروسية

9.3 Derivation from an adjective
The adjective can be in the comparative form as well as in the base form.
- importance → ’ahammiyya أهمية
- priority → ’afDaliyya أفضلية
- majority → ’akthariyya أكثرية
- effectiveness → fa‘aaliiyya فاعلية
- minority → ’aqalliyya أقلية
- priority → ’awwaliyya أولوية
- ’awlawiyya أولوية

فهناك أولويات أهم.
fa-hunaaka ’awlawiyyaat-un وhamm-u.
There are more important priorities.

هناك أفضلية لمن يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية.
There is a preference for those who have mastered English.

9.4 Derivation from a particle or pronoun
- identity → huwiyya هوية
- quantity → kammiyya كمية
- quality → kayfiyya كيفية

9.5 Derivation from a participle
- responsibility → mas‘uuliyya مسؤولية
- majority → ghaalibiyya غالبية
9.6 Derivation from a borrowed word

chauvinism  شوفينیة
transcendentalism  تراستنطیلیة

10 Nouns not derived from verb roots

10.1 Primitive nouns

Certain nouns in Arabic are not derived from verb roots. Some of these are what Wright (1967) and others refer to as “primitive,” i.e., well-attested substantives that form part of the core lexicon of the language but are not verbal derivatives.

In certain dictionaries, verbs may be listed with these nouns, but the verbs are usually denominate – derived from the noun.

10.1.1 Triliteral

man  رجل
eye  عين
head  رأس

10.1.2 Biliteral primitives

A few archaic nouns in Arabic have just two consonants (sometimes just one) in the root. These often refer to basic family relationships, body parts, or essential physical or social concepts. Some of the most frequently used ones include:

mother  أم
father  أب
brother  أخ
son  ابن
father-in-law  حم
blood  دم

10.1.3 The five nouns (الأسماء الخمسة)

الأسماء الخمسة

A subset of five of these nouns (أب, أخ, fiu, Ham, dhuu) inflect for case by using a long vowel instead of a short vowel when they are the first term of an annexation structure or when they have a personal pronoun suffix.

18 As Lecomte states (1968, 64) “Certains noms sont irréductibles à une racine verbale, et paraissent bien constituer le glossaire fondamental de la langue concrète.”
19 In some cases, a sixth noun is included. It did not occur in the corpus consulted for this text.
20 For more information on these nouns and their inflectional paradigms, see Chapter 7, section 5ff.
11 Common nouns from quadriliteral and quinquiliteral roots:

(‘asmâ‘a rubâ‘iyya wa xumaasiyya)

### 11.1 Quadriliteral

A number of Arabic common nouns are **quadriliteral**. Some of these words are of Arabic origin, and some of them derive from other languages. These quadriliteral nouns rarely have corresponding verb forms. For example:

- eternity: *sarmad*
- scorpion: *’aqrab*
- bomb: *qunbula*
- box: *Sanduuq*
- noise; uproar: *DawDaa*

### 11.2 Reduplicated quadrilaterals

Certain quadriliteral noun roots consist of reduplicated pairs of consonants. These often refer to naturally occurring phenomena. Some of these nouns are associated with quadriliteral verbs that denote a particular repetitive sound or motion.

- skull: *jumjuma*
- sesame: *simsim*
- mint: *na‘na‘*

### 11.2.1 Nouns from quadriliteral reduplicated verbs

- earthquake (to shake: *zalzala*)
- fluttering (to flutter: *rafrafa*)
waswasà rustling, whispering (to whisper: waswasà waswasà)

11.3 Nouns from quinquiliteral roots
Some common nouns are based on quinquiliteral (five-consonant) roots.21

- chess *shaTranj*
- program *barnaamaj*
- parsley *baqduunis*
- spider ‘ankabuut
- violet *banafsaj*
- quince *safarjil*
- salamander *samandal~ samandar*
- cauliflower *qarnabiiT*
- ginger *zanjabiil*

12 Collective nouns, mass nouns, and unit nouns (ism al-jins اسم الجنس;
*ism al-waHda اسم الوحدة)*
Certain Arabic nouns are terms that refer to groups of individual things in general
(grapes, bananas, trees) or to something which occurs as a “mass,” such as wood or
stone. Normally, these nouns refer to naturally occurring substances and forms of
life. In these cases, reference can also be made to an individual component of the col-
clection or the mass, and so Arabic provides a morphological way of noting this dis-
tinction through use of a “unit” noun (ism al-waHda اسم الوحدة). Most mass nouns or
collective nouns are masculine singular, whereas most unit nouns (or “count”
nouns, as they are sometimes called) are feminine singular. Here are some examples:

12.1 Collective/mass term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chicken(s)</td>
<td>dajaaj</td>
<td>eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owls</td>
<td>buum</td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bees</td>
<td>nahHl</td>
<td>stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>almonds</td>
<td>lawz</td>
<td>feathers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 Many of these nouns have a peculiarity in that in the plural, in order to fit into the Arabic broken
plural system, they actually lose a consonant, for example, ‘ankabuut /‘anaakib ‘spider/s’. See
Chapter 7, section 3.2.3 for more detail.
12.2 Unit term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a chicken</td>
<td>دجاجة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an egg</td>
<td>بيضة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an owl</td>
<td>بومة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fish</td>
<td>سمكة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bee</td>
<td>نحلة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a stone</td>
<td>حجرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an almond</td>
<td>لوزة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a feather</td>
<td>ريشة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.3 Plural of unit nouns

If there is a need to count individual nouns or units, or imply variety, the counted noun takes a specific kind of plural that refers not to the generic grouping, but to a number of individual units. That countable plural is often the sound feminine plural, but it may also be a broken plural.

- five chickens: خمس دجاجات
- six owls: ست أبوام
- three eggs: ثلاث بيضات
- types of fish: أنواع الأسماك

13 Borrowed nouns

In addition to incorporating terms from other Middle Eastern languages, over the centuries Arabic has incorporated words from European languages, such as Latin and Greek. In recent times, much of the borrowing has been from English and French. Most of these borrowed nouns are considered solid-stem words, not analyzable into root and pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td>موسىقا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comedy</td>
<td>كوميديا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petroleum</td>
<td>بترول</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td>كمبيوتر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television</td>
<td>تلفزيون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>تلفون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camera</td>
<td>كامير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor</td>
<td>دكتور</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ton</td>
<td>طن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>film</td>
<td>فيلم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank</td>
<td>بنك</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain common everyday terms, such as “telephone,” “camera,” and “doctor,” also have Arabic-based equivalents (loan translations) (e.g., حاتف, aalat taSwiir, تابي، respectively), most of which have been coined by consensus of authorities on Arabic language in the Arabic language academies in Cairo, Baghdad, and
Damascus. These academies are scholarly research institutes whose primary goal is to maintain the accuracy, richness, and liveliness of the Arabic language through defining standards, prescribing correct usage, and setting procedures for the coining of new terms.

The actual choice of using the borrowed term or the Arabic term varies from country to country, author to author, and from publication to publication. The largest category of current loanwords is in rapidly developing technology fields such as biology, medicine, and computer science. Efforts have been made to keep coining Arabic-based equivalents to these technical terms, but it is a challenge to keep pace with the amount of technical data used in the media every day. Here are just a few terms found in current Arabic newspapers:

- video 
- cassette 
- radar

**13.1 Borrowed acronyms**

Arabic newspaper writing in particular also borrows acronyms for international bodies and uses them as individual words, spelled in Arabic:

- UNESCO: 
  - לשון אונסקו
  - al-yuuniiskuu
  - י"עансיקו
e UNESCO announced it.

- OPEC: 
  - אופאך
  - uubik
  - ע"בק
daaxil-a "uubiik wa-xaarij-a-hu
inside OPEC and outside of it

- UNICEF: 
  - ל"עיניסיפ
  - al-yuuniisiif

**14 Arabic proper nouns**

Proper nouns include names of people and places. These come from a variety of sources, many of them Arabic, but some non-Arabic.

**14.1 Geographical names**

Names of cities, countries, geographical features. Sometimes these include the definite article, sometimes they do not. If the name does not have the definite article, then it is diptote.

- Tunisia: 
  - توونس
  - tuunis

- Morocco: 
  - المغرب
  - al-maghrib

- The Euphrates: 
  - الفرات
  - al-furaat

- The Nile: 
  - النيل
  - al-niil

- Jidda: 
  - جدة
  - jidda

- Cairo: 
  - القاهرة
  - al-qahira
14.2 Personal names
Arabic personal names are a rich source of cultural information. Most given names consist of one word, but some names are actually phrases that include family information (e.g., “son of,” “mother of,” “father of,” “daughter of”) or else reference to religious concepts (e.g., “servant of the merciful,” “light of the religion”). The structure of Arabic family names is highly complex and may include reference to family information, place of origin (e.g., bayruutiyiُ ‘from Beirut’), profession (e.g., Haddaad ‘blacksmith’), religion (e.g., nuuru l-diin ‘light of religion’), or even physical characteristics (e.g., aHdab ‘humpbacked’). Moreover, naming practices vary throughout the Arab world.23

Because of the absence of capitalization in Arabic script, learners of Arabic sometimes find it challenging to distinguish proper names from ordinary adjectives and nouns within a text.

14.2.1 Women’s given names
Women’s names may be Arabic or borrowed from another language; if Arabic, they are usually nouns or adjectives denoting attractive qualities. Sometimes a mother will be known by a matronymic, referring to her as the mother of her eldest child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karima</td>
<td>‘generous’</td>
<td>كریمة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farida</td>
<td>‘incomparable’</td>
<td>فریدة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afaf</td>
<td>‘chastity’</td>
<td>عفاف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmine</td>
<td>‘jasmine’</td>
<td>ياسمین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>‘lily of the valley’</td>
<td>سوسن</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.2.1.1 MATRONYMICS: Arabic uses teknonymics – names derived from a child’s given name. It is not uncommon for an Arab mother to acquire a female teknonym or matronynmic once she has had a child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umm Hasan</td>
<td>Mother of Hasan</td>
<td>أم حسن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umm Ahmad</td>
<td>Mother of Ahmad</td>
<td>أم أحمد</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.2.2 Men’s given names
Men’s names include descriptive adjectives and nouns, but also include a wide selection of phrasal names. Here are just a few examples:

---

22 See Nydell 2002, 57–61, for a succinct description of Arab naming systems and traditions.
23 See Badawi et al. 1991, for a comprehensive Arabic reference work on Arab names.
(1) Adjectives:
Sharif 'noble'  
Karim 'generous'  
Said 'happy'

(2) Nouns:
Raad 'thunder'  
Leith 'lion'  
Fahd 'panther'

(3) Participles:
Mahmoud 'praised'  
Adil 'just'  
Mukhtar 'chosen'

(4) Nisba adjectives:
Shukri 'thankful'  
Lutfi 'kind'

(5) Traditional Semitic names: These are names shared within the Semitic languages and traditions.
Ibrahim (Abraham)  
Yousef (Joseph)  
Younis (Jonas)  
Suleiman (Solomon)  
Musa (Moses)

(6) Inflected verbs: These names are actually inflected verb forms:
Yazid 'he increases'  
Ahmad 'I praise'

(7) Phrase names: Arabic has phrasal names, usually in the form of construct phrases:
Aladdin 'nobility of the religion'  
Abdallah 'servant of God'  
Abdurahman 'servant of the merciful'
(8) ***Teknonymics:* The Arabic term for this kind of name is *kunya* كنية. It is common in many parts of the Arab world for a man to acquire a teknonym once he has had a child, especially a male child, and he is often known by the name of his first male child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father of Hassan</th>
<th>&quot;'Abuu Hasan&quot;</th>
<th>أبو حسن</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Hassan</td>
<td>‘Father of Hassan’</td>
<td>'abuu Hasan-in</td>
<td>أبو حسن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Bakr</td>
<td>‘Father of Bakr’</td>
<td>'abuu bakr-in</td>
<td>أبو بكر</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9) ***Patronymics:* A patronymic is a name derived from the father’s given name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Son of Fadlan</th>
<th>&quot;Ibn Fadlan&quot;</th>
<th>ابن فضلان</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Fadlan</td>
<td>‘Son of Fadlan’</td>
<td>ibn-u faDlaan</td>
<td>ابن فضلان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Khaldoun</td>
<td>‘Son of Khaldoun’</td>
<td>ibn-u xalduun</td>
<td>ابن خلدون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Saud</td>
<td>‘Son of Saud’</td>
<td>ibn-u sa’uud</td>
<td>ابن سعود</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 **Complex nouns, compound nouns, and compound nominals (ناحت and تركيب)**

Sometimes there is a need to express semantically complex concepts in noun form. This area of noun formation in Arabic is not as clear-cut as the other areas. “The debate on compounding in Arabic has long been bedeviled by failure to define terms precisely and apply consistent criteria. There are two fundamental definitional problems: the term for compounding itself, and the status of the components of a compound” (Emery 1988, 34).

Here three categories are distinguished: complex nouns, compound nouns, and compound nominals (phrases). Complex nouns are created from parts of words fused into one word. Compound nouns are created by combining two full words into one, and compound nominals are phrases of two words that are used to refer to one concept. In general in Arabic, the term *naHt* refers to complex and compound nouns, whereas the term *tarkiib* refers to compound nominals.

15.1 **Complex nouns**

Complex nouns are created through fusing two (or more) word stems into one. This is called *naHt* (literally ‘chiseling’) in traditional Arabic grammar. There are several sub-processes or variations on this procedure, and although it is not common in traditional Arabic morphology, it tends to be used in MSA for recently coined items and for loan translations, especially technical terms.

15.1.1 **Blending word segments into one word**

In this process, parts of words are segmented and re-blended into a word that combines parts of two word stems:
boulder  

\( \text{julmuud} - \text{jalmad} \)  

(\text{from } \text{jal} \text{ida} \text{ جلدا} ‘to freeze’ and \text{jamuda} جمد ‘to harden’)  

supranationalism  

\( \text{al-fawqawiyya} \)  

(\text{from } \text{fawq-a} \text{ فوق} ‘above’ and \text{qawmiyya} قومية ‘nationalism’)  

amphibian  

\( \text{barmaa} \text{iyy} \)  

(\text{from } \text{barr} \text{ بر} ‘land’ and \text{maa} ماء ‘water’ with \text{nisba} suffix -\text{iyy})  

15.1.2 Formula nouns

This word-formation process consists of using the initial letters or syllables of a string of words in a traditional, formulaic saying to create a quadriliteral noun, usually ending with a \( \text{taa} \text{ marbuut} \text{a} \).

\text{basmalah}  

the act of saying: \( \text{bi-ism-i ilaa} \text{-i} \)  

‘in the name of God’)  

\text{Hawqalah}  

the act of saying: \( \text{laa Hawl-a wa-} \text{laa quwwat-a} \text{ illaa bi-llaah-i} \)  

(‘There is no power and no strength save in God’)

15.2 Compound nouns

Compounding refers to combining two complete word stems into one syntactic unit. The classic MSA example is the word \( \text{ra} \text{s-maal} \) رأسمال ‘capital’ formed from conjoining the words \( \text{ra} \text{s} \) ‘head’ and \( \text{maal} \) ‘money.’

\( \text{raa} \text{-markaziyya} \)  

‘decentralization,’ from the words \( \text{laa} \) ‘no’ and \( \text{markaziyya} \) ‘centralization.’ Other examples include:

- \( \text{laa-faqaariyy} \)  

(‘no spinal column’)  

- \( \text{al-la} \text{a-faqaariyya} \text{aat} \)  

(‘no forarities’)  

- \( \text{‘arD-u-Haal} \)  

(‘presentation of situation’)  

- \( \text{‘ard-u-Haalaat} \)  

(‘presentation of situation’)  

- \( \text{maa jaraa} \)  

(‘what flows’)  

- \( \text{maa jarayaat} \)  

(‘what flows’)  

- \( \text{ya} \text{a-naSiib} \)  

(‘O chance! O fate! O luck!’)

\( \text{24 The plural of } \text{ra} \text{s-maal} \) is found both as \( \text{rasaamii} \text{l} \) and as \( \text{ru} \text{uus} \text{ umwaal} \).
Note that compound nouns function as word stems and may receive plurals or definite articles.

15.3 Compound nominals: (tarkiib تركيب): Coherent composite phrases

Sometimes the noun concept is not expressed as a single word in Arabic, but as a noun phrase, usually an ‘iDaafa, such as ‘adam-u wujuud-in ‘عدم وجود ‘nonexistence’ or kiis-u hawaa-in ‘airbag.’ In such cases, the dual or plural is usually made by adding the dual suffix to or pluralizing the head noun, the first noun in the phrase.

Examples:

كـرد فـعل للاعتداءات
ka-radd-i fi’l-in li-l-i tidaa’ aat-i xams-u ghuraf-i nawm-in
as a reaction to the attacks five bedrooms
Arabic participles are descriptive words derived from particular stem classes, or Forms, of a verbal root. The active participle (ism al-faa’il) describes the doer of an action and the passive participle (ism al-maf’ul) describes the entity that receives the action, or has the action done to it. Arabic participles therefore describe or refer to entities involved in an activity, process, or state.

Arabic participles are based on a distinction in voice: they are either active or passive. This contrasts with English, where participles are based on tense (present or past) and are used as components of compound verb forms. Arabic participles are not used in the formation of compound verb tenses.

In form, participles are substantives, that is they inflect as nouns or adjectives (for case, definiteness, gender, number). In terms of their function, however, they may serve as nouns, adjectives, adverbs or even verb substitutes. As Beeston notes (1970, 34), “it may be impossible when quoting a word out of context to assert that it is either [substantive or adjective], this being determinable only by the syntactic context.” This is particularly true for Arabic participles. They are distinguishable by their form, but their syntactic functions are multiple.

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1 According to Holes (1995, 122) “The basic difference between the two types of participle is that the active describes the state in which the subject of the verb from which it is derived finds itself as a result of the action or event which the verb describes, while the passive refers to the state in which the object or complement of the verb from which it is derived finds itself after the completion of the action/event.”

2 “The participles have no fixed time reference – this has to be interpreted from the context” (Holes, 1995, 122). Also, as Kouloughli states in this context, “Il est plus éclairant de penser que le participe actif renvoie au sujet du verbe actif alors que le participe passif renvoie, lui, au sujet du verbe passif” (1994, 217) rather than associating either participle with any sort of temporal notion.

3 Lecomte (1968, 95) refers to Arabic participles as “the hinge between the verb and the noun” (“la charnière entre le verbe et le nom”) because of their noun form combined with verbal qualities.

4 “The active participle can function syntactically as a noun, verb or attributive adjective . . . while the passive participle is often used predicatively as quasi-verbal adjective to indicate the result or present relevance of a completed action” (Holes, 1995, 122–23).

5 The description of Arabic participles varies substantially because of their wide-ranging functional nature. For example, they are referred to by Depuydt (1997, 494) as “adjectival verb forms,” whereas Beeston (1970, 35) states that “the participle is a noun (substantive or adjective) which like the verbal abstract [i.e., verbal noun], matches the verb.” Arabic grammar classifies both nouns and adjectives under the term ism ‘noun; name’ and thus refers to the participles as ism al-faa’il and ism al-maf’ul.
The meanings of active and passive participles are directly related to their descriptive nature and the verb from which they derive. However, within that semantic range participles have a wide range of meanings. “Many words which have the pattern of a participle contain highly specialized senses within their semantic spectrum, in addition to the fundamental value” (Beeston 1970, 35).

The derivational rules for participles are described in greater detail in the chapters on the individual forms (I–X, XI–XV, and quadriliteral).

1 Active participle (AP): (ism al-faa‘il اسم الفاعل)

When an active participle is used as a substantive to refer to the doer of an action, often the English equivalent would be a noun ending in /-er/ or /-or/, such as ‘inspector’ or ‘teacher.’ In Arabic, the term for ‘teacher’ (mudarris مدرس), for example, is an active participle, as is the term for ‘visitor’ (zaa‘ir زائر). As a noun, when the AP refers to or describes a human being, it takes the natural gender of the person; when referring to something abstract, it may be either masculine or feminine. Also as a noun, it will take a particular form of the plural, which is not always predictable.

Used as an adjective, the active participle acts as a descriptive term, as, for example, the AP jaaff ‘dry’ in the phrase jaww-un jaaff-un ‘dry air.’ It may also correspond to an English adjective ending in /-ing/, such as the Form VIII AP mubtasim ‘smiling’ in the phrase bint-un mubtasimat-un, ‘a smiling girl.’ As a predicate adjective, it may serve as a verb substitute. For example, using the Form III AP musaafir ‘traveling’: huwa musaafir-un ‘He is traveling.’

The active participle (AP) can be derived from any form (stem class) of Arabic verbs, from I–X. AP’s can be derived from quadrilateral verbs as well as triliteral. They describe the doer of the action. They have predictable and distinctive forms.

1.1 Form I AP

The pattern of the active participle in Form I of the triliteral verb is CaaCic (faa‘il فاعل). This pattern shows slight modification when used with irregular root types, as described in Chapter 22, section 10.

1.1.1 Form I AP nouns

APs that refer to human beings take either a sound plural or a plural of the fu “aal pattern. The nonhuman AP noun may be masculine or feminine and it may take the sound feminine plural or a broken plural, usually fawaa‘il.  

6 Note, however, the temporal and aspectual ambiguity of the AP in context. It may refer to a state of current activity, or of having accomplished a certain activity. As Depuydt notes, “the inability to distinguish unambiguously between simultaneity and anteriority may occasionally be an impediment to using a participle” (1997, 494).

7 In terms of meaning, note that an active participle (e.g., ruaD-in ‘satisfied’ from ruDya ‘to be satisfied’) may have an English equivalent that ends in /-ed/, but it is still an active participle.
Strong/regular root: faa‘il

guard/s  Haaris/Hurraas
researcher/s  baaHith/-uuna
rider/s; passenger/s  raakib/rukkaab
coast/s; shore/s  saaHil/sawaaHil
floor/s; storey/ies  Taabiq/Tawaabiq
side/s  jaanib/jawaanib
rule/s; base/s  qaa‘ ida/qawaa‘id
fruit/s  faakiha/fawaakih
university/ies  jaami‘a/-aat

Geminate root:

material/s  maadda/mawaadd
pilgrim/s  Haajj/Hujjaaj/Hajjiij

Hamzated root:

reader/s  qaari’/qurraa’
accident/s; emergency/ies  Taari’/Tawaari’

Assimilated root:

mother/s  waalida/-aat
father/s  waalid/-uuna
import/s  waarid/-aat
duty/ies; homework  waajib/-aat

Hollow root:

visitor/s  zaa‘ir/zuwwaar
leader/s  qaa‘id/quwwaad
fluid/s; liquid/s  saa‘il/ sawaa‘il
being/s  kaa‘in/-aat

8 Of a building. Also pronounced Taabaq.
9 The plural mawaadd is the form that the plural pattern faa‘il takes in geminate nouns because of the phonological restriction on sequences that include a vowel between identical consonants.

*mawaadd –> mawaadd.
Participles: active and passive

Examples of Form I APs as nouns in context:

الوالدة والوليد في خير.
al-waalidat-u wa-l-mawluud-u fii xayr-un
Mother and child are well (‘in goodness’).

ناظر باسم الملكة
naaTiq-un bi-ism-i l-malikat-i
a spokesman in the name of the queen

1.1.2 Form I APs as adjectives
APs functioning as adjectives reflect the gender of the noun that they modify. In context they may function either as noun modifiers or predicate adjectives.

Strong/regular root:
able, capable qaabil قابِل former saabiq سابِق
frowning; stern ‘aabis عابِس unable ‘aajiz عاجِز
ruling Haakim حاكم next, coming qaadim قادِم

Assimilated root:
wide, broad waasi واسِع clear waaDiH واضح

Geminate root:
This form of AP creates a unique monosyllabic stem consisting of a long vowel followed by a doubled consonant: CVVCC.\(^\text{10}\)
dry jaaff جاف harmful Daarr ضار
important haamm هام special; private xaaSS خاص
hot Haarr حار poisonous saamm سم

\(^\text{10}\) See also Chapter 2, note 34.
Hamzated root:
sorry, regretful  \( ^aasif \)  
آسف    calm, peaceful  \( ^haadi \)  
هدى
final; last  \( ^aaxir \)  
آخر

Hollow root:
visiting  \( ^zaa^ir \)  
زائر    frightful; amazing  \( ^haa^il \)  
هائل

Defective root:
growing  \( ^naam-in \)  
نام     satisfied; pleased  \( ^raaD-in \)  
راض
high  \( ^‘aal-in \)  
عال     last; past  \( ^maaD-in \)  
ماض
remaining  \( ^baaq-in \)  
باقي

Examples of APs in context as adjectives:

ال詳しく الماضي
al-thulaathaa‘-a  l-maaDiy-a
last Tuesday

المرة القادمة
al-marrat-a  l-qaadimat-a
the next time

المشاريع الباقية
al-mashaarii‘-u  l-baaqiyat-u
the remaining projects

الأستخدام الضار بالبيئة
al-istixdaam-u  l-Daarr-u bi-l-bii’at-i
use injurious to the environment

أخير التطورات
\( ^aaxir-u \)  l-taTawwuraat-i
the latest developments

المعلومات اللازمة
al-ma’luumaat-u  l-haazimat-u
the necessary information

From the hamzated root  \( ^a-x-r \); the initial hamza followed by the long \( /aa/ \) of the faa’il pattern create \( ^‘aa/, spelled with \( ^‘a/ \) filled madda.
1.1.3 Identical noun and adjective AP

It may happen that the AP for a particular verb is used both as a noun and as an adjective. In that case, they look identical in the singular, but the plurals usually differ.

1.1.3.1 AP NOUN PLURAL: The Form I AP masculine human noun takes a broken plural of the form (fu‘aal نعَال). The feminine human noun takes the sound feminine plural.

- visitor/s (m.) zaa‘ir/zuwwaar
- visitor/s (f.) zaa‘ira/-aat
- worker/s (m.) ‘aamil/‘ummaal
- worker/s (f.) ‘aamila/-aat
- writer/s (m.) kaatib/kuttaab
- writer/s (f.) kaatiba/-aat
- ruler/s (m.) Haakim/Hukkaam
- ruler/s (f.) Haakima/-aat

1.1.3.2 AP ADJECTIVE PLURAL: The Form I AP adjective takes the sound masculine or the sound feminine plural if it modifies or refers to a human plural noun.

- visiting zaa‘ir/-uuna~zaa‘ira/-aat
- working ‘aamil/-uuna~‘aamila/-aat
- writing kaatib/-uuna~kaatiba/-aat
- ruling Haakim/-uuna~Haakima/-aat

1.2 Derived form active participles (II–X)

As with Form I, the derived form AP may refer to humans or nonhuman entities and may function either as a noun or adjective, many of them doing double-duty. When referring to or denoting human beings, the plural is either masculine sound plural or feminine sound plural, depending on the natural gender of the head noun.

If, however, the participle noun refers to a nonhuman entity, such as muxaddir مُخْدَر ‘drug,’ its plural is sound feminine plural, muxaddir-aat مُخْدَرات ‘drugs.’

1.2.1 Form II AP: mufa‘il مُفعَل

- coordinator munassiq/-uuna
- inspector mufattish/-uuna
teacher  mudarris/-uuna  مَدْرَّسٌ/مِدْرَسٌ
hors d’oeuvres  muqabbilaat  مَقَالِبَةَاتٍ
drug, narcotic  muxaddir/-aat  مَخْدِرٍ/مِخْدَرَاتٍ
note; reminder  mudhakkira/-aat  مَذْكُورَةٍ/مِذْكُورَاتٍ
historian  mu*arrix /-uuna  مُؤْرِخٌ/مؤرخون
distinctive feature; characteristic  mumayyiza/-aat  مَميِّزةٌ/مَميِّزَاتٍ
singer  mughann-in/mughannuuna  مَغْنِيٌ/مُغْنِينَونَ
person praying  muSall-in/muSalluuna  مَصَلٌّ/مُصَلَّونَ

1.2.2 Form III AP: mufaa’il  مَعَالِّبٍ

assistant  musaa’id  مَسَاعِدٌ
lecturer  muHaaDir  مَحَاضِرٌ
lawyer  muHaam-in  مَحَامٌ
observer  muraaqib  مَراَقِبٍ

1.2.3 Form IV AP: muf il  مَعَلُّلٍ

Muslim  muslim  مُسْلِمٌ
ocean  muHiiT  مَحيطٍ

---

12 This expression usually occurs in the plural.
Form IV APs in context:

الأيام المشمِّسة شيء مؤسف جداً
al-`ayyaam-u l-mushmisat-u shay`-un mu`sif-un jidd-an
the sunny days a very distressing thing

المحيط الأطلسي المكن
`aqrab-a waqt-in mumkin-in al-muHiiT-u l-aTasiyy-u
the soonest possible time the Atlantic Ocean

اللجنة المشتركة النسائم المنعّشة
al-lajnat-u l-mushrifat-u al-nasaa`im-u l-mun`ishat-u
the supervisory committee the refreshing breezes

1.2.4 Form V AP: mutafa`e`il مُتَفَعِّل

volunteer mutaTawwi مُتَطوِّع sorry muta`assif مَتأسِّس

specialist mutaxaSSiS مَتَخْصِص abundant mutawaffir مَتَوَفِّر

extremist mutaTarrif مَتَطرَفِّل diverse, various mutanawwi مَتَنْوَعِّل

Note that some Form V APs can have passive meanings:

married mutazawwij مَتزَوَّج
late; delayed muta`axxir مَتأخِّر
frozen mutajammid مَتَجمَّد

Form V APs in context:

تنثير حماس المترّجّين.
tu-thiir-u Hamaas-a l-mutafarrij-iina.
It arouses the excitement of the spectators.

المتحّدة باسم الحكومة
al-mutaHaddith-u bi-sm-i l-Hukuumat-i
the spokesperson in the name of the government

المحيط المتجمّد الشمالي
al-muHiiT-u l-mutajammid-u l-shimaaliyy-u
the Arctic Ocean (`the frozen northern ocean`)
1.2.5 Form VI AP:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>successive</td>
<td>mutataal-in</td>
<td>equal,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mutakaafi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>commensurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increasing</td>
<td>mutazaaayid</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scattered</td>
<td>mutanaathir</td>
<td>pessimistic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Form VI APs in context:

- Sanawaat-un mutataaliyat-un: successive years
- Ilaab-un mutanaathirat-un: scattered containers
- Al-ihitamaam-u l-mutazaayid-u bi-l-`islaam-i: the increasing interest in Islam
- Mubaaraat-un mutakaafi `at-un: an equal contest

1.2.6 Form VII AP: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sliding</td>
<td>munzaliq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>originating</td>
<td>munbathiq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.7 Form VIII AP:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listener</td>
<td>mustami `</td>
<td>respectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waiting</td>
<td>muntaZir</td>
<td>smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeing</td>
<td>muttafiq</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.7.1 FORM VIII AP WITH PP MEANING: A Form VIII AP may occasionally have the meaning of a passive participle:

- Full of; filled with: mumtali` (bi-)
- United: muttaHid
- Hidden: muxtabi`
Participles: active and passive

1.2.8 Form IX AP: *muf ʕall*

The Form IX APs are rare.

1.2.9 Form X AP: *mustaf ʕil*

orientalist *mustashriq* consumer; user *mustaxdim*
continuous *mustamirr* impossible *mustaHiil*
circular *mustadiir* *mustaHiil*

Form X APs in context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>العربية</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>بصفة مستمرة</td>
<td>in a continuous way; continuously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ساحة مستديرة</td>
<td>a circular courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لكل مستخدم</td>
<td>for every consumer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Quadriliteral APs

Quadriliteral APs may function as nouns or adjectives. As with the derived-form triliteral-based APs, quadriliteral AP nouns, when referring to human beings, take the sound masculine or feminine plural, according to natural gender; when referring to nonhuman entities, the sound feminine plural is used.

Form I: *mufaʕil*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>العربية</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>مُهَنِّئٌ/مُهَنَّئٍونَ</td>
<td>engineer/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مُتَرَجِّمٌ/مُتَرَجِّمونَ</td>
<td>translator/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مُفَرَّقٌ/مَفْرَقَاتٍ</td>
<td>explosive/s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Form VIII APs in context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>العربية</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>الأمم المتحدة</td>
<td>to please various tastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الجماعة المبتزمة</td>
<td>Your adversary is hidden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Special functions of APs
The active participle has a wide range of syntactic functions in Arabic. As noted, it may serve as a noun or adjective. As a predicate of an equational sentence, it may function to indicate a verb-like action:

هو مسافر.  
_huwa musaafir-un._  
He is traveling/has gone traveling.

أنا فاهم.  
_anaa faahim-un._  
I understand ('I am understanding').

1.4.2 The Haal حَال construction
A particular adverbial function of active participles is their use in the Haal or circumstantial accusative construction. The active participle is used to describe additional circumstances of a verbal action, coordinating a state or circumstances with the action denoted by the verb. The AP used in the Haal structure agrees with the doer or sometimes with the object of the action in number and gender, but is always in the accusative case.

دخل الصف متاخرًا.  
_daxal-a l-Saff-a muta’axxir-an._  
He entered the classroom late.
They (two) entered the country by ship, coming from Algeria.

They departed, returning to their houses.

1.4.2.1 AP + NOUN OBJECT: If the Haal AP is from a transitive verb, it may take an object in the accusative case:

He returned to Cairo carrying a letter from the Libyan leader.

The minister gave a speech transmitting the greetings of the president.

For further discussion of the Haal construction, see Chapter 11, section 2.3.1.

2 Passive participle (PP): ism al-maf‘uul

Like the active participle, the passive participle (PP) can be derived from any Form (stem class) of Arabic verbs, from I–X, and PPs can be formed from quadriliteral verbs as well as trilateral. In general, in order to have a passive participle a verb should be transitive, i.e., able to take an object complement or direct object, inasmuch as PPs describe the state of the object of the action.

Passive participles acting as nouns often correspond to English nouns ending in /-ee/ ‘employee’ (muwaZZaf موظف), or they may correspond to an English past/passive participle (e.g., maktuub مكتوب ‘written’).

However, a second important function of the PPs of derived verb forms (II–X) and quadrilaterals is to function as nouns of time and place, so the requirement for transitivity is not always met. These include, for example, the nouns mustashfan مُستشفى ‘hospital’ (X PP), muxtabar مختبر ‘laboratory’ (VIII PP), and mu‘askar مَعسَكر ‘camp’ (Quad. I PP).

2.1 Form I passive participle: maf‘uul

This form of the PP describes the result of an action, whether it functions as a noun or an adjective. It may take a broken plural or the sound feminine plural if

13 A good description of both present and past participles in English is found in Hurford 1994, 157–60 and 195–98. Note especially his description of the contrast between the English past participle and the Arabic passive participle, p. 159.
it refers to a nonhuman entity, and the sound masculine plural if it refers to human males.

Form I PP noun:

| concept/s | mafhuum/mafuahiim |
| group/s   | majmuu’a-aat      |
| plan/s    | mashruu’-aat- mashaarii |
| manuscript/s | maxTuuT/-aat¹⁴ |
| implication/s | madluul/-aat |
| topic/s   | mawDuu’/mawDuu’aat- mawaadT |
| creature/s | maxluuq/-aat |
| sound/s   | masmuu’/-aat |
| prisoner/s | masjuun/uuna |

PP adjective:

| known     | ma’ruuf    | busy | mashghuul |
| blessed   | mabruck   | forbidden | mamnuu’ |

2.1.2 Form I PPs in context

في منشوراتها هذه الوالدة والمولود في خير. fii manshuuraat-i-haa haadhihi al-waalidat-wa-l-mawluud-u fii xayr-in.
in these of its publications Mother and [new]born are well.

الجهود المبذولة لإعادة السلام al-juhuud-u l-mabdhuulat-u li-² i’aadat-i l-salaam-i
the efforts exerted to re-establish peace

2.2 Derived form passive participles II–X

As nouns, these participles usually take sound plurals when referring to human beings. When referring to nonhuman entities, the sound feminine plural is usually used. Passive participles are less likely to occur in the reflexive/reciprocal and intransitive Forms V, VI, VII, and IX. Note that PPs as nouns of time and place are especially frequent in Forms VII–X.

¹⁴ The singular occurs both as maxTuuT and as maxTuuTu.
2.2.1 Form II PP: *mufaʕal*

Nouns:
- organization: munaZZama
- volume (book): mujallad
- triangle: muthallath

Adjectives:
- illustrated: muSawwar
- preferred; favorite: mufaDDal

2.2.1.1 FORM II PP S IN CONTEXT:
- the company agent to armed force
- for mere proof at the designated time

2.2.2 Form III PP: *mufaaʕal*

addressed, spoken to: muxaaTab

2.2.3 Form IV PP: *mufʕal*

attaché: mulHaq-uuna
lexicon: mu`jam/ma`aajim
compact/ed: mudmaj
cast; seamless: mufragh
disused; disregarded: muhmal

2.2.3.1 FORM IV PP S IN CONTEXT:
- the military attaché a compact disk
2.2.4 Form V PP: mutafa‘al
change mutaghayyar expected; mutawaqqa‘
anticipated

maDaw waqt-an ³akthar-a min-a l-mutawaqqa‘-i. They spent more time than expected.

2.2.5 Form VI PP: mutafa‘al
The form VI PPs are rare.

2.2.6 Form VII PP: munfa‘al
These usually occur as nouns of place or time:
slope/s munHadar/-aat
lowland/s munxafaD/-aat
end of the month munsalax\textsuperscript{15}

2.2.7 Form VIII PP: mutfa‘al
When they occur as nouns, the Form VIII PPs sometimes denote nouns of place.
level/s mustawan/-ayaat
content/s muHtawan/-ayaat
society/s mujtama‘/-aat
mid-point; half way muntaSaf/-aat
technical term/s muSTalaH/-aat
elected muntaxab
chosen muxtaar
occupied muHtall

\textsuperscript{15} Literally ‘sloughed off, detached.’
2.2.7.1 FORM VIII PP s IN CONTEXT:

في منتصف الليل
al-araaDii l-muHtallat-u fi muntaSaf-i layl-i
the occupied lands at midnight

Sometimes an AP of Form VIII will have a passive connotation, e.g.,

الولايات المتحدة
al-wilaayaat-u l-muttaHidat-u
the United States

2.2.8 Form IX PP: muf ‘al

greened muxDarr مخضر

2.2.9 Form X PP: mustaf ‘al

future/s mustaqbal/-aat مستقبلات
hospital/s mustashfan/-ayaat مستشفيات
warehouse/s mustawda/-aat مستودعات
counselor/s mustashaar/-uuna مستشارون
imported mustawrad مستورد
borrowed musta‘aar مستعار

2.2.9.1 FORM X PP s IN CONTEXT:

أسماء مستورة
\textsuperscript{3}asmaa ‘un musta‘aarat-un
pseudonyms (‘borrowed names’) imported essences

 أحمد مستشاري الرئيس
\textsuperscript{3}aHad-u mustashaar-ii l-ra’iiis-i
one of the president’s counselors

2.3 Quadriliteral PPs
Passive participles of quadriliteral verbs tend to occur chiefly in Forms I and II.

2.3.1 Form I QPP: mufa‘al

camp mu‘askar مَعَسَّكَر flattened mufarTaH مَفْرَطُّ حَج
series musalsal مَسَلَّسَل embellished muzarkash مَزْرَكَش
old-timer muxaDram مَخْضَرَم crystallized mubalwar مِبْلَوْر
2.3.2 Form II QPP: *mutafa‘āl* مُتفعلل
This form is rare.

2.3.3 Quadriliteral PPs in context

*musalsal-un jadiid-un*

a new series

"أَمَا الْمَخْضُرَةَ فَقُدْ جَاءَت رَابِعَةٌ."

‘*ammaa l-muxa‘Dramat-u, fa-qad jaa‘-at raabi‘at-an.*

As for the old-timer, she came in fourth.

*li-suqkaan-i l-riif-l-muba‘thar-iina*

to the scattered country dwellers

2.4 PP nouns in the plural

Certain PP nouns are used idiomatically in the plural. They refer to collective inanimate entities (often prepared foods), take the sound feminine plural, and include items such as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>edibles; foods</td>
<td>مَأكُولات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refreshments</td>
<td>مَشروبات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grilled [meats]</td>
<td>مَشويات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information</td>
<td>مَعلومات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canned [goods]</td>
<td>مُعْلَبَات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuts</td>
<td>مُكَسَّرات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variety; mixture</td>
<td>مَنوعات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td>منتجات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selections</td>
<td>مُختارات</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP I ma‘kuulaat</td>
<td>مَأكُولات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP I mashruubaat</td>
<td>مَشروبات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP I mashwiyyaat</td>
<td>مَشويات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP I ma‘luumaat</td>
<td>مَعلومات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP II mu‘allabaat</td>
<td>مُعْلَبَات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP II mukassaraat</td>
<td>مُكَسَّرات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP II munawwa‘aat</td>
<td>مَنوعات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP IV muntaaajat</td>
<td>منتجات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP VIII muxtaaraat</td>
<td>مُختارات</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case

Five inflectional features characterize Arabic nouns: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case. Gender and humanness are inherent in the noun; number and definiteness are determined semantically by the nature of the specific noun referent in context, and case is determined by the syntactic role of the noun (e.g., subject of the verb, object of a preposition) in a clause. Every Arabic noun in context manifests these five features, and all of these features are key components in determining agreement with phrase and clause constituents.

For example, gender, humanness, and number are essential factors in feature compatibility, or agreement, between the verb and its subject; whereas gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case are all factors in feature compatibility between nouns and their modifiers.

Arabic nouns have a base form, or stem, which is used in a word list or looked up in a dictionary. This is also called the “citation form.” It is the bare-bones singular noun. Sometimes it is listed without any case ending, but often, in word lists, the nouns will be in the nominative case if read out loud. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ambassador</th>
<th>safiir-un</th>
<th>سفير</th>
<th>poetry</th>
<th>shi‘r-un</th>
<th>شعر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>map</td>
<td>xariiTat-un</td>
<td>خريطة</td>
<td>glory</td>
<td>majd-un</td>
<td>مجد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entrance</td>
<td>makhkal-un</td>
<td>مدخل</td>
<td>silver</td>
<td>fiDDat-un</td>
<td>فضصة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Gender

Arabic nouns are classified as either feminine or masculine. The gender category into which a noun falls is semantically arbitrary, except where a noun refers to a human being or other creature, when it normally conforms with natural gender. From the point of view of word structure, or morphology, the masculine form is the simplest and most basic shape, whereas feminine nouns usually have a suffix that marks their gender. For the most part, gender is overtly marked, but there are a few words whose gender is covert (see cryptomasculine and cryptofeminine nouns) and shows up only in agreement sequences.

1 A very few nouns can be either masculine or feminine. See section 1.4 “dual gender nouns.”
1.1 Masculine nouns
This is the base category, consisting of a vast range of nouns including male human beings and other living creatures, abstract and concrete nouns, and proper names. As a very general rule, if an Arabic noun does not have a feminine suffix, it is masculine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>river</td>
<td>nahr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>council</td>
<td>majlis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proof</td>
<td>burhaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minister</td>
<td>waziir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progress</td>
<td>taqaddum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace</td>
<td>salaam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1 Masculine proper names

1.1.1.1 PERSONAL NAMES: Arabic male given names are considered masculine, even though some of them end with taa’ marbuuTa or 3alif:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makram</td>
<td>makram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amin</td>
<td>3amiin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouad</td>
<td>fu’aad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osama</td>
<td>3usama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>muusaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa</td>
<td>muSTafaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1.2 COUNTRIES: Country names are usually feminine, but there are a few masculine ones, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>al-maghrib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>al-‘iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>lubnaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>al-3urdunn2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>al-suudaan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.2 Cryptomasculine nouns
A few words look overtly feminine because they are spelled with taa’ marbuuTa, but they are actually masculine. Some of these are plural or collective forms. Some examples include:

Singular:
- great scholar ‘allaama3
- Caliph khalifah

---

2 Wehr (1979) identifies the country of Jordan (al-3urdunn) as either masculine or feminine. As the name of the River Jordan, it is strictly masculine.

3 This pattern, fa’aal, فعالة, is one that implies greatness or intensity. Another example is ‘globe-trotter’ rahiHaala.
1.2 Feminine nouns

Most feminine nouns are marked by the taa’ marbu’uTa suffix (pronounced -ah or -a in pause form). Some of the most common categories for feminine nouns are: female human beings, female creatures, abstract concepts, individual units of naturally occurring classes (e.g., banana, tree), names of cities, names of most countries, and parts of the body that come in pairs (e.g., legs, hands, eyes).

1.2.1 Common nouns

- picture: Suura صورة
- storm: ‘aaSifa عاصفة
- tribe: qabiila قبيلة
- meal: wajba وجبة

1.2.2 Concepts

- Arabism: ‘uruuba عروبة
- culture: thaqaafa ثقافة
- trust: thiqa ثقة
- civilization: HaDaara حضارة

1.2.3 Abstract ideas

- diversification: ta’addudiyya تعددية
- importance: ‘ahammiyya أهمية
- stardom: nujuumiyya نجومية
- freedom: Hurriyya حرية

1.2.4 Instances (a single instance of an action)

- a convulsion: za‘za‘a زعزة
- a shipment: shaHna شحنة
- a coincidence: Sudfa صفة
- a burst of laughter: qahqaha قهقهة

1.2.5 Unit nouns (individual units of larger collective entities)

- a tree: shajara شجرة
- a fish: samaka سمكة
- a grape: ‘inaba عنبة
- a thorn: shawka شوكة

---

4 This is a “plural of a plural.” (See section 3.2.5 for details on this structure.)
1.2.6 Cities
Names of cities are considered feminine because the Arabic word for ‘city’ is *madiina*, a feminine word. This is true for all cities, not just Arab cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunis</td>
<td>tuunis</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>bayruut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>al-qaahira</td>
<td>القاهرة</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>al-quds</td>
<td>القدس</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain cities have titles or epithets which reflect the feminine gender of the city name. For example:

- Medina “the Enlightened” *al-madiinat-u l-munawwarat-u* المدينة المُنْوَىَة
- Mecca “the Venerable” *makkat-u l-mukarramat-u* مَكَّة المُكَرَّمَة
- Tunis “the Verdant” *tuunis-u l-xaDraa-u* تَونُسُ الخِضْرَاء

1.2.7 Countries
Most countries are considered feminine, especially if their names end in *-aa*. Exceptions are noted above in section 1.1.1.2. Some examples of feminine gender countries are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Egypt      | miSr    | America    | ֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֶֆ
1.2.9 Nouns spelled with final taa
Two common words that are feminine by nature but spelled with a final taa (rather than taa marbuuTa):

daughter; girl  bint  بنت  sister uxt  أخت

1.2.10 Parts of the body
Certain parts of the body are considered feminine although not marked with taa marbuuTa, especially those parts that come in pairs. For example:

foot  qadam  قدم  hand  yad  يد
eye  ‘ayn  عين  ear  ‘udhun  أذن

1.2.11 Borrowed nouns
Nouns borrowed from other languages that end with an -ah or -aa sound are usually treated as feminine:

doctorate (Fr. ‘doctorat’)  duktuuraah  دكتوراه
cinema (Fr. ‘cinéma’)  siinamaa  سينما
music  muusiiqaa  موسيقى
opera  ‘uubiraa  أوربا
delta (Greek ‘delta’)  daltaa  دلتا

1.2.12 Other feminine suffixes
Some nouns are marked feminine by suffixes other than taa marbuuTa. These endings include: ‘alif plus hamza (-aa) or ‘alif Tawiila (-aa) or ‘alif maqSuura (-aa). These endings are suffixed after the root consonants. For example:

desert (root: S-H-r)  SaHraa  صحراء
remembrance (root: dh-k-r)  dhikraa  ذكرى
universe; world (root: d-n-y)  dunyaa  دنيا

---

5 As in daltaa l-nil-i ‘the Nile Delta.’
6 Note that there are also a number of masculine nouns that end with ‘alif plus hamza, ‘alif Tawiila, or ‘alif maqSuura. The ‘alif ending in those instances represents the final defective consonant of the lexical root and is not an affix. Some of these masculine nouns include:

song (root: gh-n-y)  ghinaa  غناء
meaning (root: ‘n-y)  ma’n  معني
stream (root: j-r-y)  majran  مجري
formal legal opinion (root: f-t-y)  fatwaa  فتوى
1.2.13 Cryptofeminine nouns
A few nouns are not overtly marked for feminine gender and yet are feminine. This is a small, defined set and includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beautiful woman; belle</td>
<td>Hasnaa’</td>
<td>حسناء</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(root: H-s-n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>candy (root: H-l-w)</td>
<td>Halwaa</td>
<td>حلوى</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fever (root H-m-m)</td>
<td>Hummaa</td>
<td>حمى</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaos (root f-w-D)</td>
<td>fawDaa</td>
<td>فوضى</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of cryptofeminine nouns and modifiers:

the afterlife   al-daar-u l-aaxirat-u
the Holy Land   al-arD-u l-muqaddasat-u
common ground   arD-un mushtarakat-un
the First World War al-Harb-u l-aalamiyyat-u l-ulaa

in a deep well   fii bi’r-in ‘amiiqat-in

1.3 Natural gender nouns
Many nouns that refer to human beings or other living creatures have both a masculine and a feminine form. They vary in gender depending on the nature of the referent, just as English has pairs of words such as “host” and “hostess.” The general rule is that the masculine is the base form and the feminine is denoted by the addition of taa’ marbuuta. Examples of some of these include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>king/queen</td>
<td>malik/malika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artist (m/f)</td>
<td>funnaan/fannaana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambassador/ambassadress</td>
<td>safiir/safiira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Dual gender nouns
A very small number of Arabic nouns are either masculine or feminine. They can be treated syntactically as either one, although feminine agreement predominates in the data gathered for this study. There are not many nouns in this group, but some of them are fairly frequent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>suuq</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariiq</td>
<td>road; path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiis</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milH</td>
<td>salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruuH</td>
<td>spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samaa</td>
<td>sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lisaan</td>
<td>tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haal</td>
<td>condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jadd/jadda</td>
<td>grandfather/grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiTT/qiTTa</td>
<td>cat (m/f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namir/namira</td>
<td>leopard (m/f)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
- the black market: 
  al-suuq-u l-sawdaa-
  السوق السوق السوداء
- the Arab spirit:
  al-ruuH-u l-arabiyyat-u
  الروح العربية
- in good condition:
  fii Haal-in jayyidat-in
  في حال جيدة

2 Humanness
A unique and important morpho-semantic feature of Arabic nouns is humanness, that is, whether or not they refer to human beings. This is a crucial grammatical point for predicting certain kinds of plural formation and for purposes of agreement with other components of a phrase or clause. The grammatical criterion of humanness applies only to nouns in the plural.

2.1 Agreement
Agreement with nouns in the plural depends on whether the noun refers to human beings.

2.1.1 Nonhuman referent
If a plural noun refers to nonhuman entities, be they creatures or inanimate things, it takes feminine singular agreement. This is sometimes referred to as “deflected” agreement. This applies to agreement with verbs, adjectives, and also pronouns.

---

7 See Wright 1967, II:181–83 for a comprehensive list of dual gender nouns.
8 See Belnap and Shabaneh 1992 on this topic.
2.1.2 Human referent

When the referent of the plural noun is human, then the agreement is straightforward, using masculine or feminine plural forms as appropriate:

السفراء العرب
al-sufaraa'-u l-'arab-u
the Arab ambassadors

الخلفاء الراشدون
al-xulafaa'-u l-'raashid-uuna
the orthodox caliphs

قادة عسكريون
qaadat-un ʿaskariyy-uuna
military leaders

الانخوان المسلمون
al- ixwaan-u l-muslim-uuna
the Muslim Brotherhood (ʿBrothersʿ)

2.1.3 Special cases

2.1.3.1 GROUPS OF HUMANS AS ABSTRACTIONS: Sometimes, although the noun referents are human, they are being referred to as abstractions, and thus the plural is treated as a nonhuman plural:

السلطات الرومانية
al-suluTaat-u l-ruumaaniyyat-u
the Roman authorities

جميع أسرهم الكريمة
jamii ʿ-u ʿusr-i-him-i l-kariimat-i
all their distinguished families

من أهم الشخصيات النسائية في التاريخ
min ʿahamm-i l-shaxSiyyaat-i l-nisaaʿiyyat-i fii l-taariix-i
among the most important female personalities in history

هناك فنانات كثيرة من الشعب تعيش تحت الأرض
hunaaka fiʿaat-un kathirat-un min-a l-shaʿb-i taʿiish-u taHt-a l-ʿarD-i.
There are many groups of people [who] live underground.
but the majority plunged into violent debate.

At least five persons were killed.

2.1.3.2 ‘PEOPLE’ WORDS: sha‘b شعب AND naas ناس

(1) sha‘b شعب: The word sha‘b ‘people’ although semantically plural, is usually treated as masculine singular, as a collective noun. Its plural, shu‘uub, ‘peoples’ is treated as a nonhuman plural with feminine singular agreement:

مئل أي شعب آخر
mithl-a ‘ayy-i sha‘b-in ‘aaxar-a
like any other people

الشعوب العربية والإسلامية
al-shu‘uub-u l-‘arabiiyyat-u wa-l-
Arab and Islamic peoples

المجدر شعوب وثنية
mujarrad-u shu‘uub-in wathaniyyat-in
mere pagan peoples

باركها الشعب كله
baarak-a-haa l-sha‘b-u kull-u-hu.
All the people blessed it.

(2) naas ناس: The word naas ‘people’ has inconsistent agreement patterns. From the trilateral root √-n-s, and related to the words ‘insaan ‘human being,’ and ‘aanisa ‘young lady,’ it refers to people or folk in general. Sometimes its agreement patterns follow the rules for words referring to human beings, i.e., the agreement is masculine plural; other times (even in the same text) it may be treated as an abstraction and the agreement is feminine singular:

(2.1) Plural agreement:

الطيبان ناس شفاء
al-Talyaan-u naas-un shurafa‘-u.
The Italians are noble (pl.) people.

فالناس يتناولون أنواعاً مختلفة من الأغذية.
fa-l-naas-u ya-tanaawal-uuna ʾanwaa‘-an muxtalifat-an min-a l-ʾaghdhiyat-i.
People eat (pl.) different sorts of food.

9 The agreement here is not with the feminine form of the number, since it is actually masculine (agreeing via reverse gender with the singular of ʾashxaṣṣ, ʿashṣ).
2.2 Feminine singular agreement:

وكتير من الناس لا تأكل أغذية إلا من مصادر نباتية.

Many people only eat (f. sg.) food from plant sources (‘do not eat food except from plant sources’).

2.2 Form of the noun plural

Certain plural patterns are used only with nouns that denote human beings.

2.2.1 The sound masculine plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engineer</td>
<td>muhandis/muhandis-uuna</td>
<td>مهندس/مهندسان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook</td>
<td>Tabbaax/Tabbaax-uuna</td>
<td>طباخ/طباخون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omani</td>
<td>‘umaaniyy/‘umaaniyy-uuna</td>
<td>عمانى/عمانيون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>lubnaaniyy/lubnaaniyy-uuna</td>
<td>لبناني/لبنانيون</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.2 Broken plurals of certain patterns

a. fu‘ alaa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>president</td>
<td>ra’ iis/ru’ asaa’a</td>
<td>رئيس/رؤساء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambassador</td>
<td>safiir/sufaraa</td>
<td>سفير/سفراء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prince</td>
<td>‘amiir/ ‘umaraa’</td>
<td>أمير/أمراء</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. ‘af ‘illa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>Sadiiq/ ‘aSdiqa’a</td>
<td>صديق/أصدقاء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor</td>
<td>Tabiib/ ‘aTibbaa’</td>
<td>طبيب/أطباء</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. fu‘ aal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>writer</td>
<td>kaatib/kuttaab</td>
<td>كاتب/كتاب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>Taalib/Tullaab</td>
<td>طالب/طالب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guard</td>
<td>Haaris/Hurraas</td>
<td>حارس/حرايس</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.3 Human/nonhuman homonyms

Sometimes two nouns may look identical (i.e., they are homonyms) but have different meanings, one human and one nonhuman, and so the plural is different,
according to the noun referent:

worker/s  ‘aamil/‘ummaal عامل/عَمَال
factor/s  ‘aamil ‘awaamil عامل/عوامل

3 Number
Arabic nouns are marked for three different kinds of number: singular, dual, and plural. Because Arabic has a special morphological category for the dual, plural in Arabic refers to three or more. The singular is considered the base form of the noun, and the dual and plural are extensions of that form in various ways.

3.1 The dual (al-muthannaa المثنى)
Arabic has a separate number category for two of anything. Instead of using the number “two” (ithnaani إثنان or ithnataani إثنان) plus the plural noun, as does English (“two hands”), Arabic uses a dual suffix on the singular stem to mark the noun as being dual (e.g., yad-aani ‘two hands’). The suffix has two case forms, the case being signaled by the change of the long vowel in the suffix from /-aa-/ to /-ay-/:  

-aani  (nominative)
-ayni  (genitive/accusative)

Nominative:

woصل سفيران.
waSal-a safiir-aani.
Two ambassadors arrived.

Genitive:

بين سفرین
bayn-a safiir-ayni
between two ambassadors

Accusative:

زاروا السفرین.
zaar-uu l-safiir-ayni.
They visited the two ambassadors.

3.1.1 Dual with taa’ marbuuTa
When the dual suffix is added to a noun ending in taa’ marbuuTa, the taa’ marbuuTa is no longer the final letter in the word and it turns into regular taa’.
When the dual suffix is added to certain words that are biliteral in origin, or to words in the defective declension, a waaw or yaa’ is inserted before the dual suffix:\(^{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word</th>
<th>English Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ab-a-w-aani</td>
<td>parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ax-a-w-aani</td>
<td>two brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qaaDiy-aani</td>
<td>two judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maqhay-aani</td>
<td>two cafés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mustashfay-aani</td>
<td>two hospitals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Definiteness in the dual

One of the features of the dual suffix is that it shows no distinction between definite and indefinite. It cannot be marked for nunation.\(^{11}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word</th>
<th>English Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>muharrab-aani</td>
<td>two smugglers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-muharrab-aani</td>
<td>the two smugglers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma ‘a l-muharrab-ayni</td>
<td>with the two smugglers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4 Nuun-deletion in ’iDaafa

If a dual noun is the first term of an ’iDaafa or annexation structure, the nuun plus kasra (\(-ni\) /\(\text{-n}\)) of the dual suffix is deleted. Thus, -aani becomes -aa and -ayni becomes -ay.\(^{12}\)

---

\(^{10}\) Whether the additional consonant is waaw or yaa’ depends on the root consonants and on derivational morphology. See Abboud and McCarus 1983, Part 2: 14–17.

\(^{11}\) The dual suffixes -aani and -ayni as well as the sound masculine plural suffixes -uuna and -iina both terminate with the consonant nuun, followed by a short vowel, and this feature behaves to a certain extent as a form of nunation (being deleted if the noun has a possessive pronoun suffix, for instance). Additional nunation is not used for these suffixes.

\(^{12}\) In Arabic annexation structures, there is a general prohibition on the first term (the muDaaf), against noun suffixes ending with an -n sound. This applies to nunation (indefiniteness marking), to the dual suffix, and to the sound masculine plural.
وزيرا العدل والإعلام

wazir-aa l-‘adl-i wa l-‘laam-i

the two ministers of Justice and Information

في سياستي الدفاع والتجارة

fii siyaasat-ay-i l-difaa‘-i wa l-tijaarat-i

in the two policies of defense and trade

شقة مكونة من غرفتي نوم

shqaqat-un mukawwanat-un min ghurfat-ay nawm-in

a two-bedroom apartment (‘an apartment consisting of two bedrooms’)

3.1.5 Nuun-deletion with pronoun suffix

The same process occurs when a noun in the dual gets a possessive pronoun suffix. The -ni of the dual suffix is deleted and the possessive pronoun suffix is attached directly to the -aa or -ay of the dual suffix. For example:

بين يديه

bayn-a yad-ay-hi

in front of him (‘between his two hands’)

تفتح يراعيها.

ta-ftaH-u dhira‘-ay-haa.

She opens her arms.

3.1.6 Dual agreement

When a noun in the dual is modified by an adjective, is referred to by a pronoun, or is the subject of a following verb, then these form classes conform to the dual inflection as well. Thus, the concept of dual is present not only in nouns, but in adjectives, pronouns and verbs. These are discussed separately under each of the form-class headings, but here are some examples:

هناك موضوعان مهمان.

hunaaka mawDuu‘-aani muhimm-aani.

There are two important subjects.

المصدر

xaadim-u l-Haram-ayni l-shariif-ayni

the Servant of the two Holy Places

هلال السنين الماضيين

xilaal-a l-sanat-ayni l-maaDiyat-ayni

during the past two years

بهم هاذيين الحدثين

bayn-a haadh-ayni l-Hadath-ayni

between these two events

13 In this and the following phrases the -ay dual ending is given a “helping vowel” kasru because of the consonantal nature of the -y ending on the dual suffix -ay, in order to help pronunciation and liaison with the following word. (See Wright 1967, I:21 on this point.)

14 A traditional title of the ruler of Saudi Arabia.
3.2 The Plural (الجمع)
Arabic nouns form their plurals in three ways. Two of these are “external” plurals consisting of suffixes added to the singular stem (the sound feminine and sound masculine plurals). The third way of pluralizing occurs inside the noun stem itself (the “broken” or internal plural), shifting the arrangement of vowels, and sometimes inserting an extra consonant or two. To add to this diversity, a noun may have two or three (or more) alternative plurals.

3.2.1 The sound feminine plural ( jam° mu’annath saalim)
This form of plural is very common and applies to an extensive range of Arabic noun classes, both human and nonhuman. It consists of a suffix -aat (اات) attached to the singular stem of the noun. Note that when this suffix is attached to a noun that has taa’ marbuuTa in the singular, it replaces the taa’ marbuuTa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular Stem</th>
<th>Feminine Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quwwa/</td>
<td>-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maHaTTa/</td>
<td>-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waaHa/</td>
<td>-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maHaTT-aat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waaH-aat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maHaTT-aat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharika/</td>
<td>-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maTaar/</td>
<td>-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maTaar-aat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1.1 Inflection of the Sound Feminine Plural: The sound feminine plural suffix has a special declension of its own. It inflects for definiteness (definite and indefinite) and for case, but only shows two case variations instead of the normal three: / -u/ or /-un/ for nominative and /-i/ or /-in/ for genitive/accusative. The sound feminine plural ending never takes fatHa / -a/. For inflectional paradigms see section 5.4.2.1, subsection (3), in this chapter.

Nominative:
- companies: sharik-aat-un
- the companies: al-sharik-aat-u

Genitive:
- in companies: fii sharik-aat-in
- in the companies: fii l-sharik-aat-i

Accusative:
- He founded companies. ٢ًًً٢ً sharik-aat-in
- He founded the companies. ٢ًًً٢ً l-sharik-aat-i
3.2.1.2 VARIANTS: BUFFER SOUNDS INSERTED BEFORE SOUND FEMININE PLURAL SUFFIX: Some nouns insert a waaw or yaa’ or a haa’ to the noun stem before affixing the -aat ending. Most of these nouns end in the singular with a vowel or ‘alif-hamza, but some end with taa’ or taa’ marbuuTa:

(1) waaw insertion:

(1.1) Two common bi-consonantal nouns insert waaw before the -aat ending:

sister/s  ‘uxt/’axa-w-aat
year/s  sana/sana-w-aat

(1.2) Certain borrowed words ending in ‘alif Tawiila take the sound feminine plural with waaw as buffer between the two ‘alifs. Note that even though the referents of these nouns are human males, the plural is sound feminine.

pasha/s  baashaa/baashaa-w-aat
pope/s  baabaa/baabaa-w-aat

(1.3) Nouns ending in the suffix -aa’ often drop the final hamza and add a waaw between the stem and suffix.¹⁵

green (f.)/greens  xaDraa’/xaDraa-w-aat
(desert)  SaHraa’/SaHraa-w-aat
(parrot)  babbaghaa’/babbaghaa-w-aat

(1.4) Nouns ending in ‘alif plus taa’ marbuuTu usually shorten ‘alif to fatHa, and add a waaw:

channel/s; canal/s  qanaat/qana-w-aat
prayer/s  Salaat/Sala-w-aat

(2) yaa’ insertion: Nouns that end with with ‘alif maqSuura shorten the ‘alif to fatHa and insert yaa’ before the sound feminine plural suffix:

memory/jies  dhikraa/dhikra-y-aat
sweet/s  Halwaat/Halwa-y-aat

¹⁵ Note that if the hamza in the -aa’ ending is part of the root, then the hamza is not deletable, as in:
³jraa’aat إجراءات
¹⁶ Alternative plurals for SaHraa’ are SaHaaraa  صحاري صحرار and SaHaar-in  صحار.
fever/s Hummaa/Humma-y-aat
level/s mustawan/mustawa-y-aat
hospital/s mustashfan/mustashfa-y-aat

(3) **haa** insertion: The word ‘umm, ‘mother’ inserts a *haa* preceded by *fatHa* before suffixing the sound feminine plural:17

mother/s ‘umm/ ‘umm-ah-aat

Borrowed words ending with a long vowel (especially *-uu*) often insert *haa* as a buffer before the /-aat/ suffix in order to avoid two long vowels coming together:

casino/s kaaziinuu/kaaziinuu-h-aat
radio/s raadyuu/raadyuu-h-aat
studio/s (i)stuudyuu/(i)stuudyuu-h-aat

3.2.1.3 WHERE THE SOUND FEMININE PLURAL IS USED: The following categories describe the types of nouns which make their plural using the sound feminine plural suffix *-aat*. Some categories are general, like number 1, and some are specific, like 3 and 4. In some cases there is more than one form of the plural. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but covers major categories.

(1) Many (but not all) nouns ending in *taa’ marbuuTa*:

embassy/ies sifaara/sifaar-aat

government/s Hukuuma/Hukuum-aat

language/s lugha/lugh-aat

ticket/s bTaqaqa/bTaqaq-aat~baTaa’ iq

pharmacy/ies Saydaliyya/Saydaliyy-aat

continent/s qaarra/qaarr-aat

barracks thukna/thukn-aat~thukan

(1.1) **Vowel variation:** Feminine nouns ending with *taa’ marbuuTa* or *taa’* that have *sukuun* on the second radical, often use the sound feminine plural with a slight internal vowel change, usually a shift to an additional vowel inserted after the second radical. When the original short vowel is *fatHa* or

---

17 The word ‘umm, in addition to meaning literally ‘mother,’ also has abstract meanings such as ‘source, origin, original version, essence.’ See Wehr 1979 for examples and details.
kasra, the change tends to be to fatHas; if the short vowel is Damma, then the Damma may be copied or there may be a change to fatHas.

service/s  xidma/xidam-aat—xidam
experience/s  xibra/xibar-aat
girl/s; daughter/s  bint/ban-aat
session/s  jalsa/jalas-aat
sister/s  ^uxt/ ^axaw-aat
circle/s; ring/s  Halqa/Halaq-aat
authority/ies  sulTa/suluT-aat

(2) Nouns referring strictly to female human beings. Many of these nouns are actually participles used as substantives (nouns). Some denote professions, but others are simply common nouns. When the sound feminine plural is used to refer to groups of human beings, it only denotes exclusively female groups.18

lady/ies  sayyida/sayyid-aat
queen/s  malika/malik-aat
actress/es  mumaththila/mumaththil-aat
professor/s (f.)  ^ustaadh/a/ ^ustaadh-aat
customer/s (f.)  zabuuna/zabuun-aat
Muslim/s (f.)  muslima/muslim-aat
expert/s (f.)  xabiira/xabiir-aat

(3) Verbal nouns from derived forms II–X of triliteral roots and also from Forms I–IV of quadriliteral roots. These verbal nouns all take the sound feminine plural, even though most of them are masculine in the singular. In the Form II verbal noun, the -aat plural often alternates with a broken plural.19

Verbal nouns from triliteral roots:

arrangement/s  II. tartiib/tartiib-aat
negotiation/s  III. mufaawaDa/mufaawaD-aat

18 If even one human male is present within the group, the masculine plural form is used.
19 The optional Form II plural is usually of the CaCaaCiiC pattern. See section 3.2.3.2, subsection (4.1.4), in this chapter.
Verbal nouns from quadriliteral roots:

mumbling/s I. hamhama/hamham-aat

decline/s II. tadahwur/tadahwur-aat

serenity/ies IV. iTmi′naan/iTmi′naan-aat

The nisba of derived form verbal nouns, when functioning as a noun referring to nonhuman entities, also takes the sound feminine plural, e.g., ‘reserve/s’ iHtiyaaTiyy  یحیتیاجتیی-ات احتیاطی‌ات  یحیت‌یاجتیی-ات

(4) Active (AP) and passive (PP) participles of Form I that do not denote human beings, even though they may be masculine in the singular. Note that some Form I participles have an alternate broken plural form.

Examples:

plan/s I PP: mashruu′/ mashruu′-aat~mashaari′

manuscript/s I PP: maxTuuT/maxTuuT-aat

implication/s I PP: madluul/madluul-aat

topic/s I PP: mawDuu′/ mawDuu′-aat~mawaaDii′

creature/s I PP: maxluuq/maxluuq-aat

revenue/s I AP: ‘aa′id/ ‘aa′id-aat

import/s I AP: waarid/waarid-aat

duty/jies I AP: waajib/waajib-aat

being/s I AP: kaa′in/kaa′in-aat

menu/s; list/s I AP: qaa′ima/qaa′ima-aat ~ qawaa′im

20 The singular occurs both as maxTuuT مخطوطة and maxTuuTa مخطوطة.
(5) **Active (AP) and passive (PP) participles of the derived verb forms (II–X) and quadriliterals if they do not refer to human beings.** These nouns may be either masculine or feminine in the singular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>volume/s</td>
<td>II PP: mujallad/mujallad-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foundation/s</td>
<td>II PP: mu’assasa/mu’assas-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drug/s</td>
<td>II AP: muxaddir/muxaddir-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>note/s</td>
<td>II AP: mudhakkira/mudhakkir-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishment/s</td>
<td>IV PP: munsha’a/munsha’a-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ocean/s</td>
<td>IV AP: muHiiT/muHiiT-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change/s</td>
<td>V PP: mutaghayyar/mutaghayyar-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synonym/s</td>
<td>VI AP: mutaraadif/mutaraadif-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slope/s</td>
<td>VII PP munHaDar/munHaDar-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conference/s</td>
<td>VIII PP: mu’tamar/mu’tamar-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level/s</td>
<td>VIII PP: mustawan/mustaway-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settlement/s</td>
<td>X PP: mustawTana/mustawTan-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hospital/s</td>
<td>X PP: mustashfan/mustashfay-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swamp/s</td>
<td>X PP: mustanqa’/mustanqa’a-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camp/s</td>
<td>Quad PP: mu’askar/mu’askar-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explosive/s</td>
<td>Quad AP: mufarqi’ /mufarqi’-aat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that of course, participles of any verb form that refer (strictly) to female human beings will also take the sound feminine plural, in accordance with the rule in 3.2.1.3(2) above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher/s (f.)</td>
<td>II AP: mudarrisa/mudarris-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizen/s (f.)</td>
<td>III AP: muwaaTina/muwaaTin-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supervisor/s (f.)</td>
<td>IV AP: mushrif/a/mushrif-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialist/s (f.)</td>
<td>V AP: mutaxaSSisa/mutaxaSSis-aat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer/s (f.)</td>
<td>X AP: mustahlika/mustahlik-aat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With most (but not all) loanwords borrowed directly from a foreign language into Arabic.21

- **computer/s**: كمبيوتر/كمبيوتارت
- **telephone/s**: تلفون/تلفونات
- **taxi/s**: تاكسي/تاكسيات
- **dollar/s**: دولار/دولارات
- **hormone/s**: هرمون/هرمونات
- **virus/es**: فيروس/فيروسات
- **liter/s**: ليتر/ليترات
- **lord/s**: لورد/لوردات

The tens numbers (twenty through ninety), when referring to decades, such as the “twenties” and “sixties.” Note that the /-aat/ plural suffix is attached to the genitive/accusative form of the word stem (/-iin/, not /-uun/).

- **sixty/sixties**: ستٰٰين/ستٰينات
- **seventy/seventies**: سبعٰين/سبعينات
- **ninety/nineties**: تسعٰين/تسعينات

Feminine proper names even if they do not end in taa’ marbuutá:

- **Zeinab/s**: زيناب/زينبات
- **Amira/s**: أميرة/أميرات

Names of the letters of the alphabet:

- **‘alif/s**: ألف/ألقاط
- **raa*/s**: راء/رايات
- **waaw/s**: واو/وايات

Some examples of borrowed nouns with Arabic broken plurals are:

- **bank/s**: بَنْك/بنوك
- **ton/s**: طَنَ/طنان
- **million/s**: مِلْيُون/ مليونين
- **mile/s**: مِيْل/ أميال
- **meter/s**: مِتْر/ أمتار

As in majlis-u Huurdaat-i ‘The House of Lords.’

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21 Some examples of borrowed nouns with Arabic broken plurals are:

- **bank/s**: بَنْك/بنوك
- **ton/s**: طَنَ/طنان
- **million/s**: مِلْيُون/ مليونين
- **mile/s**: مِيْل/ أميال
- **meter/s**: مِتْر/ أمتار
(10) **Names of the months:** There are three sets of names of the months used in Arabic: two sets for the solar calendar (one based on Semitic names and one on borrowed European names) and one for the lunar Muslim calendar. All months make their plural with -aat.

April/s  \( niisaan/niisaan-aat \) نيسان/نيسانات  
July/s  \( tammuuz/tammuuz-aat \) تموز/تموزات  
Ramadan/s  \( ramaDaan/ramaDaan-aat \) رمضان/رمضانات  
Shawwal/s  \( shawwaal/shawwaal-aat \) شوال/شوالات  
December/s  \( disambir/disambir-aat \) ديسمبر/ديسمبرات

(11) **Feminine adjectives that stand on their own as substantives:** For example, the feminine relative or nisba adjectives (adjectives ending in -iyya). Adjectives take the sound feminine plural when referring strictly to female human beings.

Yemeni/s (f.)  \( yamaniyya/yamaniyy-aat \) يمنية/يمنيات  
Tunisian/s (f.)  \( tuunisiyya/tuunisiyy-aat \) تونسية/تونسيات  
Arab/s (f.)  \( ‘arabiyya/‘arabiyy-aat \) عربية/عربيات

(12) **Other:** The sound feminine plural is used on a number of other nouns that do not clearly fall into the above categories. One especially frequent use is with nouns whose final syllable contains a long /-aa-/ in the singular.

airport/s  \( maTaar/maTaar-aat \) مطار/طارات  
orbit/s  \( madaar/madaar-aat \) مدار/مارات  
field/s  \( majaal/majaal-aat \) مجال/مجالات  
animal/s  \( Hayawaan/Hayawaan-aat \) حيوان/حيوانات  
activity/ies  \( nashaaT/nashaaT-aat \) نشاط/نشاطات \(^{24}\)  
decision/s  \( qaraar/qaraar-aat \) قرار/قرارات  
spice/s  \( bahaar/bahaar-aat \) بهار/بهرات  
security, guarantee/s  \( Damaan/Damaan-aat \) ضمان/ضمانات  
bath/s  \( Hammaam/Hammaam-aat \) حمام/حمامات  
current/s  \( tayyaar/tayyaar-aat \) تيار/تيارات

---

\(^{23}\) For complete sets of the Arabic names of months in the lunar and solar calendars see Ryding 1990, 409.

\(^{24}\) Also 'anshiTa.
3.2.2 The sound masculine plural (jām‘ mudhakkar saalim جمع مذكر سالم)

The sound masculine plural is much more restricted in occurrence than the sound feminine plural because, almost without exception, it only occurs on nouns and adjectives referring to male human beings or mixed groups of male and female human beings.25

3.2.2.1 Inflection of the sound masculine plural: This type of plural takes the form of a suffix that attaches to the singular noun (or adjective): -uuna (nominative) or -iina (genitive/accusative).

(1) Case: The sound masculine plural shows overtly only two case inflections instead of three. Note that the long vowel in the suffix (-uu- or -ii-) is the case marker, and is what changes when the case changes.26 The short vowel ending (fatHa) (-a) remains the same in both the nominative and the genitive/accusative. This fatHa is not a case ending, but rather part of the spelling of the suffix. In pause form it is not pronounced. Examples:

- observers (nom.) murāqīb-uuna مراقبون
- observers (gen./acc.) murāqīb-iina مراقبين
- surgeons (nom.) jarraḥ-uuna جراحون
- surgeons (gen./acc.) jarraḥ-iina جراحين

(2) Definiteness: One of the features of the sound masculine plural suffix is that, like the dual suffix, there is no distinction between definite and indefinite:

- assistants musā‘id-uuna مساعدون
- the assistants al-musā‘id-uuna المساعدون
- with assistants ma‘a musā‘id-iina مع المساعدين
- with the assistants ma‘a l-musā‘id-iina مع المساعدين

25 Exceptions are very few and include, for example, ‘ārD/أرض ظZN - ‘araD-un أراضي ‘ارذن. The noun ‘ārD has a more common plural, however: ‘araD-in أراضي.

26 Arab grammarians consider the long vowel of the sound masculine plural as the inflectional vowel, the one that indicates case.
3.2.2.2 Nuun-deletion:

(1) As first term of ‘iDaafa: A distinctive feature of the sound masculine plural suffix, like the dual suffix, is that because its final consonant is a nuun, the nuun and its vowel, fatHa, are deleted if the noun is the first term of an ‘iDaafa (annexation structure). The long vowel of the suffix (−uu- or -ii-) is then left as the final element of the word.

(2) With a pronoun suffix: Likewise, when a noun with the sound masculine plural is suffixed with a possessive pronoun, the nuun and short vowel /-a/ of the suffix are deleted:

from its supporters: min mu‘ayyid-i-hi من مؤيديه
for their nominees: li-murashshaH-ii-him لمرشحهم
our delegates: manduub-uu-naa مندوبونا
its publishers: naashir-uu-haا ناشروها
our sons: ban-uu-naa بنونا

3.2.2.3 Where the sound masculine plural is used: The following categories show the types of nouns which form their plural using the sound masculine suffix. Some categories are general, like number 1, and some are specific, like 3 and 4. This is not an exhaustive list, but covers major categories.

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27 See note 12 in this chapter.
Participles as nouns: Participles acting as substantives (nouns) often take the sound masculine plural when referring to human males or mixed groups of male and female.

Form I: Some Form I participle nouns take the sound masculine plural, but most take a broken plural (see section 3.2.3.1, subsection (1.2)) when referring to male human beings or mixed male/female groups. Some examples of the sound masculine plural are:

- official/s I PP: mas’uul/mas’uul-uuna
- researcher/s I AP: baaHith/baaHith-uuna
- speaker/s I AP: naaTiq/naaTiq-uuna

Forms II–X: Derived form (II–X) triliteral and quadriliteral active and passive participles that refer to human males take the sound masculine plural:

**Form II:**

- nominee/s II PP: murashshaH/murashshaH-uuna
- actor/s II AP: mumaththil/mumaththil-uuna

**Form III:**

- reporter/s III AP: muraasil/muraasil-uuna
- citizen/s III AP: muwaaTin/muwaaTin-uuna
- observer/s III AP: muraaqib/muraaqib-uuna

**Form IV:**

- Muslim/s IV AP: muslim/muslim-uuna
- attaché/s IV PP: mulHaq/mulHaq-uuna
- manager/s IV AP: mudiir/mudiir-uuna
- guide/s IV AP: murshid/murshid-uuna

**Form V:**

- narrator/s V AP: mutakallim/mutakallim-uuna
- extremist/s V AP: mutaTarrif/mutaTarrif-uuna
- volunteer/s V AP: mutaTawwi’/mutaTawwi’-uuna
- rebel/s V AP: mutamarrid/mutamarrid-uuna

**Form VI:**

- optimist/s VI AP: mutafaa’il/mutafaa’il-uuna
- pessimist/s VI AP: mutashaa’im/mutashaa’im-uuna
Form VII: rare

Form VIII:

voter/s; elector/s VIII AP: muntaxib/muntaxib-uuna

listener/s VIII AP: mustami*/mustami*-uuna

Form IX: rare

Form X:

consumer/s X AP: mustahlik/mustahlik-uuna

renter/s X AP: musta’jir/musta’jir-uuna

(1.3) Quadriliterals:

engineer/s QIAP: muhandis/muhandis-uuna

translator/s QIAP: mutarjim/mutarjim-uuna

(2) Names of professions: Certain nouns in Arabic refer to those who engage in professions or other pursuits. The pattern is CaCCaaC (fā’-eal فعال). The masculine form of these nouns takes the sound masculine plural:

baker/s xabbaaz/xabbaaz-uuna

hunter/s Sayyaad/Sayyaad-uuna

money-changer/s Sarraaf/Sarraaf-uuna

coppersmith/s naHHaas/naHHaas-uuna

(3) Alternation with broken plural: Sometimes the sound masculine plural alternates with a broken plural:

son/s ibn/’abnaa’ ~ban-uuna

director/s mudiir/ mudaraa’ ~ mudiir-uuna

(4) Noun nisbas: Nisba or relative adjectives may also function as nouns, in which case, if they refer to human males or mixed groups, they are often pluralized with the sound masculine plural:28

Lebanese lubnaaniyy/lubnaaniyy-uuna

European/s ’uurubbiyy/’uurubbiyy-uunaa

Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case

28 Some exceptions to this include the words for ‘Arab,’ ‘bedouin,’ and ‘foreigner’ which take broken plurals: ‘arabiyy/’arab العربية/عَرَب, badawiyy/badw بَدْوِيَ/بَدْو, and ’ajnabiyy/’ajaanib أجنبى/أجِب.
electrician/s  kahrabaa‘iyy/ kahrabaa‘iyy-uuna
statistician/s  ‘iHSaa‘iyy/‘iHSaa‘iyy-uuna
politician/s  siyaasiyy/siyaasiyy-uuna
country dweller/s  riifiyy/riifiyy-uuna

(5) **Numbers in tens:** The tens numbers include the sound masculine plural suffix as part of their word structure. It inflects just as the regular sound masculine plural, -uuna for nominative and -iina for genitive/accusative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tens</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>twenty</td>
<td>‘ishruuna</td>
<td>عشرون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirty</td>
<td>thalaathuuna</td>
<td>ثلاثون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forty</td>
<td>‘arba‘uuna</td>
<td>أربعون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifty</td>
<td>xamsuuna</td>
<td>خمسون</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a plural is needed for these terms ("forties," "fifties," the sound feminine plural is suffixed to the genitive/accusative form of the number (see above 3.2.1.3(7)). For more on numerals, see Chapter 15.

3.2.3 The broken plural (**jam‘ al-taksiir** (جمع التكسير))

The broken or internal plural is highly characteristic of Arabic nouns and adjectives. It involves a shift of vowel patterns within the word stem itself, as in English "man/men," "foot/feet" or "mouse/mice." It may also involve the affixation of an extra consonant (usually hamza or waaw). The relationship between singular nouns and their broken plural forms relates to syllable and stress patterns, so that there is often a characteristic rhythm to the singular/plural doublet when said aloud.

The structure and regularities of the Arabic broken plural system have been the subject of research in morphological theory over the past fifteen years, and considerable progress has been made in developing theories to identify and account for the underlying regularities in the broken plural system, the most
prominent of those theories being templatic morphology and prosodic morphology.29

For nonnative speakers of Arabic, learning which nouns take which plurals can take some time, but if singulars and plurals are learned as doublets and grouped together, sound patterns of vowel–consonant distribution become evident and, at least to some extent, ascertainable. The most common broken plural patterns are listed here under triptote (fully inflected) and diptote (partially inflected) categories. (For the nature of diptote inflection see section 5.4.2.2 in this chapter.) Wherever possible, specific vowel patterns are identified.

Where patterns are more general, consonant–vowel structures are also given, using the convention that the symbol V stands for any vowel and VV for any long vowel. The letter C stands for any consonant.30

3.2.3.1 TRIPOTOTE PATTERN PLURALS (jamʿ muʿrab): These broken plural patterns are fully inflectable. They show all three case markers and can take nunation when indefinite.

(1) Broken plural patterns with internal vowel change only:

(1.1) Plural: CuCuuC (fuʿul) from singular: CaCC (faʿl) or CaCiC (faʿil)

The CuCuuC plural pattern is a frequent one, especially for plurals of geminate root Form I verbal nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>right/s</td>
<td>حقاً/حقوق</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubt/s</td>
<td>شك/شكوك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art/s</td>
<td>فن/فنون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>army/jies</td>
<td>جيش/جبوش</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>century/jies</td>
<td>قرن/قرُون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king/s</td>
<td>ملك/ملوك</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 See, for example, McCarthy and Prince 1990a and 1990b, Paoli 1999, and Ratcliffe 1990. In particular, see Ratcliffe 1998 for an extensive analysis of Arabic broken plurals within comparative Semitic. As he describes it, it is “a historical and comparative study of a portion of the nominal morphology of Arabic and other Semitic languages on the basis of a fresh theoretical approach to non-concatenative or ‘root and pattern’ morphology” (1998, 1). As to the abundance of broken plural forms, Lecomte notes (1968, 72–73): “Le problème des pluriels internes est fort complexe, et rebelle à toute explication décisive. On notera toutefois que la fixation a été opérée par les lexicographes anciens aux IIe et IIIe siècles de l’Hégire à la suite de minutieuses enquêtes dans les tribus. Les différences dialectales constituent donc une des clés du problème. Elles expliquent en tout cas pourquoi les dictionnaires peuvent signaler plusieurs pluriels pour un même mot.”

A borrowed word that has taken this plural pattern:

bank/s  bank/bunuuk  بنك/بنوك

(1.2) Plural CuCCaaC (fu‘aal فعل آل) from singular: CaaCiC (faa‘il فعل آل): This plural, used with the Form I active participle (m.), is used only for human beings.  

- deputy/ies: naa‘ ib/ nuwwaab  نائب/نواب
- worker/s: ‘aamil/ ‘ummaal  عامل/عمال
- reader/s: qaari‘ / qurra‘*  قارئ/قراء
- guard/s: Haaris/Hurraas~Harasa  حارس/حارسات~حرسة
- rider/s: raakib/rukkaab  راكب/ركاب
- student/s: Taalib/Tullaab~Talaba  طالب/طلابة

(1.3) Plural CiCaaC (fi‘aal فعل آل) from singular CVCVC or CVCC (fa‘al فعل آل, fa‘ul فعل آل, fa‘l فعل آل)  

- man/men: rajul/rijaal  رجل/رجال
- mountain/s: jabal/jibaal  جبل/جبال
- sand/s: raml/rimaal  رمل/رمال
- earthenware jar/s: jarra/jiraar  جرة/جرار
- basket/s: salla/silaal  سلة/سلال

(1.4) Plural CuCaC (fu‘al فعل آل) from singular CVCCa (fa‘la, fu‘la, fi‘la فعل آل)  

- state/s: dawla/ duwal  دولة/دول
- room/s: ghurfa/ ghuraf  غرفة/غرف
- sentence/s: jumla/ jumal  جملة/جمل
- opportunity/ies: furSa/ furaS  فرصة/ فرص
- time period/s: mudda/mudad  مدة/مدة
- picture/s: Suura/Suwar  صورة/صور
- nation/s: ‘umma/umam  أمّة/أمم

For example, the noun ‘aamil in the singular can mean either ‘worker’ or ‘factor.’ When it means ‘worker’ the plural is ‘ummaal; when it means ‘factor,’ the plural is ‘awaamil.'
(1.5) Plural CuCuC (fu‘ul فعل) from singular: CVCVC(a) (fa‘iil(a))\[\text{فعيل(ة) فعل(ن)}\]

city/ies  
madiina/mudun  

ship/s  
safiina/ sufun  

newspaper/s  
SaHiiffa/SuHuf  

path/s  
Tariiq/Turuq  

book/s  
kitaab/kutub  

foundation/s  
‘asaas/ ‘usus  

(1.6) Plural CiCaC (fi‘al فعل) from singular CiCCa (fi‘la فعلة) or CaCiiC (fa‘iil فعل)\[\text{فعيل}

city/ies  
madiina/mudun  

ship/s  
safiina/ sufun  

newspaper/s  
SaHiiffa/SuHuf  

path/s  
Tariiq/Turuq  

book/s  
kitaab/kutub  

foundation/s  
‘asaas/ ‘usus  

(1.7) Plural CaCCaa (fa‘laا فعلى) from singular CaCiiC (fa‘il فعل) or CaCCiC (fa‘il فعل): These plural forms go with certain adjectives that are also used as substantives referring to human beings:

dead  
mayyit/mawtaa  

killed  
qatiil/qatlaa  

wounded  
jariiH/jarHaa  

sick  
mariiD/marDaa  

(2) Plurals with vowel change and affixation of consonant:

(2.1) Plural: ‘aCCaaC (‘af‘aal أفعال) from singular: CVCC (fa‘l فعل) or CVCVC (fa‘al فعل) or hollow: CVVC (faal فعال, fiul فعل, fiil فعل): This plural involves the prefixing of hamza plus fatHa to the word stem and the shift of vowel pattern to a long /aa/ between the second and third radicals:

dream/s  
Hulm/ ‘aHlaam  

tower/s  
burj/ ‘aabraaj  

profit/s  
ribH/ ‘arbaaH  

section/s  
qism/ ‘aqsaam  

Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case 147
thing/s  "thing"/"ashyaa"\(^{32}\)

color/s  "lawn"/"alwaan"

error/s  "glitch"/"aghlaat"

foot/feet  "foot"/"aqdaam"

door/s  "door"/"abwaab"

market/s  "market"/"aswaaq"

bag/s  "bag"/"akyaas"

holiday/s  "holiday"/"a"yaad"

Borrowed words that fit the pattern:

film/s  "film"/"aflaam"

ton/s  "ton"/"aTnaan"

mile/s  "mile"/"amyaal"

Variants:

day/s  "day"/"ayaam"\(^{33}\)

thousand/s  "thousand"/"aalaaf"

(2.2) Plurals of ‘paucity’: ’aCCuC (‘a’f ‘ul) and CiCCa (f ‘I’a [فعلة]

(الجمع الفعلة): Certain nouns have an additional plural form

which denotes a ‘plural of paucity,’ usually considered to be in the range

of three to ten items:

river/s  "river"/"anthur"

month/s  "month"/"ashhur"

youth/s  "youth"/"fitya"

(2.2.1) The plural of paucity can be contrasted with jam‘ al-kathra جمع الكاترة, the

plural that indicates many:

‘anthur (a few rivers) / ‘anhaar~nuhuur (many rivers)  نهر/أنهر ـ نهور

‘ashhur (a few months) /shuhuur (many months)  شهر/أشهر

fitya (a few youths) /fityaan (many youths)  فتى/فتيان

\(^{32}\) The plural ‘ashyaa ‘things’ is diptote despite the fact that the final hamza is part of the root. See

section 5.4.2.2 in this chapter for further discussion of diptotes and diptote patterns.

\(^{33}\) By virtue of phonological rules that prevent the sequence [yw] in َ‘aywaam, the plural form

becomes ‘ayaam, with assimilation of the waaw to the ya’. Likewise, ‘a’ laaf is realized as ‘aalaaf

in order to avoid the sequence [a]/. Other plurals of this pattern include ‘literature’ َadab/

َaadaab أدب/آداب and ‘vestige’ َathar/َaathaar أثر/آثار.
(2.3) Addition of *nuun*: Plural: CVCCAan (fa‘laan/fi‘laan/fu‘laan فلان):

- country/ies: bilaad/buldaan بلاد/بلدان
- neighbor/s: jaar/jiiraan جار/جيران
- fire/s: naar/niiraan نار/نيران
- worm/s: duuda/diidaan دودة/ديدان
- bull/s: thawr/thiiraan ثور/ثوران

(2.4) Addition of *taa*’ *marbuut*ا: Sometimes a *taa*’ *marbuut*ا is suffixed as part of a plural pattern. When used with the plural, it does not signify feminine gender.

(2.4.1) Plural CaCaaCiCa (fa‘aalila فعاللة). This is often used to pluralize names of groups or professions borrowed from other languages:

- professor/s: ُustaadh / ُasaatidha أستاذ/أساتذة
- doctor/s: duktuur/dakaatira دكتور/دكاترة
- philosopher/s: faylusuuff/falaasifa فيلسوف/فلاسفة
- Bolshevik/s: bulshifiyy/balaashifa بولشيفي/بلاشفة
- African/s: ُifriiqiyy/ُafaariqa َإفريقي/أفاريقة
- pharaoh/s: fir‘awn/faraa‘ina فرعون/فراعنة
- bishop/s: ُusquf/ُasaafiqa~ُasaaqif أسقف/أساقفة~ أساقفة

(2.4.2) Plural CaaCa (faala فالة): Used with nouns derived from hollow verbs:

- sir/s: sayyid/saada سيد/سادة
- leader/s: qaa* id/qadaa قائد/قادة

(2.4.3) Plural CuCaat (fu‘aat فاعة): Used with active participles of Form I defective verbs:

- infantryman/infantry: maashin/mushaat مش/مشاهدة
- judge/s: qaaDin/quDaat قاض/قاضة
- reciter/s: raawin/ruwaat راوي/رواية

Phonological rules prevent the sequence /-iw/ in the hypothetical form *jiwraan, and it is realized as jiiraan, the /j/ sound assimilating the waaw. The same principle applies to naar/niiraan and others.
marksman/-men raamin/ruumah

dilettante/s; fan/s haawin/huwaah

(2.4.4) **Plural CaCaCa** *(fa’ala فعلة) from singular CaaCiC*: This plural often alternates with CUCaCaC.

- student/s Taalib/Talaba~Tullaab طالب/طلبة ~ طالب
- servant/s xaadim/xadaam~xuddaam خادم/خدمة ~ خادم
- guard/s Haaris/Harasa~Harraas حارس/حرسة ~ حارس

(2.4.5) **Plural ³aCCiCa** *(³af³ila أفعلة) from singular CVCaC (fa’aal فعل, fi’aal فعل):** In this broken plural pattern there is addition of both hamza at the start of the word and taa² marbuuTa at the end of the word:

- carpet/s bisaaT /³absiTa ~ busuT بساط/بسطة ~ بسط
- answer/s jawaab/³ajwiba جواب/أجوبة
- clothes libaas /³albisa لباس/لبسة
- mixture/s mizaaj/³amzija مزيج/مجزة
- brain/s dimaagh/³admigha دماغ/دمغة

(2.4.6) **Plural CaCaayaa** *(fa’ayaaa فعايا):** This plural is used for certain feminine nouns, especially if they are defective or hamzated. It is invariable, always ending with ³alif.

- gift hadiyya/hadaayaa هدية/هدية
- sin xaTii’a/xaTaayaa خطيئة/خطايا
- corner zaawiya/zawaayaa زاوية/زوايا

3.2.3.2 Diptote pattern broken plural *(mamnuu min al-Sarf من نوع من الصرف):* A number of common plural patterns are diptote and belong to conjugation five (see section 5.4.2.2). Among them are the following:

1. **Plural: CuCaCa²** *(fu’ala² فعلاء) from singular: CaCiIC (fa’il فعل):** This plural is used only for human beings:

- prince/s ³amiir/ ³umaraa³ أمير/أمراة
- president/s ra’iis/ ru’asaa³ رئيس/رؤساء
- minister/s waziir/ wuzaraa³ وزير/وزراء
- leader/s za’iim/ zu’aamaa³ زعيم/زعماء
expert/s  
poor person/s

(2) Plural ‘aCCiCaa’ (‘af‘iilā’). This broken plural pattern prefixes and suffixes hamza. It is used with humans only:

physician/s  
friend/s  
relative/s  
loved one/s

(3) Plural CaCaaCiC (fa‘aalīl). This is a frequent plural pattern. It is used primarily with words that have four consonants in the singular, but can also be used for plurals of words with three consonants in the singular. It has a number of variations, as follows:

(3.1) Nouns derived from triliteral roots where the singular has a prefixed miim. For example:

(3.1.1) Nouns of place:

center/s  
kingsdom/s  
restaurant/s  
mine/s

(3.1.2) Nouns of instrument:

towel/s  
broom/s  
elevator/s

(3.1.3) Participles: (Form IV AP nonhuman):

problem/s  

(3.2) Other patterns of triliteral roots with added consonants:

ladder/s  
foreigner/s

35 Phonological rules prevent the sequence ‘aTibbaa’, so the medial /i/ shifts and the form becomes ‘aTibbaa’.
middle part/s  ُawsaT/ُawaasit  أووسط/أواسط
ticket/s  tadhkira/tadhaakir  تذكيرا/ذائكار
fingertip/s  ُunmula/ُanaamil  أنمالة/أعمال

(3.3) Nouns derived from quadriliteral roots:

frog/s  Dafida/ ُDafaadi  ضفادع/ضفادع
element/s  ُunSur/ُanaaSir  عنصر/عناصر
hotel/s  funduq/ ُfanaadiq  فندق/فنادق
dagger/s  xanjar/xanaajir  خناجر/خناجر
bomb/s  qunbula/ ُqanaabil  قنبلة/قنابل
translation/s  tarjama/ ُtaraajim  ترجمة/ترجم

(3.4) Nouns that are borrowed from other languages, but fit the pattern:

consul/s  qunSul/ ُqanaaSil  قنصل/قناصيل

(3.5) Certain quinquiliteral (five-consonant) nouns reduce themselves by
one consonant in order to fit this quadriliteral plural pattern:

spider/s  ُankabuut/ُanaakib (omission of /t/)  عنكبوت/عناكب
program/s  barnaamaj/ ُbaraamij (omission of /n/)  برنامج/برامج
index/es  fihrist/ ُfahaaris (omission of /t/)  فهرست/فهارس

(3.6) Variants on fa˚a˚alل فعال:

A frequent variant on this plural pattern is the insertion of an extra
sound in order to create the pattern: waaw or hamza, typically from sin-
gular CVCCV or CVCVVC:

(3.6.1) Plural CaCaa˚iC (fa˚aa˚il فعال: medial hamza insertion:

newspaper/s  jariida/ ُjaraa˚id  جريدة/جرائد
minute/s  daqiiqa/ ُdaqaa˚iq  دقيقة/دقائق
result/s  natiija/ ُnataa˚ij  نتيجة/نتائج
church/es  kaniisa/ ُkanaa˚is  كنيسة/كنائس
garden/s  Hadiiqa/Hadaa˚iq  حديقة/حدائق
ode/s  qaSiida/qaSaa˚id  قصيدة/قصائد

(3.6.2) Plural ُaCaaCiC (fa˚aa˚il فعال: initial hamza insertion:

place/s  makaan/ ُamaakin  مكان/أماكن
relative/s  qariib/ ُaqaarib  قريب/أقارب
(3.6.3) **Plural CawaaCiC (fawaa’il) ْفاعل فعال: waaw insertion:**

(3.6.3.1) **Active participles**

Used primarily with Form I active participles (CaaCiC or CaaCiCa) that do not refer to human beings:

- **salary/ies**
  - raatib/rawaatib رايتية/روايتية
- **objection/s**
  - maani / mawaani مانية/مناكية
- **capital/s**
  - ‘aaSimā/’awaasSim عاصمة/عواصم
- **fruit/s**
  - faakiha/fawaakih فاكهة/فواكه
- **mosque/s**
  - jaami / jawaami جامع/جوامع
- **street/s**
  - shaari / shawaari شارع/شوارع
- **ring/s**
  - xaatim/xawaatim خاتم/خواتم
- **incident/s**
  - Haadith/Hawaadith حادث/حوادث
- **last part/s**
  - ‘aaxir/‘awaaxir آخر/أواخر

(3.6.3.2) Used with a few words that have the Form I active participle pattern and that refer to human beings:

- **monarch/s**
  - ‘aahil/‘awaahil عاهل/عواهيل
- **pregnant (one/s)**
  - Haamil/Hawaamil حامل/ حوامل

(3.6.4) **Plural CaCaaCin (fa‘aalin) فعال لف: defective noun variants:** When the fa‘aalin plural pattern is used with nouns from defective roots, or nouns with defective plural patterns, it ends with two kasras when it is indefinite. These kasras are not regular nunation but substitute for the missing waaw or yaa2 from the root. These plural forms are still diptote and therefore do not take regular nunation.36

- **coffeehouse/s**
  - maqhan/maqaahin مقهى/مقهى
- **range/s**
  - marman/maraamin مرام/مرامین
- **night/s**
  - layl/layaalin ليالٍ/لياليٍ
- **effort/s**
  - mas‘an/masa‘ain مسعأ/مساوأ

(4) **Diptote plural: CaCaaCiC (fa‘aalin) فعال لف: defective pattern**. This is a four-consonant pattern with one short and two long vowels that applies mainly to the following types of singular nouns:

---

36 See section 5.4.3 in this chapter for declensions of these words.

37 A few words, such as layl, are not from defective roots, yet they have a plural form that uses the defective pattern. The words ‘arD/‘araadin ‘أرض/أراض’ (‘earth, land’) and yad/yaaadin ‘يد/يد’ (‘hand’) have these plurals as well.
(4.1) **Singular CVCCVVC:** Used with words where the singular has an added consonant and there is a long vowel between the second and third root consonants:

(4.1.1) **Prefixed hamza:**

- pipe/s: ³unbuub/³anaabiib
- week/s: ³usbuuc/³asaabiic
- legend/s: ³usTuura/³asaaiTiir
- fleet/s: ³usTuul/³asaaiTiil

(4.1.2) **Doubled middle root consonant:**

- window/s: shubbaak/shabaabiik
- prayer rug/s: sajaada/sajaajiid

(4.1.3) **Prefixed miim:**

(4.1.3.1) **Passive participles:** Form I passive participles serving as substantives:

- decree/s: marsuum/maraasiim
- topic/s: mawDuu/ mawaaiDiic
- concept/s: mafhuum/mafaahiim
- content/s: maDmuun/maDaamiim

(4.1.3.2) **Some nouns of instrument:**

- key/s: miftaaH/mafaaTiimH
- saw/s: minshaar/manaasiiH

(4.1.4) **Prefixed taa√:** Certain Form II verbal nouns as a plural variant:

- report/s: taqriir/taqaariir
- arrangement/s: tadbiir/-aat~tadaabiir
- detail/s: tafiil/-aat~taiifSiil
- statue/s: timthaal/tamaathiil
- drill/s: tamriin/-aat~tamaaariin

(4.2) **Quadriliteral root nouns (singular pattern: CVCCVVC):**

- crocodile/s: timsaaH/tamaasiiH
- box/es: Sanduuq/Sanaadiiq
- title/s; address/es: ³unwaan/³anaawiin
3.2.4 Plurals from different or modified roots

A few nouns have plurals with different or slightly variant lexical roots.

- **woman/women**  
  امرأة/نساء - نسوة - نسوان
- **horse/es**  
  حصان/خيل
- **water/s**  
  ماء/مياه
- **mouth**  
  فم/ أفواه

3.2.5 Plural of the plural: (jam‘ al-jam‘)

Occasionally a noun will have a plural form that can itself be made plural. It is not clear whether there is a semantic difference between simple plural and plural of plural or if the use is purely stylistic choice. Some instances of plural of plural include:

- **hand/s**  
  يد/أيدي
- **wound/s**  
  جرح/جروحات
- **path/s**  
  طريق/طرق/طرقات
- **house/s**  
  بيت/بيوت/بيوتات
- **pyramid/s**  
  هرم/أهرامات
In the following case, the plural of the plural has a semantic implication: the first plural is straightforward, but the plural of the plural implies distinction as well as plurality: ‘distinctive men, men of importance.’

man/men/men of distinction  rajul/rijaal/rijaalaat  رجل/رجال/ رجالات

4 Definiteness and indefiniteness
Arabic substantives may be marked for definiteness or indefiniteness. There is a definite article in Arabic, but it is not an independent word, it is a prefix al-. The indefinite marker (“a” or “an” in English) is not a separate word in Arabic. It is a suffix, -n, referred to technically as “nunation” (from the name of the letter/sound nuun). Thus, in Arabic, the definiteness marker is attached to the beginning of a word and the indefiniteness marker is attached to the end of a word. They are, of course, mutually exclusive.

4.1 Definiteness
Specifying definiteness, or determination, is a way of specifying or restricting the meaning of a noun. Arabic nouns are determined or made definite in three ways:

(1) By prefixing the definite article /al-/
(2) By using the noun as first term of an `iDaafa (annexation structure);
(3) By suffixing a possessive pronoun to the noun.

4.1.1 The definite article /al-/: This function word has several important features:

4.1.1.1 IT IS A PREFIX: It is not an independent word, it is a prefix, or proclitic particle. It is affixed to the beginning of a word and written as part of it.

the bread  al-xubz  الخبز
the pyramids  al-`ahraam  الأهرام
the joy  al-faraH  الفرح

4.1.1.2 IT IS SPELLED WITH hamzat al-waSl: Although spelled with ’alif-laam, and most often transliterated as “al-,” the ’alif in this word is not a vowel and is therefore not pronounced; rather, it is a seat for a hamza and a short vowel -a (fatHa) which is pronounced when the word is utterance-initial.

When the definite article is not the first word in an utterance, then the hamza drops out, the /a/ vowel is replaced by the vowel that ends the previous word, and

38 For more on the definite and indefinite articles, see Chapter 2, section 8.
there is no break between the words. There is, instead, a liaison, or smooth transition from one word to the next.\textsuperscript{39}

to the city \textit{‘ila\textsuperscript{a} l-madiinat-i} إلى المدينة
in Arabic \textit{bi-l-\textquotesingle{arabiyyat-i} بالعربية}
the country’s flag \textit{‘alam-u l-balad-i} علم البلد
The United Nations \textit{al-\textquotesingle{umam-u l-muttaHidat-u} الأمم المتحدة}

\subsection*{4.1.1.3 ASSIMILATION OF laam:} The nature of the first letter of a noun or adjective determines the pronunciation of /\textipa{al-}\/. The letters of the Arabic alphabet are divided into two sections, one section whose members assimilate the /\textipa{l}/ sound and another section whose members allow the full pronunciation of /\textipa{l}/ of the definite article. See also Chapter 2, section 8.1.2.

(1)\textbf{ Sun letters (Huruuf shamsiyya حروف شمسية):} Certain sounds, or letters, when they begin a word, cause the \textit{laam} of the definite article to assimilate or be absorbed into them in pronunciation (but not in writing). When this assimilation happens, it has the effect of doubling the first letter of the word. That letter is then written with a \textit{shadda}, or doubling marker, and is pronounced more strongly. The list is:

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
Spelling & Arabic & Pronunciation \\
\hline
the leader & \textit{al-za\textquotesingle{ii}m} & الزعين \textit{az-za\textquotesingle{ii}m} \\
the fish & \textit{al-samak} & السمك \textit{as-samak} \\
the honor & \textit{al-sharaf} & الشرف \textit{ash-sharaf} \\
the fox & \textit{al-tha\textquotesingle{lab}} & الثعلب \textit{ath-tha\textquotesingle{lab}} \\
the wolf & \textit{al-dhi\textquotesingle{b}} & الذئب \textit{adh-dhi\textquotesingle{b}} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

(2)\textbf{ Moon letters (Huruuf qamariyya حروف قمرية):} Moon letters do not absorb or assimilate the /\textipa{l}/ of the definite article. They are:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{hamza, baa\textsuperscript{a}, jiim, Haa\textsuperscript{a}, xaa\textsuperscript{a}, ayn, ghayn, faa\textsuperscript{a}, qaa\textsuperscript{f}, kaaf, miim, haa\textsuperscript{a}, waaw, yaa\textsuperscript{a}}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{39} For further discussion of the definite article and \textit{hamzat al-waSl}, see Chapter 2, section 8.
4.1.2 Uses of the definite article
The definite article is used in the following ways:

4.1.2.1 PREVIOUS SPECIFICATION: To specify a noun or noun phrase previously referred to or understood by the reader or hearer. For example:

أدرك أنه نسي الكلمة.
'adrak-a 'anna-hu nasiy-a l-kalimat-a.
He realized that he had forgotten the word.

لا أحب المفاجآت.
laa ?u-Hibb-u l-mufaaaja‘aat-i.
I don’t like surprises.

المهم هو العمل.
al-muhimm-u huwa l-‘amal-u.
The important (thing) is work.

المنافسة قوية.
al-munaafasat-u qawiyyat-un.
Competition is strong.

أحب التنظيم في العمل.
'u-Hibb-u l-tanZiim-a fii l-‘amal-i.
I like organization at work.

4.1.2.2 GENERIC USE: Here the definite article is used to specify a noun in general terms. In English, the generic use of the noun often omits the definite article, for example, “life is beautiful,” “squirrels like nuts,” “elephants never forget,” “seeing is believing.” Sometimes, also, in English, an indefinite article is used to refer to something in general: “a noun is a part of speech.” In Arabic, the definite article is used when referring to something in general.

4.1.2.3 PLACE NAMES: Certain place names in Arabic contain the definite article. This includes names of places in the Arab world and elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-xarTuum</td>
<td>Khartoum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-riyaaD</td>
<td>Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-qahira</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Gaza</td>
<td>Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mumina</td>
<td>Münastir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Quds</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Quds al-Sharif</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Tiberi</td>
<td>Tiberias</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4.1.2.4 NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK: Names of the days of the week are considered definite and include the definite article. If they are modified by an adjective, it also carries the definite article:

الثلاثاء الماضي

أيام الجمعة والسبت

al-thulaathaa'-a l-maaDiy-a

'ayyaam-a l-jum'at-i wa-l-sabt-i

last Tuesday

on Fridays and Saturdays

بعد ظهر الثلاثاء الجاري

ليل الخميس والجمعة

ba'ad-a Zuhri l-thulaathaa'-i l-jaarii

layl-a l-xamiis-i wa-l-jum'at-i

next Tuesday afternoon

on Thursday and Friday night

4.1.2.5 TIMES OF THE DAY: Referring to times of the day, the hours are specified with the definite article:

بين السادسة والثامنة من مساء غد

bayn-a l-saadisat-i wa-l-thaaminat-i min masaa'-i ghad-in

between six and eight o’clock (‘the sixth and the eighth’) tomorrow evening

في السابعة والربع

fii l-saabi'at-i wa-l-rub'-i

at seven fifteen (‘the seventh and the quarter’)

4.1.2.6 WITH ADJECTIVES: The definite article is used with adjectives when they modify definite nouns. This is described in greater detail in Chapter 10.

الأمين العام

الهلال الخصيب

الحكاية القديمة

al-amin-u l-'aamm-u

al-hilaal-u l-xaSiib-u

al-Hikaayat-u l-qadiimat-u

the secretary
general

the Fertile Crescent

the old story

البحر المتوسط

السفراء العرب

al-baHr-u l-mutawassiT-u

al-sufaraa'-u l-'arab-u

the Mediterranean Sea

the Arab ambassadors

The article is also used on stand-alone adjectives when they serve as substitutes for nouns.

many of us

الكثير منا

al-kathiir-u min-naa

the greatest

الأكبر

al-'akbar-u

at least

على الأقل

'alaa l-'aqall-i
4.1.2.7 WITH CARDINAL NUMBERS IN DEFINITE PHRASES:

in the next five years 

4.1.3 Definiteness through annexation (‘iDaafa اضافة)

A noun can become definite through being added or annexed to another (Arabic: ‘iDaafa ‘addition; annexation’ also called the “genitive construct”). The first term of an annexation structure cannot have the definite article because it is made definite by means of its annexation to another noun. When the annexing noun is definite, or a proper noun, the whole phrase is considered definite.

الخبراء في التسع عشرة

4.1.4 Definiteness through pronoun suffix

A third way for a noun to be made definite is to suffix a possessive pronoun. The pronoun is attached to a noun after the case marker. Note that a noun cannot have both the definite article and a pronoun suffix: they are mutually exclusive (just as one would not have “the my house” in English). Because a noun with a

40 The first noun in the annexation structure looks definite because it does not have nunation, but it is not definite. For example, if it is modified, the adjective is indefinite:

a beautiful handbag Haqiibat-u yad-in jamiiia’-un
an Egyptian dentist Tabiib-u ‘asnaan-in miSr-iyy-un
pronoun suffix is definite, any adjective modifying that noun has the definite article, in agreement with the definiteness of the noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بطاقة تكاملها</th>
<th>Taaqat-u-haa l-takriiriyat-u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>its capacity</td>
<td>its refining capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

بدأ مؤتمره الصحافي

bada’a mu’tamar-a-hu bada’a mu’tamar-a-hu l-Sihaafiyy-a

he began his conference he began his press conference

في زيارته الرسمية الأخيرة

fii ziyaarat-i-hi l-rasmiyyat-i l-’axiirat-i

on his visit on his last official visit

4.2 Indefiniteness

4.2.1 Writing and pronunciation: nunation (tanwiin تنوين)

Indefiniteness as a noun feature is usually marked by a suffixed /-n/ sound, which is written in a special way as a variation of the case-marking short vowel at the end of a word. The technical term for this is “nunation” in English, and tanwiin تنوين in Arabic. The suffixed /-n/ sound is not written by using the Arabic letter nuun. Instead, it is signaled by writing the short case-marking vowel twice. Therefore, the names of the nunation markers are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dammataani</th>
<th>two Dammas</th>
<th>/’/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kasrataani</td>
<td>two kasras</td>
<td>/’/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatHataani</td>
<td>two fatHas</td>
<td>/’/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the definite article is visible in Arabic script, the indefinite marker normally is not, since it attaches itself to the inflectional short vowel suffixes.

In general, the nominative (Dammataani) and genitive (kasrataani) forms of nunation are not pronounced in pause form. The accusative (fatHataani), however, is often pronounced, even in pause form, especially in common spoken Arabic adverbial phrases:

always daa’im-an دائمًا especially xuSuuS-an خصوصًا
never ’abad-an أبداً exactly tamaam-an تمامًا

---

41 See also Chapter 2, section 8.2.
42 The exception to this is the accusative indefinite suffix, -an, which is written into the script with an ‘alif and two fatHas. See section 4.2.1.5(2) for further description.
4.2.1.1 MASCULINE SINGULAR INDEFINITE WORD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bayt ‘a house’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative: bayt-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive: bayt-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative: bayt-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.2 FEMININE SINGULAR INDEFINITE WORD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘aaSifa ‘a storm’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative: ‘aaSifat-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive: ‘aaSifat-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative: ‘aaSifat-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.3 BROKEN PLURAL INDEFINITE WORD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nujuum ‘stars’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative: nujuum-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive: nujuum-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative: nujuum-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.4 SOUND FEMININE PLURAL INDEFINITE WORD: The sound feminine plural does not take fatHa or fatHataani; the genitive and accusative forms are identical:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kalimaat ‘words’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative: kalimaat-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive: kalimaat-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative: kalimaat-in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.1.5 NOTES ABOUT NUNATION: There are several things to note about the writing and pronunciation of nunation:

1. First, the nominative, Dammataan, is more often written as a Damma with a “tail” or flourish, rather than two separate Dammas.

   a schedule  jadwal-un جدول
   a colt  muhr-un مهر
   a steamship  baaxirat-un باخرة
   a bell  jaras-un جرس

2. Second, the accusative, fatHataan, is often accompanied by an ’alif. This ’alif is a spelling convention and is not pronounced. It is considered to be a chair or seat for the two fatHas to perch on. It is visible in Arabic script.

   a rocket  Saaruux-an صاروخا
   a knife  sikkiin-an سكينة
   a rabbit  ’arnab-an أرنبًا
   a saddle  sarj-an سرجا

2.1. If a word in the accusative ends with a taa’ marbuuta, or a hamza, or preceded by ’alif, then the ’alif “chair” is not used and the fatHataan perch right on top of the hamza or taa’ marbuuta:

   an evening  masaa’-an مساء
   a melon  baTTixat-an بطيخة
   a meeting  liqaa’-an لقاء
   a permit  ’ijaazat-an إجازة
   a breeze  hawaa’-an هواء
   a language  lughat-an لغة

Examples:

   حضروا لقاء هامًا.  واكتشف أيضًا أخطاء.

He also discovered mistakes. They attended an important meeting.

3. Helping vowel with nunation: Because nunation causes the pronunciation of a word to end with a consonant (/n/), there may be a need for a helping vowel after the nunation if, for instance, the nunated word is followed directly by a noun or adjective with the definite article thus creating a consonant cluster. That helping vowel is pronounced as kasra (/i/), but it is not written. Wright, in discussing this form of helping vowel, gives the example:

   محمدُ النبي
   muHammad-un-i l-nabiyy-u43

Muhammad the Prophet

---

43 Wright 1967, I:22.
Words that do not take nunation: There are some words that do not take nunation when they are indefinite. This includes words that fall into the diptote declension (see section 5.4.2.2. in this chapter), words that end with the sound masculine plural (-uuna or -ina) (see section 5.4.2.1., subsection (2) in this chapter), words that end with the dual suffix (-aani and -ayni) and invariable words (see section 5.4.5. in this chapter).

Diptotes:
- ambassadors: sufaraa-u
- sound masculine plural:
  - engineers: muhandis-uuna
  - Egyptians: miSriyy-uuna

Dual:
- two states: dawlat-aani
- two poets: sha‘ir-aani

Invariable nouns:
- chaos: fawDaayaa
- issues: qaDaayaa

4.2.2 Uses of the indefinite

4.2.2.1 TO EXPRESS NON-DEFINITE STATUS: Nunation is used on Arabic nouns and adjectives to mark indefinite status. An adjective modifying an indefinite noun is also indefinite.

We have achieved adequate progress. This book is a pioneering work.

4.2.2.2 MASCULINE PROPER NAMES: A perhaps unusual (to English speakers) function of the indefinite marker is its use on many Arabic masculine given names. They are semantically definite, but morphologically indefinite. This is so because many of these Arabic names are derived from adjectives which describe particular attributes. Nonetheless, given names are considered definite and agreeing words are definite.

Muhammad ‘praised’ muHammad-un
- Salim ‘flawless’ saliim-un
- Munir ‘radiant’ muniir-un
- Ali ‘exalted’ aliyy-un
Examples of agreement:

محمّد الخامس
muHammad-un-i l-xaamis-u
Muhammad the fifth

Nunation is not marked on all masculine names, only those derived from Arabic adjectives or participles. For example, the names ʿalmaid, ʿibraahiim, sulaymaan, and yuusuf are diptote and do not take nunation.44 Most female names are also diptote and do not take nunation.45

4.2.2.3 ADVERBIAL ACCUSATIVE EXPRESSIONS: Adverbial expressions in Arabic tend to be in the accusative case, and quite often in the indefinite accusative. It is therefore common to see the indefinite accusative marker when reading Arabic texts. Another characteristic of the indefinite accusative marker, especially with adverbs, is that it is pronounced as well as written, whereas the nominative and genitive forms of nunation are not normally pronounced in spoken Arabic.46

The adverbial use of the accusative is described in greater detail in the section on the accusative case, but here are some examples in the indefinite accusative (see also 4.2.1 above):

- immediately  
  fawr-an  
  فوراً

- a little (bit)  
  qaliil-an  
  قليلاً

- very  
  jidd-an  
  جداً

- daily  
  yawmiyy-an  
  يومياً

5 Case inflection

Arabic nouns, participles, adjectives and, to some extent, adverbs have word-final (or desinential) inflection. That is, they are marked for case, which indicates the syntactic function of the word and its relationship with other words in the sentence.47 In Arabic, the term for case marking is (i'raab).48 In respect to case

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44 For the reasons behind this see section 5.4.2.2 on the diptote declension.
45 There are a few exceptions. The feminine name hind-an, for example, may take nunation. But this is exceptional.
46 Pronunciation of nunation at the end of a word is apparently still heard in some rural vernacular forms of Arabic. For the most part, the only form of nunated ending that is regularly pronounced in spoken MSA or in the urban vernaculars is the accusative (/an/).
47 Blake (1994, 1) defines case as follows: “Case is a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads. Traditionally the term refers to inflectional marking, and, typically, case marks the relationship of a noun to a verb at the clause level or of a noun to a preposition, postposition or another noun at the phrase level.”
48 The Arabic term ‘i’raab إعراب refers to desinential inflection in general: not only case markers on nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, but also mood markers (indicative, subjunctive, jussive) on verbs. Arab grammarians classify case marking and mood marking together in one category, and give them similar labels. For more on this see Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughli 1990, 53-55, and Ryding 1993.
inflection, Arabic resembles some European languages such as German, Russian, and Latin.

Arabic has three cases: nominative (rafaً, رفع), genitive (jarrah جرح), and accusative (nasib نصب). As a general rule, these cases are indicated by short vowel suffixes: -u (Damma) for nominative, -i (kasra) for genitive, and -a (fatHa) for accusative. However, these short vowels are not the only ways to mark case. Words inflected for case fall into several declensions or inflection classes and therefore inflect for these three cases in different ways.

Case marking is placed at the end of a noun or adjective. If a noun or adjective is definite, then the case-marking short vowel is suffixed at the very end of the word. If a noun or adjective is indefinite, the case marker is followed by an indefinite marker (a final |-n| sound, “nunation” in English and tanwiin in Arabic), indicated in writing by the convention of doubling the short vowel case ending, e.g., -un / ; /-in/ ; 1/-an / (see above).

Case is one of the most challenging inflectional categories in MSA for several reasons. First of all, it depends on rules of syntax for its implementation, and second, in many ways it is redundant. Moreover, colloquial forms of Arabic do not have case marking, so case is used only in written Arabic. Even for native speakers of Arabic, therefore, the case system is learned through formal instruction.

5.1 Pronunciation and writing conventions
The Arabic case-ending system consists primarily of short, word-final vowels, which are invisible in conventional written Arabic texts. This can hinder clear-cut understanding of case inflections and sentential relations. Furthermore, because the nature of these case marking vowels is dependent on a word’s function in a sentence, they vary from one context to another, and only if one knows the rules of grammatical usage can one ascertain what the noun-final case markers are for any particular sentence.

The Arabic case-marking system, then, remains mostly hidden from view in written texts and is apparent only when the text is read out loud with complete
pronunciation of all vowels (i.e., in “full” form). The ability to use and pronounce accurate case marking in written or literary Arabic is not an automatic skill but a rigorous task, even for educated native speakers. It is also therefore the mark of a well-educated or learned individual. The case-marking rules are used and understood primarily by scholars and specialists in Arabic grammar, linguistics, scripture, and literature. Learners of Arabic as a foreign language need to know the basic rules of word order, inflection, agreement, and governance in order to make sense of Arabic texts. The degree to which they need knowledge of explicit case marking rules depends on the structure and goals of particular academic programs, and on the goals of individual learners.

In this book the case-marking system is described in some detail, but not exhaustively. For those who wish to delve more deeply into Arabic morphosyntax, Wright (1967) is recommended as are Hasan (1987) especially volumes II and IV; Fleisch (1961, 268–82), Beeston (1970, 51–55), and Cowan (1958). For a recent theoretical study of case in general, a good reference is Blake 1994.

5.2 Case marking and declensions
Arabic case marking takes place either as a short vowel suffix or as a modification of a long vowel suffix. Cases are marked on nouns, adjectives, and certain adverbs. The categories described below show the most common instances of particular case functions in MSA. It has not been traditional to designate Arabic nouns as belonging to particular declensions or inflectional classes, except to refer to them as “triptote” (showing three different inflectional markers, one for each case) or “diptote” (showing only two different inflectional markers when indefinite, nominative, and genitive/accusative). However, for reference purposes here, each inflectional type is classified into a separate, numbered declension.

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51 In reading written Arabic aloud, some narrators read most of the words in pause form, omitting desinential inflections. News broadcasters, for example, vary in their formality and in the degree to which they use case-marking in narrating news items. Some seldom use it; others use it partially, and some use it more consistently. Officials giving formal speeches also vary in the degree to which they pronounce case marking. Only in formal academic and religious contexts is pronunciation of full desinential inflection considered necessary or appropriate.

52 Holes (1995, 142) states: “As a means of syntactic disambiguation in modern written Arabic, case plays almost no role (inevitably so, since in most cases it is carried by short vowel distinctions which are unmarked), and, despite the importance which the indigenous tradition of grammatical description and language pedagogy attaches to it, it is clear, when one examines ancient textual material, that the functional load of the case endings was no higher in the Classical period than it is now.”

53 See, for example, the article by Khaldieh (2001) titled: “The relationship between knowledge of ḫaṭḥ, lexical knowledge, and reading comprehension of nonnative readers of Arabic.”

54 It should be understood that these declensional identifications are not standardized; they are named as such in this book to facilitate description and reference.
5.2.1 Shift of declension

In Indo-European languages a noun usually belongs to a particular inflectional class or declension in both the singular and the plural. However, in Arabic, the number suffixes (duals and sound plurals) and even the internal broken plural pattern, can shift a noun into a different inflectional class. The criteria for identifying declensions depend on the nature of the noun stem and also whether or not it includes a dual or plural number inflection.

5.3 Case categories and their functions

The type of case marking on a noun or adjective depends on its form and function. That is, it is determined by the inflectional class (declension) of the word involved and the role of the word within a specific sentence or clause (which case is appropriate under the circumstances). For example, in a sentence such as:

\[ \text{‘aqqd-a l-mudiir-u jtimaa-an ma'a l-muwaZZaf-iina.} \]

The director held a meeting with the employees.

There are three nouns in this sentence: *al-mudiir-u* ‘director, manager,’ *jtimaa-an* ‘meeting,’ and *al-muwaZZaf-iina* ‘the employees.’ Each noun is marked for its case role in the sentence.

The first noun, *mudiir*, belongs to the triptote declension or declension one and is marked for definiteness by means of the definite article. These facts provide information about the nature of the word itself. Its function in this particular sentence is as the subject of the verb *‘aqqd-a* ‘held,’ so this provides information about its syntactic role. Putting these pieces of information together, it is then possible to know that the case marker in this particular situation is *Damma*, which is the nominative marker for definite triptotes.

The second noun, *jtimaa-an*, also belongs to the triptote declension or declension one, and is marked for indefiniteness by nunation affixed at the end of the word. The noun functions in this sentence as direct object of the verb *‘aqqd-a* ‘held,’ so this provides information about its syntactic role. Putting these pieces of information together, it is then possible to know that the case marker in this particular situation is *fatHataani*, accusative.

The third noun is *al-muwaZZaf-iina*. It is plural and definite, and it follows the semi-preposition *ma'a*. It is therefore in the genitive case. It has a sound masculine plural suffix, which places it in a declension that shows the case inflection by means of the long vowel before the *nuun* of the plural suffix (the -*ii* of -*iina*).

Therefore, case as a system is both morphological (word-related) and syntactic (sentence-related) and is a hybrid “morphosyntactic” category. Each of the three Arabic cases is presented here with its typical functions. These lists are by no means exhaustive, but they cover the majority of occurrences of these cases in MSA.
5.3.1 Nominative case (al-rafatu, al-marfuūu)

The nominative inflection (typically -u or -un, -uuna in the sound masculine plural suffix, or -aani in the dual suffix) has five key functions. It marks the subject of a verbal sentence, the subject and predicate of equational sentences, certain locative adverbs, the vocative, and citation forms.

5.3.1.1 THE SUBJECT (al-fa‘il al-falak) OF A VERBAL SENTENCE (jumla fi ‘liyya): The subject of the verb is nominative because it forms, along with the verb, a structural unit, termed jumla جملة. This unit can stand independently of any other units and conveys a predication.

\[\text{ittafaq-a l-wuzaraa’-u ‘alaa ta’ziiz-i l-ta’aawun-i.} \]

The ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation.

\[\text{‘aqad-a l-jaanib-aani mubaaHathaat-in rasmiyyat-an.} \]

The two sides held official discussions.

\[\text{tarak-a-hu l-muslim-uuna waraa’-a-hum.} \]

The Muslims left it behind them.

\[\text{wulid-a l-nabiyy-u muHammad-un fii makkat-a.} \]

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca.

5.3.1.2 THE SUBJECT (al-mubtada) AND PREDICATE (al-xabar) OF AN EQUATIONAL SENTENCE (jumla ‘ismiyya): The subject of an equational sentence (al-mubtada) is the topic of a verbless predication. For more on equational sentence structure, see Chapter 4, section 2.1ff.

\[\text{al-ma‘luumaat-u xaaTi’at-un. qaSr-u l-malik-i Daxm-un.} \]

The information is wrong. The palace of the king [is] huge.

---

55 In addition, the nominative case marking for defective nouns and adjectives fuses with the genitive (-/in/ for indefinite, /-i/ for definite); for indeclinable nouns and adjectives it is realized as /-an/ or /-aa/, and for invariable nouns and adjectives, the nominative appears the same as all other cases; /-aa/. See the paradigms for declensions six, seven, and eight, 5.4.3–5.4.5.

56 The subject of an Arabic sentence with a passive verb, such as this one, is referred to as the naa‘ib al-fa‘il ‘the deputy subject.’ See Chapter 38 for the use of the passive.

57 The term for “subject” of an Arabic sentence differs depending on whether or not the sentence contains a verb. The subject of a verbal sentence (al-fa‘il) is seen as the agent or doer of the action; the subject of an equational sentence (al-mubtada) is the topic of a verbless predication. For more on equational sentence structure, see Chapter 4, section 2.1ff.
Payment [is] in advance. The important thing [is] to return.

5.3.1.3 CERTAIN ADVERBS: A few adverbs retain a Damma (non-nunated) in many syntactic functions, even when they are preceded by a preposition. It has been hypothesized that this adverbial marker is a fossilized remnant of a locative case in previous stages of language development.\(^{58}\) Certain function words, like mundh-u and Hayth-u have Damma consistently. Other words, such as qabl-u and ba‘d-u have the Damma ending when they are used as independent adverbs, but not when used as prepositions followed by a noun or a pronoun (where they normally have fatHa).

since; ago mundh-u من حسب
where; whereas Hayth-u حيث yet ba‘d-u بعد
at all qaTT-u قبل que من قبل

wassa'a l-‘amrikiyy-uuna l-faariq-a mundh-u l-bidaayat-i.
The Americans widened the margin [of points] from the beginning.

Fi mustashfan Hayth-u ta-qa‘-u qisaS-u Hubb-in
in a hospital where love stories happen

Ask shefin wa-bidu ba‘d-u.
Their identities have not yet been revealed.

5.3.1.4 THE VOCATIVE (al-nidaa), where someone or some entity is addressed directly by the speaker. The nominative (without nunation) is used on the vocative noun unless that noun is the first term of an ‘iDaafa construction, in which case it shifts to accusative.\(^{59}\)

yaa rashid-u!\(^{60}\) ‘ayyuhaa l-sayyidaat-u wa-l-saadat-u!
O Rashid!
Ladies and gentlemen!

---

\(^{58}\) See Fleisch 1961, I:280 and 1979, II:465-66 about the Semitic “adverbial case” with /-u/ suffix. For more on this see Chapter 11, section 4.1.3.

\(^{59}\) See section 5.3.3.12 subsection (3) of this chapter for examples of the first terms of ‘iDaafa in the accusative after the vocative particle.

\(^{60}\) If the vocative particle yaa (‘O’) is used, the following word has Damma, but not nunation or the definite article. If the vocative particle is ‘ayyu-haa (m.) or ‘ayyat-u-haa (f.), the following word or words have the definite article.
Certain exclamations fall into this category.\(^{61}\)

- O goodness! (‘O peace!’) \(\text{yaa salaam-u!}\)
- What a loss! What a pity! \(\text{yaa xasaarat-u!}\)

5.3.1.5 THE CITATION FORM of nouns and adjectives in lists or lexicons, although they may also be cited without desinence, in “bare” form. This function of the nominative — as the default case marker for substantives in isolation, is in line with usage in other languages.\(^{62}\) For example, a list of vocabulary words out of context:

- monarch \(‘aahil-un\)
- forbidden \(mamnuu‘-un\)
- treaty \(mu‘aahadat-un\)
- The Sudan \(al-suudaan-u\)
- The Fertile Crescent \(al-hilaal-u l-xaSiib-u\)

5.3.2 Genitive case (\(al-jarr\), \(al-majruur\), \(al-xaf\), the مجرور,\[1\] the.genجر and \(al-xafD\); الخписать,\[2\] the\[3\] مجرور): The genitive inflection (-\(i\) or -\(in\), -\(a\) [in diptote declensions], -\(i\)-\(na\) [for the sound masculine plural] or -\(ayni\) [in the dual]) has three chief functions. It marks:

5.3.2.1 THE OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION: Prepositions are followed by nouns or noun phrases in the genitive case.

- in the shade \(‘ilaa l-yamiin-i\)
- to the right \(ka-jisr-in HaDaariyy-in\)
- as a cultural bridge \(fi l-Zalaam-i\)
- from Beirut \(fi haadh-ayni l-kitaab-ayni\)
- in these two books \(fi l-mamaaliik-i l-miSriyy-iina\)

\(^{61}\) Note that exclamations with \(\text{yaa}\) may also use the preposition \(\text{li- ‘for’ + a definite noun in the genitive case:}\)

- O the poor man! \(\text{yaa li-l-maskiin-i!}\)
- How unfortunate! \(\text{yaa li-l-‘asaf-i!}\)

\(^{62}\) Blake notes (1994, 31) that in Greek (and other languages as well) the nominative “is the case used outside constructions, the case used in isolation, the case used in naming.” He further states the proposition that (1994, 32) “the nominative simply delineates an entity not a relation between an entity and a predicate.” See, for example, the Arabic vocabulary lists in Abboud and McCarus 1983.
5.3.2.2 THE OBJECT OF A LOCATIVE ADVERB (Zarf makaan wa-Zarf zaman): Arabic locative adverbs function very much like prepositions. They are different from true prepositions in that they are derived from triliteral lexical roots and can also themselves be objects of prepositions. See section 5.3.3.2 following, and Chapter 16, section 3 on “semi-prepositions.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>under the sunlight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qabl-ayyaam</td>
<td>taHt-nuur-l-shams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[a few] days ago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2.3 THE SECOND TERM OF AN ʿiDāafa CONSTRUCTION: The second term of the annexation structure or ʿiDāafa construction is normally a noun in the genitive case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keys</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Language of cultivated people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kiis-justuq</td>
<td>ghurfat-l-tijarat</td>
<td>lughat-l-muthaqaf-ina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bag of nuts</td>
<td>the chamber of commerce</td>
<td>the language of cultivated [people]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director of the establishment</th>
<th>City of Baghdad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mudiir-l-μαsasat</td>
<td>madiinat-baghdad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.3 Accusative case (al-naSb; al-manSuub)

The accusative inflection (-a, -an, -i, -iina [in the sound masculine plural] or -ayni [in the dual]) has the most functions in Arabic because it not only marks nouns, adjectives, and noun phrases in a wide range of constructions, but it also marks adverbial expressions. In MSA, it frequently occurs in the following constructions:

5.3.3.1 THE OBJECT OF A TRANSITIVE VERB (al-maf′uul bi-hi): A transitive verb is one which, in addition to having a subject or agent which accomplishes the action, also has an object or entity that is affected by the action. The object of the verb in Arabic is in the accusative case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They attended the meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HaDar-uu l-liqaa-a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laa tu-sh′il naar-an.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63 See Wright 1967, 2:45–129 for further discussion of the accusative in Classical Arabic.
64 Blake, in his discussion of case roles in general, states (1994, 134): “The accusative is the case that encodes the direct object of a verb.”
5.3.3.2 LOCATIVE ADVERBS OF BOTH TIME AND PLACE (Zuruuf makaan wa-Zuruuf zaman): These adverbs are usually in the accusative but may be made genitive if they follow a preposition. They function in ways similar to prepositions, describing location or direction, and are followed by a noun in the genitive case. For that reason they are referred to in this work as semi-prepositions. For a more extensive description and examples of prepositions and semi-prepositions see Chapter 16 section 3.

5.3.3.3 ADVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS OF TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER (al-maf'uu'l fii-hi almu'ufu'fih): The accusative case functions extensively in MSA to indicate the circumstances under which an action takes place. In this function, the accusative can be used on nouns or adjectives. If the noun or adjective is by itself, it is normally in the indefinite accusative; if it is the first term of an 'iDaafa, it does not have nunation.

Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case

65 They seem to fall into the category of “relator nouns” described by Blake: “Relator nouns are a specialised subclass of nouns that behave like adpositions (prepositions)” (1994, 205).

66 Wright states: “Many words, which are obviously substantives in the accusative of place . . . may be conveniently regarded in a certain sense as prepositions” (1967, II:178).

67 Blake (1994, 182) notes that in a number of languages, “it is common for nouns in oblique cases to be reinterpreted as adverbs, particularly adverbs of place, time and manner.”
He will return to Baghdad soon.

5.3.3.4 THE INTERNAL OBJECT OR COGNATE ACCUSATIVE STRUCTURE (al-maf‘uul al-muTlaq). In this structure, the action denoted is intensified through use of a verbal noun cognate with the verb (i.e., derived from the same root; usually from the same derivational form (I–X)). Often the verbal noun is modified by an adjective, also in the accusative:

Hall-at-i l-mawDuu‘-a Hall-an jidhriyy-an.
It solved the issue fundamentally.

Amman realizes it fully.

saaham-aa musaahamat-an fa‘aalat-an.
They (two) participated effectively.

5.3.3.5 THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCUSATIVE (al-Haal). Expressing a condition or circumstance that occurs concurrent with or ongoing at the time of the action of the main verb, a participle is often used to describe that condition (al-Haal). The participle agrees with the noun it modifies in number and gender, but is in the accusative case and usually indefinite. The active participle is widely used in this function, but occasionally the passive participle or a verbal noun is used. For more on this topic see Chapter 11, section 2.3.1.

(1) Using active participles:

daxal-a l-Saff-a muta’axxir-an. rafa‘-a yad-a-hu mu‘tariD-an.
He entered the classroom late. He raised his hand objecting.

yu-ghaadir-uuna l-qahhirat-a l-yawm-iina mutawajjih-iina 2ilaal baaris.
They are leaving Cairo today heading for Paris.
The minister gave a speech transmitting the greetings of the president.

(2) Using passive participles:

\[
\text{قَفَّازَتْ مَذْعُوْرةً.}
\]

She jumped, frightened.

(3) Using a verbal noun:

... وقال رداً على سؤال ...

\[
\text{وَقَالَ رَدًا عَلَى سُؤَالٍ...}
\]

(And) he said, replying to a question...

5.3.3.6 THE ACCUSATIVE OF PURPOSE (\(\text{اَلْمَفْعُولَ لَأَجْلِهِ} \)) OR (\(\text{اَلْمَفْعُولَ لِهِ} \)) in order to show the motive, purpose, or reason for an action. It is usually used with an indefinite verbal noun.

\[
\text{القَوَاتُ تَشْنُ حَمْلَةً يَسِيرَهَا عَنْ أَسْلَحَةً.}
\]

The forces are launching a campaign searching for weapons.

\[
\text{xِلَاءٌ حَفْلَةٌ اِسْتِقْبَالٌ أَقَامَهَا تَكْرِيْمًا لِهِ.}
\]

during a reception they gave in his honor

\[
\text{شَهَدَ مَخْلِفُ الْمَدِينَةِ إِضْرَابًا وَاَلِسَامًا تَضَامِنًا مَعَ الْعَمَالِ.}
\]

Various cities witnessed a widespread strike in solidarity with the workers.

5.3.3.7 THE ACCUSATIVE OF SPECIFICATION (\(\text{الْتَمْيِيزِيَّةُ} \)). This accusative is used on nouns in order to delimit and specify the application of a statement. It usually answers the question, “In what way?” It includes comparative and superlative expressions as well as counted nouns between 11 and 99, which are accusative and singular.

\[
\text{نُلَعُنُ ذَٰلِكَ قَوْلًا وَفَعَلًا.}
\]

We announce that in speech and in action.
It was the greatest capital in fame and splendor.

It seemed more cautious and diplomatic (‘greater in caution and diplomacy’).

with the participation of thirty researchers

5.3.3.8 THE nawaasix: CONVERTERS TO ACCUSATIVE. Arabic grammar has a special category for words (verbs and particles) that shift one or more elements of a clause into the accusative case. There are three groups of these, each of which is composed of a typical word and what are termed its “sisters”: kaan-a and its sisters, inna and its sisters, and Zann-a and its sisters.70

(1) kaan-a and its “sisters” (kaan-a wa-’axawaat-u-haa اَكَانَ وَأَخوَاتُهَا) This set of verbs has the effect of shifting the predicate (xabar) of an equational sentence from the nominative case to the accusative case. According to Hasan (1987, I:545) there are thirteen of these verbs, the most common in MSA are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lays-a</td>
<td>to not be</td>
<td>ليسَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saara</td>
<td>to become</td>
<td>صارَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baat-a</td>
<td>to become</td>
<td>باتَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’aSbaH-a</td>
<td>to become</td>
<td>أصبحَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zall-a</td>
<td>to remain</td>
<td>ظَلَّ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

68 See Chapter 15 for further discussion of numerals and counting.

69 “The al-nawaasikh group of words in Arabic is defined by the Arab grammarians according to formal criteria; specifically, the role played by these words in inflection. Thus, words classified as belonging to the al-nawaasikh category have the effect of inducing one or two elements of the nuclear sentence to ‘fall’ from the nominative to the accusative case” (Anghelescu 1999, 131).

70 Hasan 1987, 1:543ff. and 630ff. has thorough descriptions of the nawaasix category in Arabic.

71 See also Chapter 36 in this book.

72 In addition to the verb lays-a there are certain negative particles that have similar meanings and effects, including maa and laa. See Hasan 1987 1:593ff. for more on these particles.
These verbs all denote existential states of being (or not being), becoming, and remaining. They take accusative complements. That is, the predicate of the underlying equational predication is accusative.

The author of the book is not a historian. It is not very attractive.

It was a part of this dream.

It became their daily concern.

It was the largest European capital.

Folk handicraft is still alive.

These particles are subordinating conjunctions which require that the subject of the subordinate clause (also called the complement clause) be in the accusative case.73

73 For more on 'inna and her sisters, see Chapter 19 on subordinating conjunctions.
It said that no one could stop them.

An الزراعة لغة عالمية
'tanna l-ziraa 'at-a lughat-un 'aalamiyyat-un
that agriculture is a world language

لكن قليلين من الباحثين
laakinna qaliil-iina min-a l-baaHith-iina
but few of the researchers

لأن السنين الاحترميين كانتا من أفضل السنوات
li-'anna l-sanat-ayni l-'axiirat-ayni kaaan-ataa min 'afDal-i l-sanawaat-i
because the last two years were among the best years

(3) Zann-a and her sisters (Zanna wa-'axawaat-u-haa ظنَّ وأخواتها): The verb Zann-a 'to suppose, believe' is another one of the nawaasix. It has the effect of making both the subject and the predicate of an equational clause accusative.74 This category includes verbs of "certainty and doubt" (Anghelescu 1999, 132). Hasan breaks this category down into two parts: 'af'aal al-quluub or 'af'aal qalbiyya (verbs of perception or cognition) and 'af'aal al-taHwiil (verbs of transformation).76 Hasan gives complete lists; here are some examples.77

(3.1) Verbs of perception:

to suppose, believe Zann-a ظنَّ
أظنَّ زيداً واضح لل
'a-Zunn-u Zayd-an dhaahib-an.
I believe Zayd [is] going.78

to consider, deem 'add-a عَدَتُ
to perceive, deem, see ra'aa رأى
to find, deem wajad-a وُجِدَ
to consider i'tabar-a79 اعتبار

74 One of these accusatives may take the form of an object pronoun suffix on the verb.
75 Which Hasan explains as having to do with psychological perceptions: in particular, emotions and intellect (1987, II:4, note 4).
76 As explained by Hasan, verbs that have to do with transformation of something from one state to another (Ibid., note 5).
77 See especially Hasan's chart of Zann-a and her sisters (1987, II:10). Note also the discussion in Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughli 1990, 34–36.
78 Example from Bohas, Guillaume, and Kouloughli 1990, 34.
79 The verb i'tabar-a 'to consider' is not included in older lists of 'af'aal al-quluub, but that is likely due to the fact that its usage is more modern and recent rather than traditional. Its meaning and its effect on the sentence components show that it is certainly a member of this category. I thank my colleague Amin Bonnah for this insight.
They considered this step a great historical accomplishment.

We consider the library of the center important.

What some see [as] positives others see [as] negatives.

(3.2) Verbs of transformation: These verbs signify changing a thing into something else, changing its state or appearance, or designating one thing as something else.

to convert Sayyar-a صير to take, adopt (as) ittaxadh-a إنخذ

to make ja’al-a جعل to leave tarak-a ترك

They took the river [as] borders of the region.

They took the river as borders of the region.

He left the door open.

5.3.3.9 THE NOUN FOLLOWING THE laa OF ABSOLUTE OR CATEGORICAL NEGATION (lā l-naafiyat-u lil-jins-i). In this construction the noun is devoid of the definite article or nunation. It carries only the accusative marker fatHa.

Don’t mention it. There’s no doubt about that.

(‘There is no thanking for a duty.’)

There is no excuse for its elimination. There’s no objection to paying a bit more.

See also Chapter 37, section 2.1.6.
من دونهم لا استقرار ولا سلام في المنطقة
min duun-i-him laa stiqraar-a wa laa salaam-a fii l-minTaqat-i.
Without them there is no stability and no peace in the region.

5.3.3.10 THE TEENS NUMBERS, both cardinal and ordinal, including eleven. No matter what their function in a sentence, these compound numbers always have both parts marked with *fatHa*:

\(\text{ثمانیُ خمسة عشرة درهمْ.} \quad \text{Fi’l-ghrafi} \ l-tis’-a \ ‘\text{asharat-a}
\)

Its cost is fifteen dirhams.

\(\text{يبلغُ طولهُ ثلاثة عشرة متراً.} \quad \text{Ya-blugh-u Tuul-u-hu thalaathat-a ‘\text{ashar-a mitr-an.}
\)

Its length reaches thirteen meters.

5.3.3.11 AS THE COMPLEMENT OF VERBS OF “SEEMING”: Verbs that denote appearing or seeming also take accusative complements.

\(\text{كَانَ يَبِدُو شَخِصِيَّةً بَارَزَةً فِي مَجْمَعِهِ.} \quad \text{Kaan-a ya-bduu shaxsiyyat-an baarizat-an fii mujtama‘-i-hi.
\)

He had seemed [like] a prominent personality in his society.

\(\text{يَبِدُو أَصَغَرْ بَكْثِيرَ مِنْ عُمْرِهَا.} \quad \text{Ya-bduu ‘\text{asghar-a bi-kathiir-in min ‘umr-i-haa.
\)

She appears much younger than her age. It looks very ancient.

5.3.3.12 LESS FREQUENT ACCUSATIVES: Further instances of the use of the accusative case in MSA are noted in most teaching texts and traditional grammars, but few or none appeared in the corpus of text studied for this book. Some of the most important include:

(1) *kam* + accusative singular noun: A singular accusative, indefinite noun is used after the question word *kam* ‘how much, how many?’

\(\text{كم فَصِّلَا قَرَأْتُ؟} \quad \text{Kam faSl-an qara‘-ti?
\)

How many chapters did you (f.) read?

\(\text{كم غرَفَةً فِي الْفَنْدَق؟} \quad \text{kam ghurfat-an fi l-funduq-i?
\)

How many rooms [are there] in the hotel?

81 The only exception to this is the cardinal numeral “twelve” which occurs in both the nominative and the genitive/accusative cases. See Chapter 15 on numerals and numerical expressions.
(2) **Exclamation of astonishment:** *maa 'af' al-a!* (maa l-ta‘ajjub  
ما أفعل! (مَا الْتَعْجِبُ)): The accusative is used in the ‘adjectival verb’ construction  
on the noun following the exclamation of wonder, astonishment or surprise  
*maa 'af' al-a!* In this expression, the word *maa* is followed by “an elative in  
the accusative of exclamation,” (Cantarino, 1974, II:210), and then a noun  
in the accusative case. Note that this form of the elative is identical with  
a Form IV verb, and that it is described this way in some texts and called  
*fi'l al-ta‘ajjub.*

> مَا أُجْلِلَ الْمَنْطُورُ  
> *maa 'ajmal-a l-manZar-a!*  
> How lovely the view is!

The noun may be replaced by a pronoun suffix:

> مَا أُجْلِلَهُ  
> *maa 'ajmal-a-hu!*  
> How lovely it is!

(3) **Vocative first term of construct:** The accusative case is used with the voca- 
tive particles *yaa* or *'ayy-u-haa* if the addressee is the first term of an *iDaafa*  
or noun construct, or if the noun has a pronoun suffix:

> يا عَبْدُ اللَّهَ!  
> *yaa 'abd-a illaah-i!*

> يا أَرْضُ بَلَادِي!  
> *yaa 'arD-a bilaad-ii!*

O Abdallah! (lit: ‘servant of God’)  
O earth of my country!

> يا طلَابَ الجَامِعَةِ وَأَسِانَذَهَا!  
> *yaa Tullaab-a l-jaami‘at-i wa-‘asaatidhat-a-haa!*

O students and professors of the university!

Even without the vocative particle, a noun in construct or with a pronoun  
suffix, understood as the addressee, is put into the accusative:

> أَبَا لَهَا  
> *'ab-aa-naa liadhihi fi l-samawaat-i*

Our Father who [art] in heaven ...

(4) **Nouns following exceptive expressions (al-istithnaa’  
لاِسْتِثْناء) in non-negati- 
tive clauses:** In clauses using an exceptive expression such as *maa 'adaa,* or

---

82 See Abboud and McCarus 1976, Part 2:272. See also Cowan 1964, 177. In this book, see Chapter 25  
on the Form IV verb, section 9.
83 For more examples see Cantarino 1974, II. 210–13.
"illaa, the noun following the exceptive is in the accusative case if the clause does not contain a negative.

\[
\text{حضرَ الجميع إلا رشيداً.}
\]

\[
	ext{HaDara l-jamii' illaa rashiid-an.}
\]

Everyone came except Rashid.

\[
\text{تكلمت مع كل الطالبات إلا ياسمينة.}
\]

\[
	ext{takallam-tu ma'a kull-i l-Taalibaat-ı 'illaa yaasamiin-a.}
\]

I spoke with all the [female] students except Yasmine.

This is the case in particular with time-telling, where the word "illaa" is used to express how many minutes are lacking until a particular hour, e.g.:

\[
\text{الساعة الخامسة إلا ربعاً}
\]

\[
	ext{al-saa'at-u l-xaamisat-u 'illaa rub' -an.}
\]

It is 4:45 ('five [o'clock] less a quarter [of an hour]').

\[
\text{الساعة السابعة إلا ثلثاً}
\]

\[
	ext{al-saa'at-u l-saabi'at-u 'illaa thulth-an.}
\]

It is 6:40 ('seven [o'clock] less a third [of an hour]').

5.3.3.13 OTHER ACCUSATIVES: The accusative case is used in other constructions besides the ones mentioned, but these are infrequent in MSA. For more extensive discussion and listings, especially for literary and classical syntax, see Cantarino 1975, II:161–248; Wright 1967, II:44–129 and in Arabic, Hasan 1987, II:3–430.

5.4 Arabic declensions

Following the practice of Wright (1967, I:234 ff.) and Cowan (1964, 29ff.), this book refers to the various inflectional classes of substantives as “declensions.” A declension is a class of substantives (nouns or adjectives) that exhibits similar inflectional markings for case and definiteness. Arabic nouns and adjectives fall into eight declensions:84

1 three-way inflection (called “triptote” in many Arabic grammars)

2 dual

84 Note that Wright refers to declensions of “undefined” or “defined” nouns, referring to triptote nouns as the first declension (236) and diptote nouns as the second declension (239). He does not list other inflectional classes as declensions. Cowan (29) states that “there are three declensions in Arabic” allotting the first declension to triptotes, the second declension to diptotes and the third to the uninflectable and undeclinable substantives (32).

For ease of reference in this book, I have allotted declensional status not only to singular and broken plural noun stems, but also to words that incorporate suffixes denoting dual and plural number, since they inflect for case and definiteness in different ways.
sound feminine plural
sound masculine plural
diptote
defective
uninflectable (for case, but they show inflection for definiteness), and
invariable.

5.4.1 Three-way inflection: Triptote (mu‘rab معرّب)
The triptote is the base category or declension one for Arabic nouns and adjectives.\(^{85}\) The term “triptote” refers to words (nouns and adjectives) that take all three short vowel case endings, each one differentiating a particular case (Damma, kasra, and fatHa). The triptote declension also allows nouns and adjectives to be marked for indefiniteness with nunation.\(^{86}\) This is considered the base or complete declension because it shows the full range of inflectional markers for all three cases.\(^{87}\)

5.4.1.1 THE CASE MARKERS:

(1) Nominative: The nominative suffix in the triptote declension is Damma by itself (-u) for definite words or two Dammas/Damma with a tail or (-u-n) for indefinite words. Examples:

(1.1) Noun in the nominative case:
- the honor/an honor: al-sharaf-u/sharaf-un
- the secret/a secret: al-sirr-u/sirr-un
- the ship/a ship: al-safiinat-u/safiinat-un

(1.2) Adjective in the nominative case:
- short (def.)/short (indef.): al-qaSiir-u/qaSiir-un
- new (def.)/new (indef.): al-jadiid-u/jadiid-un

(2) Genitive: The genitive marker in the triptote declension is kasra by itself (-i) for definite words or two kasras (-i-n) for indefinite words. Note that when kasra is written together with shadda, it may be written either below the consonant or below the shadda.

\(^{85}\) The term mu‘rab means ‘fully inflectable.’

\(^{86}\) For more on nunation, see section 4.2 in this chapter.

\(^{87}\) Certain linguists have designated these cases differently in English. Beeston (1970, 51), for example, refers to the cases as “independent status (nominative),” “dependent status (genitive),” and “subordinate status (accusative).” See his Chapter 7 (“Syntactic markers of nouns”) for a brief but comprehensive description of Arabic case marking.
(2.1) **Noun in the genitive case:**

- the honor/an honor: *al-sharaf-i/sharaf-in* 
- the secret/a secret: *al-sirr-i/sirr-in* 
- the ship/a ship: *al-safiinat-i/safiinat-in*

(2.2) **Adjective in the genitive case:**

- short (def.)/short (indef.): *al-qaSiir-i/qaSiir-in* 
- new (def.)/new (indef.): *al-jadiid-i/jadiid-in*

(3) **Accusative:** The accusative marker in the triptote declension is `fatHa` by itself (`-a` ) for definite words or two `fatHas` to signal nunation (`-a-n`) for indefinite words. With the accusative form of nunation, a supporting `alif` is used, except with words ending in taa marbuuTa or in a hamza preceded by `alif`. This support `alif` is visible in writing, but it is not pronounced; it is only a seat for the two `fatHas`.

(3.1) **Noun in the accusative case:**

- the honor/an honor: *al-sharaf-a/sharaf-an* 
- the secret/a secret: *al-sirr-a/sirr-an* 
- the ship/a ship: *al-safiinat-a/safiinat-an* 
- the winter/a winter: *al-shitaa√a/shitaa√an*

(3.2) **Adjective in the accusative case:**

- short (def.)/short (indef.): *al-qaSiir-a/qaSiir-an* 
- new (def.)/new (indef.): *al-jadiid-a/jadiid-an* 

5.4.1.2 **DECLENSION ONE PARADIGMS:**

(1) **Singular masculine noun:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Definite</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>bayt</code></td>
<td><code>al-bayt-u</code></td>
<td><code>al-bayt-i</code></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **البيت** | **بيت** | **بيت** | **بيت** | **بيت** | **بيت** | **بيت** |
(2) Plural noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case</th>
<th>185</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'houses' buyuut بيوت</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite:</td>
<td>Indefinite:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-buyuut-u بيوت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-buyuut-i بيوت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-buyuut-a بيوت</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Feminine singular noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>سفينة</th>
<th>'ship' safiina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite:</td>
<td>Indefinite:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-safiinat-u سفينة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-safiinat-i سفينة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-safiinat-a سفينة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) Plural noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>سفن</th>
<th>'ships' sufun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite:</td>
<td>Indefinite:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-sufun-u سفن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-sufun-i سفن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-sufun-a سفن</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Masculine singular adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>قصير</th>
<th>'short' qaSiir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite:</td>
<td>Indefinite:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-qaSiir-u القصير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-qaSiir-i القصير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-qaSiir-a القصير</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(6) Broken plural adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-qiSaar-u</td>
<td>qiSaar-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-qiSaar-i</td>
<td>qiSaar-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-qiSaar-a</td>
<td>qiSaar-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1.3 THE FIVE NOUNS (al-‘asmaa‘ al-xamsa الأسماء الخمسة): Within the triptote declension there is a subset of Arabic nouns from biliteral or even monoliteral roots which show triptote case inflection in two ways: as a short vowel and as a long vowel. The long vowel is used when the word is used as the first term of a genitive construct (‘Idaafa) or when it has a pronoun suffix.

The five nouns are:

- father  ’ab أب
- mouth  fam فم
- brother  ’ax أخ posessor dhuu ذو
- father-in-law  Ham حم

(1) The five-noun paradigms: ‘father’  ’ab أب

(1.1) As an independent word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-’ab-u</td>
<td>’ab-u-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-’ab-i</td>
<td>’ab-i-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-’ab-a</td>
<td>’ab-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.2) With pronoun suffix: –haa ‘her father’:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>’ab-uu-haa</td>
<td>أبوها</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>’ab-ii-haa</td>
<td>أبيها</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>’ab-aa-haa</td>
<td>أباها</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1.3) As first part of ‘iDaafa: ‘the father of Hasan’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>‘ab-uu Hasan-in</td>
<td>أبو حسن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>‘ab-ii Hasan-in</td>
<td>أبي حسن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>‘ab-aa Hasan-in</td>
<td>أبا حسن</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

أصبح آباً.ُ  
الأب يوسف
‘aSbaH-a ‘ab-an.  
al-‘ab-u yuusuf-u
He became a father.  
Father Joseph

ذهبت إلى بيت أبيها.
سألت أخاه.
dhahab-at ‘ilaa bayt-i ‘ab-ii-haa.  
sa’al-tu ‘ax-aa-hu.
She went to her father’s house.  
I asked his brother.

5.4.2 Two-way inflection: declensions two, three, four, and five

Certain Arabic noun declensions exhibit only two different case markers, or two-way inflection. These declensions have a specific nominative inflectional marker but they merge the genitive and accusative into just one other inflectional marker.\(^{88}\) Technically, these nouns are considered to exhibit all three cases; it is just that the genitive and accusative have exactly the same form.\(^{89}\)

The declensions that have two-way inflection fall into two major categories, the suffix declensions and the diptote declension. The suffix declensions are determined by number suffixes and include the dual, the sound masculine plural, and the sound feminine plural, whereas the diptote declension includes words that fall into particular semantic and morphological categories, as described below.

5.4.2.1 SUFFIX DECLENSIONS: THE DUAL (DECLENSION TWO), THE SOUND MASCULINE PLURAL (DECLENSION THREE) AND THE SOUND FEMININE PLURAL (DECLENSION FOUR). Three sets of two-way inflections are based on dual and plural suffixes rather than word stems. That is, once the suffix is attached to a word, it is the suffix itself that determines how the word will be marked for case. These number-marking suffixes in Arabic are all restricted to two case markings rather

---

88 Sometimes, in this latter category, the combined genitive/accusative inflection is referred to as the “oblique” or essentially, non-nominative case marker.

89 Traditional Arabic grammatical theory evolved the concept that all nouns are marked for every case, but that in some of them the case marker is “virtual” or “implied” (muqaddar) rather than overt (Zaahir).
than three. These suffixes carry two kinds of information: number (dual or plural) and case (nominative or genitive/accusative).

(1) Declension two: The dual (الثنائي) As described in section 3.1 Arabic uses a suffix on the singular stem to mark the noun as being two in number, or in the dual. The dual suffix has two case forms, and is not inflected for definiteness.

- **-aani** (nominative)
- **-ayni** (genitive/accusative)

(1.1) Masculine dual noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-bayt-aani</td>
<td>bayt-aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-bayt-ayni</td>
<td>bayt-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-bayt-ayni</td>
<td>bayt-ayni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-madiinat-aani</td>
<td>madiinat-aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-madiinat-ayni</td>
<td>madiinat-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-madiinat-ayni</td>
<td>madiinat-ayni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.2) Feminine dual noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-kabiir-aani</td>
<td>kabiir-aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-kabiir-ayni</td>
<td>kabiir-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-kabiir-ayni</td>
<td>kabiir-ayni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1.4) Feminine dual adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-kabiirat-aani</td>
<td>kabiirat-aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-kabiirat-ayni</td>
<td>kabiirat-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-kabiirat-ayni</td>
<td>kabiirat-ayni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>جرسان</td>
<td>من مركزين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaras-aani</td>
<td>min markaz-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two bells</td>
<td>from two centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عاصفتان كبرتيتان</td>
<td>في مدينتين كبرتين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aaSifat-aani kabiirat-aani</td>
<td>fii madiinat-ayni kabiirat-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two big storms</td>
<td>in two big cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.5) *Nuun*-deletion with possessive pronouns and as first term of construct:
When a dual noun is the first term of a construct, or if it has a pronoun suffix, the *nuun* of the dual suffix (and its short vowel kasra) is deleted.90

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>بيديه</td>
<td>مع مشرحي الحزب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi-yad-ay-hi</td>
<td>ma‘-a murashshaH-ay-i l-Hizb-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in his two hands</td>
<td>with the two nominees of the party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

وحضر اللقاء عميدا كليتي الطب والهندسة.
wa-HaDara Higaa 2-a 'amiid-aa kulliyat-ay-i l-Tibb-i wa-l-handasat-i.
The two deans of the schools of medicine and engineering attended the meeting.

(2) Declension three: The sound masculine plural (*jam‘* mudhakkar saalim)

جمع مذكر سالم: The sound masculine plural has two forms, much like the

---

90 The *nuun* of the dual can be considered a form of nunation, and since nunation cannot occur on a noun that is the first term of a genitive construct or on a noun with a suffixed possessive pronoun, the *nuun* of the dual suffix (and the sound masculine plural) is likewise deleted. The dual category is discussed at greater length in Chapter 15. Characteristics of the genitive construct, or *iDaafa* are discussed in Chapter 8.
dual. Note that the long vowel in the suffix (-uu- or -ii-) is what changes when the case changes. The final short vowel (fatHa /-a/) remains the same in both the nominative and the genitive/accusative. This fatHa is not a case ending, but rather part of the spelling of the suffix. In pause form it is not pronounced.

Note: This form of plural is used only to refer to human beings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>مراسلون</th>
<th>مراسلين</th>
<th>مسلمون</th>
<th>مسلمين</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correspondents (nominative)</td>
<td>مرااسیل-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مرااسیل-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correspondents (genitive/accusative)</td>
<td>مرااسیل-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مرااسیل-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims (nominative)</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims (genitive/accusative)</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>مسلم-ٍ٢٢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2.1) Sound masculine plural noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>المواطنين</th>
<th>المواطنين</th>
<th>المواطنين</th>
<th>村民们</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>معاذین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2.2) Sound masculine plural adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>كثيرون</th>
<th>كثيرون</th>
<th>كثيرون</th>
<th>村民们</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>كثيرین-ٍ٢٢</td>
<td>村民们</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>مراقبون رسمیون</th>
<th>من المثقفين المعتدلين</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>مرااقبین راسییین</td>
<td>من المثقین المعتدلین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muraaqib-uuna rasmiyy-uuna</td>
<td>min-a l-muthaqafa-lina l- mu’tadil-lina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>official observers</td>
<td>from the moderate intelligensia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2.3) **Nun-deletion with possessive pronouns and as first term of construct:**

When a noun pluralized with the sound masculine plural suffix functions as the first term of a construct, or if it has a pronoun suffix, the nun (and its short vowel fatha) of the suffix is deleted (similar to what occurs with the dual suffix above 5.4.2.1(1.5)). The long case-marking vowels /-uu-/ or /-ii-/ are then left as the remaining part of the suffix.

(3) **Declension four: The sound feminine plural (jamʿ muʿannath saalim جمع مَوْنَث سَالِم).** The sound feminine plural is also restricted to two case markers. Unlike the dual and sound masculine plural, where the case marking shows up on the long vowel of the suffix, the case marking for the sound feminine plural occurs at the end of the suffix, just as normal triptote short vowel case marking would occur. However, the sound feminine plural is restricted to only two of the short vowels: Damma and kasra. It cannot take fatha. The genitive/accusative form takes kasra or kasrataan.

(3.1) **Sound feminine plural noun:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'elections' intixaabaat</th>
<th>انتخابات</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definite:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indefinite:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-intixaabaat-u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-intixaabaat-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-intixaabaat-i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

91 See also Chapter 8, 1.2.1.4.
(3.2) **Sound feminine plural adjective:** This form of the adjective is used only to refer to groups of female human beings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Egyptian' miSriyyaat</th>
<th>كميات مصريات</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definite:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indefinite:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-miSriyyaat-u</td>
<td>al-miSriyyaat-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المصريات</td>
<td>المصريات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miSriyyaat-u-n</td>
<td>miSriyyaat-i-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المصريات</td>
<td>المصريات</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of feminine plural accusative/genitive:

- أجري محادثات. أجري اتصالات مع جميع الأطراف.
- لسن يمنيات. يفتتح مجالات واسعة.
- ٣ًاجرا muHaadathaat-in las-naa yamaniyyaat-in. ya-ftaH-u majaalaat-in
- He held talks. We are not Yemeni (f.pl.). It opens wide fields.
- يجي اتصالات مع جميع الأطراف.
- يفتتح مجالات واسعة.
- يجري محادثات.
- لسن يمنيات.

He held talks. We are not Yemeni (f.pl.). It opens wide fields.

They (f.) entered the classroom late. The term “diptote” refers to an inflectional category or declension of Arabic nouns and adjectives that are formally restricted when they are indefinite:

- They do not take nunation.
- They do not take kasra (the genitive marker).

Diptotes therefore, when indefinite, only exhibit two case-markers: final -u (Damma) for nominative case and final -a (fatHa) for both genitive and accusative. They look identical in the indefinite genitive and accusative cases.

---

92 Note that the adjective agreeing with majaalaat-in shows the accusative as fatHataan because it is triptote and belongs to declension one. Both majaalaat and waasi’a are in the accusative, but they are marked differently because they fall into two different declensions.
(1) Paradigms

(1.1) Singular diptote noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-SaHraa(^u)</td>
<td>SaHraa(^u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-SaHraa(^i)</td>
<td>SaHraa(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-SaHraa(^a)</td>
<td>SaHraa(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.2) Plural diptote noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-ru('asaa(^u)</td>
<td>ru('asaa(^u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-ru('asaa(^i)</td>
<td>ru('asaa(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-ru('asaa(^a)</td>
<td>ru('asaa(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.3) Singular masculine adjective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-('aHmar(^u)</td>
<td>('aHmar(^u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-('aHmar(^i)</td>
<td>('aHmar(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-('aHmar(^a)</td>
<td>('aHmar(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.4) Singular feminine adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definite:</th>
<th>Indefinite:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-Hamraa(^u)</td>
<td>Hamraa(^u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-Hamraa(^i)</td>
<td>Hamraa(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-Hamraa(^a)</td>
<td>Hamraa(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1.5) Plural diptote adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘foreign’  'ajaanib</th>
<th>‘foreign’  'ajaanib</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definite:</td>
<td>Indefinite:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-'ajaanib-u</td>
<td>'ajaanib-u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-'ajaanib-i</td>
<td>'ajaanib-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-'ajaanib-a</td>
<td>'ajaanib-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of diptotes in context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic phrase</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أربعةُ خناجرَ</td>
<td>four daggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'arba‘at-u xanaajir-a</td>
<td>four daggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salaTat-un xaDraa²-u</td>
<td>a green salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إلى مدينةٍ بغدادَ</td>
<td>a white house to the city of Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayt-un  'abyaD-u</td>
<td>ilaa madiinat-i baghdad-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will lead to a firmer relationship between the two of them.

(2) Categories of diptotes: Diptotes fall into categories based on their word structure. The main ones are: diptote by virtue of pattern (singular patterns and plural patterns) and diptote by nature or origin:93

(2.1) Diptote by pattern:

(2.1.1) Diptote plural patterns: Certain noun and adjective plural patterns are inherently diptote, including:

(a) fu‘alaa’ فعلااء

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns:</th>
<th>Adjectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ministers</td>
<td>wuzaraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presidents</td>
<td>ru‘asaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>princes</td>
<td>³umaraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaders</td>
<td>zu‘amaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>honorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fuqaraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ghuraba³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shurafa³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kurzama³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 See also section 3.2.3.2. in this chapter.
2.1.2 Singular diptote patterns:

(a) Elative (comparative) adjectives and colors: The diptote pattern is used to indicate the comparative state of the adjective and also for the basic color names.\footnote{For more description of comparative and superlative adjectives, see Chapter 10, section 4.2; for more about color adjectives, see Chapter 10, section 5.1.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns:</th>
<th>Adjectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|更好, 喜愛 | افضل، أحبّ 
| 青 (蓝) | أخضر، أزرق |
| 更多 | اقل، أصفر |
| 红色 | حمراء |
| 蓝色 | زرقاء |
| 黑色 | شقراء |
| 白色 | طرحة |

\footnote{For more description of comparative and superlative adjectives, see Chapter 10, section 4.2; for more about color adjectives, see Chapter 10, section 5.1.}
(2.1.2.b) Nouns or adjectives that have a suffix -\textit{aa} after the root consonants. Nouns of the \textit{fa\‘laa} pattern. These words are usually feminine in gender, e.g.,

\begin{itemize}
  \item desert: \textit{SaHraa} صحراء \\
  \item beauty: belle Hasnaa حساناء
\end{itemize}

(2.2) \textbf{Diptote by nature or origin}: Certain categories of words fall into the diptote camp by virtue of their etymology or meaning.

(2.2.1) \textbf{Most feminine proper names}, e.g.,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Fatima: \textit{faaTima} فاطمة \\
  \item Zayna: \textit{zayna} زينة \\
  \item Aida: \textit{‘aa\‘ida} عائدة \\
  \item Afaf: \textit{‘afaaf} عفاف
\end{itemize}

(2.2.2) \textbf{Proper names of non-Arabic origin}: This includes a large number of place names or names of geographical features in the Middle East whose origins are from other Semitic languages or other (non-Semitic) Middle Eastern languages. A salient characteristic of most of these names is that they do not have the definite article.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Damascus: \textit{dimashq} دمشق \\
  \item Tunis: \textit{tuunis} تونس \\
  \item Baghdad: \textit{baghdaad} بغداد \\
  \item Beirut: \textit{bayruut} بيروت \\
  \item Egypt: \textit{miSr} مصر \\
  \item Lebanon: \textit{lubnaan} لبنان \\
  \item Mecca: \textit{makka} مكة \\
  \item Tigris: \textit{dijla} دجلة
\end{itemize}

Examples:

\begin{itemize}
  \item from Damascus: \textit{min dimashq-a} من دمشق \\
  \item in Tunis: \textit{fii tuunis-a} في تونس \\
  \item to Egypt: \textit{\‘ilaa miSr-a} إلى مصر
\end{itemize}

Also, other non-Arab place names:95

\begin{itemize}
  \item Madrid: \textit{madriid} مدريد \\
  \item Paris: \textit{baariis} باريس \\
  \item Istanbul: \textit{istaanbuul} إسطنبول
\end{itemize}

95 In MSA, names of places in other parts of the world, such as \textit{nyuu yuurk} (New York), \textit{waash-inTun} (Washington), or \textit{istukholm} (Stockholm) are usually left uninflected, since they are not readily accommodated into the Arabic inflectional class system.
A helpful rule of thumb with Middle Eastern place names in Arabic is that if they carry the definite article, then they inflect as trioptotes, e.g.:

Rabat al-ribaaT
Khartoum al-xarTuum
Cairo al-qaahira
Kuwait al-kuwayt

Examples:
from Cairo min-a l-qaahirat-i
in Khartoum fii l-xarTuum-i
to Kuwait ʾilaa l-kuwayt-i

(2.2.3) **Certain masculine names**: Certain Arabic masculine proper names are diptote. These occur in the following categories:

(2.2.3.a) **Derived from other Semitic languages**: These include many names mentioned in the Bible and in the Qurʾān.

Suleiman, Solomon sulaymaan سليمان Jonah; Jonas yuunus يونس
Jacob; James yaʾquub يعقوب Abraham ʿibraahiim إبراهيم

(2.2.3.b) **Derived from verbs rather than adjectives**:

Ahmad ‘I praise’ ʾa-Hmad-u أحمد
Yazid ‘He increases’ ya-ziid-u يزيد

5.4.3 **DECLENSION SIX: DEFECTIVE NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES** (ʾasmaaʾ naaqiSa أسماء ناقصة; al-ism al-manquuS الاسم المنقوص). This inflectional class includes primarily words derived from “defective” roots, that is, lexical roots whose final element is a semivowel rather than a consonant.

It includes masculine singular active participles from all forms (I–X) of defective verbs, verbal nouns from forms V and VI, and a set of noun plurals based primarily on the diptote plural pattern CaCaaCiC. The characteristic feature of this declension is that the final root consonant appears in the form of two kasras in the nominative and genitive indefinite. In an ordinary written text, these short vowels are not visible.96

Thus in this declension, the nominative and genitive inflections are identical; the accusative shows inflection for fatHa or fatHataan.

---

96 The two kasras may be added into a printed text (in a newspaper article, for example) should there be ambiguity about the meaning of the word.
5.4.3.1 SINGULAR DEFECTIVE NOUN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'lawyer' muHaam-in′97</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definite:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indefinite:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-muHaamii</td>
<td>muHaam-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المحامي</td>
<td>محامي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-muHaamii</td>
<td>muHaam-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المحامي</td>
<td>محامي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-muHaamiya</td>
<td>muHaamiy-an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المحاميَّة</td>
<td>محاميَّة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.3.2 DIPTOTE DEFECTIVE PLURAL:98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'cafés' maqaah-in′</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definite:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indefinite:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-maqaahii</td>
<td>maqaah-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المقهَّي</td>
<td>مقَّاه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-maqaahii</td>
<td>maqaahin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المقهَّيٍّ</td>
<td>مقَّاهٍ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-maqaahiy-a</td>
<td>maqaah-iy-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المقهَّيةَّةٍ</td>
<td>مقَّاهَيَّةٍ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examples:

Singular defectives:
- club nuad-in
- challenge taHadd-in
- judge qaad-in
- singer mughann-in

Plural defectives:
- songs ُاغاان-اً: ُأُغَانٍ
- nights layaal-in
- lands ُأَراَهٌ-اً: ُأَراَعٍ
- chairs karaas-in
- hands ُأُيَاادٌ-اً: ُأَيَاادٍ
- suburbs DawaaH-in

97 Active participle from Form III defective verb Haamaay-yuHaamii, ‘to defend, protect.’
98 Pattern CaCaaGic.
99 In this (′^r-D) and the following three words, the defective ending has been added to a non-defective root (y-d, l-y-l, k-r-s).
min ‘aydii-naa fii DawaaHii bayruut-a
from our hands in the suburbs of Beirut

huwa muHaam-in. kaan-a muHaamiy-an.
He is a lawyer. He was a lawyer.

5.4.4 Declension seven: indeclinable nouns (al-ism al-maqSuur)
Indeclinable nouns show no variation in case, only definiteness. They are chiefly derived from defective lexical roots and include, in particular, passive participles (m.) from all forms (I–X) and nouns of place from defective verbs. They normally end with ʿalif maqSuura.

5.4.4.1 SINGULAR INDECLINABLE NOUN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘hospital’ mustashfan</th>
<th>دشفي</th>
<th>نسب</th>
<th>مهتم</th>
<th>اسم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-mustashfaa</td>
<td>المستشفى</td>
<td>mustashfan</td>
<td>مستشفى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-mustashfaa</td>
<td>المستشفى</td>
<td>mustashfan</td>
<td>مستشفى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-mustashfaa</td>
<td>المستشفى</td>
<td>mustashfan</td>
<td>مستشفى</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.4.2 PLURAL INDECLINABLE NOUN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘villages’ qarya</th>
<th>قرى</th>
<th>نسب</th>
<th>قرية</th>
<th>اسم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-quraa</td>
<td>القرى</td>
<td>quran</td>
<td>قرى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-quraa</td>
<td>القرى</td>
<td>quran</td>
<td>قرى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-quraa</td>
<td>القرى</td>
<td>quran</td>
<td>قرى</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100 For a detailed explanation of the phonological rules applying to indeclinable nouns and adjectives, see Abboud and McCarus 1983, II:14–19.
101 Singular qarya قرية.
5.4.4.3 FURTHER EXAMPLES:

(1) Nouns of place:

- coffeehouse  
- maqhan  
- stream, course  
- majran  
- goal, range  
- marman  
- building  
- mabnan

(2) Common nouns:

- stick, cane  
- ‘aSan  
- villages  
- quran

(3) Verbal nouns

- effort  
- mas’an  
- meaning  
- ma’nàn

(4) Passive participles of derived verb forms (II–X):

- a level  
- mustawan  
- a crossroad  
- multaqan  
- a hospital  
- mustashfan  
- required;  
- muqtaDan

(5) Examples in context:

- He was taken to the hospital of the American University.

5.4.5 Declension eight: Invariable nouns

This noun class consists of a set of nouns which vary neither in case nor in definiteness. They are spelled with final ‘alif maqSuura unless the previous letter is yaa’, in which case, ‘alif Tawiila is used.

---

102 Some passive participles of the derived forms serve also as nouns of place.
103 Abboud and McCarus 1983, II:19–20 provide an informative discussion of this declension. ‘Abd al-Latif et al. 1997, 54–55, describe these nouns as having a suffixed feminine marker, ‘alif maqSuura, and that they are therefore diptote, and do not take nunation.
5.4.5.1 INVARIABLE NOUN ENDING WITH ‘alif maqṣūra:

| Noun inflections: gender, humanness, number, definiteness, and case |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ‘complaint’ shawkāa              | شكووى                           |
| Nominative                      | al-shawkāa                      | shawkāa                         |
| Genitive                        | al-shawkāa                      | shawkāa                         |
| Accusative                      | al-shawkāa                      | shawkāa                         |

5.4.5.2 INVARIABLE NOUN ENDING WITH ‘alif Tawīla:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘gifts’ hadāayāa</th>
<th>هدآيا</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-hadāayāa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-hadāayāa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-hadāayāa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.5.3 SINGULAR INVARIABLE ADJECTIVE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘higher, highest’ ’a‘la‘a</th>
<th>أعلى</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-‘a‘la‘a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-‘a‘la‘a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-‘a‘la‘a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.5.4 PLURAL INVARIABLE ADJECTIVE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘sick’ marDāa</th>
<th>مرضى</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>al-marDāa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>al-marDāa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>al-marDāa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.5.5 TYPES OF DECLENSION EIGHT NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES. This declension or inflectional class includes a number of noun and adjective types:

(1) **Singular nouns:** These nouns are feminine in gender, having an 'alif maq-Suura suffixed after the root consonants, chiefly with patterns _fu‘laa_, _fi‘laa_ and _fa‘laa_:  

- gift; benefit _jadwaa_ جدوى 
- candy, sweet _Halwaa_ حلوى 
- chaos _jawDaa_ خوضى 
- memorial; _dhikraa_ ذكري 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gift; benefit</td>
<td><em>jadwaa</em> جدوى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>candy, sweet</td>
<td><em>Halwaa</em> حلوى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaos</td>
<td><em>jawDaa</em> خوضى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memorial;</td>
<td><em>dhikraa</em> ذكري</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And this [is] in addition to the rest of the problems. 

وهذا بالإضافة إلى بقایا المشاکل.  

wa-haadhaa bi-l-‘Daafat-i _2 ilaa baqaayaa_ l-mashaakil-i.  

He saw the world [as] beautiful. It is one of the most important establishments.

_He saw the world [as] beautiful. It is one of the most important establishments._

(2) **Singular adjectives**

(2.1) _fu‘laa_ فُلْعِي: The feminine singular superlative adjective has the form _fu‘laa_, which puts it into this inflectional class. If the final 'alif is preceded by a _yaa_, it becomes 'alif Tawilla.

- finest, _Husnaa_ حسنی (f. of _asmaa_ ‘l-llaah-u _l-Husnaa_ l-tis‘at-u wa-l-tis‘uuna) the ninety-nine attributes ('the finest names') of God
- best _al-‘aHsan_ (f. of _awsaT_)
- middle, _wusTaa_ (f. of _awlaT_)
- most central _l-wusTaa_ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>finest</td>
<td><em>Husnaa</em> حسنی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best</td>
<td><em>al-‘aHsan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td><em>wusTaa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most central</td>
<td><em>l-wusTaa</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It represents a great step forward. 

_It represents a great step forward._

خلال العصور الوسطى

_xtala‘a l-‘uSuur-i _l-wusTaa_ during the Middle Ages_
(2.2) 'af'aa أفعى: The comparative/superlative adjective from defective roots has the form 'af'aa, which puts it also into this category.

من دون حد أدنى
\textit{min duun-i Hadd-in 'adnaa}
without a lower limit (minimum)

الشرق الأدنى
\textit{al-sharq-u l-'adnaa}
the Near East

(2.3) The feminine form of ‘first’ 'uulaa أولى: This is a feminine adjective; it usually follows a feminine noun.

للمرة الأولى
\textit{li-l-marrat-i l-'uulaa}
for the first time

الجملة الأولى
\textit{al-jumlat-u l-'uulaa}
the first sentence

(2.4) The feminine form of ‘other’ 'uxraa أخرى

في دول أخرى
\textit{fii duwal-in 'uxraa}
in other countries

مرة أخرى
\textit{marrat-an 'uxraa}
another time; one more time

(3) Invariable plurals: Included in this set of words are a number of noun and adjective plurals, such as the following:

Nouns:

\textit{Halaawaa} pl. of \textit{Halwaa} ‘sweet, candy’

\textit{zawaayaa} pl. of \textit{zaawiya} ‘corner’

\textit{qaDaayaa} pl. of \textit{qaDiyya} ‘issue, problem’

\textit{baqaayaa} pl. of \textit{baqiyya} ‘rest, remainder’

Adjectives:

\textit{kaslaa} pl. of \textit{kaslaan} ‘lazy’

\textit{ghaDaabaa} pl. of \textit{ghadbaan} ‘angry’

\textit{naSaaraa} pl. of \textit{naSraaniyy} ‘Christian’

\textit{qatlaa} pl. of \textit{qatiil} ‘killed (person), casualty’

\textit{marDaa} pl. of \textit{mariiD} ‘sick (person)’

\textit{jarHaa} pl. of \textit{jariiH} ‘wounded (person)’

عدد ضحايا الزجلال
\textit{‘adad-u DaHaayaa l-zilzaal-i}
the number of victims of the earthquake
(4) **Foreign nouns:** These nouns are not traditionally considered part of this class because they are not of Arabic origin. However, foreign proper names and borrowed words ending in /-aa/ are also invariable in their inflection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>kanadaa</td>
<td>cinema</td>
<td>siinamaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>faransaa</td>
<td>potato</td>
<td>baTaaTaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>kuuriyaa</td>
<td>music</td>
<td>muusiqaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camera</td>
<td>kaamiiraa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a visit</td>
<td>to France</td>
<td>in southern</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the modern</td>
<td>cinema</td>
<td>in the rivers of Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a visit to France in southern Spain
السينما الحديثة في أنهار إفريقيا
Construct phrases and nouns in apposition

1 The construct phrase or *iDaafa* الإضافة

In Arabic, two nouns may be linked together in a relationship where the second noun determines the first by identifying, limiting, or defining it, and thus the two nouns function as one phrase or syntactic unit. Traditionally, in English descriptions of Arabic grammar, this unit is called the “genitive construct,” the “construct phrase,” or “annexation structure.” In Arabic it is referred to as the *iDaafa* (‘annexation; addition’). As Beeston explains, “The link between a noun and an entity which amplifies it is termed by the Arab grammarians *iDaafa* ‘annexation’, and the noun amplified is said to be *muDaaf* ‘annexed’” (1970, 45).

Similar constructions in English, where two nouns occur together with one defining the other, might be, for example, “coffee cup,” “university library,” or (as one word) “eggshell.” In fact, English often juxtaposes nouns to create new hybrid terms: “airbag,” “seat belt,” or “keyboard.” Another English equivalent to the Arabic construct phrase is a possessive phrase using “of” (“the Queen of Sweden,” “a bottle of wine”) or the possessive suffix /'-s/ on the possessing noun (“Cairo’s cafés”, “the newspaper’s editorial”).

The noun-noun genitive construct is one of the most basic structures in the Arabic language and occurs with high frequency. The first noun, the *muDaaf* (‘the added’), has neither the definite article nor nunation because it is in an “annexed” state, determined by the second noun. But, as the head noun of the phrase, the first noun can be in any case: nominative, genitive, or accusative, depending on the function of the *iDaafa* unit in a sentence structure. The second, or annexing noun, is called the *muDaaf* *ilay-hi.* It is marked either for definiteness or indefiniteness, and is always in the genitive case.

1 “In Arabic it is the amplifying term whose definitional status yields the definitional status of the whole phrase: consequently, an annexed substantive will not itself have the article” (Beeston 1970, 46).

2 Literally, the noun ‘added to.’ For an extensive discussion (in English) of *iDaafa* constructions in literary Arabic, see Cantarino 1970, II: 92-119. See also Wright 1967, II:198-234 for a summary of the rules for Classical Arabic “Status constructus and the genitive.” Hasan 1987, III:1-180 has a thorough analysis of the genitive construct (in Arabic).
In terms of semantic relationships between the nouns in an Arabic construct phrase, they are very wide-ranging.\(^3\) Here they are classified in relatively discrete groups, but clear boundaries cannot always be established between the groups and sometimes membership blurs or overlaps. Eleven general categories are listed here.\(^4\)

1.1 Types of *iDaafa*

1.1.1 Identity relationship

In this broad category, the second term specifies, defines, limits, or explains the particular identity of the first:\(^5\)

**Definite:**

- the city of Jerusalem: *madiinat-u l-quds-i* منْدِئِةَ الْقُدْسِ
- the minister of justice: *waziir-u l-‘adl-i* وزِيرُ الْعَدْلِ
- starfish: *najmat-u l-baHr-i* نُجُمَةَ الْبَحْرِ

**Indefinite:**

- a police officer: *DaabiT-u shurTat-in* ضابطُ شرَّتَةٍ
- a handbag: *Haqiibat-u yad-in* حقِيبَةُ يَدٍ
- love letters: *rasaa’il-u Hubb-in* رِسَائِلُ حُبٍ

1.1.2 Possessive relationship

In this kind of annexation structure, the first term can be interpreted as belonging (in the very broadest sense) to the second term. In certain respects, it is very close to the next category, the partitive relationship, and it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between the two.

- Beirut airport: *maTaar-u bayruut-a* مَطَارْ بَيْرُوْتِ
- the father of Hasan: *‘ab-uu Hasan-in* أَبُو حَسْنٍ
- the leaders of the tribes: *zu‘amaa‘-u l-qabaa‘il-i* رَعَمَاءُ الْقُبَائِلِ

1.1.3 Partitive relationship

Here the annexed term (the first term) serves as a determiner to describe a part or quantity of the annexing term. This includes the use of nouns that are quantifiers (“some,” “all,” “most”), certain numbers and fractions, and superlative constructions.

---

\(^3\) Beeston refers to the “semantic polyvalency of the annexation structure” (1970, 46).

\(^4\) Holes 1995, 166-67 (after Beeston 1970, 45-47) identifies six categories of constructs, including the adjective *‘iDaafa* or “unreal” *‘iDaafa* (‘iDuafa ghayr Haqiqiyya).

\(^5\) Also called the epexegetical genitive, or genitive of explanation.

\(^6\) Although the second noun, *Hasan*, has nunation, it is considered definite because it is a proper name.
For further discussion and examples of these categories, see sections on quantifiers, numerals, and superlative adjectives.

1.1.4 Agent relationship
In this type of construct, the second term is the agent or doer of the action and the first term is a verbal noun (masdar), the name of an action:

the crowing of the rooster  Siyaal-u l-diik-i
the squeaking of the door  Sariir-u l-baab-i
the departure of the minister  mughaadarat-u l-waziir-i
the arrival of the queen  wuSuul-u l-malikat-i

1.1.4.1 ACTION, AGENT, OBJECT: In this variant of the agent-relationship 'idaafa, where the object of the verbal action is mentioned in addition to the doer of the action, then the object follows the 'idaafa construction, and is in the accusative case (as object of the underlying transitive verb):

mughaadarat-u l-waziir-i l-'aaSimat-a
the minister’s leaving the capital
1.1.5 Object relationship
In this type of construct, the second term is the object of an action, and the first term is either the name of the action (masdar), or an active participle (ism-u l-faa’il) referring to the doer of the action.

1.1.5.1 FIRST TERM VERBAL NOUN: In this type, the first term is a verbal noun referring to the action itself:

**Definite:**
- the raising of the flag  
  raf’-u l-alam-i  
  رفع العلم
- the protection of infants  
  Himaayat-u l-aTfaal-i  
  حماية الأطفال
- the solution of the problems  
  Hall-u l-mashaakil-i  
  حل المشاكل
- the regaining of the initiative  
  isti’aadat-u l-mubaadarat-i  
  استعادة المبادرة
- entering the church  
  duxuul-u l-kaniisat-i  
  دخول الكنيسة
- criticizing Orientalism  
  naqd-u l-istishraaq-i  
  نقد الاستشراق
- riding horses  
  rukuub-u l-xayl-i  
  ركوب الخيل

**Indefinite:**
- playing a role  
  lu’b-u dawr-in  
  لعب دور
- establishing a state  
  qiyaam-u dawlat-in  
  قيام دولة
- opening fire  
  ’iTlaaq-u naar-in  
  إطلاق نار

1.1.5.2 FIRST TERM ACTIVE PARTICIPLE: In the second type of object-relationship ’iDaafa, the first term is an active participle denoting the doer of an action:

**Definite:**
- the decision-makers  
  Saani’-uu l-qaraar-i  
  صانع القرار
- companions of the delegation  
  muraafiq-uu l-wafdi  
  مراقبو الوفد
- the two leaders of the campaign  
  qaa’id-aa l-Hamlat-i  
  قاديا الحملة
Indefinite:

- an assistant minister; musaa‘id-u waziir-in مساعِد وَزِير
- undersecretary
- a shoemaker Saani‘u ’aHdhiyat-in صانِع أحِدَيَة
- an anteater ’aakil-u naml-in أَكْل نَمْل

1.1.6 Compositional relationship
In this structure, the second noun of the construct expresses the nature or composition of the first:

Definite:

- the railway (‘road of iron’) sikkat-u l-Hadiid-i سَكَة الْحَدِيد
- bouquets of flowers baaqaat-u l-zuhuur-i باقَات الزهْرَة

Indefinite:

- a chain of mountains silsilat-u jibaal-in سَلْسَلَة جِبَال
- lentil soup shuurbat-u ’adas-in شوربة عَدْس
- a bunch of grapes ’unquud-u ’inab-in عَنْقُود عِنْب
- a kindergarten (‘garden of children’) rawDat-u ’aTfaal-in رَوْثَة أَطْفَال

1.1.7 Measurement relationship
Where the first noun expresses the nature of the measurement and the second (and third) the extent or the measurement itself. These occur mainly in indefinite *iDaafa.

- a stone’s throw marmaa Hajr-in مَرْمِى حِجْر
- [for] a period of two days muddat-a yawm-ayni مَدَة يوْمٍ يَنْي
- to a distance of ten meters ’ilaa masaafat-i إِلَى مسافَة عَشَرَة أَمْتَار
  ’ashrat-i ’amtaar-in عَنْقُود عِنْب
- a kilo of bananas kiiluu mawz-in كِيلُو مَوز

1.1.8 Contents relationship
Where the first term denotes a container and the second or annexing term the contents of the container:

Definite:

- boxes of gold Sanaadiiq-u l-dhahab-i صنادِيق الْذَهْب
Indefinite:

- a cup of coffee: finjaan-u qahwat-in
- a pack of gum: ‘ulbat-u ‘ilkat-in
- a bag of nuts: kiis-u fustuq-in

1.1.9 Purpose relationship

Here the second term explains or defines the particular purpose or use of the first term:

- a marble quarry: maqla-u ruxaam-in
- a rescue plane: Taa‘ irat-u ‘inqaadh-in
- greeting cards: baTaaqaat-u tahni‘at-in

1.1.10 Quotation or title relationship

Here the second term is a title or a quotation. When this is the case, the words of the title or quotation in quotation marks are considered to be set off from the case-marking requirements of the second term of the ‘iDaafa, and are inflected independently, not necessarily in the genitive.

- the expression “jihad”: kitaab-u “al-jihaad-u” kital-u “alf-u laylat-in wa-laylat-un”
- a lecture entitled “The Middle East and Its Challenges”: muHaadarat-un bi-unwaan-i “al-sharq-u l-awsaT-u wa-taHaddiyaat-u-hu”
- the film “The Sound of Music” ('the tune of happiness'): film-u “laHn-u l-sa‘aadat-i”

1.1.11 Clause relationship

A clause in its entirety may occasionally form the second term of an ‘iDaafa. For purposes of clarity, the boundary between first term and second term is indicated by a plus sign (+) in the Arabic transliteration:

- in case the situation remains as it is: fii waqt-i + kaan-a kull-u shay-in mu‘add-an li-taHqiq-i taqaddum-in
- at a time [when] everything was prepared for achieving [some] progress: fii Haal-i + stamarr-a l-waD ‘alaa maa huwa ‘alay-hi
1.2 Rules of the noun construct (\textit{idāfa} إضافة):

1.2.1 The first term of the construct

The first term of a construct phrase has neither the definite article nor nunation because it is defined through the second term, which determines the definiteness or indefiniteness of the entire phrase. The first term of a construct phrase cannot have a possessive pronoun suffix.

The first term carries a case marker which is determined by the syntactic role of the phrase in the sentence or clause. Examples:

1.2.1.1 FIRST TERM OF CONSTRUCT IS NOMINATIVE:

\textit{mushkilat-u l-sharq-i l-awsat-i mu‘aqqadat-un.}

The problem of the Middle East is complex.

1.2.1.2 FIRST TERM OF CONSTRUCT IS ACCUSATIVE:

\textit{Hadār-a Haflat-a waD‘-il-Hajr-i l-asaas-i.}

He attended the party for the laying of the cornerstone.

1.2.1.3 FIRST TERM OF CONSTRUCT IS GENITIVE:

\textit{hiya ‘alaa sti‘da‘ad-in li-la‘b-i dawr-in nashīt-in.}

She is ready to play an active role (‘for playing an active role’).

1.2.1.4 THE RESTRICTION ON NUNATION on the first term of the construct applies not only to the nunation which marks indefiniteness, but also to the final nuuns of the dual and the sound masculine plural. These nuuns are deleted on the first term of a construct phrase.

\textit{wazīr-ā l-‘adl-wa l-i‘laam-ī} and \textit{muharrīb-ū l-mukhaddirāt-ī}

the two ministers of justice and information drug smugglers (‘smugglers of drugs’).
1.2.1.5 Pause Form Pronunciation of taa’ marbuuTa as First Term of Construct

When a word ending in taa’ marbuuTa is the first word of a construct phrase, the taa’ is pronounced, even in pause form. For more on this see Chapter 2, section 3.4.3.2.

1.2.2 The Second or Final Term of the Construct

The second or final term is in the genitive case (whether or not it is overtly marked); it may be either definite or indefinite; may be a noun or a demonstrative pronoun. It may have a possessive pronoun suffix.

1.2.2.1 Second Term = Noun:

Definite:

- the engineers’ quarter
  - Hayy-u l-muhandis-iina

- the kings of India
  - muluuk-u l-hind-i

Indefinite:

- a lunch banquet
  - ma’dabat-u ghadaa-in

- a beauty queen
  - malikat-u jamaal-in

- six schools
  - sitt-u madaaris-a

1.2.2.2 Second Term = Demonstrative Pronoun: A demonstrative pronoun may serve as the second term of a construct phrase, but as an invariable word, it does not inflect for case.

- the meaning of this
  - ma’naa haadhaa

- all (of) this
  - kull-u haadhaa

- the result of that
  - natiijat-u dhaalika
1.2.2.3 SECOND TERM HAS PRONOUN SUFFIX:

- his birthplace: masqaT-u ra’-s-i-hi
- marketing their (f.) production: taswiiq-u 3-intaaj-i-hinna
- bearing their responsibilities: taHammul-u mas’-uliyyaat-i-haa
- raising his level: raf ‘-u mustawaa-hu
- the withdrawal of its units: saHb-u waHdaat-i-hi

1.2.2.4 MORE THAN ONE NOUN MAY BE CONJOINED AS THE SECOND TERM OF THE CONSTRUCT:

- في سياستي الدفاع والتجارة: fii siyaasatay-i l-difaa 4-i wa-l-tijaarat-i
- جراح الأذن والأنف والحنجرة: jarraH-u l-‘anf-i wa-l-‘udhn-i wa-l-Hanjarat-i

1.3 Modifiers of the construct

1.3.1 Modifying the first term

A construct phrase cannot be interrupted by modifiers for the first term. Any adjectives or other modifiers applying to the first term of the 3-iDaafa must follow the entire 3-iDaafa. Modifiers for the first term agree with it in gender, number, case, and definiteness.

- أسعة الشمس الدافئة: ‘ashi‘-at-u l-shams-i l-daaffi‘-at-u
dhe warm rays of the sun

- المنظمة التحرير الفلسطينية: munaZZamat-u l-taHriir-i l-filisTiimiyyaat-u
the Palestinian Liberation Organization

- إلى مطار أبو ظبي الدولي: 3 ila‘a maTaar-i 3-abuu Zabiyy-i l-duwaliyy-i

to the Abu Dhabi international airport

7 Technically this should be 3 ila‘a maTaar-i 3 abii Zabiyy-i l-duwaliyy-i, with inflection of 3 ab in the genitive, but in newspaper Arabic the name of the emirate is often treated as a lexical unit and not inflected.
1.3.2 Modifying the second term
The second term of the construct may be modified by adjectives directly following it and agreeing with it in definiteness, gender, number, and case.

ملحق الشؤون الثقافية
in the region of the Middle East
cultural affairs officer (’attaché’)

إسعاف الدفاع المدني
Civil defense ambulance
to build secure new foundations

في افتتاح المعرض الدولي
at the opening of the international exhibit

1.3.3 Modification of both terms of the construct
When a construct or ِiDaafa needs modifiers for both terms, the general order is to put the modifiers for the last term closest to the ِiDaafa, and then modifiers for the first term(s), in ascending order. Each modifier agrees with its noun in case, gender, number, and definiteness.

مجمع اللغة العربية الأردني
the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy
(literally: ’academy (of) the-language the-Arabic the-Jordanian’)

رئيس مجمع اللغة العربية الأردني السابق
the former president of the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy
(literally: ’president (of the) academy (of) the-language the-Arabic the-Jordanian the-former’)

1.4 Demonstrative pronouns in construct phrases

1.4.1 Demonstrative with first term of construct
Normally, when a noun is modified by a demonstrative pronoun, that pronoun precedes the noun and the noun also has the definite article (for example, ٍِّْا haa-ðhaa l-qarn-u ‘this century’). However, when a noun as first term of a construct is modified by a demonstrative pronoun, that pronoun follows the entire

For further discussion of demonstrative pronouns, see Chapter 13.
**iDaafa structure** because of the restriction that prevents the presence of the definite article on the first term of a construct. The pronoun agrees with the first term in gender and number.

في حملة التفتيش هذه  
in this inspection campaign

لمدعم وجهة النظر هذه  
to support this point of view

مرحلة الجمود هذه  
this level of solidity

خلال مرة الانتظار تلك  
during that period of waiting

### 1.4.2 Demonstrative with second term of construct

The second term of a construct or **iDaafa** may be preceded directly by a demonstrative pronoun plus definite article because the second term can be marked for definiteness:

قيمة هذه المخدرات  
the value of these drugs

السnums ذلك العهد  
the sun of that time

تدمير تلك الفيروسات  
the destruction of those viruses

### 1.5 Complex or multi-noun construct

A construct phrase may consist of more than two nouns related to each other through the use of the genitive case. When this happens, the second and all subsequent nouns are in the genitive case and only the last noun in the entire construct phrase is marked for either definiteness or indefiniteness. Thus, the medial nouns, the ones which are neither first nor last, are all in the genitive, and none of them have nunation or the definite article. That is, the medial nouns combine certain features of being the first term of an **iDaafa** (no definite article or nunation) with one feature of being the second term of an **iDaafa** (marked for genitive case).

#### 1.5.1 Construct with three nouns

تعيين وزير الداخلية  
the appointment of the minister of interior

جميع أفراد الأسرة  
all the members of the family
1.5.2 Construct with four nouns

احتفالٌ زرع شرة أرز

iḥtifaal-u zar-i shajarat-i 'arz-in

celebration of the planting of a cedar tree

بمناسبة ذكرى استقلال بلاده

bi-munaasabat-i dhikraa stiqalaal-i biilaad-i-hi

on the occasion of the commemoration of his country’s independence

لمعاجلة مشكلة إدمان المخدرات

li-mu’aaalajat-i mishkilat-i ‘idmaan-i l-mukhaddiraat-i

for handling the problem of drug addiction

تحت سماء جنوب فرنسا

taHat-a samaa’-i januub-i faransaa

under the skies of southern (‘the south of’) France

في دول جنوب شرق آسيا

fii duwal-i januub-i sharq-i ‘aasiyaa

in the countries of Southeast Asia

1.5.3 Construct with five nouns

تطبيق جميع قرارات مجلس الأمن

taTbiiq-u jamii’-i qaraaraat-i majlis-i l-‘amn-i

the application of all of the resolutions of the Security Council

سرقة جواز سفر أحد اللاعبين

sargat-u jawaaz-i safar-i ‘aHad-i l-‘a‘ib-itina

the theft of the passport of one of the athletes

وزراء نفط دول مجلس التعاون

wuzaraa’-u nifT-i duwal-i majlis-i l-ta‘aawun-i

the oil ministers of the states of the [Gulf] Cooperation Council
1.6 Joint annexation

Traditional Arabic style requires that the first term of the ‘iDaafa or annexation structure be restricted to one item. It cannot be two or more items joined with wa-‘and.’ If more than one noun is to be included in the expression then they follow the ‘iDaafa and refer back to it by means of a resumptive pronoun suffix.

وَيَرُى فِي الْصَّفْ الثَّانِي مَرَافِقَ الْوَفَدِ وَمَعَاوِنَٰهُ.
wa-yuraa fi l-Saff-i l-thaanii muraafiq-uu l-wafii wa-mu‘aawin-uu-hu.

Seen in the second row are the companions and assistants of the delegation (‘the companions of the delegation and its assistants’).

بالنسبة إلى أساتذة التاريخ وطلابه
bi-l-nisbat-i ‘ilaa ‘asaatidhat-i l-taariix-i wa-Tullaab-i-hi

in relation to the professors and students of history (‘the professors of history and its students’)

وسط حماسة أعضاء المؤتمر وعُتاقهم
wasT-a Hamaasat-i ‘a‘Daay-i l-mu‘tamari wa-hutaafaat-i-him

amidst the enthusiasm and cheers of the members of the conference (‘the enthusiasm of the conference members and their cheers’)

يضم أبرز الفنانين وأعظمهم.
ya-Dumm-u ‘abraz-a l-fannaan-iina wa-‘a‘Zam-a-hum.

It brings together the most prominent and greatest artists (‘most prominent artists and the greatest of them’).

This rule is widely observed. However, it is also regularly broken, and “joint annexation is rapidly gaining ground” (Beeston 1970, 48), as the following examples show:

مساجد وقصور المدينة
masaajid-u wa-quSuur-u l-madiinat-i

the mosques and castles of the city

في بحيرات وأنهار إفريقيا
fi l-buhayraat-i wa-‘anhaar-i 3ifriiqiyaa

in the lakes and rivers of Africa

نمو وتطور اللغة العربية
numuww-u wa-taTawwur-u l-‘arabiyyat-i

the growth and development of the Arabic language

احترام قيم وعادات الحضارات الأخرى
iHtiraam-u qiym-i wa-‘adaat-i l-HaDaaraat-i l-fatimah

respecting the values and customs of other cultures
1.7 Special cases of constructs

1.7.1 The use of 'adam and 'aada

Two verbal nouns, 'adam 'lack of’ and 'aada ‘repetition, resumption’ are frequently used in lexicalizing functions, as the first term of 'iDaafa\textsuperscript{s} to create compound lexical items.\textsuperscript{9}

1.7.1.1 'adam + NOUN: The noun 'adam is a privative term that expresses negative concepts or “lack of”: it is used with verbal nouns to create compound Arabic expressions conveying concepts expressed in English by prefixes such as “non-,” “in-,” or “dis-,” or to express what would be a negative infinitive.

- impermissibility: 'adam-u jawaaz-in
- nonexistence: 'adam-u wujuud-in
- instability: 'adam-u stiqraar-in
- insincerity: 'adam-u jiddiyyat-in
- discomfort: 'adam-u rtiyaaH-in
- displeasure: 'adam-u riDaa-in

Examples:

من المهم عدم تقديم الكثير من التنازلات.  
min-a l-muhimm-i 'adam-u taqdiim-i l-kathiir-i min-a l-tanaazulaat-i.

It is important not to offer too many concessions.

\textsuperscript{9} See also Chapter 37, section 2.2.5 in this book and Holes 1995, 266–67.
1.7.1.2 ‘i’aada + NOUN ‘RE-‘: The noun ‘i’aada used as the first term of a construct with a verbal noun, expresses concepts of repetition or renewal.⁠¹⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘i’aada tawiijn</td>
<td>rebuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘i’aada farz-i l-ma’aSaat-i</td>
<td>re-sorting the votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘i’aada ta’yiin-i l-waazıir-i</td>
<td>re-appointment of the minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.7.2 Official titles as constructs

Many official titles of dignitaries and royalty consist of genitive constructs, for example:

- His Highness the Prince: sumuww-u l-amiiir-i
- His Highness the Crown Prince: sumuww-u waliy-i l-‘ahd-i
- His Majesty the King: jalaalat-u l-ma далек-i
- His Majesty the Sultan: jalaalat-u l-SulTaan-i
- His Royal Highness: SaaHib-u l-sumuww-i l-malikiyy-i
- His Eminence: SaaHib-u l-samaaHat-i
- His Excellency the Minister: ma’aalii l-waaziir-i

1.7.3 Use of nafs ‘same’ as first term

A frequent genitive construct is the use of the noun nafs ‘self’ or ‘same’ as the first term in order to express the concept of “the same ______.”¹¹

- It mentioned the same thing.  
  dhakarat nafs-a l-shay‘-i.  
  fi nafs-i l-waqt-i

---

¹⁰ The noun ‘i’aada is a verbal noun from the Form IV verb ‘a’aad-a /yu‘fiid-u ‘to renew, repeat, restore, re-do.’
¹¹ See also section 2.3.
They all work the same way.

1.7.4 Coalescence of the construct

Certain frequently used constructs have come to function as solid units and are even occasionally written together as one word. This fusing of terms is rare in Arabic, but does happen occasionally:

1.7.4.1 FIXED EXPRESSIONS:

- capital (financial resources): رأس المال، رأس المال
- administrative officer: قائمقام، قائمقام

1.7.4.2 THREE TO NINE HUNDRED: Although optionally written as one word, the first term still inflects for case. For example:

- five hundred: خمسُ مئة، خمسُ مئة
- nine hundred: تسعة مئة، تسعة مئة

1.8 Avoiding the construct phrase or 'iDaafa

Sometimes an 'iDaafa is avoided by means of linking two nouns with a preposition, usually min or li-. This happens especially if the first noun is modified by an adjective or a phrase that would otherwise have to be placed after the 'iDaafa construction. It is a stylistic option.
The new issue of the magazine appeared. They attended a horse race (‘a race of horses’).

1.9 Adjectives in construct phrases
Adjectives or participles functioning as adjectives may occur in construct phrases either as the first or second term, in the following types of constructions.

1.9.1 Modifier as first term of construct
Sometimes an adjective or a participle with adjectival meaning will appear as the first term of a construct phrase instead of following the noun as a modifier. In these phrases the adjective remains in the masculine gender, but it may be singular or plural. These expressions are often set phrases and tend to be used with particular adjectives, as follows.

في قديم الزمان

لشرقي المتوسط

fii qadiim-i l-zamaan-i
in olden times

li-sharqiyy-i l-muTawassit-i
to the eastern Mediterranean

مع كبار المسؤولين

لمجرد إثبات

ma‘a kibaar-i l-mas‘uul-iina
with the senior officials

li-mujarrad-i ‘ithbaat-in
for mere confirmation

في مختلف المدن

في شتى الأذواق

fii muxtaliﬁf-i l-mudun-i
in various cities

li-i‘irDaaf-i muxtaliﬁf-i l-‘adhwaaq-i
in order to please various tastes

في شتى مجالات الاقتصاد

في شتى الأنشطة

fii shattaa majaalaat-i l-iqtiSaad-i
in diverse fields of economics

fii shattaa l-‘anshiTat-i
in various activities

1.9.2 The adjective or “false” ‘iDaafa (‘iDaafa ghayr Haqiqiyya)
The “false” or “unreal” ‘iDaafa, also called the “adjective” ‘iDaafa, is a special case of the construct phrase where an adjective serves as the first term and acts as a modifier of a noun. Not only can an adjective serve as the first item in this structure, but, contrary to the general rules for the ‘iDaafa structure, this adjective may take the definite article if the phrase modifies a definite noun. Since this type of construct violates the rule against the first term of a construct phrase taking a definite article, it is termed “unreal” or “false.”

This construction is a way of expressing a quality of a particular component of an item, often equivalent to hyphenated expressions in English such as: long-term,
hard-nosed, or cold-blooded. It is generally used to express qualities of “inalienable possession,” that is, qualities that are “naturally attributable” to their owners.\(^{12}\)

The adjective 'iDaafa is quite frequent in MSA because it is a construction that can be used to express recently coined, complex modifying terms such as “multilateral,” or “long-range.”

In this construction, the adjective agrees with the noun it modifies in case, number, and gender. The second term of the adjective 'iDaafa is a definite noun in the genitive case and refers to a particular property of the modified noun.

1.9.2.1 ADJECTIVE 'iDaafa AS NOUN MODIFIER:

(1) Modifying a definite noun: When modifying a definite noun, the first term of the adjective 'iDaafa agrees with the noun in gender, number, and case, and it also has the definite article:

الرجل المثقف الطويل القامة
al-rajul-u l-muthaqaf-u l-Tawīl-u l-qāmat-i
the cultured, tall (‘tall of height’) man

وقد أُرسِلَت الألَّة الأمريكية الصناع من العاصمة
wa-qad 'ursil-at-i l-aalat-u l-‘amrikiyyat-u l-San‘-i min-a l-‘aaSimat-i.
The American-made instrument was sent from the capital.

في هذه القضية المتعددة الجوانب
fī haaddhihi l-qadīyyat-i l-mutta‘addidat-i l-jawaanib-i
in this multi-sided issue

(2) Modifying an indefinite noun: When modifying an indefinite noun, the first term of the adjective 'iDaafa does not have the definite article. However, neither does it have nunation, because this is prevented by its being the first term of an 'iDaafa. It agrees with the noun it modifies in gender, number, and case:

هو أول مسؤول أمريكي رفيع المستوى يزور البحرين.
He is the first high-level American official to visit Bahrain.\(^{13}\)

تسمى أشجاراً دائمة الخضرة.
tu-samma‘ ‘ashjaar-an daa‘imat-a l-xadrat-i.
They are called evergreen trees.

---

\(^{12}\) Killean 1970, 11. Killean’s article “The false construct in Modern Literary Arabic” is one of the few that deal with the syntactic and semantic analysis of this structure from the point of view of generative syntax.

\(^{13}\) Although the English equivalent of this sentence uses the definite article to refer to the “American official,” the Arabic structure using the term ‘awwal ‘first’ is followed by an indefinite noun.
1.9.2.2 ADJECTIVE ‘iDaafa as predicate of equational sentence: When serving as the predicate of an equational sentence, the first term of the adjective ‘iDaafa does not have the definite article, in keeping with the rules for predicate adjectives. It agrees with the noun it refers to in gender, number, and case.

اللغة المصرية واسعة الانتشار.

The Egyptian dialect is widespread.

الأرض مستديرة الشكل.

The earth is circular in shape.

1.9.3 The descriptive construct with ghayr plus adjective

In this unique construction, an adjective serves as the second term of a construct phrase. The noun ghayr ‘non-; un-, in-, other than’ is used as the first term of the construct in order to express negative or privative concepts denoting absence of a quality or attribute. As the first term of a construct, ghayr carries the same case as the noun it modifies. As a noun which is the first term of an ‘iDaafa, it cannot have the definite article. The second term of the ‘iDaafa construction is an adjective or participle in the genitive case which agrees with the noun being modified in gender, number, and definiteness. Here are some examples:

unsuitable ghayr-u munaasib-in
indirect ghayr-u mubaashir-in
untrue ghayr-u SaHiiH-in
insufficient ghayr-u kaaf-in
non-Arab ghayr-u ‘arabiyy-in
undesirable ghayr-u marghuub-in fii-hi

 construção não esperada ghayr-u mutawaqqa-at-in

unexpected difficulties

بمثاليات غير شريفة bi-‘asaaliib-a ghayr-i sharifat-in

in unscrupulous (‘non-noble’) ways
Hasab-’arqaam-in ghayr-i rasmiyat-in
according to unofficial figures

2 Nouns in apposition (badal بدل)

Nouns or noun phrases are said to be in apposition with one another when they are juxtaposed and both refer to the same entity, but in different ways. Phrases such as “my cat, Blondie,” “Queen Victoria,” “President Bush,” or “King Hussein” consist of nouns in apposition. As a general rule, the nouns agree in case, number, gender, and definiteness, but one subset of appositional specifiers requires the accusative case.

2.1 Straight apposition

In straight apposition, the noun in apposition takes the same case as the noun with which it is in apposition.

2.1.1 Names and titles

The title (normally with the definite article) is followed directly by the name of the person:

King Fahd   al-malik-u fahd-un
The Emperor Constantine al-imbiraaTuur qustTanTiiun
The Prophet Muhammad al-nabiyy-u muHammad-un
Queen Nur   al-malikat-u nuur-u
Father Joseph al-‘ab-u yuuusuf-u
Professor Faris al-‘ustaadh-u faaris-un
Colonel Qadhdhaafi al-‘aqiid-u l-qadhdhaafiyy-u

2.1.2 Reduced relative clauses

In this form of apposition, the specifying noun is equivalent to a relative noun phrase:

14 The term badal (literally, ‘substitution; exchange’) is used in traditional Arabic grammar to describe more than the noun-noun appositional relationship. It also covers the use of the demonstrative pronoun in demonstrative phrases, and modifying adjectives. In this section of the reference grammar, however, the discussion of badal is restricted to appositional structures that include nouns and personal pronouns. For a detailed discussion of apposition see Wright 1967, II: 272ff. Cachia (1973) gives the terms tab‘ or tab‘yyu for ‘apposition,’ and Hasan (1987) refers to nouns in apposition as tawaabi‘ (literally: ‘followers’).
between two deputies of the national party

among deputies [who are] members of the national party

It will demand the member states sever these relations.

2.1.3 Apposition for specification

In more general terms, the noun or nouns in apposition further specify the head noun:

from the mother company min-a l-sharikat-i l-umm-i من الشركة الأم

in the sister [country] Jordan fii l-urduunn-i l-shaqiq-i في الأردن الشقيق صديقتي أميرة

my friend, Amira Sadiiqat-ii ʿamirat-u صديقة أميرة

the creator god al-rabb-u l-xaaliq-u الرب الخالق

She carried her brother Samir. Hamal-at ʿax-aa-haa samiir-an. حملت أخاه سميرًا

today, Sunday al-yawm-a l-ʿaHad-a اليوم الأحد

the guest minister al-waziir-u l-Dayf-u الوزير الضيف

in the Jordanian capital, Amman fii l- aaSimat-i l-urduunniyaat-i ʿammaan-a في العاصمة الأردنية عمان معرض الفنانين الشباب maʿraD-u l-fannaan-iina l-shabaab-i

the exhibit of young artists ('artists youths')

2.2 Accusative Apposition

A noun in apposition to a pronoun is put into the accusative case because it specifies that noun in a particular way and is considered a form of tamyiiz or accusative of specification.

When an independent pronoun (often the first person plural) is further specified, the specifying noun is in the accusative case as the object of an understood verb such as ʿaʿnii ʿI mean,' or ʿaxuSS-u 'I specify.'

we, the Arabs naHnu l-ʿarab-a نحن العرب

we, the people of the Gulf naHnu l-xaliijiyy-iina نحن الخليجيين

we, the Americans naHnu l-ʿamriikiyy-iina نحن الأمريكيين
2.3 Appositive specification of quantity or identity

Arabic nouns may be further specified by other nouns in terms of quantity or identity. In most of these cases, the specifying noun agrees in case with the head noun and carries a personal pronoun suffix referring back to the head noun. The pronoun agrees with the head noun in number and gender. Quantity nouns such as *kull*, *jamii*, *ba*D, and fractions, as well as identity nouns such as *nafs* ‘same; self’ are used in these expressions.  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ضحك الطلاب جميعهم} & \quad \text{الشعب كله} \\
\text{DaHik-a l-Tullaab-u jamii-u-hum} & \quad \text{al-sha'}b-u kull-u-hu} \\
\text{all the students laughed} & \quad \text{all the people} \\
(\text{‘the students, all of them’}) & \quad (\text{‘the people, all of them’}) \\
\text{على دول المنطقة كلها} & \quad \text{في الوقت نفسه} \\
\text{‘alaa duwal-i l-minTaqt-i kull-i-haa} & \quad \text{fii l-waqt-i nafs-i-hi} \\
\text{on all the states of the region} & \quad \text{at the same time} \\
(\text{‘the states of the region, all of them’}) & \\
\text{بالأسلوب نفسه} & \quad \text{بالسرعة نفسها} \\
\text{bi-l-'usluub-i nafs-i-hi} & \quad \text{bi-l-sur‘at-i nafs-i-haa} \\
\text{in the same way} & \quad \text{at the same speed} \\
\text{بين العرب أنفسهم كنيسيين ويمنيين} & \\
\text{bayn-a l-arab-i 'anfus-i-him ka-qaysiyy-iina wa-yamaniyy-iina} & \text{among the Arabs themselves like the Qays and the Yamanis} \\
\end{align*}
\]

2.3.1 Quantifier noun *idda* (عدة)

The noun *idda* ‘several’ is often used in apposition with a head noun. It does not carry a pronoun suffix. It agrees with the noun in case.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{in several cities} & \quad \text{fii mudun-in 'iddat-in} \\
\text{in several regions} & \quad \text{fii manaaTiq-a 'iddat-in} \\
\text{in several languages} & \quad \text{bi-lughaat-in 'iddat-in} \\
\text{several years ago} & \quad \text{mundhu sanawaat-in 'iddat-in} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\text{وهناك سيدات عدة برزن في هذا المجال.} \\
\text{wa-hunaaka sayyidaat-un 'iddat-un baraz-na fii haadhaa l-majaal-i.} \\
\text{There are several women who have become eminent in this field.}
\]

\[\text{15 This is an alternative structure to using the quantifying nouns as the first term of an 'iDaafa, e.g.,} \]
\[\text{kull-u l-wuzaraa-'i 'all the ministers' versus al-wuzaraa-u kull-u-hum, or nafs-u l-fikrat-i 'the same idea' versus al-fikrat-u nafs-u-haa.}\]
2.4 Relative pronoun *maa* in apposition

The indefinite relative pronoun *maa* can be used in apposition with a noun to indicate ‘a certain,’ or ‘some.’

- *in a certain place*: *fī mākān-in maa*  
  - في مكان ما
- *some day*: *yawm-an maa*  
  - يوماً ما
- *somewhat; to a certain extent*: *naw’t-an maa*  
  - نوعاً ما

*لماذا تحب كاتباً ما؟*  
*li-maadhāa tu-Hīb-u *kaatib-an maa*?  
*بعد فتح بلد ما*  
*ba’d-a fatḥ-i *balad-in maa*?

*Why do you like a certain writer?*  
*after conquering a certain country*
Noun specifiers and quantifiers

Certain Arabic nouns act primarily as specifiers or determiners for other nouns. They may be used as first terms of construct phrases, in apposition with nouns, with pronouns, or independently. Many of these nouns express quantities; some express other kinds of specification.

Here are five major classes of specifiers and quantifiers in MSA.

1 Expressions of totality

1.1 *kull* كل ‘all; every; the whole’

1.1.1 “Each, every”
When used as the first term of a construct phrase with a singular, indefinite noun, *kull* has the meaning of ‘each’ or ‘every.’¹

- everything *kull-u shay’in* كل شيء
- every one *kull-u waaHid-in* كل واحد
- every day *kull-a yawm-in* كل يوم

- for every user *li-kull-i mustaxdim-in* لكل مستخدم
- every riyal of our income *kull-u riyaal-in min daxl-i-naa* كل ريال من دخلنا
- all possible aid *kull-u l-musaa’adat-i l-mumkinat-i* كل المساعدة الممكنة
- all of this/that *kull-u haadhaa* كل هذا

1.1.2 “all, the whole”
When used with a definite singular noun or a pronoun, *kull* has the meaning of ‘all of,’ ‘the whole,’ or ‘all.’

- all of this/that *kull-u haadhaa* كل هذا

¹ LeTourneau (1995, 30) refers to constructs with quantifiers as the first term as a “quantified construct state.”
1.1.3 “all”

When used with a definite plural noun, kull means ‘all.’

in all circumstances  
with all the problems of the Middle East

1.1.4 kull-un min َكل من ‘each; both; every one of’

The noun kull may be used as an indefinite noun with nunation, followed by the preposition min ‘of’ to convey the meaning of totality. When there are only two items, the phrase kull min functions as the equivalent of ‘both.’

in both Washington and Amman, alternately

In each installment is a new story.

1.1.5 kull-un َكل ‘everyone’

The noun kull may be used alone to express the idea of ‘everyone.’ It may occur with or without the definite article. Agreement is masculine singular.

Everyone wants to take pictures there.

1.2 jamiiَ جميع ‘all’

The word jamiiَ is used with a following genitive noun (usually plural) to mean ‘all,’ or ‘the totality of.’

the application of all the decisions of the security council

it rivaled all aspects of knowledge to all their brothers
1.3 kilaa~kilay/ kiltaa~kiltay ‘both; both of (m. & f.)’
The specialized dual quantifiers kilaa/kilay (m.) and kiltaa/kiltay (f.) are used to express the idea of ‘both.’ They are followed by a definite dual noun in the genitive or by a dual pronoun suffix. These two words inflect as does the dual suffix when it is the first term of a construct, but they do not inflect for case when followed by a noun; only when followed by a pronoun.

1.3.1 Masculine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both of the delegations</th>
<th>kilaa l-wafd-ayni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In both worlds</td>
<td>fii kilaa l-‘aalam-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With both of them (m.)</td>
<td>ma‘-a kilay-himaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2 Feminine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During both of the periods</th>
<th>fii kiltaa l-fatrat-ayni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In both cases</td>
<td>fii kiltaa l-Haalat-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With both his hands</td>
<td>bi-kiltaa yad-ay-hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both of them (f.) are affixes.</td>
<td>kiltaa-humaa zaa‘idat-aani.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By both of them (f.)</td>
<td>bi-kiltay-himaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 kaaffa ‘totality; all’
The noun kaaffa is used as the first term of a construct phrase to express totality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaaffa اتجاهاتها</th>
<th>Kaaffat-u ttijaahaat-i-haa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaaffat-u shu‘uun-i l-wizaarat-i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of its inclinations</td>
<td>All the affairs of the ministry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He directed congratulations to all the members of the delegation.

2 Expressions of limited number, non-specific number, or partiality
There are several ways to express partial inclusion in Arabic.
2.1 *ba‘D* بعض ‘*some,* ‘*some of*

The masculine singular noun *ba‘D* is followed by a singular or plural noun in the genitive or by a pronoun suffix. It may also be used independently.

### 2.1.1 As first term of a construct

The quantifier *ba‘D* is usually followed by a definite noun in the genitive case. Note that adjectives that follow the construct normally agree in gender and number with the second term, the noun being quantified.

- بعض الجمعيات الخيرية
- *ba‘D*-u l-jam‘iyyat-i l-xayriyyat-i
- some of the charitable associations
- إعادة إخراج بعض الأفلام
- *‘i‘aadat-u ‘ixraaj-i ba‘D-i l-‘aflaam-i*
- the re-release of some films

نجحوا بعض الشيء.
*najaH-uu ba‘D-a l-shay‘-i.*
They succeeded somewhat.

### 2.1.2 With pronoun suffix

The noun *ba‘D* may also take a pronoun suffix.

- يرى بعضهم في ذلك خطأ.
- *ya-raa ba‘D-u-hum fii dhaalika xaTa-an.*
- Some of them see in that a mistake.

### 2.1.3 Reciprocal: Double use of *ba‘D*

The concept of “each other” or “together” may be expressed with the use of *ba‘D* as a reciprocal pronoun. The first *ba‘D* has a pronoun suffix; the second has either the definite article or nunation.

- هم يسألون بعضهم البعض.
- They are asking each other.
- تعيش مع بعضها البعض.
- *ta‘iish-u ma‘-a ba‘D-i-haa l-ba‘D-u.*
- They live all together.

وقوف اللاعبين بعضهم فوق البعض.
*wuquuf-u l-laa‘-ib-iina ba‘D-u-hum fawq-a l-ba‘D-i*
the acrobats standing on top of each other

وعلى المواطنين أن يعرفوا بعضهم ببعض معرفة جيدة.
It is necessary for citizens to know each other well.

أعتقد أنهما منفصلان كثيرا عن بعضهما بعضا.
I think that they (two) are very separate from each other.
2.2 *biD* بضع and *biD Ist* ‘a few,’ ‘several’
This term is used in the masculine with feminine nouns and in the feminine
with masculine nouns, reflecting gender polarity similar to that of the numeral
system. The following noun is in the genitive plural. The nouns specified by *biD*
and *biD Ist* are often numerals or terms of measurement:

### 2.2.1 With masculine noun

يتطلب بضعة أسابيع.

*ya-taTallab-u *biD*at-a *‘asaabii*-a.*

It requires several weeks.

بعد بضعة أيام.

*ba’d-a *biD*at-i *‘ayyaam-in*

after a few days

### 2.2.2 With feminine noun

أكثر من بضع مئات الأمثلة.

*‘akthar-u min *biD*Ist-i *l-‘amthilat-i*

more than several hundred examples

بعد بضع دقائق.

*ba’d-a *biD*Ist-i *daqaa’ iq-a*

in a few minutes

يعلق على بضع مئات الأصوات.

*yuTalliq-u *‘ala l-‘amthilat-i ba ‘d-a *biD*Ist-i thawaan-in*

It hangs on several hundred votes.

أكثر من بضع ثوان.

*‘akthar-u min *biD*Ist-i thawaan-in*

more than a few seconds

### 2.3 *‘idda* عدّة ‘several’
This noun is used in two ways: either as the first part of a construct phrase or as a
noun in apposition with the noun it specifies.

#### 2.3.1 As first term of construct

امتهن أهل المدينة عدة مهن.

*imtahan-a *‘ahl-u l-madiinat-i *‘iddat-a mihan-in.*

The people of the city practiced several trades.

 جاء هؤلاء المرّيون من عدة دول عربية.

*jaa’-a haaTulaa’ i l-murabb-uuna min *‘iddat-i duwal-in ‘arabiyyat-in.*

These educators came from several Arab countries.

#### 2.3.2 In apposition with a noun

When *‘idda* is in apposition with a noun, it carries the same case as the noun.

في مدن عدة.

*fii mudun-in *‘iddat-in*

in various cities

في مناطق عدة.

*fii manaat-a *‘iddat-in*

in several regions
There are several stories about what happened.

2.4 shattaa ‘various, diverse; all kinds of’
This word, the plural of shatiit ‘scattered; dispersed,’ is used as the first term of an ʿiDaafa.

في شتى أنحاء الأرض
fii shattaa ʿanHaa-i l-ʿarD-i
in various parts of the earth

2.5 muxtalif ‘various; several’
This active participle of Form VIII (literally ‘differing’) is often used as the first term of an ʿiDaafa to mean ‘various’ or ‘different.’

من مختلف أنحاء الولاية
min muxtalif-i ʿanHaa-i l-wilaayat-i
from various parts of the state

2.6 ‘adad-un min ‘a number of’
This is a widely used expression to denote a non-specific but significant number. Unlike other quantifiers, it is an indefinite noun followed by a preposition, so the noun that follows is the object of the preposition min ‘of.’

دعوة عدد من الأساتذة واليبرين العرب
daʿwat-u ʿadad-in min-a l-ʿasaatidhat-i wa-l-murabbiina l-ʿarab-i
the invitation of a number of Arab professors and educators.

حضر الاجتماع عدد من الباحثين والمفكرين.
HaDar-a l-ijtimaa-ʿa ʿadad-un min-a l-baaHithiina wa-l-mufakkiriina.
A number of researchers and intellectuals attended the conference.

2.7 kathiir-un min ‘many’
To indicate a large but indefinite number, these phrases are used.

يتذكر كثير من الناس.
ya-tadhakkar-u kathiir-un min-a l-naas-i.
Many (of the’) people remember.

أسمانا الكثير من الفرص والكثير من التحديات.
ʿamaam-a-naa l-kathiir-u min-a l-furaS-i wa-l-kathiir-u min-a l-taHaddiyaat-i.
Before us are many opportunities and many challenges.
3 Expressions of “more,” “most,” and “majority”

Arabic uses several expressions to convey concepts of “more,” “most of,” or “the majority of.”

3.1 “More”

When discussing the concept of “more,” there are two sides to it: a quality can be greater in intensity, which is expressed by the comparative (or “elative”) form of the adjective (e.g., more important, more famous); this is discussed in Chapter 10, sections 4.2.1–4.2.3.

However, there is also another use of “more” to mean “more of something,” “a greater quantity/amount of something” where the “more” expression is followed by a noun or noun phrase. In contemporary Arabic the phrase al-maziid min (literally ‘the increase of’) is often used to express this concept of “more of.”

لمزيد من الأراضي الزراعية
li-l-maziid-i min-a l-‘araadi l-ziraa’iyyat-i
for more agricultural lands

لتحقيق المزيد من الإنجازات في جميع القطاعات
li-taHqiq-i l-maziid-i min-a l-‘injaaazat-i fii jamii’i l-qitaa’aat-i
to realize more production in all sectors

تعهده بتقديم المزيد من الأموال للبنوك.
ta‘ahhad-at bi-taqdiim-i l-maziid-i min-a l-‘amwaal-l fi-l-bunuuki.
It pledged support for more money for banks.

3.2 ‘Most of’: mu‘Zam معظم and ‘akthar أكثر

3.2.1 mu‘Zam

The expression ‘most of’ is often accomplished with the word mu‘Zam as the first term of an ‘iDaafa:

معظم السفارات العربية
mu‘Zam-u l-sifaaraat-i ‘arabiyyat-i
most of the Arab embassies

HaSal-a ‘ala mu‘Zam-i l-maqaa‘id-i.
It obtained most of the seats.

في معظم القسم الثاني من الكتاب
fii mu‘Zam-i l-qism-i l-thaanii min-a l-kitaab-i
in most of the second part of the book

3.2.2 ‘akthar أكثر ‘more; most’

The elative adjective ‘akthar ‘more; most’ may also be used to express ‘most’ as first term of an ‘iDaafa. The following noun is definite, may be singular or plural, and is in the genitive case.
3.3 Expression of “majority”
The Arabic superlative adjective ًaghlab, the derived noun ًaghlabiyya, or the active participle ghaalib are all used to express the concept of “majority.”

ًaghlab-u-hum lays-a mu’arrix-an.
The majority of them are not historians.

4 Scope of quantifier agreement
The scope of agreement or concord refers to agreement patterns that apply to “quantified construct states.” Agreement or concord is normally shown through adjectives and/or verbs.

Patterns of agreement with quantified construct states can vary in MSA and the phenomenon has been studied by both Parkinson and LeTourneau. As LeTourneau remarks (1995, 30), “a verb may agree in number and gender with either the quantifier (invariantly masculine singular) or with its complement.”

Parkinson’s findings (as paraphrased by LeTourneau 1995, 31) reveal that “certain grammatical features on the second term in the QCS [quantified construct state] license only one agreement option. Thus, if the second term to kull is either an indefinite feminine singular or a definite plural, the verb must agree with the second term (logical agreement, in traditional terms); if ba‘D has a pronominal suffix and the verb follows, agreement with the quantifier (grammatical agreement) is mandatory (Parkinson 1975, 66).”

4.1 Agreement with quantifier
In conformity with the above-stated rule, the agreement is with the quantifier when it has a pronoun suffix (such as ba‘D or ًaghlab).

ًaghlab-u-hum lays-a mu’arrix-an.
The majority of them are not historians (‘is not a historian’).

4.2 Agreement with specified noun
The agreement may be with the noun that is the second term of the ًiDaafa. This occurs especially with adjectives that immediately follow the noun.

2 LeTourneau, 1995, 30. In this article, “Internal and external agreement in quantified construct states,” LeTourneau provides detailed analysis on this topic. See also Parkinson 1975 on the agreement of ba‘D and kull.
it concerns every Arab residing in the country

They are carrying all the requested documents.

All probabilities are possible.

Sometimes the agreement is ambiguous, as in the following example.

Every party tries to obtain the best conditions.

In the following sentences using *baʿD*, the adjective following the plural noun is plural, but the verb is third person masculine singular, in agreement with the quantifier.

In practice, the verb may optionally agree with the second term of the construct (*nuqqaad*):

some American critics believe (m. pl.) that . . .

some American critics believe (m. pl.) that . . .

To express the concept of “the same” Arabic uses the word *nafs* (pl. *'anfus* ~ *nufuus*), either as the first term of an *'iDafa*, or in apposition with the modified

---

3 As my colleague Amin Bonnah states, the usage here depends on “a mix of grammar, style, logic, and meaning” (personal communication).
noun. Note that this word has several meanings: ‘self,’ ‘same,’ ‘spirit~soul,’ and ‘breath.’ See also its use as an appositive specifier in chapter 8, section 2.3.

5.1.1.1 IN ‘iDaafa

They all work the same way.

5.1.1.2 IN APPOSITION

He repeats the same expression.

5.1.2 dhaatiyy ‘self

In certain expressions the term dhaatiyy is used to delineate the concept of self, e.g.,

النقد الذاتي
al-naqd-u l-dhaatiyy-u

self-criticism

5.2 Expression of ‘any; whichever’ ‘ayy/ ‘ayya

The noun ‘ayy is used as the first term of an ‘iDaafa to express the concept of “any” or “whichever.” If the noun following ‘ayy is feminine, ‘ayy may shift to ‘ayya, but this does not always happen. The noun following ‘ayy is indefinite and in the genitive case. It is normally singular, but is sometimes plural.

5.2.1 Masculine form of ‘ayy + noun

5.2.1.1 ‘ayy + MASCULINE SINGULAR NOUN

they oppose any intervention

I have the ability to do anything.

like any other people

from almost any place

4 For more on the pronoun dhaat and its usage, see Chapter 12, section 4.
5.2.1.2 'ayy + FEMININE SINGULAR NOUN:

لأيّة دولة
li-‘ayy-i dawlat-in
for any state

لأيّة محاولة
li-‘ayy-i muHaawalat-in
for any attempt

في حالة أيّة شكوى
fii Haalat-i ‘ayy-i shakwa
in case of any complaint

أسأل عن معنى أيّة كلمة.
is’al’an ma’naa ‘ayy-i kalimat-in.

für any state for any attempt

5.2.2 Feminine ‘ayya + noun

When the noun being specified is feminine, the feminine form, ‘ayya أيّة may be used:

في أيّة قائمة لأكابر علماء الدنيا
fii ‘ayyat-i qaa’imat-in li-‘akaabir-i ‘ulamaa’i l-dunyaa
on any list of the greatest scholars in the world

لن يجدوا أيّة مشاكل.
lan ya-jid-uu ‘ayyat-a mashaakil-a
They will not find any problems.

5.2.3 ‘ayy as independent noun

The noun ‘ayy may be used independently to mean ‘anything,’ ‘whatever,’ or ‘anyone.’ When used with a dual noun, it indicates ‘either one of’; it is normally indefinite and takes nunation.

أيّة من المرشحين
‘ayy-un min-a l-murashshaH-ayni
either one of the (two) candidates

5.2.3.1 ‘ayy WITH NEGATIVE AS ‘NONE’:

With a negative verb, ‘ayy carries the sense of ‘none’:

لم يستطع أيّة منها.
lam ya-staTt ‘ayy-un min-haa.
None of them could.
Adjectives: function and form

This chapter is in two parts. The first part deals with function: adjectives in context and issues such as agreement, word order, and inflection, including inflection for comparative and superlative. The second part focuses on the derivational morphology or word structure of adjectives.

Part one: Function

1 Attributive adjectives

An attributive adjective is part of a noun phrase and follows the noun directly, agreeing with it in gender, number, case, and definiteness:

- **البحر الأحمر** (al-baHr-u l-‘aHmar-u) — the Red Sea
- **الرياضيون العرب** (al-riyaaDiyy-uuna l-‘arab-u) — Arab athletes
- **فوز سهل** (fawz-un sahl-un) — an easy win

1.1 Attributive adjective modifying noun + pronoun suffix

A noun with a pronoun suffix is considered definite; therefore, an adjective that modifies that noun carries the definite article, in addition to agreeing in gender, case, and number with the noun:

- **في بيئاتها الطبيعية** (fii bii’at-i-haa l-Tabii‘iyyat-i) — in their natural environments
- **هيويته الثقافية** (huwiyyat-u-hu l-thaqaafiyyat-u) — its cultural identity
2 Predicate adjectives

A predicate adjective is used in an equational (verbless) sentence to provide information about the subject of the sentence, thus completing the clause. In an Arabic equational sentence, there is usually no overt copula, or present tense form of the verb “to be,” linking the subject and predicate. When acting as a predicate, the adjective agrees with the noun or pronoun subject in gender and number. It is usually in the nominative case. However, it does not normally take the definite article because it is predicating a quality or attribute to the subject.

العربية

al-HiSaad-u wafiir-un.
The harvest is abundant (‘is an abundant one’).

القائمة طويلة.
al-qaa’imat-u Tawiilat-un.
The list is long (‘is a long one’).

القصة طويلة.
al-qISSat-u Zariifat-un.
The story is charming.

أنا محظوظة.
‘anaa mahHZuuZat-un.
I am fortunate.

الكرز أحمر.
al-karaz-u ‘aHmar-u.
Cherries are red.

هي ذكيّة.
hiya dhakiyyat-un.
She is intelligent.

نحن بعيدون عن ذلك.
naHnu ba’iid-uuna ‘an dhaalika.
We are far from that.

3 Adjectives as substantives

Adjectives may serve as substantives or noun substitutes, just as they sometimes do in English:

حيث القديم يختلط مع الجديد.
Hayth-u l-qadiim-u ya-xtaliT-u ma’-a l-jadiid-i.
Where the old mixes with the new.

نزل الكبار والصغار إلى الشوارع.
nazal-a l-kibaar-u wa-l-Sighaar-u ‘ila l-shawaari’s-i.
The adults and children (‘the big and the little’) descended into the streets.
4 Arabic adjective inflection

Adjectives in Arabic inflect for four morphological categories: gender, number, case, and definiteness. Many of them also inflect for a fifth category: degree (comparative and superlative).

As far as the first four categories are concerned, adjectives mirror the inflectional categories of the nouns that they modify, that is, they agree or are in concord with those nouns. In most cases the agreement or concord is direct or “strict,” meaning that the adjective reflects exactly the categories of the noun.¹

As noted above, Arabic adjectives normally follow the nouns they modify.

4.1 Inflectional categories: gender, number, case, definiteness

Much like nouns, Arabic adjectives have a base form, which is the singular masculine, and an inflected (marked) form for the feminine, usually marked by taa’s marbūTa. They also inflect for dual, and for plural. In the plural, they take broken or sound plural forms, or both.

In terms of case inflection, adjectives fall into the same declensions as nouns, depending on their morphological form (their lexical root and pattern structure).

4.1.1 Masculine singular adjectives

Masculine singular adjectives modify masculine singular nouns.

| طقس غائم | في الوقت المناسب |
| Tags-un ghaa‘im-un | fi l-waqt-l-munaasib-i |
| cloudy weather | at the proper time |

| الاحترام المتبادل | المفتش العام |
| al-iHtiraam-u l-mutabaadal-u | al-mufattish-u l-aamm-u |
| mutual respect | the inspector general |

¹ Adjectives in general are referred to in morphological theory as “targets” rather than “controllers.” That is, they are targets of the agreement requirements of nouns. As Carstairs-McCarthy (1994, 769) states: “Adjectives are gender targets, i.e., they must agree with nouns in gender as well as number and case.”
4.1.2 Masculine dual adjectives
Masculine dual adjectives modify masculine dual nouns.

في مجلدين كبيرين
fî mujallad-ayni kabiir-ayni
in two large volumes

بين البلدين العربيين
bayn a l-balad-ayni l’arabiyy-ayni
between the two Arab countries

4.1.3 Masculine plural adjectives
Masculine plural adjectives modify masculine plural nouns only if the nouns refer to human beings.

المماليك المصريون
al-mamāliik-u l-miSriyy-uuna
the Egyptian Mamelukes

زوّار رسميون
zuwwaar-un rasmiiyy-uuna
official visitors

خبراء نفطيون
xubraraa’-u nifTiyy-uuna
oil experts

من الفنانين اليونانيين
min-a l-fannaan-iina l-yuunaaniyy-iina
from the Greek artists

الأمراء الروس الآخرون
al-’umaraa’-u l-ruus-u l-’aaxar-uuna
the other Russian princes

تسعة أشخاص جدد
tis’at-u ’ashxaas-in judud-in
nine new persons

4.1.4 Feminine singular adjectives
The feminine singular adjective is used to modify feminine singular nouns and also for nonhuman plural nouns. The use of the feminine singular to modify nonhuman plural nouns is referred to as “deflected” agreement rather than “strict” agreement.

Note that when numerals are used for counting over ten, the counted noun is grammatically singular and any agreeing adjective is also singular, although the meaning is plural. For example:

عشرون مهندساً جديداً
’ishruuna muhandis-an jadiid-an
twenty new engineers
4.1.4.1 WITH FEMININE SINGULAR NOUNS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Hikaayat-u l-qadiimat-u</td>
<td>the old story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-marrat-a l-qadimat-a</td>
<td>the next time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.4.2 WITH NONHUMAN PLURAL NOUNS: “DEFLECTED” AGREEMENT

Nonhuman plural nouns require feminine singular agreement. Case and definiteness are in strict agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-umam-u l-muttaHidat-u</td>
<td>the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nataa’ij-u ’awwaliyyat-un</td>
<td>preliminary results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-taqaaliid-u l-masiiHiyat-u</td>
<td>the Christian traditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.5 Feminine dual adjectives

Feminine dual nouns are modified by feminine dual adjectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>safiinat-aani kabiirat-aani</td>
<td>two big ships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-madiinat-aani l-’uxray-aani</td>
<td>the other two cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.6 Feminine plural adjectives

Feminine plural adjectives modify feminine plural nouns only if the nouns refer to human beings:

3 See the article by Belnap and Shabeneh 1992 for discussion of the history and nature of deflected agreement in Arabic.
4.1.7 Non-gendered adjectives
There are a limited number of adjectives in MSA that do not inflect for gender. They remain in the masculine singular base form.4

4.1.4.1 THE ADJECTIVE xaam ‘RAW’:

مالحة الخام
maaddat-un xaam-un
raw material

المواد الخام
al-mawaadd-u l-xaam-u
the raw materials

4.1.4.2 THE ADJECTIVE maHD ‘PURE’ (WITH EXCEPTIONS):5

لغة عربية محض
lughat-un ‘arabiyyat-un maHD-un
pure Arabic language

4.1.4.3 CERTAIN ADJECTIVES THAT APPLY STRICTLY TO FEMALE ANATOMY, SUCH AS “PREGNANT”:

عروس حامل
imra‘at-un Haamil-un
a pregnant woman

4.2 Adjective inflection for comparative and superlative (ism al-tafDil اسم التفضيل)
The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives in Arabic are sometimes referred to together in grammatical descriptions of Arabic as “relative” forms

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4 For an interesting discussion of discrepancies in gender agreement in the Qur’an, see Gaballa 1999.

5 Wehr (1979, 1050) describes the adjective maHD as “invariable for gender and number,” but I found it at least once in the feminine, in Hasan (1987, III:1) in his description of the types of ‘iDaafj as maHDat-un wa-ghayr-u maHDat-in ‘pure and non-pure.’
because they signify a more intense degree of the quality described by the adjective.⁶ The Arabic term ism al-tafDiil signifies that these are terms of preference, preeminence, or preferment. In this text, the more standard terms “comparative” and “superlative” are used to refer to these forms of adjectives.

Just as English has sequences such as large, larger, largest, or nice, nicer, nicest, to indicate increasing degrees of intensity, Arabic has equivalent sequences consisting of base form, comparative, and superlative forms.

4.2.1 Comparative adjective: ‘af‘al

Arabic adjectives derived from Form I triliteral roots inflect form the comparative through a pattern shift. No matter what the original or base pattern of the adjective, the comparative pattern shifts to ‘aCCaC (‘af‘al أفعل), and it is dip-tote. That is, it does not take nunation or kasra in its indefinite form.⁷ Note also that the initial hamza of this pattern is hamzat al-qaT، that is, it does not elide. It is stable.

4.2.1.1 REGULAR TRILITERAL ROOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saghiir</td>
<td>‘aSghar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>smaller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>far</td>
<td>farther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kathir</td>
<td>‘akthar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabiir</td>
<td>‘akbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>bigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heavy</td>
<td>heavier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.2 HOLLOW ROOTS: Comparative adjectives from hollow roots, where the middle radical is either waaw or yaa، behave as though the waaw or yaa is a regular consonant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tawiil</td>
<td>‘aTwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tall; long</td>
<td>taller; longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>جيد</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أطيب</td>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶ See, for example, Abboud and McCarus 1983, part 1:340–45. Also Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1975, 97 "L'élatif est un aspet de l'adjectif qui en exprime une valeur supérieure, complète, en une nuance souvent délicate à exprimer en français."

⁷ For more on the diptote declension see Chapter 7, section 5.4.2.2.
4.2.1.3 ASSIMILATED ROOTS: Comparative adjectives from assimilated roots, where the initial root consonant is waaw or yaa°, keep that consonant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tayyib</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aTyab</td>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sayyi'</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aswa'</td>
<td>worse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.4 GEMINATE ROOTS: Comparative adjectives from geminate roots (where the second and third root consonants are the same) have a variant comparative form due to a rule which prevents a short vowel from occurring between two identical consonants. Thus instead of 'af°al, the form is 'afall°al, and the two identical consonants are together, spelled with a shadda:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qalil°al</td>
<td>little; few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aqall°al</td>
<td>less; fewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haamm°al</td>
<td>important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ahamm°al</td>
<td>more important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1.5 DEFECTIVE ROOTS: Comparative adjectives from defective roots have the form 'af°aa. The final root consonant (whether waaw or yaa°) becomes 'alif maqsuura:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'aalin°aa</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'a'laa°aa</td>
<td>higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghaniyy°aa</td>
<td>rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aghnaa°aa</td>
<td>richer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qawiyy°aa</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'aqwaa°aa</td>
<td>stronger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Inflection and use of comparative

Note that the Arabic comparative adjective does not show difference in gender. In fact, comparative adjectives do not inflect for gender or number or definiteness. They inflect only for case. When comparing two things and contrasting them, the preposition min is used the way ‘than’ is used in English.
4.2.2.1 CASE INFLECTION FOR COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES: The comparative adjective falls into the diptote category and therefore shows only two different case markers in the indefinite form: Damma and fatHa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>aHsan</th>
<th>‘better’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>أحسنُ</td>
<td>aHsan-u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>أحسنَ</td>
<td>aHsan-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>أحسنَ</td>
<td>aHsan-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2.2 EXAMPLES OF COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE IN CONTEXT:

She appears younger than her age.

أكثر من خمسة دراسة علمية

more than 500 scientific studies

أكثر من نصف الأنواع المعروفة

more than half the known species

أهم مما سبقه

more important than what preceded it

This is less than we need.

ta-Dumm-u ‘akthar-a min sab‘i mi‘at-i mashhad-in.

It contains more than 700 scenes.

4.2.2.3 COMPARATIVE WITHOUT min: Sometimes the comparative is used without reference to what it is compared to, so there is no need for the preposition min:
She started to take a greater role.

to a wider and more spacious horizon

It will lead to a firmer relationship between the two of them.

### 4.2.2.4 COMPARATIVE IN FORM ONLY

An adjective may occasionally have the comparative form, although its meaning is not comparative. In this case, it inflects for number, gender, and definiteness, as well as case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>f. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empty</td>
<td>أجوف</td>
<td>جوفاء</td>
<td>جوف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ajwaf</td>
<td>jawfaa'</td>
<td>juuf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silly, stupid</td>
<td>أحقق</td>
<td>حمقاء</td>
<td>حميق حميق حميق</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aHmaq</td>
<td>Hamqaa'</td>
<td>Humuq<del>Hamqaa</del>Hamqaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

"كيس أجوف كييس عجوف"  
It seems [like] a silly idea.  
an empty bag

(1) ‘Other’: 'aaxar أخر and 'uxraa أخرى

A special form of adjective is the word for ‘other.’ It has a unique inflectional paradigm that combines comparative and superlative patterns, but does not have comparative or superlative meaning. It inflects for number, gender, case, and definiteness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>f. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
<th>f. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other; another</td>
<td>آخر</td>
<td>أخرى</td>
<td>آخرون</td>
<td>أخريات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aaxar</td>
<td>'uxraa'</td>
<td>'aaxar-uuna</td>
<td>'uxray-aat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

"مثل أي شعب آخر"  
like any other people
4.2.3 The periphrastic or phrasal comparative

Certain qualities, attributes, or descriptors do not fit into the pattern-change paradigm for comparative and superlative meanings. For example, *nisba* adjectives and the active and passive participles functioning as adjectives from the derived verb forms (II–X) have extra consonants or vowels as part of their essential word structure, so they cannot shift into the ‘*af‘al* pattern without losing some of their identity and meaning. Moreover, certain colors are already of the ‘*af‘al* pattern, so how does one express a quality such as “blacker,” or “whiter”?

Arabic handles this using a strategy similar to using “more” in English. Intensity words such as “more” plus the adjective are used, or words such as “stronger” plus a color word in order to form a descriptive comparative phrase.

The most common intensifying words used for forming the periphrastic comparative are:

- *akthar*   
  *ashadd*   
  *aqall*
  more   stronger   less

This intensifying word is then joined with a noun in the *indefinite accusative case*, a structure called *tamyiiz* or ‘accusative of specification.’

**He was more favorably disposed toward the Arabs.**
\[ \text{kaan} \text{ } *\text{akthar}-\text{a} \text{ } \text{ta‘aaTuf}-\text{an} \text{ } \text{ma‘a} \text{ } \text{l-‘arab}-\text{i}. \]

**It might make him more understanding of the situation.**
\[ \text{yu-mkin-u} \text{ } *\text{an} \text{ } \text{ya-j‘al-a-hu} \text{ } *\text{akthar}-\text{a} \text{ } \text{tafaahum}-\text{an} \text{ } \text{li-l-mawqif}-\text{i}. \]

**She is more responsible than you.**
\[ \text{hiya} \text{ } *\text{akthar}-\text{u} \text{ } \text{mas‘uuliyat}-\text{an} \text{ } \text{min-ka}. \]

---

8 See Chapter 11, section 6 for more on the *tamyiiz* construction.
سلم أوسع وأكثر شمولية

salaam-un  `awsa' - u wa-`akthar-u shmuuliyyat-an

a wider and more inclusive peace

محرك أكثر كفاءة وأكثر اعتبارية

muHarrik-un  `akthar-u kafa‘at-an wa-`akthar-u `timaadiiyyat-an

a more capable and more dependable motor

قد تكون أكثر أهمية.

huwa  `akthar-u dhaaa‘-an min Husayn-in.  qad ta-kuun-u `akthar-a  `ahammiyyat-an.
He is more shrewd than Hussein.  They might be of more importance.

كان أكثر عدوانية وأقل سماحة.

kaan-a  `akthar-a’udwaaniyyat-an wa-`aqall-a samaaHat-an.
It was more aggressive and less permissive.

4.2.4 The superlative

The form of the Arabic superlative adjective, which indicates the highest degree of comparison, resembles the comparative form `af‘al. There are differences, however. The superlative form is always definite, defined by the definite article, a pronoun suffix, or by being the first term of an `iDaafu. Moreover, it has a feminine form as well: fu’laj. Because the feminine form ends with `alif maqSuura, it does not inflect for case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples:</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biggest; oldest;</td>
<td>الأكبر</td>
<td>الكبَرى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greatest</td>
<td>al-`akbar</td>
<td>al-kubraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smallest</td>
<td>الأصغر</td>
<td>الصغيرَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>al-`aSghar</td>
<td>al-Sughraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greatest</td>
<td>الأعظم</td>
<td>العظَمى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supreme</td>
<td>al-<code>a</code>Zam</td>
<td>al-`uZmaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highest;</td>
<td>الأعلى</td>
<td>العلَايَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supreme</td>
<td>al-<code>a</code>laa</td>
<td>al-`ulyaa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some instances a dual form or plural form of the superlative may be used. The plural form of the masculine superlative is either the sound masculine plural  `af‘al-uuna, or CaCaCaaCic (fu‘aali), a diptote plural pattern. The plural of the feminine superlative is CuCCayaat (fu‘layaat), (فَعْلِيَات).
in the two super powers

on any list of the greatest scholars in the world

Superlatives in Context: Word Order

Superlative adjectives may follow a noun directly, may be used as the first term of an 'iDaafa with a noun, or may have a pronoun suffix. In certain expressions, they occur alone, with the definite article.

(1) Following a definite noun: The superlative adjective may, like the ordinary adjective, follow the noun. In that case, it agrees with the noun in gender, number, definiteness, and case:

القوة العظمى  
al-quwwat-u l-‘uZmaa  
the greatest power/ the super power

المجلس الأعلى  
al-majlis-u l-‘a’laa  
the supreme council

الدرب الأكبر  
al-dibb-u l’akbar-u  
Ursa Major (constellation) ‘the greatest bear’

ذات الأهمية القصوى  
dhaat-u l-‘ahammiyyat-i l-quSwaa  
of utmost importance

السؤال الأصعب  
al-su’aal-u l-‘aS‘ab-u  
the hardest question

بعد أزمة الثلاثينيات الكبرى  
ba’d-a ‘azmat-i l-thalaathiinaat-i l-kubraa  
after the major crisis of the thirties

(1.1) Fixed expressions with the superlative: Sometimes, especially in set phrases, Arabic uses a superlative expression where English would use an ordinary adjective:

الشرق الأدنى  
al-sharq-u l-‘adnaa  
the Near (‘nearest’) East

الشرق الأوسط  
al-sharq-u l-‘awsaT-u  
the Middle (‘middlest’) East

القرون الوسطى  
al-quruun-u l-wusTaa  
the Middle (‘middlest’) Ages

الحرب الكبرى  
al-Harb-u l-kubraa  
the Great (‘greatest’) War (WWI)
أمريكا الوسطى والجنوبية
'amrikaa l-wus'taa wa-l-januubiyat-u
North and South America
الأسد الساحر
'as'ad-us sahaar-u
the strongest
أجمل سنوات صباه
'ajmal-u sanawaat-i Sibaaya
the most beautiful years of my childhood
أقوى لاعبين في العالم
'aqwaal laa'ib-iina fii l-'aalam-i
the strongest players in the world
الدول الكبرى
'al-duwal-u l-kubraa
the Great (‘greatest’) Powers
الرأس الشرقي
'al-akbar-u
Alexander the Great (‘the greatest’)
آسيا الصغرى
'aasiyaa l-Sughraa
Asia Minor (‘the smallest’)
الإسكندر الأكبر
'al-iskandar al-'akbar-u
Alexander the Great (‘the greatest’)
أصغر سمكة في العالم
'aSghar-u samakat-in fii l-'aalam-i
the smallest fish in the world
في أفضل شكل ممكن
fi 'afDal-i shakl-in mumkin-in
in the best way possible
هو أكبر مطار في كندا
huwa 'akbar-u maTaar-in fii kanadaa.
It is the biggest airport in Canada.
لزيارة أقدم قصر
li-ziyaarat-i 'aqdam-i qaSr-in
to visit the oldest castle
على أبعد تقدير
'alaq ab'd-ad-i taqdiir-in
at the furthest estimate
في أقصى ساحل بحر الشمال
fi 'aqSaa saaHil-i baHr-i l-shimaal-i
on the farthest shore of the
North Sea
أدنى مستوى
'adnaa mustawan
the lowest level
He obtained the title of ‘best Arab player.’

(2) As the first term of an ‘iDaafa with a singular, indefinite noun: The superlative adjective is often used as the first term of an ‘iDaafa with a singular, indefinite noun as the second term. In this structure, the adjective does not inflect for gender; it remains masculine singular no matter what the gender of the noun.
(4) With pronoun suffix: A superlative adjective may occur with a pronoun suffix.

\[\text{أغلبهم من المهاجرين المسلمين.}\]
\[fa\text{-}aghlab-u-hum min-a l-muhaajir-iina l-muslim-iina.\]
Most of them are Muslim emigrants.

\[\text{أغلبهم ليس مورخًا.}\]
\[\text{'aghlab-u-hum lays-a mu'}\text{'arrix-an.}\]
The majority of them are not historians.

(5) With indefinite pronoun \textit{maa} and following clause: The superlative adjective may be the first term of an ‘iDaafa whose second term is a phrase starting with an indefinite pronoun.

\[\text{أغرب ما في هذا الأمر.}\]
\[\text{'aghrab-u maa fii haadha l-amr-i}\]
the strangest [thing] in this affair

\[\text{أخطر ما في الأمر.}\]
\[\text{'axTar-u maa fii l-amr-i}\]
the most dangerous [thing] in the affair

(6) With definite article by itself: In certain expressions, the superlative adjective occurs alone, with the definite article.

\[\text{خمسة أشخاص على الأقل.}\]
\[xamsat-u 'ashxaas-in 'alaa l-'aqall-i\]
five people at least

\[\text{ل فترة وجيزة على الأقل.}\]
\[li-fatrat-in wajiizat-in 'alaa l-'aqall-i\]
for a brief period at least

5 The adjective ‘iDaafa, the “false” iDaafa
(‘iDaafa ghayr Haqiiqiyya إضافة غير حقيقية)
The “adjective” ‘iDaafa is a particular use of the adjective as the first term of an ‘iDaafa or annexation structure. The adjective may take the definite article if it modifies a definite noun. Since this type of construct violates the general rules (by allowing the first term of the ‘iDaafa to take a definite article), it is called “unreal” or “false.”
This kind of phrase is used to describe a distinctive quality of an item, equivalent to hyphenated expressions in English such as fair-haired, long-legged, many-sided.

In this kind of ‘iDaafa, the adjective agrees with the noun it modifies in case, number, and gender. The second term of the adjective ‘iDaafa is a definite noun in the genitive case and refers to a particular property of the modified noun.9

5.1 Definite agreement
Here the adjective takes the definite article, agreeing with the noun it modifies.

اللجنة البرلمانية الواسعة النفوذ
al-lajnat-u l-barlamaaniyyat-u l-waasi‘at-u l-nafuudh-i
the widely influential parliamentary committee (‘wide of influence’)

هذا الفيلسوف العميق التفكير
haadha l-faylusuf-u l-‘amiiq-u l-taफkiir-i
this profound (‘deep of thought’) philosopher

5.2 Indefinite agreement
Here the adjective ‘iDaafa modifies an indefinite noun. The adjective does not therefore take a definite article but does not take nunation, either, because it is the first term of an ‘iDaafa.

في ظروف بالغة الأهمية
fii Zuruf-in baalighat-i l-‘ahammiyyat-i
in circumstances of extreme importance

قدر متوسط الحجم
qidr-un mutawassiT-u l-Hajm-i
a medium-sized pot

على نار متوسطة الحرارة
‘alaa naar-in mutawassitiT-at-i l-Haraarat-i
on a medium-hot fire

5.3 Adjective ‘iDaafa as predicate
When acting as a predicate adjective in an equational sentence, the adjective in the adjective ‘iDaafa lacks the definite article. For example:

هو هولندي الأصل.
huwa huulandiyy-u l-‘aSl-i.
He is of Dutch origin.

Part two: Adjective derivation: the structure of Arabic adjectives
Arabic adjectives are structured in two ways: through derivation from a lexical root by means of the root-and-pattern system, or by means of attaching the nisba

9 For further discussion and examples of the adjective ‘iDaafa, see Chapter 8, section 1.9.2.
suffix -iyy (m.) or -iyya (f.) to create an adjective from another word (usually a noun). Very rarely, an adjective will exist on its own, without relation to a lexical root.

In traditional Arabic grammar, adjectives and nouns both fall under the syntactic category, ism ‘noun.’ The particular designations for the *nomen adjectivum* (Wright 1967, I:105) in Arabic include *al-waSf*, *الوصف*, *al-Sifa*, and *al-na’t* النعت, referring to qualities, attributes, and epithets. These types of words function in ways that very closely parallel what would be termed “adjectives” in English, and many pedagogical texts refer to them simply as adjectives.

Active and passive participles may function either as adjectives or as nouns. When they function as adjectives, they follow the same inflectional and syntactic rules as adjectives, agreeing with the noun they modify in case, gender, number, and definiteness.

1 **Derivation patterns from Form I triliteral roots**

These adjective forms are based on particular morphological patterns derived from the base form of the verb, Form I. In some cases, an identical pattern may be used for nouns as well. Some of the more commonly occurring adjectival patterns include the following. Whereas the masculine plural patterns vary widely, the feminine plural, when used, is usually the sound feminine plural.

1.1 **The CaCiiC or fa‘iil فعليل pattern**

This is one of the most common adjective patterns. The plural forms, used only for human beings, may be several, including sometimes both sound plurals and broken plurals. The masculine plural applies to human males and to mixed groups of males and females. The much more predictable feminine plural forms (ending in /-aat/) apply to groups of female human beings. Some of the more frequently occurring adjectives are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>far, distant</td>
<td>بعید</td>
<td>بعید بعید، بعیدون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ba‘iīd</em></td>
<td><em>ba‘iīd-uuna~ bu‘adaa’~bi‘aad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large, big</td>
<td>کبیر</td>
<td>کبیر کبیرون</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>kabiir</em></td>
<td><em>kabiir-uuna~ kibaar</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Beeston states: “One cannot establish for Arabic a word class of adjectives, syntactic considerations being the only identificatory criterion of an adjective” (1970, 44).

11 For example, from the fa‘iil pattern come nouns such as *waziir* ‘minister,’ *jaliid* ‘ice,’ and *safiir* ‘ambassador.’

12 Wright 1967, I:131–40 gives an extensive description of these adjective patterns and uses. He refers to them all as “verbal adjectives,” since he considers them derived from Form I verbs. However, I prefer to reserve the term “verbal adjectives” for active and passive particles, rather than adjectives in general.
1.1.1 With passive meaning
When derived from a transitive verb root, the fa‘iil pattern may carry the same meaning as a passive participle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>صغير Saghii’</td>
<td>صغير صغار Sighaar-Sugharaa²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nice; pleasant</td>
<td>لطيف lTaTiff</td>
<td>لطفاء لطاف liTaaaf~ luTaaaf⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>عظيم ‘aZiim</td>
<td>عظام عظامة ‘uZamaa~ ‘aZa‘im</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generous</td>
<td>كريم kariim</td>
<td>كرام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>فقير faqii’</td>
<td>فقراء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>ضعيف Da‘iif</td>
<td>ضعاف ضعفة ضعفاء Da‘afa~ Da‘afa ~Di‘aaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little; few</td>
<td>قليل qaliil</td>
<td>قليلين قليلون qaliil-uuna ~ qalaa‘il ~ qalaa‘il~ qilaal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new</td>
<td>جديد jadiid</td>
<td>جدد</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wounded</td>
<td>جريح jariiH</td>
<td>جريحي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>killed</td>
<td>قتيل qatiil</td>
<td>قتيلي</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 The CaCCiC or fa‘iil فعل فعل pattern
Adjectives of this pattern, if applied to human beings, usually use the sound plurals. This pattern appears frequently with hollow roots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sayyi’</td>
<td>جيد jayyid</td>
<td>جيد jayyim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>قيم qayyim</td>
<td>قيم Tayyib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>طيب</td>
<td>طيب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valuable</td>
<td>okay; fine</td>
<td>okay; fine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 The CaCiC or fa’il فعل pattern

Adjectives of this pattern also, if applied to human beings, usually use the sound plurals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>جشع</th>
<th>تعب</th>
<th>لفطن</th>
<th>عطر</th>
<th>مرن</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jashi</td>
<td>ta’ib</td>
<td>wasix</td>
<td>xashin</td>
<td>‘aTir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

greedy    tired    dirty    coarse    fragrant    flexible

Examples:

سياسي جشع — سياسة مرنة
siyasiyy-un jashi-un — siyaat-un marinat-un

a greedy politician — a flexible policy

1.4 The CaCC / CuCC or fa’l / fu’l فعل/فعل pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hefty, huge</td>
<td>ضخم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daxm</td>
<td>Dixaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>حر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurr</td>
<td>أحرار حراير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haraa’ir ~ ʔaHraar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not usually used to refer to humans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>집</th>
<th>سهل</th>
<th>Sulb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jamm</td>
<td>sahl</td>
<td>plentiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
<td>hard, firm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 The CaCaC or fa’al فعل pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>حسن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>Hisaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle, medial</td>
<td>وسط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wasaaT</td>
<td>ʔawsaaT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 The CaCCaan or fa’laan فعلان pattern

This pattern is for the most part, diptote in the masculine singular.\textsuperscript{13} It can have rather complex plural and feminine patterns, although none of these occurred in

\textsuperscript{13} The MECAS grammar (1965, 44) states for instance, that kaslaan is diptote, but it is not noted as such in Wehr (1979, 969), although Wehr notes za’aan, ghaDbaan, and ‘aTshaan as diptote. Wright (1967, I:133) gives both alternatives; Haywood and Nahmad (1962, 86) state that this pattern is “without nunation”; and Cowan (1964, 40) puts it in the diptote declension.
the data gathered for this book. Cowan states (1964, 40) “In Modern Arabic the pattern fa‘laan-u usually takes the sound endings in the feminine and the plural.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>f. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sleepy</td>
<td>na‘saan</td>
<td>na‘saana</td>
<td>na‘saan-uuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tired</td>
<td>ta‘baan</td>
<td>ta‘baana</td>
<td>ta‘baan-uuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>kasaan</td>
<td>kasaana</td>
<td>kasaalaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kaslaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angry</td>
<td>za‘laan</td>
<td>za‘laana</td>
<td>za‘laan-uuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ghaDaaan</td>
<td>ghaDaaan</td>
<td>ghiDaab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ghaDaabaab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hungry</td>
<td>jaw‘aan</td>
<td>jaw‘aa</td>
<td>jiya‘a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘aTshaan</td>
<td>‘aTshaa</td>
<td>‘iTuash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.7 The CaCCaaC or fa‘aal فعال pattern
This pattern denotes intensity of a quality and takes sound plurals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fa‘aal</th>
<th>jadhdhaab</th>
<th>majjaan</th>
<th>raHHaal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>effective</td>
<td>attractive</td>
<td>free of charge</td>
<td>roving, roaming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Quadriliteral root adjective patterns
The CaCCuuC or fa‘luul pattern from quadriliteral roots:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بحبوح</th>
<th>baHbuuH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>merry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Participles functioning as adjectives
Active and passive participles are verbal adjectives, that is, descriptive terms derived from a particular Form (I–X) of a verbal root. The active participle
describes the doer of an action and the passive participle describes the entity that receives the action, or has the action done to it. They therefore describe or refer to entities involved in an activity, either as noun modifiers (adjectives) or as substantives (nouns) themselves. Here we are dealing with them as adjectives.\textsuperscript{14}

3.1 Active participles as adjectives

Active participles as adjectives describe the doer of an action. In context, they agree with the modified noun in gender, number, definiteness, and case. When used as adjectives modifying nouns referring to human beings in the plural, the sound feminine or the sound masculine plural is used.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{tabular}{lll}
AP I: & زائر & AP I: & هام & AP I: & عالٌ \\
zaa’ir & haamm & ‘aal-in & visiting & important & high \\

AP II: & مبكر & AP III: & مماثل & AP III: & مناوب \\
mukabbir & mumaathil & munaawib & magnifying & similar & on duty \\

AP IV: & مشمس & AP IV: & ممطر & AP IV: & مملَ \\
mushmis & mumTir & mumill & sunny & rainy & boring \\

AP V: & متوفر & AP V: & متأخر & AP VI: & متزايد \\
mutawaffir & muta’axxir & mutazaayid & abundant & late & increasing \\

mutaqaa‘id & mun’azil & munkamish & retired & isolated & introverted; shrunk \\

AP VIII: & مختلف & AP VIII: & محترم & AP X: & مستمرَ \\
muxtalif & muHtarim & mustamirr & different & respectful & continuous \\

AP X: & مستحيل & Quad. & AP IV: & مكلف & Quad. & AP IV: & مطمئنَ \\
mustaHtil & mukfahirr & muTma’inn & impossible & dusky, gloomy & calm, serene \\

\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{14} See also Wright 1967, I:143–45.

\textsuperscript{15} Form I participles may take a broken or sound plural, but usually the sound plural is used when the participle functions as an adjective. Derived participles from the Forms II–X take sound plurals.
Examples:

Form I:

الرّاة القادمة
al-marrat-a l-qaadimat-a
the next time

الوثب العالي
al-wathab-u l-'aalii

وزير الاقتصاد السابق
waziir-u l-iqtiSaad-i l-saabiq-u

مهمة شاقة
mihnat-un shaqqat-un
a demanding profession

the high jump

the former Minister of the Economy

Form IV:

النسائم المنعشة
al-nasaa' im-u l-mun‘ishat-u
the refreshing breezes

اللجنة المشرفة
al-lajnat-u l-mushrifat-u
the supervisory committee

Form V:

ساحة مستمرة
saHat-un mustadiirat-un
advanced lessons

a circular courtyard

3.2 Passive participles as adjectives

These participles usually take sound plurals when referring to human beings.

PP I: معروف PP I: مبرووك PP II: معقد
ma‘ruuf mabruuk mu‘aqqad
known blessed complicated

PP II: مصروع PP II: مفضل PP VI: متداول
muSawwar mufaDDal mutadaawal
illustrated preferred; favorite prevailing

PP IV: مدمج PP IV: مراد PP VIII: منتخب
mudmaj muraad muntaxab
compacted desired elected

PP VIII: محتل PP X: مستورد PP X: مستعار
muHtall mustawrad musta‘aar
occupied imported borrowed

Quad. PP I: مُطْرَق PP I: مزركش
muJarTaH muzarkash
flattened embellished
Examples:

Form II:

السلمون المدخن
al-salmuun-u l-mudaxxan-u  bi-mawaqiq-i-ka l-mufaDDalat-i
smoked salmon in your favorite places

Form IV:  Form VIII:

قرص مرمج
qurS-un mudmaj-un  al-araaDii l-muHtallat-u
compact disk the occupied lands

Form X:

أسماء مستعارة
^asm^a^a-un musta^a^aarat-un
pseudonyms (‘borrowed names’)

4 Derivation through suffixation: relative adjectives (al-nisba
(النسبة)

Converting a noun, participle, or even an adjective into a relative adjective
through suffixation of the derivational morpheme -iyy (feminine -iyya) is an
important derivational process in MSA and is actively used to coin new terms. The
words used as stems for the nisba suffix can be Arabic or foreign, singular or plu-
ral. For the most part, their plurals are sound, except where noted.

4.1 Nisba from a singular noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>تاريكي</th>
<th>أسبوعي</th>
<th>إيجابي</th>
<th>حالي</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>taariix-iyy</td>
<td>'usbuu'^a-iyy</td>
<td>^tijaab-iyy</td>
<td>Haal-iyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>positive; affirmative</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>جزئي</th>
<th>إسلامي</th>
<th>شمسي</th>
<th>مركزي</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>juz'^a-iyy</td>
<td>^islaam-iyy</td>
<td>shams-iyy</td>
<td>markaz-iyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partial</td>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>solar</td>
<td>central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ذهبي</th>
<th>تأثري</th>
<th>جنوبي</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dhahbat-iyy</td>
<td>ta’aththur-iyy</td>
<td>januub-iyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>golden</td>
<td>impressionist</td>
<td>southern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

القطب الجنوبي
al-quTb-u l-januub-iyy-u  Hall-un juz'^a-iyy-un
the south pole a partial solution
4.1.1 ta` marbu`Ta deletion

If the base noun ends in ta` marbu`Ta, the ta` marbu`Ta is deleted before suffixing the nisba ending:

- political
  سِيِّاسِيّ
  siyaas-iyy (from siyaasa, سياسة ‘politics, policy’)

- artificial
  صناعيّ
  Sinaa`-iyy (from Sinaa`a صناعة ‘craft; industry’)

- cultural
  ثقافيّ
  thaqaaaf-iyy (from thaqaafu ثقافة ‘culture’)

4.1.2 waaw insertion

If the noun ends in a suffix consisting of `alif, or `alif-hamza, the hamza may be deleted and a waaw may be inserted as a buffer:

- desert; desert-like
  صَحَرَائِيّ
  SaHraa-w-iyy (from SaHraa’ صحراء ‘desert’ root: s-H-r)

- semantic
  مَعَنِيّ
  ma’na-w-iyy (from ma’nan مَعْنَى ‘meaning’ root: ۱-n-y)

4.1.3 Root hamza retention

If the hamza is part of the lexical root, it cannot be deleted. Thus,

- equatorial
  إسْتوَآئِيّ
  istiwa`a`-iyy (from istiwa`a` استواء ‘equator’ root: s-w-۱)

- final
  نهائِيّ
  nihaa`-iyy (from nihaa’ نهاية ‘end’ root: n-h-y)
4.1.4 Stem reduction
Sometimes the form of the base noun is reduced:

ecclesiastical, church-related
*কনসিয়া*  
**kanas-iyy** (from *kaniisa* 'church')

civic, civil
*মদনিয়া*  
**madan-iyy** (from *madiina* 'city')

الطيران المدني
**al-Tayaraan-u l-madan-iyy-u**  
civil aviation

4.2 Nisba from a plural noun
A plural form of the noun may occasionally be used as the stem for the *nisba* suffix. This is especially true if the singular ends in taa’ *marbuṭa*:

tax-related
*درجائيَّي*  
**Daraa’ib-iyy** (singular *Darīiba* 'ضريبة')

international
*دوليَّي*  
**duwal-iyy** (singular *dawla* 'دولة')

journalistic
*صحفيَّي*  
**SuHuf-iyy** (singular *SaHiifa* 'صحيفة')

women’s
*نسائيَّي*  
**nisaa’-iyy/nisaw-iyy** (singular *‘imra-a* 'إمرأة')

documentary
*وثائقيَّي*  
**wathaa’ iq-iyy** (singular *wathiiqa* ‘وثيقة')

legal
*حقوقيَّي*  
**Huquuq-iyy** (singular *Haqq* ‘حق')

Examples:

*في فيلم وثائقيَّ*  
**fii fiilm-in wathaa’ iq-iyy-in**  
*fii fititaalHiyyat-in SuHufiyyat-in*

in a documentary film  
in a newspaper editorial

**al-diraasaat-u l-nisawiyyat-u**  
women's studies  
information network

4.3 Nisba from a participle or adjective

*mawsu‘-iyy*  
*أولِيَّ*  
**awwal-iyy**

comprehensive
*прероо وَلاَء*  
**preliminary**

---

16 A variant on the *nisba* adjective based on the stem *أولِيَّ* 'أولَ 'first' is the additional form

*awwalawiyya*, with an inserted /-aw/ between the stem and the *nisba* suffix, as in

**Daruurat-un ‘awwalawiyyat-un ‘a primary necessity.’**
4.4 *Nisba* from place names

A place name is usually stripped down to its barest, simplest stem form before the *nisba* suffix is added. Definite articles, final long vowels, and final *taa* marbuutas are generally eliminated. It is here that one can see the origin of English adjectival terms ending in */i* such as ‘Yemeni’ and ‘Iraqi,’ which are modeled on the Arabic *nisba*.

### 4.4.1 Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Nisba</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>الأردن</td>
<td>ʿurdunn</td>
<td>Jordanian</td>
<td>Sudanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>ʿurdunn-īyy</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Sudanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الكويت</td>
<td>kuwayt</td>
<td>Kuwaiti</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>kuwayt-īyy</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الصين</td>
<td>Siin</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Siin-īyy</td>
<td>tunis</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فرنسا</td>
<td>faransaa</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4.2 Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Nisba</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>القاهرة</td>
<td>qaahirī</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>qaahir-īyy</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بيروت</td>
<td>bayruut</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayruut</td>
<td>bayruut-īyy</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Baghdadi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4.3 Geographical areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Nisba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نجد-īyy</td>
<td>Hijāaz-īyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Nejd</td>
<td>from Hijaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خليجي-īyy</td>
<td>from the (Arabian) Gulf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4.4 Exceptions

With a few place names, a final ʿalīf is retained in the *nisba*, in which case a waaw or nuun is inserted between the ʿalīf and the *nisba* suffix:
Adjectives: function and form

4.5 Names of nationalities or ethnic groups
Certain terms, especially those referring to Middle Eastern groups, have non-nisba masculine plurals, but revert to the nisba form in the feminine plural. See also section 4.15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
<th>f. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>عرب</td>
<td>'arab</td>
<td>عربيات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>كردي</td>
<td>أكراد</td>
<td>كرديات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>تركي</td>
<td>أتراك</td>
<td>تركيات</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 *Nisba* from biliteral nouns
Nouns with only two root consonants usually insert a *waaw* before the affixation of the *nisba* suffix. The *waaw* is preceded by *fatHa*:

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أخوي</td>
<td>أبوي</td>
<td>يدوي</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'axa-w-iyy</td>
<td>'aba-w-iyy</td>
<td>yada-w-iyy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the biliteral noun has a *taa*’ *marbuuTa* suffix, that is deleted when the *waaw* is added:

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سنوي</td>
<td>منوي</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sana-w-iyy</td>
<td>mi’a-w-iyy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>شعور أبوي</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>shu’ur-un</em></td>
<td><em>'abawiyy-un</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paternal feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سنة قنبلة يدوية</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mi’at-u qunbulat-in</em></td>
<td><em>yadawiyyat-in</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a hundred hand grenades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>التشاور وال الحوار الأخوين</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-tashaawwur-u wa-l-Hiwaar-u l-</em>'axawiyy-u*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation and <em>fraternal</em> conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>النسبة المئوية للمسلمين</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-nisbat-u l-mi’awiyyat-u li-l-muslimiina</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the <em>percentage</em> of Muslims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Nisbas from quadriliteral nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>عسكري</th>
<th>قرمزي</th>
<th>كيهباني</th>
<th>جمهوري</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘askar-iyy</td>
<td>qirmiz-iyy</td>
<td>kahrabaa'-iyy</td>
<td>jumhuur-iyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>military</td>
<td>crimson red</td>
<td>electrical</td>
<td>republican</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 Nisbas from quinquiliteral nouns

بنفسجي
banafsaj-iyy
violet; purple

4.9 Nisbas from borrowed nouns

Derivation of an adjective from a borrowed noun is accomplished in several ways. For example, the English word “diplomatic” is rendered in Arabic as diibu-umaasiyy:

هو عميد السلك الدبلوماسي.
huwa ‘amiid-u l-silk-i l-diibluumaasiyy-i.
He is the dean of the diplomatic corps.

4.9.1 Nouns ending in -aa or -aa’

If the borrowed noun ends in -aa or -aa’, the final vowel may be deleted, or the hamza deleted and the -aa buffered by a waaw:

chemist
kiimyaa-w-iyy (from kiimyaa’ ‘chemistry’)
musical
muusiiq-iyy (from muusiiqaa موسيقى ‘music’)

4.9.2 Hamza insertion

The foreign noun ending in -aa may get an additional hamza as a buffer between the stem and the suffix:

cinematic, film
siinamaa’-iyy (from siinamaa سينما ‘movies, cinema’)

4.9.3 Intact stem

The foreign noun stem may be left intact and suffixed with -iyy:

archival
arshiif-iyy barmiil-iyy karnifaal-iyy
barrel-like carnival-like
4.10 Nisbas from borrowed adjectives
In the following words, an English adjective ending in “-ic” or a French adjective ending in “-ique” has been borrowed and used as a stem. The nisba suffix is attached to it in order to convert it into an Arabic adjective:

- Dynamic: diinaamiik-iyy
- Automatic: utuumaatiik-iyy
- Classic: kilaasiiik-iyy

4.10.1 Nisba ending as replacive suffix
In the following instances, the adjective stem is borrowed but the “-ic” or “-ical” suffix is replaced by the Arabic nisba suffix:

- Strategic: istiraattiij-iyy
- Academic: 'akaadiim-iyy
- Psychological: siikuuluuj-iyy

4.11 Nisbas from particles and pronouns
Prepositions, adverbs and other particles may also have a nisba suffix:

- Inter- (in compounds): bayn-iyy
- Quantitative: kamm-iyy
- Qualitative; discretionary: kayf-iyy
- Front; frontal: 'amaam-iyy
- Rear; hind: xalf-iyy
- Self- (in combinations): dhaat-iyy

Examples:

They (f.) sit in the front seats. (two hind feet)

4.12 Nisbas from set phrases or fixed expressions
Technically, in traditional Arabic grammar, a nisba adjective cannot be formed from a phrase, only from a single word. Sometimes, however, a certain phrase is used so often that it becomes a fixed expression, behaving semantically and
syntactically as a morphological unit or compound noun. The following phrases and compound words with nisba suffixes occurred in data gathered for this study.

‘Middle Eastern’

شرک أوسطي

sharq 'awsaT-iyy (from al-sharq-u l-'awsaT-u ‘the Middle East’)

Examples:

النظام الشرک الأوسط

al-nilZaam-u l-sharq-u l-'awsaTiyy-u

the Middle Eastern system

to Middle Eastern markets

‘never-ending; everlasting’

لا نهایي

laa nihaa-iyy (from لا نهاء laa nihaa ‘there is no end’)

عبر تغييراته لا نهاییة

‘abra taghayyyuraat-i-hi l-laa nihaa'iyyat-i

through its never-ending transformations

4.13 Nisbas from compound words

Compounding has traditionally been a very minor component of Arabic derivational morphology, but it is resorted to more often in MSA, especially when there is a requirement for coining technical terms. Relative adjectives are sometimes created from these compound stems:

capitalistic

رأسمالي

ra’smaal-iyy (from رأس مال ra’s maal ‘capital’)

amphibian

برمائي

barmaa'iyy (through compounding from the words barr ‘land’ and maa ‘water’)

Recently coined technical terms sometimes make use of the shortened forms of qabl-a (qab) ‘before’ and fawq-a (faw) ‘above’ to express the concepts of “pre-” and “super-.” Sometimes these are combined with Arabic stems and sometimes with stems from other languages, suffixed with -iyy:

قيميلادي

qab-milaad-iyy

Before Christ (BC)

قبرائي

qab-taariix-iyy

prehistoric

قبريمي

qab-kambr-iyy

Precambrian

فوصوتي

faw-Sawt-iyy

supersonic

4.14 Special use of *nisba*

Where in English one noun may be used to describe or modify another noun, in Arabic such a phrase often uses a *nisba* adjective:

**Tullaab-un jaami‘iyy-una** university students

**xubaraa‘-u nifTiyy-una** oil experts

**‘iZaam-un Hayawaaniyyat-un** animal bones

**zamaniyyat-un** time zones

4.15 *Nisba* plurals

The preponderance of *nisba* plurals are sound, using the sound masculine or sound feminine plurals when referring to human beings. However, a few *nisbas* take broken or truncated plurals, especially when referring to ethnic or religious groups.

### 4.15.1 Truncated *nisba* plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>‘arabiyy</td>
<td>‘arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bedouin</td>
<td>badawiyy</td>
<td>badw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>yahuudiyy</td>
<td>yahuud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>barbariyy</td>
<td>barbar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.15.2 Broken *nisba* plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>foreign</td>
<td>‘ajnabiyy</td>
<td>‘ajaanib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>naSraaniyy</td>
<td>naSaaraa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>kordiyy</td>
<td>‘akraad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>turkiyy</td>
<td>‘atraak/turk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Color adjectives

Color adjectives are of three types in Arabic: pattern-derived, nisba, and borrowed.

5.1 Pattern-derived color adjectives

The essential colors of the spectrum have a special pattern or form ‘\(\text{aCCaC}\)’ or ‘\(\text{af’al}\)’ in the masculine singular, ‘\(\text{CaCCaa}\)’ or ‘\(\text{fa’laa}\)’ in the feminine singular, and ‘\(\text{CuCC}\)’ or ‘\(\text{fu’l}\)’ in the plural. Here is a list of the most commonly occurring derived color adjectives. It includes black and white and brown as well as the primary colors: red, blue and yellow. It also includes green, but not orange or purple.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. sg.</th>
<th>f. sg.</th>
<th>m. pl.</th>
<th>f. pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>أسود</td>
<td>سوداء</td>
<td>سوداوات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُaswad</td>
<td>sawdaa’</td>
<td>suud</td>
<td>sawdaawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>أزرق</td>
<td>زرقاء</td>
<td>زرقاوات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُazraq</td>
<td>zarqaa’</td>
<td>zurq</td>
<td>zarqawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>أسمار</td>
<td>سمراء</td>
<td>سمراوات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُasmar</td>
<td>samraa’</td>
<td>sumr</td>
<td>samraawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>أخضر</td>
<td>خضراء</td>
<td>خضراوات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُaxDar</td>
<td>xaDraa’</td>
<td>xuDr</td>
<td>xaDraawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>أحمر</td>
<td>حمراء</td>
<td>حمرارات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُaHmar</td>
<td>Hamraa’</td>
<td>Humr</td>
<td>Hamraawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>أبيض</td>
<td>بيضاء</td>
<td>بيضاءات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُabyaD</td>
<td>bayDaar</td>
<td>biiD</td>
<td>bayDaawaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>أصفر</td>
<td>صفراة</td>
<td>صفراوات</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ُaSfar</td>
<td>Safraa’</td>
<td>Sufr</td>
<td>Safraawaat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three things to note and remember about these color adjectives. First, the masculine singular pattern ‘\(\text{af’al}\)’ is diptote and is identical in form to the comparative adjective pattern (for example, ‘\(\text{akbar}\)’ ‘bigger’ or ‘\(\text{aTwal}\)’ ‘longer’), which is also diptote. Second, the feminine singular pattern ‘\(\text{fa’laa}\)’ is also diptote. Third, the plural form is primarily used to refer to human beings, since the feminine singular would be used for modifying a nonhuman noun plural, in keeping with rules of gender and humanness agreement.18 Examples include:

18 One instance of the plural form of the adjective used with a nonhuman plural noun appeared in the corpus of data used for this text:

بطاقات "أميركان إكسبرس" الخضر

\(\text{bitaaqaat-u} \quad ^*\text{amirkaan ikisbris}^{*} \quad \text{l-xuDr-u}\)

green American Express cards
5.1.1 Masculine phrases

الحيوان الأزرق
al-Huut-u l'-azraaq-u

the blue whale

البحر الأحمر
al-baHr-u l'-aHmar-u

the Red Sea

5.1.2 Feminine phrases

جبنة بيضاء
jubnat-un bayDaa'-u

white cheese

سلطة خضراء
salaTat-un xaDraa'-u

green salad

في القائمة السوداء
fii l-qaa'imat-i l-sawdaa'-i

in the black list

5.1.3 Plural phrases

المسلمون السود
al-muslim-uuna l-suud-u

black Muslims

القبعات الزرق
al-qubba'aat-u l-zurq-u\(^{19}\)

the blue berets (UN troops)

نساء سمراوات
nisaa'-un samraawaat-un

tawny-skinned women

5.2 Physical feature adjectives

The "af'al pattern is used to denote not only color but also certain physical characteristics:

\(^{19}\) Although the word qubba'aat 'berets' is technically nonhuman, the reference is to human beings.
5.3 *Nisba* color adjectives

Another process for deriving names of colors in Arabic is to identify the color of a naturally occurring substance, such as ashes, roses, oranges, or coffee beans, and then to affix the *nisba* ending -*iyy* onto that noun. Sometimes the base noun is of Arabic origin, and sometimes it is of foreign derivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ashes</td>
<td>رمادَّ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ramaad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>رماديَّ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ramaad-iyy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange</td>
<td>برتقاليَّ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>burtuqaal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>برتقالي*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>burtuqaal-iyy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inflection of these *nisba* adjectives follows the general rules for *nisbas*: adding a 
*taa marbuTa* for feminine agreement (including nonhuman plurals), and adding 
the sound masculine or sound feminine plural for plural (human) agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rose</td>
<td>وردةَ warda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ورديَ ward-yy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coffee beans</td>
<td>بنَ bunn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>بنينَ bunn-yy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violet</td>
<td>بنفسجَ banafsaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>بنفسجِ banafsaj-yy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>purple; violet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bronze</td>
<td>برونزَ buruunz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>برونزيَ buruunz-yy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bronze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Borrowed color adjectives

In recent times, the practice has been to borrow directly names of certain colors 
or particular shades of colors that do not already exist in Arabic. These come 
mainly from European languages and do not inflect for number, gender, or case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>بييج</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mauve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>موف muuf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>توركواز turkwaaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ترکواز turkwaaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ترکواز turkwaaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ترکواز turkwaaz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Non-derived adjectives

Rarely, an Arabic adjective is non-derived and simply exists on its own, without 
relation to a productive lexical root:
Examples:

الزواحف المعلاقة

| نموذج | فذ |
| al-zawaaHif-u | l-‘imlaaqat-u |
| namuudhaj-un | fadhdh-un |
| the giant reptiles | a unique example |

7 Compound adjectives

In order to express complex new concepts, compound (two-word) adjectival expressions are sometimes used in MSA. They occur primarily as adjective ‘iDaafas, or, for negative concepts, as adjectives in construct with the noun ghayr.

7.1 The active participle muta‘addid متعدّد ‘numerous’

To express the concept of “multi-” as the first component of an Arabic compound, the AP muta‘addid is normally used.

مَتَعِدُ الْأَطْرَاف
muta‘addid-u l-‘aTraaf-i
multilateral

مَتَعِدُ الْاستَعْمَالات
muta‘addid-u l-isti‘maalaat-i
multi-use

مَتَعِدُ الأَنْظِمَة
muta‘addid-u l-‘anZimat-i
multi-system

مَتَعِدُ الْجَنْسِيَات
muta‘addid-u l-jinsiyyaat-i
multinational

Examples:

لِبِرَانِامِجِ الْمَسَايِدَ الْمِتَعِيَّدَةِ الْجَنْسِيَاتِ
li-barnaamaj-i l-musaa‘adaat-i l-muta‘addidat-i l-jinsiyyaat-i
for the program of multinational assistance

tَتَنْخَذُ الْشَّرِكَاتُ الْمِتَعِيَّدَةِ الْجَنْسِيَاتِ خَطَوَاتٍ
ta-ttaxidh-u l-sharikaat-u l-muta‘addidat-u l-jinsiyyaat-i xutuwaat-in.
The multi-national companies are taking steps.

فِي هَذِهِ الْقَضَائِلِ الْمِتَعِيَّدَةِ الْجَوَانِبِ
fil haadhihi l-qaDiyyat-i l-muta‘addid-i l-jawaanib-i
in this multi-sided issue

7.2 The noun ghayr ‘non-; un-, in-, other than’

To express negative or privative concepts denoting absence of a quality or attribute, the noun ghayr is used.

The noun ghayr ‘other than’ becomes the first term of a construct phrase modifying the noun and carries the same case ending as the noun being modified. It does not, as the first term of the ‘iDaafa, ever have the definite article. The second
term of the construct is an adjective or participle in the genitive case which agrees with the noun being modified in gender, number, and definiteness. See also Chapter 8, section 1.9.3.

Examples:

المواضيع غير المناسبة
al-mawaadd-u l-xaam-u ghayr-u l-mutajaddidat-i
non-renewable raw materials

طرق غير قانونية
bi-turuq-in ghayr-i qaunuuniyyat-in
by illegal means

dفعات غير المشروعة كالرشاوى مثلا
al-dafile-u ghayr-u l-mashruu‘at-i ka-l-rashaawii mathal-an
illegal payments such as bribes, for example

اتفاقيات غير مقدسة
ittifaqiyyat-un ghayr-u muqaddasat-in
an unholy agreement

غير قابلة للنثوزر
ghayr-u qaabilat-in li-l-tazwiir-i
non-counterfeitable
A good general definition of adverbs is found in Hurford (1994, 10): “The most typical adverbs add specific information about time, manner, or place to the meanings of verbs or whole clauses.” Adverbs may also add information to adjectives (“very easy”) or even other adverbs (“late yesterday”). An essential characteristic of adverbs is that they are additive; that is, they are external to the core proposition in a clause or sentence. They are, as Stubbs has noted, “an optional element in clause structure” (1983, 70).

Arabic refers to this optional status as faDla فضلة ‘extra’ or ‘surplus’ parts of a sentence rather than part of the kernel or core predication. This optionality has meant that adverbs have traditionally received less attention from linguistic research than the major form classes (nouns and verbs), despite the fact that they are very common in both spoken and written discourse.1

This class of words and phrases is also very heterogeneous in terms of its composition. Adverbial modification may be accomplished with single words (daa‘im-an دانما ‘always,’ jidd-an جدًا ‘very’) or with phrases (“ilaah Hadd-in ma‘a إلي حد ما ‘to a certain extent,’ ‘aajil-an ‘aw ‘aajil-an عاجلا أو أقرأ ‘sooner or later’). Arabic adverbials also include grammatical structures such as the cognate accusative (al-maf‘uul al-mutlaq (المفعول المطلق) and Haal حال (‘circumstantial’) phrases.

In Arabic, few words are adverbs in and of themselves; but there are some (such as faqaT فقط ‘only’ or hunaa هننا ‘here’).2 Most words that function as Arabic adverbs are adjectives or nouns in the accusative case (e.g., ‘alHyaa-an أنحيان ‘sometimes,’

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1 Stubbs notes that adverbs are one of three areas which have resisted traditional treatment in grammar (in addition to coordinating conjunctions and “particles”) and that none of these areas “fit neatly into the syntactic and semantic categories of contemporary linguistics” (1983, 70).

Furthermore, he states (1983, 77): “Adverbs then, and certain items in particular, provide problems for sentence based grammars but are of great interest in a study of discourse sequences, since their functions are largely to do with the organization of connected discourse, and with the interpretation of functional categories of speech acts.”

2 Cowan (1964, 63) starts his section on adverbs with the observation that “the Arabic language is exceedingly poor in adverbs,” referring to the fact that few Arabic words are inherently and solely adverbs. Haywood and Nahmad (1962, 426) open their chapter on “adverbial usage” with the statement: “Arabic has no Adverbs, properly speaking” (emphasis in original). They go on to explain that “this lack is hardly felt owing to the inherent flexibility and expressiveness of the language.”
Adverbs and adverbial expressions

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ghad-an ‘tomorrow,’ al-yawm-a ‘today’; some adverbials occur with a Damma ending (e.g., ba‘d-u ‘yet’) and at least one ends consistently in kasra (‘ams-i ‘yesterday’). Still other adverbial expressions are compound words consisting of a noun and a demonstrative suffix, e.g., yawm-a-dhaak ‘that day.’

Placement of adverbs within an Arabic sentence is flexible to a certain extent, but sometimes particular adverbs have preferred positions. Several adverbs or adverbial expressions may occur in the same sentence. In the following one, for example, are four adverbs:

hunaaka l-yawm-a mathal-an xilaafat-un Hawl-a l-mawDu‘i.

There [are] today, for example, disagreements about the subject.

The first adverb is the locative hunaaka, ‘there is/are’; the second is the time adverbial l-yawm-a ‘today’; the third is mathal-an ‘for example’; and the fourth is the locative adverb Hawl-a ‘about.’

Most Arabic adverbials can be divided into four major groups according to their semantic function: degree, manner, place, and time. There are also some important categories that do not fall within these four groups, but which have key functions in Arabic, such as adverbial accusatives of cause or reason (maf‘uul li-‘ajlihi or maf‘uul la-hu) and the accusative of specification (tamyiiz). Within each of these categories there are several kinds of adverbial components. Given the heterogeneous and multifunctional nature of this class of expressions, the examples provided here are by no means exhaustive; but they represent a broad sample of occurrences in modern written Arabic.

1 Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree describe and quantify concepts such as intensity (“very,” “considerably,” “particularly”), measurement (“one by one”), or amount (“a little,” “a great deal,” “completely”). In some respects, they are a subcategory of manner adverbials, but they constitute a substantial group of their own.

1.1 Basic adverbs of degree

1.1.1 faqat ‘only, solely’

This adverb of degree is a commonly used expression of limitation. It is invariable in form and ends with sukuun. In terms of its placement in a sentence, it

3 In discussing the Arabic morphological category of adverb, Wright (1967, I:282) notes that “there are three sorts of adverbs. The first class consists of particles of various origins, partly inseparable, partly separable; the second class of indeclinable nouns ending in u; the third class of nouns in the accusative” (emphasis in original). He includes an exhaustive list of particles, including interrogatives, negatives, and tense markers in his first category. In this book these particles are discussed according to their separate functions.
tends to occur at the end of the phrase or clause it modifies, but this is not absolute.

He only learned a [limited] number of words. It was not only documentation.

The trip from Geneva to Tunis takes only two hours.

Their marriage lasted only two years.

The role was written into three scenes only.

Despite their only winning the silver medal

1.2 Degree nouns and adjectives in the accusative

Adverbial modification is often managed in Arabic using nouns or adjectives in the accusative case. Certain accusative adverbials are used so frequently that they have become idiomatic. This is especially true of degree adverbials. Note that most of them occur in the indefinite accusative.

1.2.1 jidd-an ‘very’

This adverbial expression is of frequent occurrence in written Arabic. It follows the phrase that it modifies.

Tabii ‘iyy-un jidd-an ‘an nu-Hibb-a-hu. It is very natural that we love it.

1.2.2 kathiir-an ‘much; a lot; greatly’

Haadhaa ‘ahamm-u kathiir-an mimmaa sabaq-a-hu. This is much more important than what preceded it.
Adverbs and adverbial expressions

My son is traveling and I miss him greatly.

1.2.3 *muTlaq-an* مطلقاً ‘absolutely’

لا أستطيع التكلم مطلقاً.

lā ʾa-staTiiʿ-u l-takallum-a *muTlaq-an*.

I absolutely cannot speak.

1.2.4 *qaliil-an* قليلاً ‘a little bit; a little’

أفهم قليلاً.

ʾa-fham-u *qaliil-an*.

I understand a little.

1.2.5 *tamaam-an* تماماً ‘exactly; completely’

يجب عليها أن تدعم الاتفاق تماماً.

ya-jib-u ʾalay-haa ʾan ta-dʿam-a l-ittifaq-a *tamaam-an*.

It must support the agreement completely.

1.2.6 *xusuS-an* خصوصاً ‘especially’

خصوصاً في ما يتعلق بالموز.

*xusuS-an* fī maa yaʿallaq-u bi-l-mawz-i

especially in what relates to bananas

1.2.7 *ajmaʿ-া* أجمع ‘all; entirely; all together’

This adverbial accusative of degree is a comparative adjective. It is not nunated because the word *ʾajmaʿ* is diptote.

فِي أنحاء العالم أجمع

*fīʾanHaʾaʿ-l-ʾaalam-i ʾajmaʿ-ा*

in all parts of the world

1.2.8 Repeated noun of measurement

In these expressions, a noun in the accusative is repeated in order to indicate gradual sequencing.

4 ʿAbd al-Latif et al. (1997, 340) refer to this structure as *al-Haal al-jaamida*، ‘solid Haal’ or ‘inflexible Haal.’
A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic

He kissed ('undertook kissing') them one by one ('individual by individual').

1.3 Adverbial phrases of degree
There are many of these types of phrases consisting of two or more words. These examples show some of the most frequently occurring ones.

1.3.1 *bi-l-DabT* ‘exactly, precisely’

ما هو الهدف منها بالضبط؟
maa huwa l-hadaf-u min-haa bi-l-DabT-i?
That is exactly what I mean.

1.3.2 *bi-kathiir-in* ‘by a great amount; much’

This expression is usually used in the context of comparison or contrast.

تبدو أصغر بكثير من عمرها.
ta-bduu ṣaSghar-a bi-kathiir-in min ‘umri-haa.
She seems much ('by a great amount') younger than her age.

1.3.3 *laa siyyamaa* ‘especially; particularly’

This phrase literally means 'there is nothing similar.'

لا سيما الأيام المشمسة
laa siyyamaa l-‘ayyam-a l-mushmisat-a
especially on sunny days

لا سيما أنتي لا أنتم إلى أي جماعة
laa siyyamaa ṣa-nii laa ‘a-ntamii ‘ilaa ‘ayy-i jamaa‘at-in
especially since I do not belong to any [particular] group

1.3.4 *li-l-ghaayat-i* ‘extremely; to the utmost’

كان الوضع سيينا للغاية.
kaan-a l-waD-u sayyi‘-an li-l-ghaayat-i.
The situation was extremely bad.

5 This expression is often pronounced 'bi-l-ZabT,' as though it were spelled with a Zaa instead of a Daad.

6 See also Cantarino 1976, III:195-96.
1.3.5 *ilaa Hadd-in maa* إلّي حَدّ مَا ‘to a certain extent; kind of; sort of’
*ilaa Hadd-in kabiir-in* إلّي حَدّ كِبَير ‘to a great extent’

Siṣaad إلّي حَدّ كِبَير.

say-yu-sa‘ād-u *ilaa Hadd-in kabiir-in.*

It will help to a great extent.

1.3.6 *ba‘D-a l-shay‘-i* بعض الشيء إلّي ‘somewhat’

نجموا بعض الشيء.

*najā‘-u ba‘D-a l-shay‘-i.*

They succeeded somewhat.

1.3.7 *akthar-a min-a l-laazim* أكثَر من اللازم إلّي ‘too; over-; too much; more than necessary’

ربما كنت واقعاً من نفسي أكثر من اللازم.

rubba-maa kun-tu waathiq-an min nafs-ii *akthar-a min-a l-lużuum-i.*

Perhaps I was overconfident.

1.3.8 *‘alaa l-‘aqall-i* على الأقل إلّي ‘at least’

قُتِل خمسة أشخاص على الأقل

*li-fatrat-in wajizat-in* ‘alaa l-‘aqall-i

for a brief time, at least

*ashxaS-in* ‘alaa l-‘aqall-i

at least

في هذه المرحلة على الأقل

*fii haadhihi l-marHalat-i* ‘alaa l-‘aqall-i

at this stage, at least

1.3.9 *wa-Hasb-u* وحسب ‘only; that’s all’

لا تقتصر على حدود قطر وحسب.

*laa ta-qtaSir-u* ‘alaa Huduud-i qaṭara wa-Hasb-u.*

It is not limited to the borders of Qatar only.

2 Adverbs of manner

Manner adverbials provide a wide range of options for describing the state, condition, circumstances, manner, or way in which something is accomplished or happens.

2.1 Basic adverbs of manner

The members of this group are related to demonstrative pronouns.
2.1.1 *haakadhaa* مُكَّتًا ‘thus; and so; in such a way’

This adverb of manner indicates both comparison and consequence.

Thus it moved between the centers of Syria and Yemen.

Thus do the Europeans distort the expression “jihad” and translate it literally.

2.1.2 *ka-dhaalika* كَذَلِكَ ‘likewise; as well; also’

Likewise the brooms which are still used.

He is also preparing to film a motion picture.

2.2 Nouns and adjectives in the accusative

Many nouns and adjectives are used in the accusative case to amplify a statement adverbially. Adverbs of manner are the most frequent, but many accusative adverbials do not fit that category precisely. In most cases, the indefinite accusative is used on the singular base form of the noun or adjective.

We will never forget. And there is also the subject of money.

I remember it visually. I will depart at once.

He has to pay 100 dinars in addition/additionally.

That we are working together for peace.
2.3 Manner adverbial phrases

There are four general ways to express manner adverbials in phrases: using the *Haal* structures, the cognate accusative, other accusative phrases, and prepositional phrases.

### 2.3.1 The circumstantial construction: *al-Haal* 

The *Haal* (literally 'state' or 'condition') or circumstantial accusative structure is a way of expressing the circumstances under which an action takes place. It is often structured using an active participle in the indefinite accusative to modify or describe the circumstances of the action. The participle agrees with the doer of the action in number and gender.

*They know that well.*  
*He thought seriously.*

#### 2.3.1.1 If the *Haal* active participle is from a transitive verb, it may take a noun object in the accusative case:

*He asked him, whispering.*  
*He left the office quickly/in a hurry.*

#### 2.3.1.2 Occasionally, a passive participle is used in the *Haal* structure:

*She jumped, frightened.*

---

2.3.1.3 An adjective may also be used in the circumstantial accusative structure.

فَقَدْ تَمَّ أَمْيَ صِغِّرًا.
faqad-tu ‘umm-ii Saghir-an.
I lost my mother [when I was] young.

2.3.1.4 The circumstantial accusative is occasionally expressed with a verbal noun in the accusative.\(^8\)

أَلْقَى كِلَمَةَ نِبَاءَةٍ عَنَ السَّفِيرِ.
‘alqaa kalimat-an niyaabat-an ‘an-i l-safiir-i.
He gave a speech in place of (‘substituting for’) the ambassador.

وَقَالَ رَدَاً عَلَى سُؤَالٍ . . .
wa-qaal-a radd-an ‘alaa su’aal-in . . .
he said, responding to a question . . .

وَكَانَ قَدْ أَغْتَيْلَ . . . سِيَّرًا عَلَى الْقَدْمِينَ . . .
wa-kaan-a qad ughtil-a . . . sayr-an ‘alaa l-qadam-ayni . . .
He had been assassinated [while] walking (‘on two feet’) . . .

2.3.1.5 *Haal* EXPRESSING CAPACITY OR FUNCTION: A noun or participle may be used in the accusative to express the idea of “in the capacity of” or “as”:

يَعْمَلُ مُحَرِّرًا أدْبِيِّيًا.
yu-mal-u muHarrir-an ‘adabiyy-an.
He works as a literary editor.

2.3.1.6 *Haal* CLAUSE WITH *waaw* (وَاَل حَالِ) (واَلِ الحَالِ): Another way of expressing the circumstances under which an action takes place is to use the connecting particle *wa-* followed by a pronoun and a clause describing the circumstances.

وَفِجِّيَوْنَهُ وَهُوَ يَقْطَعُ الْحَطَبَ.
wa-fuujii-a wa-huwa ya-qTa ‘-u l-HaTab-a.
He was surprised while he was cutting wood.

دَخَلَ وَهُمَا يَرْتَدُّانَ زَبْيًا إِسْلَامِيًا.
daxal-aa wa-humaa ya-rtadiy-aani ziyy-an ‘islaamiyy-an.
The two of them entered wearing Islamic garb.

\(^8\) Cantarino (1975, II:193-96) lists five form classes that may be used with the circumstantial accusative: adjectives, active participles, passive participles, substantives, or “infinitives” (i.e., *masdar*; verbal nouns).
A tree fell on him while he was trying to open a road.

2.3.1.7 Haal WITH PAST TENSE: If the circumstances referred to by the Haal structure precede the action noted by the main verb, and especially if they form a background for the main verb, the waaw al-Haal is used with qad and a past tense verb. Abboud and McCarus state that “this construction indicates a completed action whose results are still in effect” (1985, Part I:537).

Yesterday the second conference ended . . . having been organized by the Arabic club (‘the Arabic club having organized it’).

2.3.1.8 Haal CLAUSES WITHOUT waaw: In yet another form of Haal, a main verb may be followed directly by another verb that gives a further description of either the agent or the object of the main verb. Most often, the main verb is past tense and the following verb in the present tense, but not always.

He went on, saying . . . She saw him spattering paint.

It does not leave you waiting.

2.3.2 The cognate accusative: al-maf`uul al-muTlaq المفعول المطلق

The cognate accusative is an elegant way of emphasizing or enhancing a previous statement by deriving a verbal noun from the main verb or predicate (which may also be in the form of a participle or verbal noun) and modifying the derived verbal noun with an adjective that intensifies the effect of the statement. The verbal noun and its modifying adjective are usually in the indefinite accusative.

2.3.2.1 VERBAL NOUN + ADJECTIVE:

It realizes that fully.
يشارك فيها مشاركة فعالة.
yu-shaarik-u fii-haa mushaarakt-an fa’aalat-an.
He is participating effectively in it.

حل الموضوع جزئيًا
li-Hall-i l-mawDuu‘i Hall-an jidhriyy-an
to solve the problem fundamentally

فرح لذلك فرحاً شديداً
He was extremely happy at that.

وعلى المواطنين أن يعرفوا بعضهم بعضاً معرفة جيدة
wa’alaa l-muwaafin-‘an ya-rif-i ba’D-u-hum ba’D-an ma’rifat-an jayyidat-an.
It is necessary for citizens to know each other well.

2.3.3.2 VERBAL NOUN IN `iDaafa': The cognate accusative structure may also have the verbal noun as the second term of an `iDaafa construction whose first term is a qualifier or quantifier in the accusative case:

يختلف كل اختلاف
yu-xtalif-u kull-a l-ixtilaaf-i.
It differs completely.

أشكراً عميقاً الشكر على ما قدمت
‘a-shkur-u-ka ‘amiq-a l-shukr-i alaa maa qaddam-ta.
I thank you deeply for what you have offered.

2.3.4 Other phrasal manner adverbials
Phrases that function adverbially are of two sorts: accusative adverbials or prepositional phrases.

2.3.4.1 waHd-a + PRONOUN SUFFIX ‘ALONE, BY ONE’S SELF’: The adverbial expression waHd-a plus pronoun suffix is used in apposition with a noun to indicate or specify the meaning of ‘alone,’ ‘on one’s own,’ or ‘by one’s self.’ It is invariably in the accusative case, no matter what case its head noun is in, and is suffixed with a personal pronoun that refers back to the head noun.

للأمير العباسي وحده
li-l’amiiri l’abbasiyy-i waHd-a-hu
for the Abbasid amir alone

هو وحده المرجع الصحيح
huwa waHd-a-hu l-marji‘-u l-SaaliH-u.
He alone is the competent authority.
Adverbs and adverbial expressions

2.3.4.2 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES: A prepositional phrase may function as manner adverbial.

(1) bi- or fī: The preposition bi- is often used with a noun to modify a verb phrase by describing the manner in which an action takes place.

أحبها بجنون. 

ُ‘aHabb-a-haa bi-junuun-in.

He loved her madly.

يُنظر إليها بصمت.

ya-nZur-u ُ‘ilay-haa bi-Samt-in.

He looks at her in silence/silently.

رفضت المشروع بشدة.

rafaD-at-i l-mashruu ‘a bi-shiddat-in.

It refused the plan forcefully.

Come quickly!

When indicating manner, bi- or fī are sometimes prefixed to a noun such as Suura ‘manner,’ Tariiqa ‘way,’ or shakl ‘form’ followed by a modifier that provides the exact description of the manner:

بهذا الشكل الواسع

bi-haadhaa l-shakl-i l-waasi ‘a-i

in this extensive way

في شكل أساسي

fī shakl-in ‘asaasiyy-in

in a fundamental way

في شكل جذري

fī shakl-in jidhriyy-in

in a radical way

 بصورة عامة

bi-Suurat-in ‘aammat-in
generally

 بصورة فورية

bi-Suurat-in fawriyyat-in

enthusiastically

 بطريقة غير مباشرة

bi-Tariiqat-in ghayr-i mubaashirat-in

indirectly

 طريقه غير قانونية

bi-Turuq-in ghayr-i qaanuuniyyat-in

in illegal ways

(2) Other prepositions may also occur in manner adverbial phrases:

القرار سيتخذ في كل قضية على انفراد


Decision will be made on each issue individually.

تدرس في المكتبة كالعادة

ta-drus-u fī l-maktabat-i ka-l-‘aadat-i.

She is studying in the library, as usual.
3 Place adverbials

3.1 One-word adverbs of place

3.1.1 hunaa هنا ‘here’ and hunaka هناك ‘there’

These two adverbs are deictic locatives, that is, they indicate proximity or remoteness from the speaker. They are also considered locative pronouns. In addition to indicating relative distance, the adverb hunaka ‘there’ is used figuratively for existential predications to indicate the concept “there is” or “there are.” These adverbs are invariable; they always end with fatHa. A variant of hunaka هناك indicating slightly greater distance is hunaalika هناك ‘(over) there.’

3.1.1.1 hunaa هنا ‘HERE’

عندما جاءنا إلى هنا
hunaa ya-bda‘-u l-Hulm-u. ‘indo-maa ji‘n-aa 3ilaan hunaa
Here begins the dream.

أعيش هنا مع أسرتي.
‘a-t‘iish-u hunaa ma‘a ‘usrat-ii.
I live here with my family.

3.1.1.2 hunaka هناك ‘THERE’ (SPATIAL LOCATIVE)

يود أن يصعد إلى هناك
yu-riid-u 3an ya-S‘ad-a ‘ilaan hunaa.
He wants to go up there.

لن تظل هناك إلى الأبد.
lan ta-Zall-a hunaa 3ilaan l‘abad-i.
It won’t stay there forever.

3.1.1.3 hunaka هناك ‘THERE IS; THERE ARE’ (EXISTENTIAL LOCATIVE)

هناك أربعة مكاتب سياحية.
hunaaka ‘arba‘-at-u makaatib-a siyaaHiyyat-in.
There are four tourist offices.

هناك من يقول...
hunaaka man ya-quul-u . . .
There are [those] who say . . .

فهناك اتفاق فلسطيني إسرائيلي.
There is a Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

ينبغي أن تكون هناك علاقة حسنجوار.
yu-nbaghii 3an ta-kuun-a hunaa a‘alaaqat-u Husn-i jiwaar-in.
There ought to be a good neighbor relationship.

3.1.1.4 hunaalika هناك: This variant of hunaka is very similar in meaning although sometimes it indicates a more remote distance (actual or figurative).

كانت هناك فكرة لدخول مجلس الشعب.
kaan-at hunaalika fikrat-un li-duxuul-i majlis-i l-sha‘b-i.
There was (remotely) an idea of entering the house of representatives.
3.1.2 thammat-a ‘there is; there are’
The word thammat-a has fatHa as an invariable ending and predicates existence in much the same way as hunaaka.

fatHa قيم مختلفة

fa-thammat-a qiyam-un muxtalifat-un wa-thammat-a ‘ulamaa-u ya’taqid-uuna ‘anna . . .

for there are different values and there are scholars who believe that . . .

ليس في الأمر فهماء يعتقدون أن . . .
lays-a fii l’amri thammat-a Suquur-un ‘aw Hamaa’im -u.

There are neither hawks nor doves in the matter.

هل فهمة إضافات إلى ذلك?

hal thammat-a ‘iDaafat-un ‘ila dhaalika?

Are there additions to that?

3.1.3 Hayth-u ‘where’
The connective adverb Hayth-u denotes the concept of ‘where’ or ‘in which’ and connects one clause with another. It has an invariable Damma suffix.9

في كلية حيث تدرس

fii kulliyyat-in Hayth-u tu-darris-u

in a college where she teaches

حيث القديم يختلف مع الحديث

Hayth-u l-qadiim-u ya-xtaliT-u ma’a l-Hadiith-i

where the old mixes with the new

حيث تشرنب الطريق

Hayth-u ta-shra’ibb-u l-Tariiq-u

where the road stretches

3.2 Accusative adverbial of place
A noun may be marked with the indefinite accusative in order to indicate direction or location.

هل سرت يمينًا أو شمالًا؟

hal sir-ta yamiin-an ‘aw shimaal-an?

Did you go right or left?

3.3 Locative adverbs or semi-prepositions (Zuruuf makaan wa-Zuruuf zamaan)

These adverbs are actually nouns of location marked with the accusative case, functioning as the first term of an ‘iDaafa, with a following noun in the genitive, or with a pronoun suffix. The location may be spatial or temporal. Although close

9 Note that the question word “where?” is different: ‘ayna (see Chapter 17, section 1); see also Chapter 18, section 6.1.
to prepositions in both meaning and function, these words are of substantive
(usually triliteral root) origin and may inflect for genitive case if they are pre-
ceded by a true preposition.10

بعد أربعة أشهر
ba‘d-a ʿarbaʿat-i ʿashhur-in
after four months

قبل سنتين
qabl-a sanat-ayni
two years ago

من تحت منحدرة خشبية
min taḥt-i minDadat-in
xashabiyyat-in
from under a wooden table

3.4 Phrasal adverbs of place
Adverbial expressions of place often occur in the form of prepositional phrases.

بدأ اجتماعاته في القدس المحتلة
bada‘-a ʿitima‘aat-i-hi fī l-quds-i l-muḥtallat-i.
He began his meetings in occupied Jerusalem.

في مستشفى الملك خالد
fī mustashfaa l-malik-i xaalid-in
at King Khalid Hospital

في مقهى على الرصيف
fī maqḥan ‘alaa l-raSiif-i
at a café on the sidewalk

على الصعيد الدولي
‘alaa l-Sa‘īd-i l-duwaliyy -i
on the international level

4 Time adverbials
Adverbial expressions of time fall into four categories: basic adverbs, single nouns
and adjectives in the accusative, compound time demonstratives, and phrases.

4.1 Basic adverbs of time
These words denote particular points in time and tend to remain in one form
without inflecting for case or definiteness.

4.1.1 ʿams-i ʿ أمس ‘yesterday’
The invariable adverb ʿams-i is unusual in that it ends in kasra. It does not take nuna-
tion even when it lacks the definite article. According to Wright, the kasra is not a
case ending, but an anaptyctic vowel, added to ease pronunciation.11 In terms of
placement within a sentence, it is flexible because it is a short word and it is often
inserted prior to a longer phrase; the only place it does not occur is in initial position.

10 See also Chapter 16 on prepositions and semi-prepositions, section 3.
11 “The kesra is not the mark of the genitive but merely a light vowel, added to render the
pronunciation easy” Wright 1967, I:290. Note that if the definite article is attached to ʿams, it
becomes fully inflectable.
Adverbs and adverbial expressions

He returned to Cairo yesterday. The two presidents arrived in Muscat yesterday.

ذكر راديو صوت لبنان صباح أمس...

dhakara raadyuu Sawt-u lubnaan-a SabaaH-a ’ams-i...

the radio [station] “The Voice of Lebanon” mentioned yesterday morning...

4.1.1.1 OCCASIONALLY, ’ams IS USED WITH THE DEFINITE ARTICLE.

كان ذلك بالأمس.

kaana dhaaka bi-l-’ams-i.

That was yesterday.

4.1.1.2 Because it is used adverbially, ’ams-i is considered to be a “virtual” accusative (despite the presence of kasra), so that when it has a modifier, or noun in apposition, that modifier or noun is in the accusative case:

في غارة نفدّها أمس الأولً

fii ghaarat-in naffadh-a-haa ’ams-i l-’awwal-a

in a raid it carried out the day before yesterday

4.1.2 al-’aan-a ‘now’

The expression al-’aan-a is invariable as an adverb, remaining in the accusative even after a preposition:

افتح الآن!

iftaH-i l-’aan-a!

Open now!

yu-riid-aani l-’aan-a jadwal-a ’a’maal-in

mushtarak-an.

They (two) now want a shared agenda.

وظهر حتى الآن خمسة وخمسون عددا من المجلة.

wa-Zahar-a Hattaa l-’aan-a xamsat-un wa-xamsuuna “adad-an min-a l-majallat-i.

Up to now 55 issues of the magazine have appeared.

4.1.3 ba’d-u ‘yet; still’

The word ba’d-u, with the Damma inflection and no nunation, acts as an adverb in negative clauses to mean ‘not... yet,’ ‘still... not.’ When inflected with the Damma, it cannot be the first term of a genitive construct.12

12 The Damma is not thought to represent the nominative case here but is rather an archaic form of Semitic locative “un ancien cas adverbia 1 qui n’est pas le nominatif” (Lecomte 1968, 90). Similar forms such as qabi-u ‘before,’ fawq-u ‘above,’ and taHt-u ‘beneath’ also exist, with the restriction that they may not occur as the first term of an ‘iDaafa. On this topic see also Fleisch 1961, E:280, and Chapter 16, section 3.4.3.
Their identities have not yet been revealed.

Its date has not yet been set.

It has still reached very few Egyptian households. (It still hasn’t reached but a few Egyptian households.)

4.1.3.1 fii-maa ba’d-u ‘LATER’: The idiomatic expression fii-maa ba’d-u means ‘later; later on.

Then put it later in your book.

4.1.4 thumm-a; min thumm-a ‘then; after that; subsequently’

Both of these expressions denote sequential action. Note that thumm-a invariably ends with fatHa.

After that he transferred to work in the university.

4.2 Time nouns and adjectives in the accusative

Specific times or time nouns are marked for the accusative. They may be definite or indefinite.

4.2.1 Indefinite accusative time nouns

hal sa-na-tadaxxal-u ‘aw laa na-tadaxxal-u ‘abad-an?

wa’aaxir-an jaa’at ‘ilaa l-qaahirat-i. And finally she came to Cairo.
The President inspects work sites **tomorrow**.

The committee will hold two meetings **yearly**.

The incident ended **that day**.

He said **at that time** that they were on the verge of arriving at the agreement.

His book set off a wave of interest **at that time**.

The seminar lasts **one day**.

The incident ended **that day**.
4.3.1.3 *sanat-a-dhaaka* AND *‘aam-a-dhaaka* ‘THAT YEAR’

اكتشف أمريكا *sanat-a-dhaaka* كَان الحدث الكبير.

*iktishaaf*-u *‘amriikaa sanat-a-dhaaka* kaan-a l-Hadath-a l-kabiira.

The discovery of America *that year* was the great event.

حققت عامَّة الكسبة وعشرين مليار دولار.

*Haqqaq-at ‘aam-a-dhaaka* sab’at-an wa-‘ishriina bilyuun-a duulaarin.

It realized *that year* 27 billion dollars.

4.3.2 *-‘idhin* – expressions

These are more common in literary Arabic than in day-to-day journalistic prose.

*ba’d-a-‘idhin* ‘after that’

وبعدنْ انتقل إلى دار ماهر.

*wa-ba’d-a-‘idhin* intaqal-a ‘ilaa daar-i maahir-in.

And *after that* he moved to Mahir’s house.

4.4 Adverbial time phrases

A noun denoting either a point in time or a period of time may occur in the accusative to denote that it is functioning adverbially. The nouns may be indefinite or definite, depending on the structure. For an expression of time in general, the indefinite accusative is used:

يسعى ليلاً ونهاراً.

*yu-s’a layl-an wa-nahaar-an*.

He hurries *night and day*.

For specific expressions of time the accusative may be used with demonstrative pronouns, the definite article, as first term of an *‘iDaafa*, or in a prepositional phrase.

نجح هذه السنة في توقيع مثل هذا الاتفاق.

*najaH-a haaddhii l-sanat-a fii tawqii-l-mithl-i haadhaa l-ittifaaq-i*.

It succeeded *this year* in signing such an agreement.

جاءوا فجر يوم الاقتراع.

*jaa’-uu fa’jrr-a yawm-i liqiraat-i*.

They came *at dawn* on the day of balloting.

اليوم الأحدِ الساعة الحادية عشرة صباحاً

*al-yawm-a l-aHad-a l-saa‘at-a l-Haadiyat-a ‘ashrat-a SabaaH-an*.

today, Sunday, at 11:00 in the morning
Adverbs and adverbial expressions

5 Numerical adverbials
For the expression of points in sequence, as in an outline, the ordinal numbers are used in the accusative indefinite. For example:

- اَوْلَا 'firstly'
- ثانِيَا ‘secondly’
- ثالِثَا ‘thirdly’
- اَوْلَ الْأَمْر ‘at first; the first thing’

6 Adverbial accusative of specification (التمييز)
This form of adverbial accusative is used to label, identify, or specify something previously referred to in the sentence. It specifies the nature of what has been mentioned by answering the question “in what way?” Often an equivalent English structure might include the terms “as” or “in terms of.”

- هذا البلد الطيب أرضاً وناساً وثقافةً
  haadhaa l-balad-u l-Tayyib-u ُاَرْدَانَا وَاَنَا وَثَقَافَانَا
  this good country [in terms of] land, people, and culture

- نقل ملكتها أسريةً إلى روما.
  naqal-a malikat-a-haa ُاَسْيِرَانَا ُاَلَا رُوْمَاء.
  He transported its queen to Rome [as] a prisoner.

- تحكم الغرب اقتصادياً وعسكرياً
  taHakkum-u l-gharb-i qtiSaadiyy-an wa-‘askariyy-an
  the dominance of the west economically and militarily

- ونتيجة ذلك محرك أكثر كفاءةً
  wa-natiijat-u dhaalika muHarrik-un ُاكْثَارَانَا ُاكْفَا’اتَانَا
  The result of that is a more efficient motor.

See also Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.7.
6.1 Other uses of *tamyiiz*

The accusative of specification is also used with the following quantifying expressions:

6.1.1 The interrogative quantifier *kam* كم ‘how much, how many’

The noun following *kam* كم is in the accusative singular.

¿كَمُ طَالِبُ أَيْنَ في سَفَكَ؟

¿كَمُ فَلَمَا شَاهِدَتَمْ؟

*kam* تَعْلِيمٍ أَيْنَ سَلَفَ لِسَافِكَ؟

*kam* فيلمان شاهدتُم؟

How many students are in your class?

How many films did you (‘all’) see?

6.1.2 The counted singular noun after numerals 11-99

For more examples and discussion of this topic, see Chapter 15.

¿عَن بَيْعَة عَشْرَة نَائِبَ؟

¿عَشْرَة قَرْشَانَ؟

_from seventeen representatives_

¿َثَرَة مَنْ خَمْسَة وَحَمِينَ فِيلْمَا؟

¿َثَرَة مِنْ خَمْسَة وَحاَصِنَينَ فيلَمْان؟

more than fifty-five films

6.1.3 The periphrastic comparative

The expression of comparative or superlative quality with the comparative adjective *‘akthar* allows comparison of qualities that do not fit into the comparative adjective (*‘af ‘al*) form.

¿قَدَ تَكُونُ أَكْثَرُ أَهْمَأَ؟

¿هو أَكْثَرُ دَهَا بَكْثِيرَ؟

*‘akthar-u min xamsat-in wa-xamsiina فيلمان*

He is more shrewd by far.

It might be more important.

_(‘greater in terms of importance’)_

من أَجْل شَرْق أَوْسَط أَكْثَرُ أَسْتَغْلَأَرْا

*‘ajl-i sharq-in ‘awsat-i ‘akthar-u stiqraar-an*

for the sake of a more stable Middle East

7 Adverbial accusative of cause or reason (*al-maf‘uul li-‘ajl-i-hi* المفعول لأجله, *al-maf‘uul la-hu* المفعول له)

In this adverbial structure, a verbal noun in the indefinite accusative is used to indicate the motive, reason, or purpose of the mentioned action. If the verbal

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14 See also Chapter 15, sections 1.4, 1.5, 1.6. For an analysis of this function of the accusative and its treatment in traditional Arabic grammar, see Carter 1972.

15 See also Chapter 10, section 4.2.3.
noun has a preposition associated with it, that preposition remains as part of the structure.

\[\text{تدقيقاً لجهوده} \quad \text{تمهيداً لاحالتهم} \]
\[\text{taqdîr-an li-juhuud-i-hi} \quad \text{tamhiid-an li-’iHaalat-i-him . . .} \]
\[\text{in appreciation of his efforts} \quad \text{in preparation for their transfer} \]

نتيجةً للعجز الذي سيطر على الحكومة
\[\text{natiijat-an li-l-’ajz-i lladhii sayTar-a ‘alaa l-Hukuumat-i} \]
\[\text{as a result of the incapacity that dominated the government} \]

بدأ عملية التمشيط بحثاً عن رجال المقاومة.
\[\text{bada’-a ‘amaliyyat-a l-tamshiiT-i baHth-an ‘an rijaal-i l-muqaawamat-i.} \]
\[\text{It started a combing operation to search for (’men of’) resistance.} \]

بحث تطوير العلاقات خدمة لمصلحتهما المشتركة.
\[\text{buHith-a taTwiir-u l-’alaqaat-i xidmat-an li-maSlaHat-i-himaa l-mushtarakat-i.} \]
\[\text{Development of relations was discussed in order to serve their [two]} \]
\[\text{shared interest.} \]

8 Adverbs as speech acts
A few Arabic adverbs are used both in speech and in writing to function as performatives, that is, to accomplish acts such as thanking, welcoming, pardoning, and so forth. A number of these are words and phrases in the indefinite accusative. These include:

- ‘thank you’  \[\text{shukr-an} \]
- ‘pardon; you’re welcome’  \[\text{afw-an} \]
- ‘welcome’  \[\text{‘ahl-an wa-sahl-an} \]
- ‘hello’  \[\text{marHab-an} \]
Personal pronouns refer to persons or entities and stand on their own as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases. This word class fills a wide range of roles in Arabic and consists of three groups: subject, object, and possessive pronouns. The first group, subject pronouns, are independent, separate words; the other two groups both take the form of suffixes.

The personal pronouns show differences in gender (masculine and feminine), number (singular, dual, plural), and person (first, second, and third). However, the number of categories of personal pronouns in Arabic is larger than in English (12 as opposed to 8) because it includes both masculine and feminine forms of the second and third person, and it also includes the dual pronouns.

1 Independent personal pronouns (*Damaaʾir munfасила* ضمائر منفصلة)

The independent pronouns are also referred to as subject pronouns since they can serve as the subjects of verbs or of equational sentences and they correspond to the set of English subject pronouns. They are as follows:1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>أَنَا  'I  'anaa</td>
<td>نَحنُ  'we' naHn-u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>أَنتَ 'you'  'anta</td>
<td>أَنْتُما  'you two'  'antumaa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>أَنتَ 'you'  'anti</td>
<td>أَنتُنْ  'you' 'antunna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 There is no neutral pronoun “it,” since there is no neutral gender in Arabic. Everything is referred to as either masculine or feminine. Note that the third person feminine singular pronoun, in keeping with the agreement rules of Arabic, is used to refer to nonhuman plurals.
The masculine plural pronouns *antum* and *hum* end with *sukaun*, which means that they require a helping vowel if they are followed directly by a cluster of two or more consonants (often the case with a following word that starts with the definite article). That helping vowel is *Damma*, based on a principle of vowel harmony with the previous vowel.

They are the Muslims.

They are the inventors of chess.

1.1 Independent personal pronouns: functions

This form of the pronoun is used in a number of different ways, sometimes as an essential part of a clause and sometimes as a nonessential part.

1.1.1 To emphasize the subject of a verb

Because Arabic verbs incorporate the subject into their inflections, the independent personal pronoun is not necessary to mark the subject of a verb phrase. However, the pronoun may be used along with the verb in order to fortify or emphasize the subject. In the following sentences, the independent pronoun could be omitted and the sentence would still be grammatically correct; however, the emphasis on the subject would be reduced.

He does not seem optimistic.

It will be the magic key.

It was the turning point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td><em>هو</em> ‘he’ <em>huwa</em></td>
<td><em>هما</em> ‘they two’ <em>humaa</em></td>
<td><em>هم</em> ‘they’ <em>hum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td><em>هي</em> ‘she’ <em>hiya</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>هن</em> ‘they’ <em>hunna</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Arabic is a “pro-drop” language; i.e., it is a language that allows a separate pronominal subject to be left unexpressed. This feature results in the verb inflectional paradigm distinguishing all persons uniquely. See Chapter 21 on verb inflection, esp. note 1.

3 When preceded by the conjunctions *wa-* or *fa-*, the third person singular pronouns *huwa* and *hiya* may lose their first vowel, thus becoming *wa-hwa* and *wa-hya* odpowiednio.
I try to defend it.

1.1.2 Subject of an equational sentence
Equational or verbless sentences do not have an overt verb, but they may show a subject through use of a pronoun. Used in this way, the pronoun is usually the first element in the sentence.

He is an expert in Middle Eastern affairs.

1.1.3 Predicate of equational sentence
Less common is the use of a subject pronoun as the predicate of an equational sentence; for example,

This is he.

1.1.4 As a copula
In order to clarify the relationship between the subject and predicate of an equational sentence, especially when the predicate is a definite noun or noun phrase, a third person subject pronoun may be inserted between the subject and predicate as a way of linking these two parts of the sentence, and as a substitute for the verb “to be.” When functioning in this manner, it is said to be a copula.4

The one disturbing thing is the prices.
The Muslim is the Turk. These are the atmospheres prevailing in the party.

2 Suffix personal pronouns (*Damaa‘ir mutta Sila*)

There are two sets of suffix pronouns, one set indicates possession (possessive pronouns) and is suffixed to nouns, and the other set indicates the object of a verb or object of a preposition (object pronouns).

Although the two sets are different in their distribution and in their meanings, in form they are almost exactly alike. The only formal difference between them is in the first person singular pronoun (‘my’ or ‘me’), which when it indicates possession and is suffixed to a noun, is /-ii/, but when it indicates the object of a verb is /-nii/.

2.1 Possessive pronoun suffixes

These suffixes are attached to nouns to show possession. They agree with the gender and number of the possessor (as in English), not the thing possessed (as in French).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>-ii</td>
<td></td>
<td>-naa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
<td></td>
<td>-kunna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>-ka</td>
<td>-kumaa</td>
<td>-kum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
<td>-hunna</td>
<td>-hinna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>-hu</td>
<td>-humaa</td>
<td>-hum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>-haa</td>
<td>-hunna</td>
<td>-hinna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These suffixes are attached at the end of a noun, after the case-marking vowel, except for the suffix -ii ‘my’ which supercedes any inflectional vowel. A noun with a pronoun suffix is considered definite, the suffix acting like the second term of an annexation structure to define the noun. When a personal pronoun suffix is used, the noun cannot have the definite article (it is definite by virtue of

---

Note that all the pronoun suffixes except -ii start with a consonant; that is why they can follow directly after a vowel. Since /-ii/ consists of a long vowel only, it cannot follow or combine with another vowel. Instead, it replaces any short inflectional vowel.
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the suffix) and it does not have nunation (because it is definite rather than indefinite).

Note that words ending in taa’ marbuuţa and pronounced with a final /a/ in pause form shift their spelling to a regular taa’ when they are suffixed with a personal pronoun, since the taa’ is no longer final.

حافظوا على نظافة مدينتكم!
HaafiiZ-uu ‘alaα naZaaﬁat-i madiinat-i-kum!
Keep your (m. pl.) city clean (‘preserve the cleanliness of your city’)

عن إذنكم
‘an ۖidhn-ki
with your (f.) permission

من فضلك
min faDl-i-ka
please (‘of your kindness’)

(when requesting something)

في محفظتك
fii miΗfaZat-i-ka
in your (m. sg.) wallet

أمض صوتي إلى صوتك
‘a-Dumμ-u Sawt-ii ۖilaα Sawt-i-ka.
I add my voice to yours (your voice).

من شمالها إلى جنوبها
min shimaal-i-haa ۖilaα jumuub-i-haa
from its north to its south

في بيئة الطبيعية
fii bi‘aat-i-haa l-Tabii‘iyyat-i
in their natural environments

كل ريال من دخلنا
kull-u riyaaλ-in min daxl-i-naa
every riyal of our income

علاقته وجوهه
‘ulaαa‘-u-hu wa-junuud-u-hu
its scholars and its soldiers

2.1.1 Vowel shift pronouns

The third person suffix pronouns that include the sequence -hu (-hu, -humaa, -hum, -hunna) are affected by any front vowel (i or ii) or yaa’ that precedes them. Their -u vowel shifts to /i/ in vowel harmony with the preceding sound. Other vowels (-a or -u) do not affect these suffixes:

في مذكراته
fii mudhakkiraat-i-hi
in his notes/diary

على كتفه
‘alaα katif-ay-hi
on his [two] shoulders

أكرما ووالدهما
‘akram-aa waaλid-ay-himaa
They [two] honored their [two] parents.

بشيارتهم
bi-sayyaaraat-i-him
in their cars
2.1.2 Plural pronoun suffix helping vowel
The masculine plural pronoun suffixes, -kum and -hum/him, end with a sukuun, which means that they need a helping vowel if followed directly by a cluster of two or more consonants. That vowel is Damma, based on a principle of vowel harmony with the previous vowel. If the third person plural suffix pronoun shifts from -hum to -him, the helping vowel may be either Damma or kasra.6

2.1.3 Noun + pronoun suffix + adjective
When a noun plus pronoun suffix is modified by an attributive adjective, that adjective is definite and carries the definite article because the noun is considered definite. The adjective also agrees in number, gender, and case with the modified noun.

6 In this text, the principle of vowel harmony is observed.
2.1.4 Pronoun suffixes on dual and sound masculine plural nouns

Nouns with the dual suffix (-aani/-ayni) or with the sound masculine plural suffix (-uuna/-iina) drop the nuun when a pronoun suffix is attached:

- 'unwaan-aa-humaa
  - their two titles
  - It will request its electors to vote.

- bi-yad-ay-haa
  - with her two hands
  - It was a refuge for our weary.

- 'aHad-u mustashaar-ii-hi
  - one of his advisors
  - from the votes of its supporters

2.1.4.1 SOUND MASCULINE PLURAL SUFFIX PLUS /-ii/ 'MY': The sound masculine plural (-uuna or -iina), as noted above, drops the nuun when a suffix pronoun is attached, leaving a long vowel /-uu/ or /-ii/. Because of restrictions on vowel combinations, adding the pronoun -ii causes a shift in these endings. They are shortened and combined into one, with a short vowel kasra (i) followed by a double yaa’ with fatHa: -iyya ي. Note that when (-ii) ‘my’ is suffixed to sound masculine plural nouns it overrides the case distinction and the plural is reduced to only one form.\(^7\)

- mu‘allim-iyya
  - my teachers (nominative and genitive/accusative)
  - My teachers are Egyptian. I went with my teachers.

2.1.4.2 DUAL SUFFIX PLUS /-ii/: The dual suffix (-aani or -ayni) drops the nuun when a suffix pronoun is attached, leaving a long vowel -aa or the diphthong -ay. Owing to restrictions on the combination of two long vowels in Arabic, the long vowel suffix /-ii/ is shifted to /-ya/ in both cases: nominative -aaya and genitive/accusative -ayya ي: 

\(^7\) This is due to incompatibility between the vowels /-uu/ and /-ii/, which do not combine in MSA.
2.1.5 The five nouns plus /-ii/: ‘ab, ‘ax, fuu, Ham, dhuu)

These five nouns are a special subset of semantically primitive nouns that inflect for case with long vowels instead of short vowels whenever they have pronoun suffixes or when they are used as the first term of an ‘iDaafa (see Chapter 5, section 10.1.3). Except for dhuu, which does not take pronoun suffixes, when used with the possessive suffix /-ii/ ‘my,’ all three cases are neutralized into one form, with omission of the inflectional vowel, e.g.,

- my father: ‘ab-ii
- my brother: ‘ax-ii
- my father-in-law: Ham-ii
- my mouth: fiyya[^8]

[^8]: Alternates with the variant word stem for ‘mouth,’ fam, as fam-ii.

2.2 Object pronoun suffixes

Object pronouns are suffixes almost identical in form with the possessive pronoun suffixes. They serve as objects of transitive verbs and of prepositions and therefore are affixed to those word classes.

2.2.1 Pronoun objects of transitive verbs

This set of pronouns is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘me’-nii</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘us’-naa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘you’-ka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘you’-kum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘you’-ka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘you’-kuma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^8]: Alternates with the variant word stem for ‘mouth,’ fam, as fam-ii.
These suffixes are attached at the end of a verb, after the verb inflection for person, number, gender, tense, and mood. Just as with possessive pronoun suffixes, the third person suffix pronouns that include the sequence -hu- (hum, hunna) are affected by any front vowel (-i or -ii) or yaa that precedes them. Their -u vowel shifts to -i in vowel harmony with the preceding sound. Other vowels (-a or -u) do not affect these suffixes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أشكرك.</td>
<td>I thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نعثبرهم نجوما.</td>
<td>We consider them stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وجدتها.</td>
<td>I found it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'a-shkur-u-ka.</td>
<td>We consider them stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-'tabir-u-hum</td>
<td>I found it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>njuu'm-an.</td>
<td>I found it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wajad-tu-haa!</td>
<td>I found it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اختارني.</td>
<td>I chose me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اعذرني.</td>
<td>I apologize for that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'dhir-nii.</td>
<td>I chose me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laa ta-staxdim-ii-hi!</td>
<td>Don’t (f. sg.) use it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أريد أن أساعدكما.</td>
<td>I want to help you two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intaZar-naa-hu.</td>
<td>We have waited for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'u-riid-u 'an</td>
<td>We have waited for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-saa'id-a-kumaa</td>
<td>I want to help you two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.1.1 SECOND PERSON PLURAL HELPING VOWEL:
Whenever a pronoun suffix is attached to the second person masculine plural form of a past tense verb (ending in -tum), a long helping vowel -uu is inserted between the verb suffix and the pronoun object suffix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هل هذا ما تعلمنه في المدرسة؟</td>
<td>Is this what you (pl.) learned (‘it’) in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarak-tum-uu-naa!</td>
<td>You (pl.) left us!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.1.2 WORD ORDER:
Because of the pronoun object attaching directly to the verb, and the verb-initial word order in Arabic sentences, sometimes the object of a verb in Arabic comes before the mention of the subject.
Three million tourists visit it every year.

UNESCO announced it. Your friend took it.

2.2.1.3 WORD = SENTENCE: If both subject and object are in pronoun form, the verb, its subject and object can create one word which constitutes a complete predication or sentence by itself:

(1) Past tense:

isteqbal-naa-hum. ُاقنعوا. 
We met them.

*sami*-tu-hu. ُاسمه. 
I heard it.

*aHbab-naa-hu. ُاصحابه. 
We loved him.

(2) Present tense:

ya-Hmil-u-haa ُيهمله. 
He is carrying it.

yu-qaddis-uuna-hu. ُيقذسه. 
They venerate it.

2.2.1.4 NOTE ABOUT WORD STRESS: Because suffix pronouns are attached to the ends of words, and because word stress is calculated by syllables from the end of a word, the suffixing of a personal pronoun lengthens a word and may cause a shift in stress when the words are spoken or pronounced out loud. (See stress rules in Chapter 2, section 7.) For example (stressed syllable is boldface):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pause form</th>
<th>Full form + pronoun suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>policy</td>
<td>سياسة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem</td>
<td>مشكلة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world</td>
<td>عالم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conference</td>
<td>مؤتمر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we waited</td>
<td>انتظرا</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.2 Object pronoun carrier: یَیِیْیَاا-
Rarely, in MSA, a pronoun object of a verb will occur and not be attached to the verb. This may happen if the verb is one that takes a double object (direct and indirect) and both of the objects are pronouns, or it may occur as a stylistic choice. For these cases, there is a word that acts as a pronoun-carrier, یَیِیْیَاا-, and object pronouns can be attached to it.⁹

2.2.2.1 VERB THAT TAKES DOUBLE ACCUSATIVE:

أَهْدَاءنِي اِبَاهَا اَمْلِ صَدِيقٍ.
'ahdā-nii 'iyyaa-haa 'ahl-u Sadiiq-ii.
My friend’s family presented it to me
Give (f.) it [to] me (‘give me it’).

2.2.2.2 STYLISTIC CHOICE: In the following example, the writer could have said ‘تَأْتِهِدْدأْثَا مَا’اِهَا-حُو,’ but he chose a more classical turn of phrase, using the expression ِواَ-یَیِیْیَاا-حُو instead. In this case, ِوَا- is a connector which takes the accusative case (ِوَاَلْمَا’یِیْیَا) on a following noun, signifying concomitance or accompaniment.¹⁰ Since a pronoun object is needed here, ِوَا- is followed by ِیَیِیْیَاا-حُو.

تَحْدَثُ وَاِیِیْیَاا مَطُوْلَا.
taHaddath-a ِواَ-یَیِیْیَاا-حُو muTawwil-an.
He talked with him for a long time.

2.3 Pronoun objects of prepositions and semi-prepositions
Prepositions may take pronoun objects. The form of the object pronouns of prepositions is almost exactly identical to the pronoun objects of verbs.¹¹

As objects of prepositions, the suffix pronouns attach directly onto the preposition itself. Sometimes a spelling change is required, however.

This subset of pronouns is as follows:

---
⁹ See Wright 1967, I:103–104 for more on the use of یَیِیْیَاا-. Note also that in Classical Arabic it was possible to have both direct and indirect objects as suffixes on the verb. Lecomte states (1968, 106): "La langue ancienne, surtout poétique, admettait l’agglutination des pronoms dans l’ordre des personnes 1+2+3: ‘اَیْیَااُتُتُتْاکَا-حُو je te l’ai donné; depuis l’époque classique, le second pronom s’affixe toujours à une particule-outil یَیِیْیَاا-.’

¹⁰ For more on ِوَاَلْمَا’یِیْیَا see Baalbaki 1986 and Wright 1967, II:83–84.

¹¹ Note, however that the prepositions ِهِتَأَا, ِکَا-، and ِمَنْدَا- do not take pronoun objects.
### 2.3.1 One-letter prepositions: bi and li-

#### 2.3.1.1 bi- + PRONOUN SUFFIX: Pronoun suffixes with bi- ‘with, at, to, in’ are regular, except for the third person “vowel-shift” pronouns (see 2.1.1), which are affected by the kasra of bi- and shift their -u vowel to -i:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>غيّنيّ -بیّ-نیّ -یّ</td>
<td>غناّ -بیّ-نیّ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>مکّم -باّ-کم</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>مکّم 'you'</td>
<td>مکّم 'you'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>مکّم 'you'</td>
<td>مکّم 'you'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>مکّم -بیّم</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>مکّم 'him'</td>
<td>مکّم 'them'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>مکّم 'her'</td>
<td>مکّم 'them'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.3.1.2 li- —> la- PLUS PRONOUN SUFFIX: The preposition li- ‘to, for’ shifts its vowel to -a whenever it has a pronoun suffix, except for the long vowel suffix -ii ‘me,’ which supercedes any short vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>لا بأس به</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 aantal bi-ka.  
ثمناً بهم  
لا بأس به  
Welcome to you.  
our confidence in them  
not bad  
('there is no harm in it')

al-sharaf-u la-naa  
la-ka si'run xaaSS-un.  
hanii'-an la-kum.  
The honor is ours (‘to us’).  
For you, a special price.  
Congratulations to you (pl.).

lā ma'nāa la-hu.  
أرسلوا لي طردا.  
It is meaningless (‘there is no meaning to it’).  
They sent [to] me a package.

lām ya-kun la-hum  
أرسال-أك لى تارد-ان.  
They did not have any contact (‘there was not to them any contact’).
2.3.2 Two-letter prepositions: *fii*, *min*, ‘*an*’

2.3.2.1 *fii* + PRONOUN SUFFIX: The preposition *fii* ‘in, at, into,’ because it ends in a long vowel -ii, undergoes a slight change when suffixed with the first person object pronoun -ii; the two long vowels merge into each other and become a *yaa*’ with a *shadda* on it, followed by the short vowel *fatHa*: *fiyya* فيّا. In writing it is sometimes hard to tell the difference between *fii* and *fiyya*, but there is often a marked *shadda* added to the *yaa* when *fiyya* is intended.

Otherwise, pronouns simply follow the long -ii, with the “vowel shift pronouns” changing their -u vowel to -i:

- أُذِابَ الحَزْنَ فِيّاً. فيّا شَمْسٍ جَبِيلِيّة.

It dissolved the sorrow in me. 
There’s a mountain sun there (‘in it’).

2.3.2.2 *min* + PRONOUN SUFFIX: The preposition *min* ‘of; from; than’ is fairly regular in its shape when pronoun suffixes are attached, except that when suffixed with the pronoun -ii ‘me,’ the *nuun* in *min* doubles, so that instead of *min-ii*, the phrase ‘from me’ or ‘than me’ becomes *min-nii*.

- أَحْسَنُ مَنْهُ? كِثِيرُونَ مِنْهُمْ.
- ‘*ahsan-u min-nii* kathiir-uuna min-hum
better than I many of them

- هِي أَكْثَرُ مَسْؤُولِيَةٌ مِنْهُ.
- hiya ‘*akthar-u mas’iliiyat-an min-hu* ithnataani min-haa
She is more responsible than he is. two of them

2.3.2.3 ‘*an* + PRONOUN SUFFIX: Like *min*, the preposition ‘*an* ‘away from; from; about; of ’ maintains its shape when pronoun suffixes are attached, except that when suffixed with the pronoun -ii ‘me,’ the *nuun* in ‘*an* doubles, so that instead of ‘*an-ii*, the phrase ‘from me’ or ‘away from me’ becomes ‘*an-nii*.’

- هل سَأَلَتُمْ عَنِّي؟ الإعلان عَنْهُ.
- hal sa’al-tum ‘*an-nii*? al-‘i’laan-u ‘*an-hu*.
Did you (pl.) ask about me? the announcing of it

- مَا قَبْلُ وَمَا سَيْقَالُ عَنْهُمْ.
- maa qil-a wa-maa sa-yu-qaal-u ‘*an-hum* what has been said and what will be said about them
2.3.3 Defective three-letter prepositions: ‘ilaa, ‘alaa and semi-preposition ladaa

These three words are put in one category because they all have a final ‘alif maq-Suura, and all of them shift this ‘alif to a yaa preceded by fatHa whenever they receive pronoun suffixes. Thus the attachable stem for ‘ilaa is ‘ilay-; for ‘alaa it is ‘alay- and for ladaa, laday-.

The shift to yaa has an effect on certain pronoun suffixes. The “vowel-shift” pronouns change their -u vowel to -i, and the first person singular suffix -ii ‘me’ merges with the yaa of the preposition stem, creating a double yaa, which is followed by fatHa. A model paradigm using ‘alaa is presented here.

2.3.3.1 ‘alaa + PRONOUN SUFFIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>علی</td>
<td>علی</td>
<td>علینا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘alay-ya</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘alay-naa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>علیک</td>
<td>علیکم</td>
<td>علیكم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>‘alay-ka</td>
<td>‘alay-kum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>علیک</td>
<td>علیکم</td>
<td>علیكم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘alay-ki</td>
<td>‘alay-kum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>علیه</td>
<td>علیهما</td>
<td>علیهم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>‘alay-hi</td>
<td>‘alay-him</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>علیها</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘alay-hinna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

كان عليّاً kaan-a ‘alay-ya  
it was [incumbent] on me.

السلام عليكم. al-salaam-u ‘alay-kum.

Peace [be] upon you.

The conditions were better than what they are ('on it') now.

2.3.3.2 ‘ilaa + PRONOUN SUFFIX

ينظر إليها. ya-nZuuru ‘ilay-haa.  
He looks at her.

أنا أشتق إليه. ‘anaa ‘a-shtaaq-u ‘ilay-hi.  
I miss him ('I yearn for him').
2.3.3.3 *ladaa* + PRONOUN SUFFIX

لا مستقبل لدي.  
*I have no future (‘there is no future for me’).*

He has the official documents.

2.3.4 Semi-prepositions + pronoun suffixes

The locative adverbs or semi-prepositions may also take pronoun suffixes.

*آثار حملة من الانتقادات ضدَّه.*  
*It aroused a campaign of criticisms against him.*

3 Reflexive expressions with *nafs* plus pronouns

Reflexive expressions in Arabic often use the noun *nafs* ‘self; same’ plus a pronoun suffix, the pronoun referring back to the subject of the verb.

*يجد نفسه.*  
*It renews itself.*

* يستطيعون أن يفرضوا أنفسهم على المستوى العالمي.*  
*They can impose themselves on the world level.*

4 Independent possessive pronoun: *dhuu* + noun

This pronoun refers to the possessor or owner of something and is used for expressing descriptive concepts where English would use the word “of” plus a noun, such as “of importance” “of means.” It is also used for descriptive terms such as “bald-headed” or “two-humped” when describing creatures in terms of their distinctive features. It is used chiefly in conjunction with a noun, as first term of an *iDaafa* with that noun. Occasionally it is followed by a pronoun suffix. The masculine form, *dhuu*, is inflected as one of the “five nouns” whose final vowel is also their inflectional vowel.12 The feminine form, *dhaat*, inflects separately. Both paradigms are presented here.13

---

12 See Chapter 7, section 5.4.1.c.
13 There are several variants of this pronoun, but only the most commonly used forms in contemporary Arabic are presented here. See Wright 1967, I:265–66 for greater detail on the Classical Arabic forms of this pronoun.
### 4.1 Masculine

النسر ذو الرأس الأبيض

*al-nasr-u dhuu l-raʾsī l-ʿabyaD-i*

the bald-headed eagle (‘white-headed’)

اذوي الدخل المحدود

*li-dhawii l-daxi-l maHduud-i*

for those [people] of limited incomes

الجمل ذو السنامين

*al-jamal-u dhuu l-sanaam-ayni*

the two-humped camel

سافر بعيدا عن ذويه.

*saafar-a baʾiid-an ʿan dhawii-hi.*

He traveled far from his kin (‘those of his’).

### 4.2 Feminine

The feminine singular possessive pronoun (*dhaat*) is of frequent occurrence because of its use with nonhuman plurals.\(^\text{14}\)

---

\(^{14}\) Note that this instance of *dhaat* is not the same as the demonstrative use of *dhaat* (e.g., *dhaat-a yawm-in* ‘one day’) (see Chapter 13, section 4.2) or the substantive *dhaat* used to express “self” or “same” (e.g., *madH-u l-dhaat-i* ‘self-praise’) (see Chapter 9, section 5.1.2).
He described the talks as worthwhile ('of worth').

sources that have a relationship with the subject

He said that the results will be of importance.
Demonstrative pronouns (‘asmaa’ al-ishaara أسماء الإشارة) are determiners used with nouns or instead of nouns to show either distance from or proximity to the speaker, like “this” and “that” in English. English has four demonstrative pronouns: “this,” “that,” “these,” and “those.” Arabic has a richer variety of demonstratives. In fact, Classical Arabic has a complex system of sets and subsets of demonstratives, but in Modern Standard Arabic, the most commonly used ones are described as follows.

1 Demonstrative of proximity: ‘this; these’ هنا haadhaa

The demonstrative pronoun meaning ‘this’ or ‘these’ shows differences in gender and number, as well as inflection for case in the dual:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>هنا haadhaa</td>
<td>هَذَا haadhihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>هَذَا haadh-aani</td>
<td>هَانَا haat-aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive/accusative</td>
<td>هَذَا haadh-ayni</td>
<td>هَانِينَ haat-ayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>هُؤلاءُ haa’ulaa’i</td>
<td>هُؤلاءُ haa’ulaa’i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the plural demonstrative has no gender distinction and is used only when referring to human beings. For referring to nonhuman plurals, the feminine singular demonstrative is used.

1 More extensive paradigms of demonstrative variants are provided in Wright 1967, I:264-70; Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 80-81; Thatcher 1942, 53-55; Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1975, 200–203.
2 Demonstrative of distance: ‘that; those’ 

The demonstrative of distance “that” and “those” inflects for gender and number but is rarely used in the dual in MSA. These forms of the demonstrative are invariable and do not inflect for case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>ذلك</td>
<td>تلك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dhaalika</td>
<td>tilka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>أولك</td>
<td>أولك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘uulaa’ika</td>
<td>‘uulaa’ika</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Functions of demonstratives

The demonstrative pronouns can be used independently, in phrases, or in clauses.

3.1 Independent use

A demonstrative can stand by itself as a noun substitute:

- النجح في ذلك. 
  najaH-a fii dhaalika.
  He succeeded in that.

- حدث عن ذلك كله.
  Haddath-a ‘an dhaalika kull-i-hi.
  He spoke about all that.

- ما معنى هذا.
  ma’naa haadhaa
  the meaning of this

- القول هذا عن خبرة عملية.
  ‘a-quoU-u haadhaa ‘an xibrat-in ‘amaliyyat-in.
  I say this from practical experience.

3.2 Demonstrative phrases

In a demonstrative phrase, the demonstrative pronoun forms a syntactic unit with a definite noun in order to convey the concept of particular proximity or distance. These pronouns are considered determiners of nouns (in some ways like the definite article).

In Arabic, the demonstrative phrase consists of a demonstrative pronoun + definite article + noun, as follows:

- haadhaa + l- + lawn-u = haadhaa l-lawn-u
  ‘this-the-color’ = this color

- هذا اللون

Unlike English, then, the demonstrative phrase includes the definite article with the noun. If there is a modifying adjective, it follows the noun and agrees with it in gender, number, case and definiteness.

3.3 Demonstrative with second term of *’iDaafa*

The bond between the demonstrative pronoun and its noun is so tight that a demonstrative phrase is allowed to be used as the second term of an *’iDaafa*.

3.4 Demonstrative with first term of *’iDaafa*

If a demonstrative is needed for the first term of an *’iDaafa*, it must follow the whole *’iDaafa*. It cannot attach itself to the first term of the *’iDaafa* because it must be followed by a noun with the definite article, whereas the first term of

---

2 Normally, an *’iDaafa* cannot be interrupted by any word between the two nouns joined in the annexation structure.
an ‘iDaafa is stripped of the definite article and defined through the second term.

وجهة النظر هذه

wujhat-u l-naZar-i haadhihi

this point of view

3.5 Demonstrative with possessed noun

A noun made definite by means of a suffixed possessive pronoun cannot be preceded by a demonstrative pronoun because in order to precede the noun, the demonstrative must be followed by the definite article. Since a noun with a possessive pronoun cannot have the definite article (it is definite by virtue of the suffix), the demonstrative follows:

في كتابه هذا

fii kitaab-i-hi haadhaa

in this book of his

3.6 Demonstratives with proper names

Proper names are considered definite even though many of them do not have a definite article. When referring to someone’s name with a demonstrative, it follows the name:

كنت أشارت إلى خالد هذا.

kun-tu ‘ashar-tu ‘ilaa xaalid-in haadhaa.

I had referred to this ‘Khalid.’

3.7 Demonstrative clauses

In a demonstrative clause, the demonstrative pronoun serves as the subject of the clause, followed by a complement or predicate. There is therefore a syntactic boundary between the demonstrative and the rest of the clause.

هذا قطي.

haadhaa qiTT-ii.

This [is] my cat.

وهذا اختلاف هام.

wa-haadhaa xtilaaf-un haamm-un.

(‘And’) this [is] an important difference.

هذا رأي ينواقض الحقائق.


This [is] an opinion that contradicts the facts.
Most often, the predicate of a sentence or clause with a demonstrative as the subject is indefinite, or a definite noun with a pronoun suffix.

A noun with a definite article may serve as the predicate of an equational sentence, but if preceded by a demonstrative pronoun, there normally needs to be a copula or pronoun of separation between the demonstrative and the definite noun to show that there is a syntactic boundary between them, and that they do not form a phrase (see below).

3.8 Demonstrative clause with pronoun of separation (copula)
Here the predicate of the equational sentence is a noun with a definite article. In order to show clearly that there is a separation between a demonstrative pronoun subject and the definite noun, a personal pronoun is inserted at the boundary between subject and predicate to act as a copula or substitute for a verb of being.

3.8.1 Omission of copula
Occasionally, the copula pronoun or pronoun of separation is omitted in the demonstrative clause, and the separation has to be deduced from the context.

4 Other demonstratives

4.1 dhaaka
The demonstrative dhaaka is a variant of dhalika and sometimes may be used to contrast with it.
4.1.1 As an independent word

تلك الشوفينية وذلك التصبب وذلك الانغماس
tilka l-shuufiniyyat-u wa-dhaalaka l-ta‘asSub-u wa-dhaaka l-inghilaaq-u
that chauvinism, that tribalism, and that obscurity

كان ذلك بالأمس.
kaa-nda dhaaka bi-l-‘ams-i.
That was yesterday.

4.1.2 As a suffix

As a suffix on an accusative noun denoting ‘time when’:

انتهى الحدث يومذاك.
intahaay l-Hadath-u yawm-a-dhaaka.
The event ended that day.

وتحدثوا يومذاك.
wa-taHaddath-uu yawm-a-dhaaka.
They spoke that day.

وأطلق كتابه آنذاك تيارا من الاهتمام.
wa-‘aTlaq-a kitaab-u-hu ‘aan-a-dhaaka tayyaar-an min-a l-ihtimaam-i.
His book evoked a current of interest at that time.

اكتشف أمريكا سننذاك كان الحدث الكبير.
iktishaaf-u 'amriikaa sanat-a-dhaaka kaan-a l-Hadath-a l-kabiir-a.
The discovery of America that year was the great event.

4.2 Demonstrative dhaat-a ذات

This demonstrative indicates an indefinite distance in time or space and is used as the first term of an ‘iDaafa with an indefinite noun:

قبل أن تعرف ذات يوم أنها وارثة
qabl-a ‘an ta‘rif-a dhaat-a yawm-in ‘ann-a-haa waarithat-un
before she found out one day that she was an heiress.

4.3 Use of haa ها ‘this’
The word haa is sometimes used as a shortened form of haadhaa. It implies an immediate perception, something like English “behold.”

ها هي دولتكم.
haa hiya dawlat-u-kum.
This is your country/ Here is your country.

4.4 Locative demonstrative pronouns: hunaa هنا, hunaaka هناك and hunaalika هناك ‘here’, ‘there’ and ‘(over) there’

These words are considered both adverbs and locative demonstrative pronouns, since they denote a place close to, distant from, or very distant from the speaker.
They are used widely in both written and spoken Arabic. Some examples are found in Chapter 11 on adverbs. Here are some others:

4.4.1 Locative hunaa 'here'

_temp

هنا في المدينة هل أخذت المفتاح من هنا؟
hunaa fii l-madiindat-i hal 'axadh-ta l-miftaaH-a min hunaa?
here, in the city Did you take the key from here?

والحصين لا يوجد هنا مستحيل أن نجد أحداً هنا.
mustaHiil-un 'an na-jid-a 'aHil-an hunaa.
[It is] impossible to find ('that we find’) anyone here.

4.4.2 Locative hunaaka 'there'

الطائر هناك.
al-Ta' irat-u hunaaka.
The plane is [over] there.

لا بد أن تكون هناك بعد خمس دقائق.
laa budd-a 'an 'a-kuun-a hunaaka ba'd-a xams-i daqaa'iq-a.
I have to be there in five minutes.

4.4.3 Existential hunaaka هناك and hunaalika هناك: ‘there is, there are’

To convey the idea of existence Arabic uses the pronoun/adverb hunaaka ‘there’ paralleling the English use of “there is, there are.” Occasionally the variant hunaalika is also used.

هناك أولويات أهم.
fa-hunaaka 'awwalawiyaat-un 'ahamm-u.
There [are] more important priorities.

هناك مثلا القصور.
hunaalika mathal-an-i l-quSuur-u.
There [are], for example, castles.

هنالك روايات عدة عما حدث للملكة.
fa-hunaaka riwaayat-un 'iddat-un 'ammaa Hadath-a li-l-malikat-i.
There [are] several stories about what happened to the queen.
Relative pronouns and relative clauses

Relative pronouns relate an element in a subordinate relative clause (in Arabic, الن ál-Sila الصلة) to a noun or noun phrase in the main clause of a sentence. The Arabic relative pronoun (الـامـisms al-mawSuul الاسم الموصول) may be definite or indefinite. MSA uses nine forms of definite relative pronoun. Only the dual form of the definite relative pronoun shows difference in case. All, however, are marked for number and gender.

Relative clauses in Arabic are either definite or indefinite; definite clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun; indefinite relative clauses do not include a relative pronoun.

1 Definite relative pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>الـذي</td>
<td>التـي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alladhii</td>
<td>allatii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Nominative</td>
<td>الـذان</td>
<td>الـتـان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alladhaani</td>
<td>allataani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive/Accusative</td>
<td>الـذين</td>
<td>الـتين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alladhayni</td>
<td>allatayni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>الـذين</td>
<td>اللواتي ~ اللاتي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alladhiina</td>
<td>allaatii ~ allawaatii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the above paradigm the definite relative pronouns have a component that resembles the definite article, /al-/ /اـlـ/. They refer only to definite nouns and noun phrases. The initial /al-/ of the relative pronoun starts with hamzat al-waSl.
2 Definite relative clauses
A relative clause referring back to a definite antecedent uses the definite relative pronouns. The relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number and gender.

2.1 Singular relative pronoun

هي التي أرسلت الدكتورة.
hiya llatii ʾarsal-at-i l-duktuur-a.
She is the one who sent the doctor.

وهو الذي وضع المسمار الأخير.
wa-huwa lladhii wadāʿa l-mismaara l-ʾaxiira.
And he is the one who put [in] the last nail.

المركز الجديد الذي أقيم في المدينة
al-markaz-u ljaddid-u lladhii ʾuqiim-a fī l-madiinat-i
the new center which has been established in the city

2.2 Dual relative pronoun
In the dual, the relative pronoun agrees not only in gender and number with its antecedent, but also in case.

البرجان اللذان لا يزالان قائمين
al-burj-aani lladhaani laa ya-zaal-aani qaaʾim-ayni
the two towers which remain standing

لل الزوجين اللذين ينتظرا حدثا سعيدا
li-l-zawj-ayni llaḥ-ayni ya-ntaZir-aani Hadath-an saʾiid-an
for the couple who are awaiting a happy event

في الجلستين اللتين انعقدتا أمس
fī l-jalsat-ayni llataayni nʾaqad-ataa ʾams-i
in the two sessions that were held yesterday

2.3 Plural relative pronoun
The plural relative pronoun is used only when referring to human beings.

السياح اللذين يصلون كل يوم
al-siyyaH-u llaḍhiina ya-Sil-unna kull-a yawm-in
the tourists who arrive every day

النسوة اللواتي أرغمن على الإخلاء بالقوة
al-niswat-u llawaatii ʾurghim-na ʾalaa l-ʾixlaaʾi bī l-quwwat-i
the women who were compelled to evacuate by force
3 Indefinite relative clauses

A relative clause may refer to an indefinite noun or noun phrase in the main clause, in which case the relative pronoun is omitted.

The indefinite relative clause follows the main clause without any relative pronoun linking them. They are like two independent sentences implicitly linked because the second refers back to the first.

في زيارة لدمشق تستغرق أسبوعاً

$fii$ ziyaarat-in $li$-dimashq-a $’a$-staghriq-u $’usbuu$-an

on a visit to Damascus [which] lasts a week

عُثِرَ على هيئة عظمي فقد رأسه.

‘$athar-at $’ala$ haykal-in $’a$-Zmiyy-in $faqad$-a $ra$-s$-a$-hu.

She came upon a skeleton [which] had lost its head.

وأخيراً يظهر كرجل يمتلك الشجاعة.


Finally, he appears as a man [who] possesses courage.

عن مصدر فلسطيني رفض الكشف عن اسمه.

‘$an$ ma$Dar-in $filis$Tiiniyy-in $raf$aD-a $l$-kashf-a ‘$an$-i $sm$-i-hi

from a Palestinian source [who] refused to disclose his name

4 Resumptive pronouns in relative clauses

When a relative clause in Arabic refers back to a noun or noun phrase in the main clause which is the object of a verb or a preposition (e.g., “the book that we read,” “the house that I lived in”), a pronoun must be inserted in the relative clause to serve as the object of the verb or preposition, referring back to the object noun in the main phrase (“the book that we read (it),” $al$-kitaab-u $lladhiu$ $qara$-naa$-hu$

الكتاب الذي قرأناه

“the school I studied at (it)” $al$-madrasat-u $llatiu$ $daras-tu$ $fi$$-hhaa$

المدرسة التي درست فيها).

This substitute pronoun is called in Arabic the ‘$aa’id$ عائد or $raaji$ ‘returner’ and in English it is referred to as a resumptive pronoun. It occurs in definite and indefinite relative clauses that contain transitive verbs or prepositions referring back to an object in the main clause.

4.1 Resumptive pronoun in definite relative clauses

المكان الذي تقصده هنا.

$al$-makaan-u $lladhiu$ ta-qSid-u-hu $huna$.

The place which you seek (it) is here.
This is the house of the man whom we are searching for (him).

They kept the manuscripts which they had authenticated (them).

He said in a press conference [which] he held (it) yesterday.

The two leaders of the parties held (it) in a closed meeting [which] the results were final.

These pronouns refer to non-specified entities.

The pronoun man is used to refer to unspecified individuals. It may denote one person or a group but is usually treated grammatically as masculine singular.

من
من
ماذا ~ ما

5.1 Use of man as indefinite pronoun

5 Indefinite or non-specific relative pronouns: maa ما and man من

 кто такой, который мы ищем.

HaáfúaZ-uu ‘alaa l-maxTuU'aat-i l-latii ‘aqna‘-uu-haa.

They kept the manuscripts which they had authenticated (them).

Whoever; he/she who; one who

Whatever; what; that which

ماذا ~ ما

мн
He sells it to whomever needs it. there are those that say...

He was the first [person] who saw the moon.

5.2 Use of *maa*: ‘whatever; that which’
The relative pronoun *maa* functions in a wide variety of contexts.¹ Note that this use of *maa* is distinct from its use as an interrogative or negative particle.

*maa* bayn-a l-nahr-ayni
Mesopotamia (‘that which is between two rivers’)

*maa* laa nihaayat-a
infinity (‘that which has no end’)

*maa* ya-ta’allaq-u bi-l-zira’at-i

‘that which relates to agriculture’

‘that which follows’

What happened in Syria has not happened [here].

5.3 *maa* and *man* + resumptive pronoun
The indefinite pronouns *maa* and *man*, if they refer to the object of a verb or a preposition, are usually followed by a resumptive pronoun in the relative clause.²

*haadhaa* *maa* ‘aqsid-u-hu bi-l-DabT-i

This is exactly what I mean (it).

*shakar-a-hu ‘alaaa* *maa* gaddam-a-hu.

He thanked him for what he offered (it).

---

¹ Wehr lists nine different uses of *maa* (1979, 1042) and Abboud et al. (1997, 47–49) list examples of all nine uses: negative *maa*, interrogative *maa*, relative *maa*, nominalizing *maa*, durative *maa*, exclamatory *maa*, indefinite *maa*, conditional *maa*, and redundant *maa*.

² Technically, a resumptive pronoun is not necessary after an indefinite pronoun that refers to an object of a verb, but it was used consistently in the data gathered for this book. See Abboud and McCarus 1983, part 1:588; MECAS 1965, 97.
They get what they need (it). So she explained what she meant (it).

5.4 *maadhaa* as relative pronoun

Sometimes the particle *maadhaa* ‘what’ is used instead of *maa*, especially when the use of *maa* (which also functions as a negative particle) may be confusing:

> يعرف ماذا يريد حقاً.
> ya-‘rif-u *maadhaa* yu-riid-u Haqq-an.
> He really knows what he wants.

5.5 Use of *maa* for approximation

Used with numbers, amounts, and times, *maa* serves as a pronoun that can link a prepositional or verbal phrase to a previous statement by indicating approximation:

> قد يصل إلى ما بين ثلاثين وأربعين ألف شخص.
> qad ya-Sil-u ‘ilaal *maa* bayn-a thalaath-in wa-thalaathat-in.
> It might reach (what is approximately) between 300 and 400 thousand people.

> يستطيع الجمل أن يشرب ما حجمه من الماء.
> ya-tawajjab-u l-antzaraan ‘ilaal *maa* ba’d-a yawm-i l-sabt-i.
> The camel can drink his weight (what approximately his weight is) in water.

5.6 *maa* ‘a certain; some, one’

The relative pronoun *maa* is also used following a noun to emphasize its indefi- niteness or non-particularity, as in the following expressions:

> غيرت موقفها إلى حد ما.
> ghayyar-at mawqif-a-haa ‘ilaal Hadd-in maa.
> She changed her position to a certain extent.

> سيرجع يوما ما.
> sa-ya-rjfi‘-u yawm-an *maa*.
> He will come back one day.

> لماذا تحب فنانا ما?
> li-*maadhaa* tu-Hibb-u fannaan-an *maa*?
> Why do you like a certain artist?
5.7 mimmaa

The contracted phrase mimmaa (min + maa) may be used instead of the simple maa when referring to a preceding situation or condition:

The contracted phrase mimmaa (min + maa) may be used instead of the simple maa when referring to a preceding situation or condition:

mimmaa ‘amman-a la-hu ttiSaal-an daa’ im-an

which guaranteed him a permanent connection

mimmaa yu-addii ‘ilaa ‘i’Taa’-i l-majallat-i Taabi’an ‘adabiyy-an

which leads to giving the journal a literary character

mimmaa ya-’nii ‘anna kalfat-a l-mashruu’-i

which means that the cost of the project

5.8 bi-maa fii + pronoun ‘including’

This common idiomatic expression includes the indefinite pronoun maa:

bi-maa fii-haa Hukuumat-i ’israa’il-a.

He is in communication (‘conducting contacts’) with all the parties including the government of Israel.
The Arabic numeral system has been described as “somewhat complicated” (Cowan 1964, 182), “assez complexe (‘rather complex’)” (Kouloughli 1994, 121), “one of the trickiest features of written Arabic” (Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 301), as having “a special difficulty” (Cantarino 1975, II:361), and it has been said that the numerals “do not readily lend themselves to inductive analysis” (Ziadeh and Winder 1957, 148). These observations provide an indication of the complexity of a system which is important to understand but also challenging in the diversity of its categories and rules.

Provided here is an outline of the general structure of the morphology and syntax of MSA numerals, with examples taken from various contemporary contexts.1 The rules and examples are presented in numerical order, cardinal numerals first and then ordinal numerals.2

1 Cardinal numerals (al-‘a‘daad) (الأعداد)
The Arabic numerals “zero” through “ten” are listed as follows. To some extent there is resemblance with what are termed “Arabic” numbers in English, but the system is adapted from the Hindi numeral system and has significant differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numeral</th>
<th>Arabic Form</th>
<th>English Transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>Sifr⁴</td>
<td>صفر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>waaHid</td>
<td>واحد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>ithnaan</td>
<td>اثنان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>thalaatha</td>
<td>ثلاثة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>‘arba‘a</td>
<td>أربعة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>xamsa</td>
<td>خمسة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 I am grateful to my colleague, Dr. Muhsin Esseesy, for reading, correcting, and commenting on this chapter. See also Esseesy 2000.
3 Cognate with English ‘cipher.’
The numerals “one” and “two” have special features. “One” has two forms: an adjectival (waaHid) and a noun (or pronoun) form (’aHad), used in different ways. The numeral “two” is special because of the independent and extensive nature of the dual category in Arabic morphology. The numerals three to ten, on the other hand, are all nouns.

1.1 The numeral “one”

1.1.1 waaHid واحد and waaHida واحدة

The numeral ‘one’ waaHid has the morphological pattern of an active participle of Form I (faa’il). It behaves syntactically as an adjective, following the counted noun, and agreeing with it in case and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>six</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>sitta</th>
<th>ستة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seven</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>sab’a</td>
<td>سبعة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>thamaaniya</td>
<td>ثمانية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nine</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>tis’a</td>
<td>تسعة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>‘ashra</td>
<td>عشرة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numeral ‘one’ waaHid has the morphological pattern of an active participle of Form I (faa’il). It behaves syntactically as an adjective, following the counted noun, and agreeing with it in case and gender.

**fii waqt-in waaHid-in**

at one time

bihadaf-ayni muqaabil-a hadaf-in waaHid-in

with two goals as opposed to one goal

هل لهذا البلد أكثر من اسم واحد؟

hal li-haadhaa l-balad-i ’akthar-u min-i sm-in waaHid-in?

Does this country have more than one name?

قبل أن يخفف العقوبة إلى سنة واحدة فقط

qabli-a ’an yu-xaffif-a l-uquubat-a ’ilaa sanat-in waaHidat-in faqaT

before he lightened the penalty to one year only

1.1.2 ‘One of’: ’aHad أحمد and ’iHdaa إحدى

This form of “one” is usually used when expressing the notion “one of.”

§≤a IóMGh áæ°S ï∂EG áH ƒ≤©dG ∞Øîj ¿CG πÑb

before he lightened the penalty to one year only

However, waaHid min is also occasionally found for the expression of “one of”:

المنطقة كلها واحدة من أقل مناطق الجزائر سكاناً.

al-minTaqat-u kull-u-haa waaHidat-un min ‘aqall-i manaaTiq-i l-jazaa’-ir-i sukkaan-an.

The entire region is one of the lowest-populated in Algeria.

إلى واحد من أهم الفنون المعاصرة

’ilaa waaHid-in min ’ahamm-i l-funuun-i l-mu‘aaSirat-i

to one of the most important contemporary arts
following noun in the genitive dual or plural, or pronoun, which is dual or plural. The masculine form, 

\[ a'Had \]

is triptote; the feminine form, \[ iHdaa \], is invariable.

### 1.1.2.1 \[ a'Had \]:

\[
\text{في أحد مستشفيات جدة} \\
\text{fi' a'Had-i mustashfayaat-i jiddat-a} \\
\text{in one of the hospitals of Jidda}
\]

\[
\text{أحد المستنواب المستقلين} \\
\text{a'Had-u l-nuwwaab-i l-mustaqill-ina} \\
\text{one of the independent deputies}
\]

\[
\text{أحد مصباح} \\
\text{a'Had-u hum 'uSiib-a.} \\
\text{One of them was hit.}
\]

\[
\text{قدم أحد أعضاء المؤتمر اقتراحاً} \\
\text{qaddam-a 'a'Had-u 'a'Daa-i l-mu'tamar-i qitiraH-an.} \\
\text{One of the members of the conference offered a proposal.}
\]

### 1.1.2.2 \[ iHdaa \]: The feminine numeral \[ iHdaa \] is invariable in case:

\[
\text{في إحدى هذه المحاولات} \\
\text{fi' iHdaa haadhihi l-muHaawalaat-i} \\
\text{in one of these attempts}
\]

\[
\text{إحدى مهام هذه اللجنة} \\
\text{iHdaa mahaamm-i haadhihi l-lajnat-i} \\
\text{one of the tasks of this committee}
\]

### 1.1.2.3 ‘NO ONE, NOBODY; NEITHER ONE’:

Used with a negative verb, \[ a'Had \] is equivalent to ‘no one’ or ‘nobody’:

\[
\text{كانت إنّ أحداً لا يستطيع أن يوقفهم.} \\
\text{qaal-at 'inna 'a'Had-an laa ya-staTii'-u 'an yu-waqqif-a-hum.} \\
\text{She said that no one could stop them.}
\]

\[
\text{لم يكن أحد من الأسرة المالكة في القصر.} \\
\text{lum ya-kun 'a'Had-un min-a l-'usrat-i l-maalikat-i fii l-qaSr-i.} \\
\text{No one from the royal family was in the castle.}
\]

\[
\text{ليس في استطاعة أحدنا أن يعيش من دون الآخر.} \\
\text{lays-a fii stiTa'at-i 'a'Had-i-naa 'an ya-'iiish-a min duun-i l-'aaxar-i.} \\
\text{Neither one of us can live without the other.}
\]
1.2 The numeral ‘two’ \( \textit{ithnaan} \) and \( \textit{ithnataan} \)

The numeral “two” has both feminine and masculine forms and it also inflects for case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masc.</th>
<th>Fem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>اثنان</td>
<td>اثنان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \textit{ithnaani} )</td>
<td>( \textit{ithnataani} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>اثنين</td>
<td>اثنين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \textit{ithnayni} )</td>
<td>( \textit{ithnatayni} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accus.</td>
<td>اثنين</td>
<td>اثنين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \textit{ithnayni} )</td>
<td>( \textit{ithnatayni} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The genitive and accusative forms of inflection are identical, putting the numeral “two” into the two-way inflection category, just like the dual suffix on nouns and adjectives. Note that the initial vowel on \( \textit{ithnaan} \) is a hamzat al\(-\)-waSL, not a strong hamza (hamzat al-qaT).

1.2.1 The dual (\( \textit{al-muthannaa} \))

The numeral “two” is rarely used for counting purposes because of the existence of the dual category in the Arabic grammatical system. Two of anything is a separate inflectional class and receives a separate inflectional suffix: -\( aani \) (nominative) or -\( ayni \) (genitive/accusative). Note that dual agreement (pronouns, verbs, adjectives) follows a dual noun. See Chapter 7, sections 3.1 and 5.4.2.1., subsection (1) for further discussion of dual inflection.

1.2.1.1 MASCULINE DUAL: The masculine dual is used to refer to masculine nouns or a mix of feminine and masculine.

\begin{align*}
\text{دُخُلُ المَلَكَانَ.} & \quad \text{دُخُلُ البَلَدَيْنَ.} \\
\text{daxal-a l-malik-aani.} & \quad \text{bayn-a l-balad-ayni.} \\
\text{The two rulers entered.} & \quad \text{between the two countries} \\
(\text{Here, referring to a king and queen.}) & \\
\text{وَقَدْ وَجَدَ طَابِقَانَ بَنِيَّا مِنَ الحِجَارَةُ.} & \quad \text{tَ حَمْلُ بَنَوأتَينِ.} \\
\text{wa-qad wujid-a Taabaq-aani buniy-aa min-a l-Hijaaarat-i.} & \quad \text{ta-Hmil-u bi-taw’am-ayni.} \\
\text{Two floors were found built of stone.} & \quad \text{She is pregnant with twins.}
\end{align*}
1.2.1.2 FEMININE DUAL

أما المدنان الآخران
as for the other two cities

الدولتان العظميان
the two super powers

خلال السنتين الماضيتين
during the past two years

1.2.1.3 DUAL OF DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS: Demonstrative pronouns also have dual forms. When modifying dual nouns, they agree in duality, case, and gender:

من هدين الصحفين
from these two journalists

أعضاء هاتين اللجنتين
the members of these two committees

1.2.1.4 nuun-DELETION: When a dual noun is the first term of an annexation structure, or if it has a pronoun suffix, the nuun (and its short vowel kasra) of the dual suffix is deleted:

في كتفي الثور
in the two shoulders of the bull

ففي وادي نهر دجلة والفرات
in the valley of the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates

1.2.1.5 DUAL FOR EMPHASIS AND DISAMBIGUATION: Occasionally the number “two” is used explicitly in order to emphasize, distinguish two among others, or disambiguate.

فاثنتان منها تُعتبران معقاً للمعارضة.
(For) two of them [cities] are considered a stronghold for the opposition.

tضمّ ممثلين اثنين عن كل جانب.
It includes two representatives from each side.*

*Here, the word thnayn is added to clarify the status of the word mumaththil-ayni مماثلين because in unvoweled Arabic script it looks identical to the plural, mumaththil-iina مماثلين.
1.2.1.6 ‘BOTH’ kilaa AND kiltaa  The words kilaa (m.) and kiltaa (f.) are quantifiers used to express the concept of “both.” These words are related to the noun kull ‘all,’ and are not part of the numeral system, but are considered to have numerative meaning. They are specifically dual and followed either by a noun in the dual or by a dual pronoun suffix.

When followed by a noun they do not inflect for case; when followed by a pronoun, they do inflect for case.

in both cases  
fii kiltaa l-Haalat-ayni  
في كلتا الحالتين

with both his (two) hands  
bi-kiltaa yad-ay-hi  
بكلتا يديه

both of them (m.)  
kilaa-humaa  
كلاهما

with both of them  
bi-kil-ay-himaa  
بكليهما

For further discussion of kilaa and kiltaa, see Chapter 9, section 1.3.

1.3 Numerals three to ten
Arabic numerals three to ten have two distinctive characteristics: first, they are followed by a plural noun in the genitive case, and second, they show gender polarity, or reverse gender agreement with the counted noun. That is, if the singular noun is masculine, the numeral will have the feminine marker taa’ marbūṭa, and if the singular noun is feminine, the numeral will be in the masculine form.

The numerals three to ten are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used for counting f. nouns</th>
<th>Used for counting m. nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thalaath</td>
<td>thalaath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“arba”</td>
<td>“arba”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xams</td>
<td>xams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitt</td>
<td>sitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sab</td>
<td>sab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thamaanin⁵</td>
<td>thamaaniya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tis</td>
<td>tis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ashra”</td>
<td>“ashra”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵ The numeral ‘eight’ thamaanin, is defective in the masculine gender (the feminine form, ending in taa’ marbūṭa, is triptote, or regular in declension). As an indefinite defective noun it declines as follows: nominative and genitive have identical form: thamaan-in; accusative has the form thamaaniy-an; as a definite noun, the nominative and genitive are also identical: thamaanii, and the accusative definite form is thamaaniy-a. See the declension for defective nouns in Chapter 7, section 5.4.3
In recitation form, in counting without a counted noun, or in referring to a specific numeral alone, the form with taa’ marbuuTa is usually used. For example:

\[ \text{راقم ستة هو رقم سحري.} \]

\[ \text{raqm-u sittat-in huwa raqm-un siHriyy-un.} \quad \text{waahHiid-un, ithnaani, thalaathat-un!} \]

The number six is a magic number. One, two three!

1.3.1 Three to ten counted nouns

Counted noun phrases from three to ten have two forms, definite (“the five houses”) and indefinite (“five houses”). If an adjective follows the counted noun (“the five large houses; five large houses”), it agrees with the noun in case, gender, and definiteness. For nonhuman plural nouns, the adjective is feminine singular and for human nouns, the adjective is plural.

1.3.1.1 INDEFINITE COUNTED NOUN: With an indefinite counted item, the numeral shows reverse gender agreement and precedes the counted noun. The case marker on the numeral varies according to its role in the sentence and it is considered definite because it is in an ‘iDaafa relationship with the noun, so the case ending on the numeral is in definite form (i.e., it does not take nunation). The counted noun itself is plural, indefinite, and in the genitive case.

(1) Feminine noun = masculine numeral form

\[ \text{ثلاث مخطوطات} \]

\[ \text{thalaath-u maxTuuTaat-in (singular maxTuuTa مخطوطات)} \]

three manuscripts

\[ \text{ثلاث قصائد} \]

\[ \text{thalaath-u qaSiida} (\text{singular qaSiida قصيدة}) \]

three odes

\[ \text{نقرأ ثلاثة مقابلات.} \]

\[ \text{na-qra’-u thalaath-a muqaabalaat-in. (singular muqaabala مقابلة)} \]

We are reading three interviews.

\[ \text{ثلاث أبار عميقة} \]

\[ \text{thalaath-u ‘aabaar-in ‘amiiqat-in (singular bi’r(بحيرة)}^6 \]

three deep wells

---

^6 The singular of “well” (bi’r) looks masculine but is actually cryptofeminine.
خمس مرات في اليوم
xams-a marraat-in fii l-yawm-i (singular marra مرة)
five times a day

 ضمن ست فرق عمل
Dimm-a sitt-i firqa-ı ’amal-in (singular firqa فرقة)
within six working groups

 لمدة ثمانية ساعات
li-muddat-i thamaani saa’aat-in (singular saa’a ساعة)
for a period of eight hours

 سرقوا تسع سيارات.
saraq-uu tis’-a sayyaaraat-in. (singular sayyaara سيارة)
They stole nine cars.

(2) Masculine noun = feminine numeral form

أربعة خنجر
‘arba‘at-u xanaajir-a (singular xanjar خنجر)
four daggers

خمسة دراهم
xamsat-u daraahim-a (singular dirham درهم)
five dirhams

 بسرعة ستة كيلومترات في الثانية
bi-sur‘at-i sittat-i kiiluumitraat-in fii l-thaaniyat-i (singular kiiluumitr كيلومتر)
at the rate of six kilometers per second

 وأضافت أن ستة أشخاص اعتقلوا.
wa-‘aDaaf-at ‘anna sab‘at-a ‘ashxaas-in u’tuqil-uu. (singular shaxS شخص)
It added that seven persons were detained.

 إلى مسافة عشرة أمتار
‘ilaa masaafat-i ‘asharat-i ‘amtaa-ar-in (singular mitr متر)
to a distance of ten meters

(3) Indefinite counted noun plus adjective:

 لنا ثلاثة احتياجات أساسية
la-naa thalaathat-u Htiyaajaaat-in ‘asaasiyyat-in. (singular iHtiyaaj احتياجات)
We have three basic needs.
لسهابة مواسم متتالية
li-thalaathat-i mawaasim-a mutataaliyat-in (singular mawsim موسم)
for three successive seasons

يستقبل أربعة سفراء جد.
ya-staqbil-u ‘arba‘-at-a sufaraa‘-a judud-in. (singular safiir سفير)
He welcomes four new ambassadors.

خمسة مؤتمرات دولية
xamsat-u mu’tamaraat-in duwaliyyat-in (singular mu’tamar مؤتمر)
five international conferences

(4) Indefinite with definite meaning: This can occur when a numeral is used
with a superlative expression, where the superlative adjective is followed by
an indefinite plural noun.7

في أهم أربع مدن
fii ’ahamm-i ‘arba‘-i mudun-in
in the most important four cities

(5) Indefinite noun with following numeral: Rarely, an indefinite counted noun
will precede the numeral. The numeral still shows reverse gender, but in this
position it is in apposition with the noun and takes the same case as the noun:

من خلال جلسات ثلاثة
min xilaal-i jalasaat-in thalaath-in (singular jalsa جلسة)
through three sessions

خلال عقود ثلاثة
xilaal-a ‘uqud-in thalaathat-in (singular ‘aqd عقد)
during three decades

(6) Indefinite numeral followed by min ‘of’: When indicating a specific num-
ber of items among a larger number, an indefinite form of the numeral may
be used followed by min ‘of’ and a definite noun or noun phrase:

يضم أربعة من وزراء النفط.
ya-Dumm-u ‘arba‘-at-an min wuzaraa‘-i l-nifTi.
It includes four of the petroleum ministers.

7 For further discussion of this point, see Chapter 10, section 4.2.4.
1.3.1.2 DEFINITE COUNTED NOUN: In the definite form, the numeral is in apposition with the noun. It follows the noun, it agrees with the noun in case, it has the definite article, and it shows reverse gender agreement.

(1) **Masculine noun:** With a noun that is masculine in the singular, a feminine numeral form is used:

أركان الإسلام الخمسة

'arkaan-u l-‘islaam-i l-xamsat-u (singular rukn ركن)

the five pillars of Islam

طوال العقود الثلاثة الأخيرة

Tiwaal-a l-‘uquud-i l-thalaathat-i l-axiirat-i (singular ‘aqd عقد)

during the last three decades

ووزراء النفط السنة

wuzaraa-wu l-nifT-i l-sittat-u (singular waziir وزير)

the six oil ministers

(2) **Feminine noun:** With a noun that is feminine in the singular, the masculine form of the numeral is used:

الجهات الأربعة الأصلية

al-jiihaat-u l-‘arba-‘-u l-‘aSliyyat-u (singular jiha جهة)

the four cardinal directions

دقات القلب الخمس

daqqaat-u l-qalb-i l-xams-u (singular daqq دقة).

the five heartbeats

في القارات الخمس

fii l-qaarraat-i l-xams-i (singular qaarra قارة)

on the five continents

بين ممثلي هذه الصحف السبع

bayn-a mumaththil-lii haadhihi l-SuHuf-i l-sab-‘-i (singular SaHiifa صحيفة)

among the representatives of these seven newspapers

(3) **Definite counted noun with following adjective:** When a definite counted noun is modified by an adjective, the adjective follows the numeral and agrees with the noun in gender, case, and definiteness. For nonhuman nouns, the plural form of the adjective is feminine singular; for human nouns, the adjective is plural in form.

بين ألوان الطيف السبعة المعروفة

bayn-a ’alwaan-i l-Tayf-i l-sab-at-i l-ma-‘ruufat-i (singular lawn لون)

among the seven known colors of the spectrum
He declared that the first five winners in the match would represent their country.

1.3.2 Plural numerals

The numerals taken in groups, such as “tens” are made plural with the sound feminine plural marker -aat:

He declared that the first five winners in the match would represent their country.

1.4 Numerals eleven and twelve

The numerals eleven and twelve start the teens number series. In this set of numerals, the numeral names are compounds, that is, they are formed of two parts, the first part referring to the first digit and the second part always some form of the word “ten” (‘ashar or ‘ashra).

Eleven: The numeral eleven is invariable in case, being accusative at all times. The first component of the compound number is the word ‘aHad (m.) or ِiHdaa (f.), rather than the word waaHid. Both parts of the compound numeral show the same gender.

Twelve: The numeral twelve shows two case inflections, nominative and genitive-accusative, along the lines of the numeral “two” and the dual. Both parts of the compound numeral show the same gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eleven</td>
<td>أحمد عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘aHad-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twelve nominative</td>
<td>إثنا عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ithn-aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twelve genitive-accusative</td>
<td>اثني عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ithn-ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘ashar-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contemporary newspaper Arabic, numerals over ten tend to be in figures rather than spelled out in words. In this chapter the numbers are converted into spelled-out numerals in order to illustrate how they are pronounced and how the numeral system works.
When used in a counted noun phrase, **both components of the compound numerals eleven and twelve agree with the counted noun in gender.** They do **not** show gender polarity. They are followed by a noun in the **accusative singular**. This accusative is a form of *tamyiiz*, or “accusative of specification.”

1.4.1 Indefinite counted nouns

1.4.1.1 **FEMININE COUNTED NOUN = FEMININE ELEVEN OR TWELVE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine Eleven</th>
<th>Feminine Twelve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>thaman-u-haa</code> <code>Hda </code> <code>asdr-at-a liirat-an</code></td>
<td><code>thaman-u-haa thnat-aa </code> <code>asdr-at-a liirat-an</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its price is <em>eleven liras/pounds</em></td>
<td>Its price is <em>twelve liras/pounds</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bniit qlbl <code>Hda </code> `asdr-at-a sanat-an</em></td>
<td><em>bniit qlbl thnat-ay <code> </code>asdr-at-a sanat-an</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was built <em>eleven years ago</em></td>
<td>It was built <em>twelve years ago</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.1.2 **MASCULINE NOUN = MASCLINE ELEVEN OR TWELVE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine Eleven</th>
<th>Masculine Twelve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>thaman-u-haa</code> <code>Had-a </code> <code>ashar-a dirham-an</code></td>
<td><code>thaman-u-haa thn-aa </code> <code>ashar-a dirham-an</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its price is <em>eleven dirhams</em></td>
<td>Its price is <em>twelve dirhams</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bniit qlbl <code>Had-a </code> <code>ashar-a </code> `aam-an</em></td>
<td><em>bniit qlbl thn-ay <code> </code>ashar-a <code> </code>aam-an</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was built <em>eleven years ago</em></td>
<td>It was built <em>twelve years ago</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.2 Definite counted nouns with eleven and twelve

When the counted noun is definite, the **numeral eleven or twelve follows the plural noun** and the definite article is affixed to the first part of the numeral only. The case marker of the noun varies depending on the role of the noun in the sentence; the case marker on eleven is always accusative; the case marker on the first part of the numeral twelve varies according to the case of the noun it modifies.

---

9 For further discussion of the *tamyiiz* structure see Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.7, and Chapter 11, section 6.
1.4.2.1 MASCULINE DEFINITE PLURAL NOUN:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{HaDar-a} & \text{l-sufaraa`} -u \text{l-`}a\text{Had-a} `\text{ashar-a}. \\
\text{HaDar-a} & \text{l-sufaraa`} -u \text{l-thn-aa} `\text{ashr-a}.
\end{align*}
\]

The eleven ambassadors came.

The twelve ambassadors came.

1.4.2.2 FEMININE DEFINITE NOUN:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{HaDar-at-i} & \text{l-`}ustaadhah-at-u \text{l-`}i\text{Hdaa} `\text{ashrat-a}. \\
\text{HaDar-at-i} & \text{l-`}ustaadhah-at-u \text{l-`}ithnat-aa `\text{ashrat-a}.
\end{align*}
\]

The eleven professors (f.) came.

The twelve professors (f.) came.

1.5 Numbers thirteen to nineteen

The group of “teens” numerals are similar to the numeral eleven in that they are invariably in the accusative case and are followed by a singular accusative noun. They are unlike eleven and twelve in that the first part of the compound number shows gender polarity with the counted noun, while the second part of the compound number shows direct gender agreement with the counted noun.

That is, the first element, three to nine, behaves in gender like the cardinal numbers three to nine. The second element behaves more like an adjective, agreeing with the counted noun in gender.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With feminine counted noun:</th>
<th>With masculine counted noun:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thirteen ٣٠٨ عشرة</td>
<td>٣٠٨ عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thalaath-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>thalaathat-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourteen أربع عشرة</td>
<td>أربع عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'arba'-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>'arba'at-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifteen خمسة عشرة</td>
<td>خمسة عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xams-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>xamsat-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sixteen ستة عشرة</td>
<td>ستة عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitt-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>sittat-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seventeen سبعة عشرة</td>
<td>سبعة عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sab'-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>sab'at-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eighteen ثمانية عشرة</td>
<td>ثمانية عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thamaaniy-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>thamaaniyat-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nineteen تسع عشرة</td>
<td>تسع عشرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tis'-a 'ashrat-a</td>
<td>tis'at-a 'ashar-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.5.1 Indefinite counted noun

ببلغ طوله ثلاثة عشر متراً

ya-blugh-u Tuul-u-hu thalaathat-a 'ashar-a mitr-an.

Its length reaches thirteen meters.

فازوا بأربع عشرة ميدالية

faaz-uu bi-'arba'-a 'ashrat-a

'miidaaliyyat-an.

They won fourteen medals. over a period of fifteen years

ثم الجريدة خمسة عشر ريالاً

thaman-u l-jariidat-i xamsat-a 'ashar-a ryyaal-an.

The cost of the newspaper is fifteen rials.

يضم تسع عشرة شقة

ya-Dumm-u tis'-a 'ashrat-a shaqqat-an.

It contains nineteen apartments. for a period of sixteen years
1.5.2 Definite counted noun

A definite counted noun with a teens numeral is in the plural, followed by the teens numeral prefixed with the definite article. The article is on only the first part of the numeral compound, not the second part. Whereas the counted noun in this situation may be in any case that its role in the sentence requires, the teens numeral remains invariably in the accusative case. The first part of the compound number shows gender polarity.

in the nineteen rooms

1.5.3 In independent form

When counting or listing the numerals by themselves, the form with the feminine marker on the first element is used, i.e., xamsat-a ‘ashar-a, sittat-a ‘ashar-a, sab‘at-a ‘ashar-a ‘fifteen, sixteen, seventeen.’

1.6 Numerals twenty to ninety-nine

The even tens numerals are constructed as a numeral stem joined with a sound masculine plural suffix that inflects two ways for case, -uuna for the nominative and -iina for genitive-accusative. These even tens numerals themselves do not show any gender distinctions or differences.

The numbers twenty to ninety-nine are followed by a singular accusative counted noun, which is a form of tamyiiz, or accusative of specification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>twenty</td>
<td>‘ishruuna/‘ishriina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirty</td>
<td>thalaathuuna/thalaathiina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forty</td>
<td>‘arba‘uuna/‘arba‘iina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Note that the adjective agrees strictly with the counted noun and is singular, although the meaning is plural.

11 In spoken Arabic, the tens numbers are reduced to one case, the genitive-accusative. However, in written Arabic, the case distinction is still maintained if the number is written out.

12 The base form for this number appears to be from the lexical root for “ten,” and it has been theorized that originally, it might have been something like “‘ishrauni ‘two-tens’ and that the dual suffix came subsequently to resemble the other tens suffixes by a process of analogy.
fifty xamsuuna/xamsiina خمسون/خمسين
sixty sittuuna/sittiina ستون/ستين
seventy sab‘uuna/sab‘iina سبعون/سبعين
eighty thamaanuuna/thamaaniina ثمانون/ثمانين
ninety tis‘uuna/tis‘iina تسعون/تسعين

1.6.1 Indefinite counted noun

في عشرين مجلدًا
‘ishruuna qirsh-an fii ‘ishriina mujallad-an
taxtew piasters in twenty volumes

بمشاركة أكثر من أربعين دار نشر
bi-mushaarakat-i ‘akthar-a min ‘arba‘iina daar-a nashr-in
with the participation of more than forty publishing houses

بعد مرور أكثر من ستين عامًا
ba‘d-a muruu-r-i ‘akthar-a min sittiina‘aam-an
after the passage of more than sixty years

خمسون من موظفي المحطة
xamsuuna min muwaZZaf-ii l-maHaTTat-i
fifty of the station employees

1.6.2 Plurals of tens

The plural form of the tens numerals is the sound feminine plural, which is suffixed to the genitive-accusative form of the number:

twenties ‘ishriinaat عشرينات
thirties thalaathiinaat ثلاثينات
forties ‘arba‘iinaat أربعينات
fifties xamsiinaat خمسينات
sixties sittiinaat ستينات
seventies sab‘iinaat سبعينات
eighties thamaaniinaat ثمانينات
nineties tis‘iinaat تسعينات

13 Because the word xamsuuna here is followed by the preposition min, the counted noun is not governed by the numeral, but is plural.
1.6.3 Compound tens
To construct compound tens numerals, the first part of the compound is an indefinite number joined to the second by the conjunction wa- ‘and.’ The first digit shows case and gender as follows:

1.6.3.1 THE “ONES” AND “TWOS” The units twenty-one, thirty-one and so forth are constructed with the numeral “one” and then the tens component. The numeral “one” shows straight gender agreement with the noun. It can be either of the form waaHid/ waaHida or the form √aHaa/√iHaa.

The “twos” units inflect for case as duals and show straight gender agreement with the counted noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With masculine counted noun:</th>
<th>With feminine counted noun:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>twenty-one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>واحِدة وعشْرٍونَ</td>
<td>واحِدة وعشْرٍونَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waaHid-un wa-‘ishruuna</td>
<td>waaHidat-un wa-‘ishruuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أَحْدَه وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
<td>إِحْدَئ وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>√aHaa-un wa-‘ishruuna</td>
<td>√iHaa wa-‘ishruuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twenty-two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اثَنَان وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
<td>اثَنَان وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ithnaani wa-‘ishruuna</td>
<td>ithnataani wa-‘ishruuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اَثْنَيْن وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
<td>اَثْنَيْن وَعُشْرُونَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ithnayni wa-‘ishruuna</td>
<td>ithnayni wa-‘ishruuna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

لِمُدْة واحِدة وعشْرين يوماً
li-muddat-i waaHid-in wa-‘ishriina yawm-an
for a period of twenty-one days

لِمُدْة اثْنَان وعشْرين سنة
li-mudddat-i √iHaa wa-‘ishriina sanat-an
for a period of twenty-one years
1.6.3.2 TENS NUMERALS PLUS THREES TO NINES: Numerals such as twenty-four, seventy-six, thirty-five and so on are compounded of the single digit number linked to the tens numeral by means of the conjunction wa-, making combinations such as “four and twenty, six and seventy, five and thirty,” and so forth. Except for the numeral eight, which belongs to the defective declension, the single digits are triptote, they take nunation, and they show reverse gender with the counted noun. The counted noun is singular, indefinite, and accusative. Both parts of the numeral inflect for case.

(1) Indefinite counted noun:

 Arabic

 بعد أربع وعشرين ساعة
ba’d-a ʿarba‘-in wa-ʿishiīna

 saa‘-at-an
after twenty-four hours

 أكثر من خمسة وخمسين فيلماً
'?akthar-u min xamsat-in wa-xamsiīna

 fiilm-an
more than fifty-five films

 تنافسوا في ثمان وعشرين لعبة.
tanaafaas-uu fii thamaan-in wa-ʿishiīna laʿbat-an.
They competed in twenty-eight sports.

 عمره ثلاثة وستون عاماً.
ʿumr-u-hu thalaathat-un wa-sittuuna ʿaam-an.
He is sixty-three years old (‘His age is sixty-three years’).

(2) Definite counted noun: With a definite counted noun from 20 to 99, the numeral comes first and has the definite article, followed by the singular indefinite noun in the accusative case:

 Arabic

 عليَّ باباً والأربعون لصاً
ʿaliyy baabaa wa-l-arba‘-uuna liSS-an

 Tiwaal-a l-thalaathīna sanat-an-i
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

 خلال الثلاثين سنة الماضية
l-maaDiyat-i

during the past thirty years

 أسماء الله الحسني النسعة وتسعون
ʿasmaa‘-u llaah-i l-Husnaa l-tis‘at-u wa-tis‘uuna

the ninety-nine attributes of God

1.7 The even hundreds

The word for “hundred” in Arabic is mi‘a, spelled both as مئة and مائة. It is a feminine noun and remains feminine at all times. When used with a counted noun, it goes into an ‘iDaafa relationship with the noun and that noun is in the genitive singular. The concept of “two hundred” is expressed by using mi‘a in the dual, with the dual suffix. The dual suffix here obeys the law of nuun-drop when it goes into an ‘iDaafa with a following counted noun:
one hundred
منة
mi’ā

two hundred
منتان (nominative)
mi’at-aani

( accusative/genitive)
mi’at-ayni

1.7.1 Counting in even one and two hundreds
منة كيلومتر شرق عدن
mi’at-u qunbulat-in yadawiyyat-in
mi’at-u kiluūmitr-in sharq-a ‘adan-a
100 hand grenades
100 kilometers east of Aden

 لمدة منة يوم
li-muddat-i mi’at-i yawm-in
mi’at-aa fils-in
for a period of 100 days
200 fils (a unit of currency)
for 200 dollars

في جلساته حوالي منة باحث.
fii jalsat-i-hi Hawaalii mi’at-u baaHith-in.
In its sessions [are] approximately 100 researchers.

1.7.2 Definite hundreds phrases
In this case, the word mi’a has the definite article, and the counted noun is genitive singular indefinite. In these examples, the hundreds phrase serves as the second term of an ‘iDaafa.

سباق المئة متر
sibaaq-u l-mi’at-i mitr-in
the hundred-meter race

بطل المئة متر
ba’al-u l-mi’at-i mitr-in
the champion of the hundred meters

1.7.2.1 EXPRESSING ‘PERCENT’: To express the concept of percent, the term fii l-mi’at-i or bi-l-mi’at-i is used:

يملكان خمسة عشر في المئة من الشركة.
mi’at-un bi-l-mi’at-i
yu-mlik-aani xamsat-a ‘ashar-a fii l-mi’at-i
100 percent
min-a l-sharikat-i.
The two of them own 15 percent of the company.

في نحو تسعين في المئة من البلديات الريفية
fii naHw-i tis’îina fii l-mi’at-i
in approximately 90 percent of the rural municipalities
1.7.3 Three hundred to nine hundred

When the numeral is over two hundred, the hundred noun is counted by a numeral (in the masculine form because mi’a is feminine) followed by the word mi’a in the singular genitive form. This compound numeral may be written optionally as one word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One word</th>
<th>Two words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>three hundred</td>
<td>thalaath-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>ثلاث مئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four hundred</td>
<td>’arba‘-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>أربع مئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five hundred</td>
<td>xams-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>خمس مئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six hundred</td>
<td>sitt-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>ست مئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seven hundred</td>
<td>sab‘-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>سبع مئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight hundred</td>
<td>thamaanii mi’at-in</td>
<td>ثمانيمئة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nine hundred</td>
<td>tis‘-u mi’at-in</td>
<td>تسع مئة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following counted noun is genitive, singular, and indefinite:

1.7.3.1 INDEFINITE COUNTED NOUN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>من خمس مئة متر مكعبَِٔ</th>
<th>من خمس مئة متر مكعبَِٔ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>four hundred</td>
<td>’arba‘-u mi’at-i mil‘im-in</td>
<td>min xams-i mi’at-i mitr-in muka‘‘ab-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 millemes</td>
<td></td>
<td>from 500 cubic meters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

في غضون خمس مئة ساعة دراسية

fii ghuDuun-i xams-i mi’at-i saa‘at-in diraasiyyat-in
during 500 study hours

1.8 Complex numerals with hundred

When counting in the hundreds, the word mi’a comes first joined to the second part of the numeral by the conjunction wa-‘and.’ For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>منة وتسعة عشر</th>
<th>منة وتسعة عشر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a hundred and seven</td>
<td>mi’at-un wa-sabt’at-un</td>
<td>a hundred and seven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>منتان وخمسة وسبعون</th>
<th>منتان وخمسة وسبعون</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a hundred and fifty</td>
<td>mi’at-un wa-xamsuuna</td>
<td>a hundred and fifty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two hundred and seventy-five</td>
<td>mi’at-aani wa-xamsat-un wa-sab‘uuna</td>
<td>two hundred and seventy-five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(‘two hundred and five and seventy’)
1.8.1 Counting with complex numerals in the hundreds

The second part of the number, being the part directly adjacent to the following noun, is the part that determines the case and number of the counted noun.

1.8.1.1 LAST PART IS 3–10 FOLLOWED BY GENITIVE PLURAL:

بُنيت قبل السنة وسبعة أعوام.

buniy-at qabl-a mi’at-in wa-sab‘at-i ‘a‘waam-in.

It was built 107 years ago.

1.8.1.2 LAST PART IS 11–99 FOLLOWED BY ACCUSATIVE SINGULAR:

اجاءوا من سنة وخمسين دولة.

jaa‘-uu min mi’at-in wa-xamsiina dawlat-an.

They came from 150 countries.

وصلت سرعة الرياح إلى سنة وسبعين كيلومترًا في الساعة.


The wind speed reached 170 kilometers an hour.

1.8.2 Plural “hundreds”: mi’aat

The word mi’a is made plural with the sound feminine plural mi’aat. When used for counting, mi’aat is followed by either a definite noun in the genitive plural or the preposition min to express the “hundreds of” relationship.

أُغلقت مئات المدارس.

‘ughliq-at mi’aat-u l-madaaris-i.

Hundreds of schools were closed.

أكثر من بضع مئات من الأمثلة

‘akhtar-u min biD-i mi’aat-i min-a l-‘amthilat-i

more than several hundreds of examples

مئات الأطفال اللبنانيين

mi’aat-u l-t‘afaal-i l-lubnaaniyy-iina

hundreds of Lebanese children

ويجتمع المئات منهم.

wa-yajtimi‘-u l-mi’aat-u min-hum.

Hundreds of them are meeting.
1.9 Thousands
The word for thousand in Arabic is 'alf ١٠٠٠, plural 'aalaaf ١٠٠٠٠. It is a masculine noun and is counted as any other masculine noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>'alf</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>'alf-aani/ 'alfayni</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>thalaathat-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>'arba’at-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>xamsat-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>sittat-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>sab’at-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>thamaaniyat-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>tis’at-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>‘asharat-u 'aalaaf-in</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>'aHad-a 'ashar-a 'alf-an</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>ithnaa 'ashar-a 'alf-an</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>xamsat-a 'ashar-a 'alf-an</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>'ishruuna 'alf-an</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>xamsat-un wa-'ishruuna 'alf-an</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>mi’at-u 'alf-in</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>mi’at-aa 'alf-in</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>475,000</td>
<td>'arba’-u mi’at-in wa-xamsat-un wa-sab’uuna 'alf-an</td>
<td>475,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.9.1 Counting in thousands
When used for counting, the numeral 'alf / 'aalaaf goes into an 'iDaafa relationship with the following noun, which is in the genitive singular. In complex numerals over a thousand (as with mi’a), it is the final component of the numeral that determines the number (singular or plural) and case of the counted noun.

As for the number of hotels, it reaches 4,000 establishments.
More than 11,000 athletes came.

More than 13,000 books

153,000 Kurds

3,432 square kilometers

It has lost approximately 450,000 jobs.

1.9.2 Special cases

For the even thousands plus “one” or “two,” a special construction exists in Classical Arabic, although no instances of it were encountered in the data covered for this project.

1001 nights ألف ليلة وليلة

2002 nights ألف ليلة وليلتان

1.10 Reading years in dates

Because Arabic has two words for ‘year,’ ‘aam عام and ‘awaam أعوام (masculine) and sana سنة and sanawaat سنوات (feminine), the numbers in year dates can vary in gender. When reading year dates, the word for ‘year’ (either ‘aam or sana) precedes the numeral expression and is in an iDaafa with it, so that the date itself is the second term of the iDaafa and is in the genitive case.

Because of the reverse gender rule, if the masculine noun ‘aam is used, then any 3–10 digit is feminine, and if the feminine noun sana is used, then any 3–10 digit is in the masculine.

In general, either the phrase ‘in the year’ fii ‘aam-i or fii sanat-i is used, or the word ‘aam-a or sanat-a is used in the accusative (time adverbial). Sometimes these phrases are understood and not explicitly mentioned.
1.10.1 ‘in the year 711’

1.10.1.1 USING sana

في سنة سبع مئة ونادي عشرة

\textit{fii sanat-i sab\textsuperscript{i} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-\textit{iHdaa} ‘ashrat-a}

سنة سبع مئة ونادي عشرة

\textit{sanat-a sab\textsuperscript{i} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-\textit{iHdaa} ‘ashrat-a}

1.10.1.2 USING ‘aam:

في عام سبع مئة ونادي عشرة

\textit{fii ‘aam-i sab\textsuperscript{i} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-\textit{aHad-a} ‘ashar-a

عام سبع مئة ونادي عشرة

\textit{‘aam-a sab\textsuperscript{i} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-\textit{aHad-a} ‘ashar-a

1.10.2 ‘in the year 1956’

1.10.2.1 USING sana

في سنة ألف وتسعة مئة وست وخمسين

\textit{fii sanat-i ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-sitt-in wa-xamsiina

سنة ألف وتسعة مئة وست وخمسين

\textit{sanat-a ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-sitt-in wa-xamsiina

1.10.2.2 USING ‘aam:

في عام ألف وتسعة مئة وست وخمسين

\textit{fii ‘aam-i ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-sittat-in wa-xamsiina

عام ألف وتسعة مئة وست وخمسين

\textit{‘aam-a ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-sittat-in wa-xamsiina

1.10.3 ‘in the year 1998’

1.10.3.1 USING sana

في سنة ألف وتسعة مئة وثمانون وتسعين

\textit{fii sanat-i ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-thamaanin wa-tis\textsuperscript{iina

سنة ألف وتسعة مئة وثمانون وتسعين

\textit{sanat-a ‘alf-in wa-tis\textsuperscript{s} mi\textsuperscript{at-in wa-thamaanin wa-tis\textsuperscript{iina

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1.10.3.2 USING ‘aam’:

في عام ألف وتسعة مائتا وثمانية وتسعين

\[ \text{fi 'aam-i 'alf-in wa-tis-i mi`at-in wa-thamaaniyat-in wa-tis`iina} \]

عام ألف وتسعة مائتا وثمانية وتسعين

\[ \text{‘aam-a 'alf-in wa-tis-i mi`at-in wa-thamaaniyat-in wa-tis`iina} \]

1.10.4 ‘in the year 2001’

1.10.4.1 USING sana

سنة ألفين وواحدة

\[ \text{fi sanat-i 'alf-ayni wa-waaHidat-in} \]

sanat-a 'alf-ayni wa-waaHidat-in

1.10.4.2 USING ‘aam

عام ألفين وواحد

\[ \text{fi 'aam-i 'alf-ayni wa-waaHid-in} \]

‘aam-a 'alf-ayni wa-waaHid-in

NB: In practice, when saying year dates out loud, short vowel case endings are often omitted.

1.11 Millions and billions

Arabic has borrowed the terms “million” (milyuun مليون /malaayin) and “billion” (bilyuun بليون /balaayin), using them in much the same way as the terms for hundred and thousand. The names of the numerals themselves are masculine and when counting, they form the first term of an `iDaafa with the following noun, which is genitive singular.

\[ \text{‘intaaj-u l-wilaayaat-i l-muttaHidat-i min-a l-nafT-i yu-qaarib-u milyuun barmiil-in} \]

The oil production of the United States approaches a million barrels daily.

عشرون مليون مشترك

\[ \text{‘ishruuna milyuun-a mushtarik-in} \]

bi-bilyuun-ay duulaar-in

twenty million participants for two billion dollars

يتجاوز ثمنها ثلاثيون دولار

\[ \text{ya-tajaawaz-u thaman-u-haa thalaathat-a balaayiin-i duulaar-in.} \]

Their cost exceeds three billion dollars.

مائة مليون دولار ليست مستغوبة.

\[ \text{mi`at-u milyuun-i duulaar-in lays-at mustaghrabat-an.} \]

A hundred million dollars is not unusual.
2 Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals are essentially adjectives. They usually follow the noun that they modify and agree with it in gender, but sometimes they precede the noun as the first term of an *iDaafa* structure. Occasionally they may also be used as independent substantives (i.e., “the fifth of May”; “twenty seconds”).

2.1 ‘First’ *awwal* and *uulaa*

The Arabic words for “first” are *awwal* (m.) and *uulaa* (f.). They can either follow the noun they modify or precede it as first term of an *iDaafa*.

2.1.1 *awwal*

The word *awwal* (plural *awaa* and *iHSaa*) may function as the first term of an *iDaafa* structure, as an adjective following a noun, or as an independent noun.

2.1.1.1 As first term of an *iDaafa*, *awwal* may be followed by either a masculine or feminine noun.

كان أول رجل في العالم يطبق الفكرة.
*kaan-a *awwal-a rajul-in fii l-‘aalam-i yu-Tabbiq-u l-fikrat-a.*
He was the first man in the world to apply the idea.

وتفقا لأول إحساس للسكان
*wafq-an li-*awwal-i *iHSaa*-in li-l-sukkaan-i*
in conformity with the first statistics of the population

كان أول من ألقى كلمة.
*kaan-a *awwal-a man *alqaa kalimat-an.*
He was the first to give a speech.

بدأ أول زيارة له اليمن.
*bada*-a *awwal-a ziyaarat-in la-hu li-l-yaman-i.*
He started his first trip to Yemen.

وقد كانوا أول رياضيتين من الخليج تشاركان في الألعاب الأولمبية.
*wa-qad kaan-ataa *awwal-a riyaaDiyyat-ayni min-a l-xaliij-i tu-shaarik-aani fii l-‘al‘aab-i l-uuliimbiyyat-i.*
They were the first two female athletes from the Gulf to participate in the Olympic Games.

2.1.1.2 ‘THE FIRST’: The word *awwal* may also be used independently and followed by a preposition to convey the meaning of ‘the first of; first among’:

يُعتبر الأول من نوعه.
*yu-‘tabaru l-*awwal-a min naw‘-i-hi.*
It is considered the first of its kind.
The first of them dealt with the political situation.

The title is the first of (‘among’) the five titles.

The feminine word ‘uulaa ‘first’ is invariable, i.e., it does not inflect for case. It can occur in either of two structures:

2.1.2.1 AS AN ADJECTIVE FOLLOWING A NOUN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>نترم الأولي</th>
<th>أحد المشاريع الثلاثة الأولى</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>li-l-marrat-i l-’uulaa</td>
<td>‘aHad-u l-mashaarii’-i l-thalaathat-i l-’uulaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the first time</td>
<td>one of the first three projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>课题的第一</th>
<th>أعطيت الأولى الأولى لمياه الشرب</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-qanaat-u l-’uulaa</td>
<td>‘u Tiy-at-i l-’awwaliyyaat-u l-’uulaa li-miyaah-i l-shurb-i.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>channel one</td>
<td>The first priority was given to drinking water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>الرحلة الجوية الأولى</th>
<th>في الساعات الأولى من الصباح</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-riHlat-u l-jawwiyyat-u l-’uulaa</td>
<td>fii l-saa’aat-i l-’uulaa min-a l-Sabaah-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the first air trip</td>
<td>in the first hours of the morning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2.2 AS THE FIRST TERM OF AN ‘iDaafa WITH A FOLLOWING FEMININE WORD: This construction is not frequent, but may occur.

The Saudis won the first of their matches.
2.2 Second through tenth

The words “second” through “tenth” have the pattern of the active participle of a Form I verb: faa’il or faa’ila.

**Masculine/Feminine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Thaanin/thaaninya¹⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Thaalith/thaalitha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Raabi’/raabi’a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Xaamis/xaamisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Saadis/saadisa¹⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>Saabi’/saabi’a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>Thaamin/thaamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>Taasi’/taasi’a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>‘Aashir/’aashira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These adjectival forms of the numbers usually follow the noun that they modify, agreeing with the noun in gender, definiteness, and case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>مُرَة ثانِيَة</th>
<th>ثَمَة مشروِع ثَانِ</th>
<th>marrat-an thaaniyat-an</th>
<th>thammat-a mashruut-un than-in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a second time; another time</td>
<td>There is a second plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>انتهى أمس في لندن المؤتمر الثاني</th>
<th>أَصْبِح خَامِس أَعلى ثَمن.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intahaa ’amsi fii lundun-a l-mu’tamar-u l-thaanii.</td>
<td>’aSbaH-a xamis-as ’a’laa thaman-in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second conference ended yesterday in London.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>في معظم القسم الثاني من الكتاب</th>
<th>في الذكرى الخامسة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fii mu’Zam-i l-qism-i l-thaanii min-a l-kitaab-i</td>
<td>fii l-dhikraa l-xaamisat-i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in most of the second part of the book on the fifth anniversary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>نجح في محاولةه الثالثة</th>
<th>العالم الثالث</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>najaH-a fii muHaawalat-i-hi l-thaalithat-i.</td>
<td>al-‘aalam-u l-thaalith-u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He succeeded on his third try. the Third World

---

¹⁴ The masculine form of the word for ‘second’ thaanin (pl. thawaanin) is a defective adjective and inflects for case and definiteness in declension six. See Chapter 7, section 5.4.3.

¹⁵ The adjective saadis ‘sixth’ has a related but different lexical root (s-d-s) from the root for “six” (s-t-t).
The company ranks fourth worldwide (‘occupies the fourth rank’).

2.2.1 Ordinal numeral as first term of ‘iDaafa
Occasionally, an ordinal numeral will precede the noun it modifies, as the first term of an ‘iDaafa structure. In this case it is usually the masculine form of the number that is used, even if the following noun is feminine:

في ثاني زيارة له
fii thaanii ziyaarat-in la-hu
on his second visit

ثالث المشروعات التجريبية مشروع رقم.
thaalith-u l-mashruu‘aat-i l-tajriibiyyat-i mashruu‘u-rayy-in.
The third of the experimental projects is an irrigation project.

يصبح ثالث عداء فقط يحمل اللقب العالمي.
He becomes only the third runner to hold the world championship.

2.2.2 Ordinals as nouns: thaanin/thaanii
The ordinal “second” may be used as a substantive. In its masculine singular form, as a final-weak noun, it is in the defective declension.

في الثاني من أيار
fii l-thaanii min ‘ayyaar-a
on the second of May

As a unit of time measurement, “second” in Arabic is feminine thaaniya ثانية with a broken defective plural, thawaanin ثوان.

بسرعة ستة كيلومترات في الثانية
bi-sur‘at-i sittat-i kiliumitraat-in fii l-thaaniyat-i
at the rate of six kilometers per second

أحرزت ذهبية مسجلة 5.75 ثوان.
‘alrAz-at dhahabiyyat-an musajjilat-an 10.75 thawaanin.
She won a gold [medal] registering [a time of] 10.75 seconds.

2.2.2.1 OTHER FORMS OF ORDINALS AS NOUNS: In addition to “second” as a noun, other ordinals may also be used in this way, especially when referring to days of the month:
2.3 Eleventh through nineteenth

These compound adjectives consist of the tens ordinal numeral plus a masculine or feminine form of the word for “ten” ٌ‘ashar-a or ٌ‘ashrat-a. Both parts of the compound adjective agree in gender with the noun they modify. However, both parts of the compound teens ordinal are always in the accusative case, no matter what the case of the noun they are modifying. The definite article goes on the first element of the compound only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Number</th>
<th>Masculine Form</th>
<th>Feminine Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eleventh</td>
<td>الحادي عشر</td>
<td>الحادية عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twelfth</td>
<td>الثاني عشر</td>
<td>الثانية عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirteenth</td>
<td>الثالث عشر</td>
<td>الثالثة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourteenth</td>
<td>الرابع عشر</td>
<td>الرابعة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifteenth</td>
<td>الخامس عشر</td>
<td>الخامسة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sixteenth</td>
<td>السادس عشر</td>
<td>السادسة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seventeenth</td>
<td>السابع عشر</td>
<td>السابعة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eighteenth</td>
<td>الثامن عشر</td>
<td>الثامنة عشر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nineteenth</td>
<td>التاسع عشر</td>
<td>التاسعة عشر</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The display of the adjectives is consistent with their gender and case requirements.

العرض السنوي الحادي عشر

في دورتها الخامسة عشرة

fii dawrat-i-haa l-xaamisat-a ٌ‘ashrat-a

the eleventh annual exhibition

fii l-xaamis-i min shubaaTa

on the fifth of February

fii l-thaamin-i min tishriina l’awwal-i

on the eighth of October
Its history goes back to the twelfth century.

فَتَى فِي الرايْثَة عَشْرَة مِن النَّعْمَة
fatâni fî l-‘raabi‘at-a ʿashrat-a min-a l-ʿumri
a youth in his fourteenth year (‘the fourteenth [year] of age’)

في القرن الخامس عشر الميلادي
fî l-dhikraa l-‘raabi‘at-a ʿashrat-a
on the fourteenth anniversary

في القرن الخامس عشر الميلادي
fî l-qarn-i l-xaamî-i l-miilaadî-yî
in the fifteenth century AD

أفتتح المسابقة المحلية السادسة عشرة
iftâta-ha l-musaabaqat-a l-maḥaliyyat-a l-saadisat-a ʿashrat-a.
He opened the sixteenth local competition.

2.4 Twentieth to ninety-ninth

The ordinals for the group of numerals from twenty to ninety-nine are of two types: straight tens (“twentieth, fortieth, eightieth”) and compound tens (“twenty-first, forty-fifth, fifty-third”). In both cases the tens component does not vary from its numeral shape. That is, twentieth (‘ishruuna عشرون) and twenty (‘ishruuna) look the same. However, as an adjective, ‘ishruuna may take a definite article, and it agrees in case with the noun it modifies. It remains invariable in gender.

في القرن العشرين
fî l-qarn-i l-‘ishrînî
in the twentieth century

في العيد الخمسين لاستقلالها
fî l-‘îd-i l-xamsînî l-istiqlâlî-ha
on the 50th anniversary of its independence

تحتفل بيوم ميلادها الخمسين.
ta-Htâﬁl-u bi-yawm-i miilaad-i-ha l-xamsînî.
She is celebrating her 50th birthday.

With the compound tens ordinals, the first part of the compound has the ordinal form of the number and agrees with the following noun in gender. Both parts of the tens ordinal agree in case and definiteness with the modified noun. Note that the word Haad-in حادي (def. Haadii حادي) is used to indicate ‘first’ in tens compounds.

في عيد ميلادها الحادي والعشرين
fî ‘îd-i miilaad-i-ha l-Haaddî
wa-l-‘ishrînî
on her twenty-first birthday

في القرن الحادي والعشرين
fî l-qarn-i l-Haaddî wa-l-‘ishrînî
in the twenty-first century
2.5 Hundredth
The ordinal expression for “hundredth” looks like the word “hundred.” It follows
the noun it modifies and agrees in definiteness and case, but not in gender. It
remains invariably feminine.

كان ترتيبه المئة.

kaan-a tartiib-u-hu l-mi’at-a.
His ranking was hundredth.

3 Other number-based expressions

3.1 Fractions
With the exception of the word for “half” (niSf نصِّف), fractions are of the pattern
fu’l فعل وأفعال أُصْلَات, based on the numeral root. In syntax, the fraction word nor-
mally acts as the first term of an “iDaafa” structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a half</td>
<td>niSf ‘anSaaf</td>
<td>a half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a third</td>
<td>thulth athlaath</td>
<td>a third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fourth, a quarter</td>
<td>rub’arbaa</td>
<td>a quarter of a rial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a fifth</td>
<td>xums ‘axmaas</td>
<td>a fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a sixth</td>
<td>sudsi ‘asdaas</td>
<td>a sixth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a seventh</td>
<td>sub ‘asbaa</td>
<td>a seventh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an eighth</td>
<td>thumn ‘athaan</td>
<td>an eighth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ninth</td>
<td>tus ‘atsaa</td>
<td>a ninth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a tenth</td>
<td>‘ushr ‘a’shaar</td>
<td>a tenth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

نصف الأنواع المعروفة

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>niSf l-anwaa’-i l-ma’ruufat-i</td>
<td>half of the known species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niSf u qarn-in min-a l-zamaan-i</td>
<td>half a century of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ربع ريال

rub’-u riyaaal-in

a quarter of a rial

منذ ربع قرن

mundh-u rub’-i qarn-in

a quarter of a century ago
It requires two-thirds of the members of both houses of Congress.

3.1.1 Fractions as nouns
A fraction may function as a substantive or independent noun:

في النصف الثاني من القرن العشرين
fī l-niṣf-i l-thaaniy-i min-a l-qarn-i l-ʽishriina
in the second half of the twentieth century

3.1.2 Special functions of niṣf:
The term niṣf may also function as the equivalent of “semi-” or “hemi-”:

في الاجتماع نصف السنوي
fī l-ijtimaa’-i niṣf-i l-sanawiy-y-i  niṣf-u l-kurat-i l-shimaaliyy-u
in the semi-annual meeting the northern hemisphere

And niṣf also indicates the half-hour, as does English “thirty”:

حتى العاشرة والنصف صباحاً
Hatta l-‘aashirat-i wa-l-niṣf-i SabaaH-an
until ten-thirty in the morning

3.2 Telling time
The ordinal numbers are used for telling time in MSA. The word “hour” (saaʽa ساعة) may or may not be mentioned, but the ordinal numeral is in the feminine form, agreeing with that noun.

في الساعة الثامنة
fī l-saaʽa-at-i l-thaaminat-i
at eight o’clock (‘at the eighth hour’)

اليوم الأول الساعة الحادية عشرة صباحاً
al-yawm-a l-ʼaHad-a l-saaʽat-a l-Haadiyat-a ʼashrat-a SabaaH-an
today, Sunday, at 11:00 in the morning

Rather than expressions such as “seven-fifteen” or “seven-twenty” or “seven-thirty,” Arabic usually uses fractions of the hour: rubʽ, thulth, and niṣf:
في السابعة والربع من مساءغد
fii l-saabi‘at-i wa-l-rub‘-i min masaa‘-i ghadin
at seven-fifteen ('and the quarter') tomorrow evening

في السابعة إلا ربعاً من مساءغد
fii l-saabi‘at-i ‘illa rub‘-an min masaa‘-i ghadin16
at 6:45 tomorrow evening (the seventh [hour] less a quarter)

في الخامسة والأربعة من مساء أميس
fii l-xaamisat-i wa-l-thulth-i masaa‘-a 3‘ams-i
at 6:45 tomorrow evening (the seventh [hour] less a quarter)

في الخامسة إلا ثلاثة مسائي أممس
fii l-xaamisat-i illaa thulth-an masaa‘-a 3‘ams-i
at 5:20 ('five and the third') yesterday evening

في العاشرة والنصف مساء اليوم
fii l-‘aashirat-i wa-l-nisF-i masaa‘-a l-yawm-i
at ten-thirty ('ten and the half') this evening ('the evening of today')

The word for minute is daqiiqa دقيقة. In telling time, it is also used with an ordinal numeral:

الساعة الرابعة والدقيقة الخامسة
al-sa‘at-u l-raabi‘at-u wa-l-daqiiqat-u l-xaamisat-u
4:05 ('the fourth hour and the fifth minute')17

3.3 Days of the week
Most of the names of the days of the week are based on the numeral system, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>al-‘aHad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>al-ithnayn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>al-thulaathaa‘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>al-arbi‘aa‘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>al-xamiis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>al-jum‘a18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>al-sabt19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

الأحد        | الاثنين    |
الاثنين     | الثلاثاء |
الأربعاء    | الخمسين     |
الجمعة      | السبت       |

16 The exceptive particle ‘illa ('less,' 'minus,' 'except for') takes the following noun in the accusative case. The following noun may be definite or indefinite.
18 The word for “Friday” is from the root j-m-f ‘to gather together.’
19 The root for “Saturday” is cognate with the word “Sabbath.”
When used in syntax, the names of the days may occur independently, with the definite article, or as the second term of an 'iDaafa with the word yawm 'day,' or they may be in apposition with a time word, such as “yesterday,” “tomorrow,” or “today.”

### 3.3.1 Independent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>last Tuesday</td>
<td>al-thulaathaa'-a l-maaDiy-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next Tuesday</td>
<td>al-thulaathaa'-a l-jaariy-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.2 In an 'iDaafa with the word yawm or 'ayyam ('day/days')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on Thursday</td>
<td>yawm-a l-xamiis-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on Sundays</td>
<td>'ayyaam-a l-aaHaad-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only on Saturdays</td>
<td>'ayyaam-a l-sabt-i waHd-a-haa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.3 In apposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in Cairo, tomorrow morning</td>
<td>fii l-qaahirat-i SabaaH-a ghad-in-i l-ithnayn-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday today, Sunday</td>
<td>al-yawm-a l-’aHad-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Number adjectives

These are adjectival forms of numbers that attribute a numerical quality to the item being described. They fall into two categories: the fu’aaliyy pattern and the mufa’al pattern (PP II) pattern.

#### 3.4.1 thunaa’iyy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bilateral agreements with other countries</td>
<td>mu’aahadaat-un thunaa’iyyat-un ma’-a duwal-in ’uxraa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations between the two countries.

#### 3.4.2 thulaathiyy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the tripartite committee in Geneva</td>
<td>al-lajnat-u l-thulaathiyyat-u fii jiniif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triliteral (lexical) roots</td>
<td>’af’aal-un thulaathiyyat-un</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that Egypt signed in the year 1978 a tripartite/trilateral agreement

He is working now to complete his trilogy.

3.2.3 rubaa‘iy y `quadrilateral; four-part`

أفعال رباعية
`af’aal-un rubaa‘iyat-un
quadrilateral verb roots

3.2.4 mufa‘al مفعل

This number adjective takes the form of a Form II passive participle and is used to refer to something with a characteristic number of sides or features:

مثّل
muthallath
triangle (n.); threefold (adj.)

مربع
murabba‘
square (n. and adj.)

ثلاثٌة آلاف وأربعون منزلة وأربعة أمتار مربعة
thalaathat-u ‘aalaaf-in wa-arba‘-u mi’at-in wa-thalaathuuna kiiuumitr-an murabba‘-an
3,430 square kilometers

مسدس
musaddas
six-shooter, gun, revolver; also: hexagonal

مسدس لعبه
musaddas-un lu’bat-un

toy gun

4 Expressions of serial order: “last”

We have already seen the use of expressions for “first” and other numerical rankings. The concept of “last” or “final” is expressed by the terms `aaxir or `axiir. They are both from the same lexical root but are different in form and distribution.

4.1 `aaxir آخر ‘last, final’

The noun `aaxir is an active participle in form, signifying the final part or the end part of something. Its plural is `awaaxir أواخر if it refers to nonhuman entities, and `aaxir-uuna `اُخرون (m. pl.) or `aaxir-aat `اُخرات (f. pl.) if it refers to humans. It is often used as the first term of an `iDaafa.
The word ‘*aaxir*’ is an adjective meaning ‘final’ or ‘last’ both in the sense of ‘final’ and of ‘past.’ It usually follows the noun and is in concord with it in terms of gender, case, definiteness, and number.

4.2.1 In the accusative indefinite, it is used as an adverb meaning “finally”:

واخيراً جاءت إلى القاهرة.

And finally she came to Cairo.
1 Overview
In Arabic as in English, prepositions refer to a location (e.g., ‘at, in’ fī, في, bi- ب) or a direction (e.g., ‘to, from’ َإلى َإلى, إلى, َبِ, ِب, َمِن, ِمن), and the meanings of prepositions can apply to concepts of space (‘at school’ fī ْل-مَدْرَاسَةِ َإِلَى َإِلَى, إلى المدرسة) or time (‘at five o’clock’ fī ْل-سَاعَةِ َإِلَى ْل-سَاعَةِ َأَمِيسَةِ َإِلَى َإِلَى, إلى الساعة الخامسة).
Prepositions may also be used in abstract or figurative ways (‘at least’ َإِلَى ْل-فِي َإِلَى الأَقَلِ, إلى الأقل; ‘by the way’ َإِلَى ْل-فِي ْل-فِيْكَرَةِ َإِلَى َإِلَى, إلى فكرة). They may occur in conjunction with verbs to convey a particular meaning (e.g., rahlHāb-ā, bi- ب ‘to welcome’ or َأَبَارَ َأَن ْل-عَرْبُ َعَن َعَرْبُ ْل-عَرْبُ ‘to express’). Arabic has a number of these verb-preposition idioms, where the preposition used with the verb is essential for expressing a specific meaning.

1.1 Arabic preposition types
Arabic prepositional expressions fall into two groups, the first group being a relatively small number (ten) of “true” prepositions, and the other group being a more extensive collection of locative expressions.

1.2 حروف الجر
According to Arabic grammatical theory, the non-derived prepositions are the true, fundamental markers of location and direction, and are called حروف الجر, حروف الجر ‘particles of attraction’ because they “attract” a substantive (noun or adjective) in the genitive case or a suffix pronoun. These non-derived prepositions are a limited and invariable set of lexical items.

1.3 ظروف مكان وظروف زمان
The derived prepositions, on the other hand, usually come from triliteral lexical roots that are also the source of verbs, nouns, and other parts of speech. They are called locative adverbs, or in Arabic ظروف مكان وظروف زمان ظروف مكان وظروف زمان ‘adverbs of place and adverbs of time.’ These words denote location in much the same way as prepositions and in this work they are
referred to as semi-prepositions. These semi-prepositions may take different case inflections or, in some cases, nunation.

Each of the two preposition types has particular attributes, but the basic rule that applies to both classes is that the noun, noun phrase, or adjective object of the preposition is in the genitive case. If the object of the preposition or semi-preposition is a personal pronoun, it takes the form of a pronoun suffix.

Prepositions and semi-prepositions are crucial elements in Arabic syntax, playing fundamental syntactic and semantic roles. However, their usage can be highly idiomatic and may not necessarily correspond to their English equivalents. Therefore, a wide selection of examples is included here.

2 True prepositions (Huruuf al-jarr حروف الجر)

This small set of lexical items contains the true Arabic prepositions, words that exist strictly as prepositions. There are only ten of them in Modern Standard Arabic, but they are of great frequency and they each have a wide range of meanings. They are: bi-, li-, ka-, fi-, min, ‘an, ‘ilaa, ‘alaa, Hattaal and mundhu. One of the distinctive features of this word class is that a true Arabic preposition (Harf al-jarr حرف الجر) cannot be preceded by another preposition.

Another characteristic is that only this class of prepositions can combine with verbs to create verb-preposition idioms (such as baHath-a fii ‘discuss’ and baHath-a ‘an ‘search for’).

This set of items can be divided on the basis of orthography into one-letter, two-letter, and three-letter word groups. Examples are provided to illustrate both spatiotemporal and abstract uses. In certain cases, frequent idiomatic uses are noted as well.

2.1 One-letter prepositions: bi-؛ li-؛ and ka-≤

The three members of this group consist of one consonant plus a short vowel. This means that they do not exist as independent orthographical items and they need to be prefixed to the noun that follows.

2.1.1 The preposition bi- ‘at, with, in, by; by means of’

The preposition bi- designates contiguity in its broadest sense. It has a wide range of uses including spatiotemporal, instrumental, and manner adverbial.

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1 In his excellent short reference work Grammaire de l’arabe d’aujourd’hui, D. E. Kouloughli refers to this group of words as “quasi-prépositions” (1994, 152), which is also an appropriate label. Abboud et al. 1997, 67–68 refer to these words as “noun-prepositions.”

2 For an in-depth semantic and syntactic analysis of Arabic prepositions see Ryding-Lentzer 1977.

3 When the object of the preposition is an invariable or non-inflected word, such as certain demonstrative pronouns or adverbs (e.g., dhaalika ‘that’ or hunaa ‘here’), it remains invariable, e.g. min hunaa ‘from here,’ or ba’d-a dhaalika ‘after that.’
2.1.1.1 SPATIOTEMPORAL LOCATION

(1) Space: The use of bi- as a spatial locative (‘in, at, on’)

bi-shaari‘-i l-barakat-i
on Baraka Street

bi-l-shimaal-i l-ifriiqiy-i
in North Africa (‘the African north’)

al-ustaadh-u bi-jaami‘at-i l-qahhirat-i
the professor at the University of Cairo

bi-judraan-i l-manaazil-i l-bayDa‘-i
on the white walls of the houses

(2) Personal locative: Used in this sense, bi- may be prefixed to a noun that denotes a state of being and attributes a condition to or describes the condition of a person, or it may be prefixed to a noun that denotes an attribute or temporary state.

kull-a ‘aam-in wa-antum bi-xayr-in.
Many happy returns.

Men with (wearing) traditional clothes

(3) Time: An occasion or location in time can be marked with bi-:

kaan-a dhaaka bi-l-‘ams-i.
That was yesterday.

by-munaasabat-i ta‘yiin-i l-shaykh-i waziir-an li-l-difa‘-i
on the occasion of the appointment of the sheikh as minister of defense

2.1.1.2 INSTRUMENTAL bi- (baa‘ al-‘ala‘; baa‘ al-isti’aana): The preposition bi- is used to refer to an instrument (tool, material, body part) with which an action is accomplished. The instrument can be defined as “an object that plays a role in bringing a process about, but which is not the motivating force, the cause or the instigator” (Chafe 1970, 152).
Prepositions and prepositional phrases

They cannot go in (‘by means of’) their cars.

The two of them entered the country by ship.

I began with (‘by means of’) a question.

He pulled the door with both his hands.

(1) **bi**- for substance: A related use, but not instrumental as such, is **bi**- meaning ‘with’ in the sense of what constitutes the nature of a filling, a substance or an accompaniment.

The place filled with history

The ground filled with thorns

It was not crowned with success.

A related use, but not instrumental as such, is **bi**- meaning ‘with’ in the sense of what constitutes the nature of a filling, a substance or an accompaniment.

They decided the fate of their country by themselves.

**2.1.1.3 ABSTRACT/FIGURATIVE USE:** The preposition **bi**- has a wide range of abstract/figurative uses.

Because of/on account of the mystery

The same way with the aim of solving all the problems

They decided the fate of their country by themselves.

**2.1.1.4 MANNER ADVERBIAL:** The preposition **bi**- can be used with a noun to modify a verb phrase by describing the manner in which an action took place.
When used in this way, the bi- phrase answers the question “how?” and the object of the preposition is usually an abstract noun.4

\[ ta-nmuu \text{ } \text{bi-}buT^{\prime}-\text{in}. \]

They grow slowly to defend the position with redoubled intensity ('with slowness').

When indicating manner, bi- is sometimes prefixed to a noun such as Suura 'manner,' Tariiqa 'way,' or shakl 'form' followed by a modifier that provides the exact description of the manner:

\[ bi-Suurat^{\prime}-i \text{ } \text{mustamirrat}-\text{in} \quad bi-Suurat^{\prime}-i \text{ } \text{muxayyifat}-\text{in} \]

continuous frighteningly

\[ bi-Turuq^{\prime}-i \text{ } \text{ghayr}-\text{i qaanuuniyyat}-\text{in} \quad bi-haadhaa l-shakl^{\prime}-i \text{ } l-waasi^{\prime}-i \]

in illegal ways in this extensive way

2.1.1.5 bi- AS PREFIX FOR THE PREDICATE OF A NEGATIVE COPULA (al-xabar al-manfiyy (الخبر المنفي))): A negative verb of being such as lays-a ‘is not’ or lam ya-kun ‘was not’ may be followed by bi- as part of the predicate. This is especially the case when the predicate involves the use of a demonstrative pronoun:

\[ laakinna \quad \text{’ahad-an min-haa lam ya-kun bi-haadhihi l-’ahammiyyat}-\text{in}. \]

But none of them was of this importance.

\[ lays-a fii kull-i l-aHyaan-i bi-haadhaa l-Suu^{\prime}-i. \]

It isn’t this bad all the time.

2.1.1.6 bi- ‘PER; [FOR] EVERY’: The concept of ‘per’ meaning ‘for every’ may be expressed with bi-:

\[ sab’at-a \text{ } \text{’aHyaan}^{\prime}-i \quad bi-l-‘usbuu^{\prime}-i \quad mi’at-u \quad bi-l-mi’at}-\text{in} \]

seven days a week a hundred percent

\[ ta-bda’-u min \text{ } \text{’arba’-at}-\text{in} \text{ } \text{sintaat}-\text{in} \quad bi-l-daqiiqat}-\text{in} \]

It starts at four cents a minute.

4 For more on this topic see Chapter 11 on adverbs and adverbial expressions.
2.1.2 The preposition *li*- ‘to; belonging to; for; for the purpose of’

The preposition *li*- is used to express purpose, direction toward (destination), possession, the indirect object or dative concept of ‘to,’ and the benefactive concept of ‘for’ or ‘on behalf of.’

There are two spelling rules to observe with *li*-

(1) When attached to a noun with the definite article, the ‘alif of the definite article is deleted and the laam of *li*- attaches directly to the laam of the definite article (e.g., *li*-jaami‘at-iالجامعة).

(2) When *li*- is followed by a pronoun suffix, it changes its short vowel to fatHa and becomes la- (la-ka لَكَ, la-ki لَكِ, la-hu لَهُ, la-haa لَهَا, la-kumaa لَكُمَا, la-humaa لَهُمَا لَهُمْ, la-naa لَنا لَنَا, la-kum لَكُم لَكُمْ, la-kunna لَكُنْنَا لَكُنْنَانَ لَهُمْ, la-hum لَهُم لَهُمْ) except with the first person singular pronoun suffix, -i, which is suffixed directly to the laam (*l-i لي ‘to me, for me’).

2.1.2.1 PURPOSE, CAUSE, REASON, OR MOTIVATION: ‘IN ORDER TO, FOR THE PURPOSE OF; DUE TO, BECAUSE OF’ (*laam al-ta‘liil لِام التعلیل*): This use of *li*- includes expression of the intention for doing something as well as the reason or motivation for something. “The distinction between intention and reason is made because in English the two are expressed in different terms: the former is introduced by a phrase such as ‘in order to’ or ‘for’ whereas the latter is introduced by a phrase such as ‘because of.’ In Arabic these are both considered to be under the category of *ta‘liil*” (Ryding-Lentzner 1977, 132).

(1) Intention:

لَدَمْ مَسْتَفْعِمِ المحْلِیْن

*li*-radm-i l-huwwat-i

(in order) to fill the gap

in order to support their local candidates

(2) Reason:

لَاسْبَابِ فَنِیَة

*li*-‘asbaab-in fanniyyat-in

for (‘because of’) technical reasons

2.1.2.2 POSSESSION (*laam al-milk لِام الملك*): MSA does not normally use a verb equivalent to ‘have.’ The preposition *li*- is usually used instead to predicate the concept of belonging in both concrete and abstract senses. If the predication

---

5 To state ownership explicitly, a verb *malak-a/yamlik-u* is used to mean ‘own’ or ‘possess,’ e.g., *’a-mlik-u HiSaan-an raa* ‘I own/possess a splendid horse.’

6 Possession is also expressed by the semi-prepositions *ladaa* and ‘ind-a (q.v), although ‘ind-a is chiefly used in spoken Arabic.
is other than present tense, an accompanying verb of being or becoming carries the tense.

(1) **Present tense:**

- **la-ka Tard-un fii ghurfat-i l-bariid-i.**
  - You have a package at the mail room.
- **li-l-Hayawaanaat-i lughaat-u-haa 'ayDan.**
  - Animals have their languages too.

(2) **Past tense:** A past tense form of the verb kaan-a or sometimes another verb of being or becoming (Saar-a, baat-a) is used to convey the past tense of a possessive prepositional construction.

- **kaan-a la-haa manzil-un lam ya-kun la-hu 'ayy-u ttiSaal-in bi-him.**
  - He did not have any contact with them.

2.1.2.3 ‘FOR’: The concept of ‘for’ can be used in spatial or temporal time extensions. When used with persons it often expresses a benefactive or dative relationship.

- **na-kaad-u laa na-jid-u naZiir-an la-hu.**
  - We can almost not find a counterpart for him.
- **kaan-at maxzan-an li-l-tawaabil-i.**
  - It was a storehouse for spices.

(1) **Time:** When used with time expressions li- refers to an extent of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>li-muddat-i thamaanii saa’aat-in</td>
<td>for a period of eight hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li-jatratin wajiizatin</td>
<td>for a brief period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li-l-marratin l-’uulaa</td>
<td>for the first time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.2.4 ‘TO’: With the meaning of ‘to,’ li- may be used with persons or places. When used with places, it conveys much the same directional idea as ‘ilaa;’ with persons it may express directionality, proximity, benefactive, or dative relationships.

\[
\text{min-a l-yamiin-i } li-l-yasaar-i \quad fii \text{ ziyaarat-in } li-lubnaan-a \text{ ta-staghriq-u } 'ubsuu'-an
\]

from right to left on a visit to Lebanon [that] will last a week

معبود الاتحاد الأوروبي لعملية السلام في الشرق الأوسط

\[
mab'uth-u l-kham-i l-tuurubbiyy-i li-'amaliyyat-i l-samaan-i fii l-sharq-i l-'awsat-i
\]
the envoy of the European Union to the process of peace in the Middle East

يجلس على المقع المجاور لها.

\[
y'a-jlis-u 'alaa l-maq'ad-i l-mujaawiri la-haa.
\]
He is sitting on the seat next to her.

ماذا حدث لها؟

\[
\text{al-Ham-}u \quad li-llaah-i. \quad \text{hanii'-an} \quad la-ka. \quad \text{maadhaa Hadath-a la-haa?}
\]
Praise [be] to God. Congratulations to you. What happened to her?

2.1.2.5 ‘OF’: This is a broad category where li- is used in cases when an iDaafa construction is avoided because of indefiniteness or definiteness of the noun prior to li-. It may not always translate directly into English as ‘of,’ but it often does.

\[
\text{huwa n'ikaas-un } li-l-waqq'i l-itimma'iyiyy-i. \quad \text{wa-qaal-a xatm-an } li-Hadiith-i-hi
\]
It is a reflection of social reality. he said [in] closing [of] his talk

قال ختماً لحديثه

المستشار السياسي لرئيس الجمهورية

\[
al-mustashaar-u l-siyasiyy-u li-ra'is-i l-jumhuuriyyat-i
\]
the political advisor of the president of the republic he said in a speech of his

قال في كلمة له

الأمين العام لجامعة الدول العربية

\[
al-amiin-u l-aamm-u li-jaami'at-i l-duwal-i l-arabiyyat-i
\]
the secretary general of the League of Arab States

\footnote{William Wright (1967, II: 147–48) considers li- to be “etymologically connected with ‘ilaa (‘to, toward’) and differs from it only in... that ‘ilaa mostly expresses concrete relations, local or temporal, whilst li- generally indicates abstract or ideal relations... Its principal use is to show the passing on of the action to a more distant object and hence it corresponds to the Latin or German dative.”}
2.1.3 The preposition *ka-* ‘like, as; such as; in the capacity of’

This preposition is used for comparison and expresses similarity. It also designates capacity or function. It is restricted in occurrence because it is not used with personal (suffix) pronouns; however it can be used with demonstrative pronouns (e.g., *ka-dhaalika* ‘like that, thus; likewise.’).

2.1.3.1 DESIGNATION OF FUNCTION: The use of *ka-* in this sense specifies capacity, status or function, equivalent to ‘as.’

- *badaa ka-mudaafi*‘-in ‘an-i l-‘islaam-i.*
  He appeared as a *defender* of Islam.

- *ta-‘mal-u ka-mutarjimat-in.*
  She is working as a *translator.*

- *taHaddath-a ‘an-i l-‘istishraaq-i ka-baHth-in ‘ilmiiy-in.*
  He spoke of Orientalism as *scholarly research.*

2.1.3.2 SIMILARITY: The preposition *ka-* is used to denote likeness or similarity, equivalent to English ‘like.’

- *al-‘amr-u lays-a ka-dhaalika ‘ala l-‘Itlaaq-i.*
  The situation is not *like* that at all.

- *thumm-a bayn-a l-‘arab-i ‘anfus-i-him ka-qaysiyy-iina fii balad-in ka-tuunis-a*
  then among the Arabs themselves *like* the *Qays* [tribe] *in a country like Tunisia*

  This preposition does not take pronoun suffixes. If there is a need to use the concept of similarity with a personal pronoun, i.e., “like him,” “like us,” the semi-preposition *mithl-a* is used instead of *ka-*:

- *lays-a hunaaka fannaamat-un mithl-a-haa.*
  There is no artist *like* her.

2.1.3.3 *ka-maa* AS ADVERBIAL ‘AS’: By suffixing *-maa*, the preposition *ka-* becomes an adverbial expression meaning ‘as’ or ‘likewise, as well.’ It is normally followed directly by a verb.
2.2 Two-letter prepositions
Prepositions that consist of two letters include: \textit{fii}, \textit{min} and ‘\textit{an}.

2.2.1 \textit{fii} في ‘in; at; on’
The preposition \textit{fii} is an essential locative preposition in Arabic. It can be used to express location in space (\textit{fii} \textit{l-jaami‘at-i} ‘at the university’) or in time (\textit{fii} \textit{l-Saabah-i} ‘in the morning’), as well as figuratively. It may translate as ‘at,’ ‘in,’ or ‘on,’ depending on the context.

2.2.1.1 SPATIAL USES OF \textit{fii}:

- في مستشفى الملك خالد
  \textit{fii mustashfaa} l-malik-i xaalid-in
  at the King Khalid Hospital

- عشت في الطابق العلوي
  ‘\textit{ish-tu fii l-Taabq-i l-ulwiyy-i}.
  I lived on the top floor.

- في القدس المحتلة
  \textit{fii l-quds-i l-muHtallat-i}
  in occupied Jerusalem

- في الحرم الجامعي
  \textit{fii l-Haram-i l-jaami‘iyy-i}
  on the campus (‘the university grounds’)

- جلسوا في مقهى على الرصيد
  jalas-\textit{uu fii maqhan} ‘aalaa l-raSiid-i.
  They sat in a café on the sidewalk.

- في مسرح الشوارع
  \textit{fii masraH-i l-shawaari‘i}
  in the street theater

2.2.1.2 TEMPORAL USES: Used in a temporal sense, \textit{fii} can express both punctuality and duration, i.e., points in time and extension over a span of time:

(1) Punctual use of \textit{fii}:

- في هذه المناسبة
  \textit{fii haadhihi l-munaasabat-i}
  on this occasion

- في ختام الفصل الصيفي
  \textit{fii xitaam-i l-faSl-i l-Sayfiyy-i}
  at the close of the summer season

- في الوقت المناسب
  \textit{fii l-waqt-i l-munaasib-i}
  at the right time/proper time

- في أول الأمر
  \textit{fii ‘awwal-i l-‘amr-i}
  at first (‘at the first of the matter’)

- كما تحب
  \textit{ka-maa tu-Hibb-u}
- likewise, the spokesman mentioned
  as you like

- كما تعرفون
  \textit{ka-maa fa’al-uu l-sanat-a l-maaDiyat-a}
  like they did last year
Durative: The durative meaning of \( fii \) results from its use with nouns that indicate a span of time. Used in this sense it may be equivalent to English ‘during.’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{في} & \quad \text{في} \\
\text{هذا القرن} & \quad \text{جرب الخليج} \\
fii \text{ haadhaa l-qarn-i} & \quad fii \text{ Harb-i l-xaliij-i} \\
\text{in (during) this century} & \quad \text{in (during) the Gulf War} \\
\text{في الأعوام الأخيرة} & \quad \text{في غضون دقائق} \\
fii \text{ l-‘a’waam-i l-‘axiirat-i} & \quad fii \text{ ghuDuun-i daqaa’iq-a} \\
\text{in (during) recent years} & \quad [with]in minutes
\end{align*}
\]

2.2.1.3 ABSTRACT/FIGURATIVE USES OF \( fii \): The locative meaning of \( fii \) extends to nouns and noun phrases of many types.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{في حالة أي شكوى} & \quad \text{في زيارة لفرنسا} \\
fii \text{ Haalat-i ‘ayy-i shakwaa} & \quad fii \text{ ziyaarat-in li-faransaa} \\
\text{in case of any complaint} & \quad \text{on a visit to France} \\
\text{دورهم في نشر الإسلام} & \quad \text{في ضوء الأحداث الأخيرة} \\
dawr-u-hum fii \text{ nashr-i l-‘islaam-i} & \quad fii \text{ Daw‘-i l-‘ahDaath-i l-‘axiirat-i} \\
\text{their role in spreading Islam} & \quad \text{in the light of recent events} \\
\text{في مجال الزراعة} & \quad \text{يقضي لياليه في الصلاة} \\
fii \text{ majaal-i l-ziraa‘at-i} & \quad ya-qDii layaalii-hi fii \text{ l-Salaat-i} \\
\text{in the field of agriculture} & \quad \text{He spends his nights in prayer.}
\end{align*}
\]

2.2.1.4 AS A MANNER ADVERBIAL: In this idiomatic use, \( fii \) is often followed by the words \( shakl \) or \( Suura \) ‘way, shape, form.’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{في شكل أساسي} & \quad \text{في صورة فورية} \\
fii \text{ shakl-in ‘asasiyy-in} & \quad fii \text{ Suurat-in fawriyyat-in} \\
\text{in a basic way} & \quad \text{immediately} \\
\text{في شكل غريب} & \quad \text{في أفضل شكل ممكن} \\
fii \text{ shakl-in ghariib-in} & \quad fii \text{ ‘afDal-i shakl-in mumkin-in} \\
\text{in a strange way} & \quad \text{in the best way possible}
\end{align*}
\]
2.2.1.5 MEANING ‘PER’

وصلت سرعة الرياح إلى مئة وسبعين كيلومتراً في الساعة.

waSal-at sur‘at-u l-riyaaHHi ‘ilaal mi‘at-in wa-sab‘iina kiiluumitr-an fii l-saa‘at-i.

The wind velocity reached 170 kilometers an hour/per hour.

بسرعة ستة كيلومترات في الثانية

bi-sur‘at-i sittat-i kiiluumitraat-in fii l-thaaniyat-i

at the rate of six kilometers per second

خمس مرات في اليوم

xams-a marraat-in fii l-yawm-i

five times a day/per day

2.2.1.6 SPECIAL FORMS OF PRONOUN SUFFIXES: Because of its long vowel ending, fii has special forms for the pronoun suffixes -ii ‘me,’ -hu ‘him,’ -humaa ‘them [two],’ -hum, and -hunna ‘them.’ The -ii suffix merges with the -ii of fii and changes to -iyya; the vowel-shift suffixes, because they come after an -ii sound, change their -u vowel to -i.⁸

| fii + pronoun suffixes |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                        | Singular        | Dual         | Plural       |
| First person:          |                 |              |              |
| Masculine              | في fiyya        | fii-naa      |              |
| Feminine               |                 |              |              |
| Second person:         |                 |              |              |
| Masculine              | فيك fii-ka      | fii-kumaa    | fii-kum      |
| Feminine               | ك fii-ki        | fii-kumaa    | fii-kunna    |
| Third person:          |                 |              |              |
| Masculine              | فيه fii-hi      | fii-himaa    | fii-him      |
| Feminine               | ك fii-haa       | fii-himaa    | fii-hinna    |

لا ريب فيه.

laa rayb-a fii-hi.

There’s no doubt about it (‘in it’).

⁸ The vowel-shift suffixes are the personal pronoun suffixes of the third person that normally have Damma after haa’:-hu, -humaa, -hum, and -hunna. This Damma shifts to kasra when preceded by a front vowel or fronted semivowel (-i- or -ii- or sometimes yaa’). See also chapter 12, 2.1.1.
2.2.2 The preposition \textit{min} من 'of; from; than'}

The preposition \textit{min} indicates direction away from, or point of departure when used spatiotemporally. In addition, it is used to denote source, material, or quantity. It also is used in expressions of comparison, with a comparative adjective where English would use the word “than.” It can be used in figurative or abstract ways as well as concrete spatiotemporal ways. Because it ends with a \textit{sukuun}, it sometimes needs a helping vowel. That vowel is /-\textipa{a}/ before the definite article and otherwise, /-\textipa{i}/.

\textbf{2.2.2.1 \textit{min} AS ‘FROM’}: Used as a directional preposition, \textit{min} indicates ‘from’:

\begin{itemize}
  \item من جيرانهم العرب
  \textit{min jiiraan-i-him-i l-\textquoteleft arab-i} from their Arab neighbors
  \item تتحول من سييء إلى أسوأ.
  \textit{ta-taHawwal-u min sayyi\textquoteleft in \textquoteleft ilaa \textquoteleft aswa\textquoteleft -a.} It changes from bad to worse.
\end{itemize}

\textbf{2.2.2.2 \textit{min} AS ‘OF; ONE OF’}: The use of \textit{min} is especially common in expressions of quantity, measure, or constituent parts.

\begin{itemize}
  \item قصص من الحمرا \textit{qiSaS-un min-a l-Hamraa\textquoteleft -i} stories of the Alhambra
  \item قلّها من هذا النوع \textit{kull-u-haa min haadhaa l-naw\textquoteleft -i.} They are all of this type.
  \item المادّة 125 من القانون \textit{al-maaddat-u 125 min-a l-qaanuun-i} article 125 of the law
  \item وصفوها بأنه جو من الثقة. \textit{waSaf-uu-hu bi\textquoteleft -anna-hu jaww-un min-a l-thiqat-i.} They described it as an atmosphere of trust.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item استنباطت أنواعاً متميزة من الصوف. \textit{istanbaT-at \textquoteleft -anwaa\textquoteleft -an mutamayyizat-an min-a l-Suuf\textquoteleft -i.} She discovered distinctive types of wool.
  \item ما يحتوي هذا المتحف من كنوز \textit{maa ya-Htawii haadhaa l-muthHaf-u min kunuuz-in} what this museum contains [in terms] of treasures
\end{itemize}

\textbf{2.2.2.3 \textit{min} AS ‘AMONG’}

\begin{itemize}
  \item ومن هذه الفنانين أيضاً السيرك \textit{wa-min haadhihi l-funuun-i \textquoteleft -ayD-an-i l-siirk-u} and among these arts [is] also the circus
\end{itemize}

\textbf{2.2.2.4 \textit{min} AS ‘THROUGH’}

\begin{itemize}
  \item دخل من الشباك \textit{daxal-a min-a l-shubbaak-i.} He came through the window.
\end{itemize}
2.2.2.5 *min* AS ‘THAN’: With comparative expressions, *min* is used as the equivalent of English ‘than.’ For more examples, see Chapter 10 on comparative adjectives.

They are spending more time than expected.

It has published more than 500 scientific studies.

2.2.2.6 THE USE OF *min* WITH LOCATIVE ADVERBS: When *min* occurs before a locative adverb (or semi-preposition), it usually changes the inflectional vowel of the adverb to *kasra* if the adverb is followed by a noun or pronoun suffix.

We find it through his commentaries.

(1) *min qabl-u*: Used with certain adverbs that end in *Damma* (such as *qabl-u*), *min* has no effect on the final inflectional vowel as long as the adverb is not in an *‘iDaafa* with a following noun.9

*min qabl-u* ‘[ever] before’
*min Hayth-u* ‘regarding, as to’

2.2.2.7 PLEONASTIC OR “DUMMY” *min*: As a way of introducing a sentence, *min* may be used with a descriptive term such as a participle or adjective expressing an introductory observation, just as in English some sentences start with “It is.” This is a way to avoid mentioning the source of a judgment or evaluation and is especially common usage in media Arabic, where observations may need to be general or unattributed.

It is expected that . . .

It is natural that we undertake a visit.

---

9 See Chapter 11, section 4.1.3, and Chapter 7, section 5.3.1.3.
It is certain that the passage of twenty years . . .

It is wrong for imperialism to remain.

2.2.2.8 WITH qariib ‘NEAR’: An idiomatic use of min occurs with the adjective qariib ‘near, close.’ English speakers think of “close to” or “near to” when using this adjective, but the correct Arabic preposition to use is min.

 اسمه كان قريبا جدا من اسمها.

ism-u-hu kaan-a qariib-an jidd-an min-i sm-i-haa.
His name was very close to her name.

2.2.2.9 SOME SPELLING VARIATIONS: When suffixed with the pronoun -ii ‘me,’ the nuun in min doubles, so that instead of *min-ii, the phrase ‘from me’ or ‘than me’ becomes minnii منني.

When followed by the pronouns maa ‘what, that, whatever,’ or man ‘whoever,’ the nuun of min is assimilated to the miim of maa, or man’ and doubles, yielding the contractions mimmaa مما ‘of/from that, from what’ and mimman ممن ‘of/from whom.’

أقل مما نحتاج إليه

*aqall-u mimmaa na-Htaaj-u ’ilay-hi huwa *akbar-u minnii.
less than [that which] we need He’s older than I.

أهم كثيرا مما سبقه

’ahamm-u kathiir-an mimmaa sabaq-a-hu
much more important than what preceded it

2.2.3 The preposition ‘an ‘from, away from; about’
Arabic grammars consider ‘an to be a true preposition, but its syntactic behavior under certain conditions also allows it to be classified as a noun. Its original meaning, according to Wright (1967, 2:143), was as a noun meaning ‘side.’

---

10 E.g., when it serves as the object of the preposition min (see below).
11 Its nominal use survives in the expressions such as min ‘an yamiin-i-ka ‘from your right [side].’ For discussion of this point see Ryding Lentzner 1977, 94.
This preposition has two distinct meanings, one having to do with ‘distance away from,’ and the other with the concept of ‘concerning’ or ‘about.’ As other prepositions, it can have spatiotemporal and abstract uses, as well as idiomatic ones.

In terms of special spelling rules, the helping vowel used with ‘an is /-i/. When suffixed to a pronoun starting with miim (maa, man) the nuun of ‘an is assimilated to the miim, and doubles: ‘ammaa عَمَّا, ‘amman عَمْان. Likewise, when suffixed with the first person singular personal pronoun -i, the nuun doubles: ‘annii عَنْنِي.

2.2.3.1 ‘an as ‘about, regarding, of, concerning’

أصدق تعبير عن الوالد للوطن
’aSdaq-u ta‘bir-in ‘an-i l-wila‘-i li-l-waTan-i
the most sincere expression of devotion to the homeland

في برنامج عن دور الجامعة في الاتصال الثقافي
‘fi barnaamaj-in ‘an dawr-i l-jaami‘at-i ‘fi l-ittiSaal-i l-thaqaafiyy-i
in a program about the role of the university in cultural contact

ف هناك روايات عدة عما حدث.
fa-hunaaka riwaayaat-un ‘ammaa Hadath-a.
There are several stories about what happened.

2.2.3.2 Certain verbs require ‘an:

الكتاب صدر عن دار العلم
al-kitaab-u Sadar-a ‘an daar-i l-‘ilm.
The book was published by (‘issued from’) Dar al-‘ilm.

ta-xtalif-u ‘an ghayr-i-haa.
She differs from others.

2.2.3.3 ‘on the right; on the left’: With directions, ‘an is used as English would use ‘on’:

عن يمينه ... وعن يساره
‘an yamiin-i-hi ... wa-‘an yasaar-i-hi
on his right ... and on his left

2.3 Three-letter prepositions: ‘alaa على, ‘ilaa إلى, and Hattaa حتي

All three of these prepositions end with ‘alif maqSuura. A particular spelling feature of both ‘alaa and ‘ilaa is that the final ‘alif maqSuura converts to yaa when a pronoun suffix is added to the word. Owing to the shift of the ‘alif to yaa, the third person pronoun suffixes -hu, -humaa, -hum, and -hunna shift their vowel from /-u/ to /-i/ and become -hi, -himaa, -him, and -hinna. For a model inflectional chart of ‘alay- and ‘ilay- plus pronoun suffixes see Chapter 12 section 2.3.

Note that Hattaa does not take pronoun suffixes.
2.3.1 The preposition ‘alāa على ‘on, upon’
This preposition designates the concept of ‘on’ or ‘upon’ in general, whether spatio-temporal or figurative. In the abstract sense, it conveys also a sense of “incumbent upon.”

2.3.1.1 ‘alāa ‘ON; UPON’

(1) Spatial meaning:

- عَرَضَ عَلَى الْيَابِسَة ‘athar-a ‘alāa haykal-in ‘aZmiyy-in.
- فَالْهَرْجُ عَلَى الْيَابِسَة: ‘alāa l-yaabisat-i
  He stumbled upon a skeleton. on dry land

- الرّجُلُ عَلَى ظُهُورِ الخِلْل al-rijaal-u ‘alāa Zuhuur-i l-xayl-i
- الْمَنْدَرُ عَلَى الْيَابِسَة: ‘alāa l-shaashat-i
  the men on horseback on the screen

(2) Temporal meaning: Used with a word denoting extent of time, ‘alāa has a durative sense and may indicate passage of time from a particular point in the past. This can be expressed in English in various ways.

- عَلَى مَدَارِ الْعَام ‘alāa madaar-i l-‘aam-i
  all year round (‘on the circuit of the year’) for (‘during’) two days

- بَعْدُ ثَلَاثَةٍ أَيَامٍ عَلَى وَقُولَ الْبِزْنَاحَل ba‘d-a thalaathat-i ‘ayyaam-in ‘alāa wuquu‘-i l-zilzaal
  after three days since the [happening of the] earthquake

2.3.1.2 FIGURATIVE MEANING: Used figuratively, ‘alāa can denote a range of meanings, some a direct reflection of the spatiotemporal concepts; others more abstract. Among those abstract meanings are the sense of ‘according to; as for’ and ‘incumbent upon.”

- عَلَى أَنَاسِ غَيْرِ عَنْصَرِيّ ‘alaa ‘asas-in ghayr-i ‘unSuriyy-in
  on a non-racist basis
- عَلَى مَا أُظْنِ ‘alaa maa ‘a-Zunn-u . . .
  in my opinion; as for what I think

السلام عليكم. وعليكم السلام.
al-salaam-u ‘alay-kum. wa ‘alay-kum-u l-salaam-u.
Peace be upon you (pl.). And upon you (pl.) peace.

(1) ‘up to; incumbent upon; must; have to’: Used in this sense, ‘alāa denotes a required or expected action. It is therefore followed either by the particle ‘an plus a subjunctive verb, or by a verbal noun.
We have to understand the meaning of sport. We have to begin from zero.

It is up to the state to undertake its role. He has to come here.

2.3.2 The preposition ilaa إلى ‘to, towards’

The general meaning of ilaa is directional towards an object. It is used spatiotemporally and also in abstract and figurative ways. When used in abstract senses it often has the sense of ‘addition to.’

Because its final letter is ‘alif maqsura, like alaa, its ‘alif converts to yaa’ when pronoun suffixes are added (see Chapter 12, section 2.3).

MIN HUNAAKA ilaa isTanbuul-a
from there to Istanbul

ILAA MASAAFAT-i ‘asharat-i ?amtaar-in
to a distance of ten meters

ILAA L-YAMIIN-i
to the right

ILAA ‘AYNA?
Where to?

2.3.2.1 VERBS OF MOTION PLUS ilaa: Note that with many verbs of motion, it is necessary to use ilaa with the point of destination.

Undeena janna ila ila huna america
when we came (to) here

Janna ila ila huna america li’anna-nii waathiq-un min qudrat-ii.
I came (to) here because I am confident in my ability.

2.3.2.2 ABSTRACT/FIGURATIVE MEANINGS OF ilaa:

INTAHAT ilaa fashl-in dharri‘-in.
It ended in a devastating failure.

YU-TARJIM-u ilaa lughat-i-hi.
He translates into his language.

Wa-ma ila ila dhaalika
and so forth

MIN-A L-‘ALIF-i ilaa l-yaa‘-i
from beginning to end

(‘from the ‘alif to the yaa’)

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2.3.3 The preposition *Hattaa* حَتۡتى ‘until, up to’

*Hattaa*, although it ends with ٌalif maqṣūra like ٌilaَa and ٌalaَa, does not take personal pronoun objects (suffix pronouns) and therefore it does not change its shape or spelling. Its meaning as a preposition is closely related to that of ٌilaَa ‘to, towards’ except that it designates direction in time rather than in space.

It is important to note that *Hattaa* has at least two other functions in Arabic syntax other than as a preposition meaning ‘up to’ or ‘until’; it also is an adverb or preposition with the meaning of ‘even’ and a conjunctive particle used with verbs meaning ‘in order to’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>حَتۡتى غروب الشمس</td>
<td>until sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hattaa</em> ghuruub-i l-shams-i</td>
<td>until sunset yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حَتۡتى شمس</td>
<td>until dawn yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hattaa</em> masaaٍ-i ghad-in</td>
<td>until tomorrow evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حَتۡتى السبعينيات من القرن العشرين</td>
<td>up to the seventies of the twentieth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hattaa</em> fatH-i-haa ٌalaَا yaد-ٍ i l-muslim-iina</td>
<td>until it was conquered (‘its conquering’) by the Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حَتۡتى العشرين من عمره</td>
<td>until he was twenty years old (‘until the twentieth [year] of his age’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.4 The preposition *mundhu* مَنۡذ ‘since; ago; for’

This preposition has the meaning of distance or extent in time and can be translated in several ways, depending on context. Like *Hattaa* and *ka*- it does not take personal pronoun objects.

2.3.4.1 *mundhu* AS ‘FOR; IN’: Used to mean ‘for’ or ‘in,’ it denotes a time span during which something goes on. Its object is usually a noun phrase that refers to a span of time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>مَنۡذ خمس سنوات متواصلة</td>
<td>for five continuous years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mundhu</em> xams-i sanawaat-in mutawaaSilat-an</td>
<td>for a quarter century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مَنۡذ ربع قرن</td>
<td>for five continuous years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mundhu</em> rubٍ-ٍ i qarn-in</td>
<td>for a quarter century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يعمل منذ شهرين كمترجم.</td>
<td>He has been working for two months as a translator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ya-‘mal-u mundhu shahr-ayni ka-mutarjim-in.*
2.3.4.2 *mundhu* AS ‘SINCE; FROM’: When *mundhu* means ‘since,’ it specifies a particular point of time in the past where the action began. It can also mean ‘from’ when the beginning of a time period is denoted and an end specified (often used with *Hattaa* ‘until, up to’).

When *mundhu* means ‘since,’ it specifies a particular point of time in the past where the action began. It can also mean ‘from’ when the beginning of a time period is denoted and an end specified (often used with *Hattaa* ‘until, up to’).

They had been stored in boxes since the war.

Since the sixties she has assumed a larger role.

They had been lined up since early morning.

2.3.4.3 ‘AGO’: In the sense of ‘ago,’ *mundhu* specifies a time in the past measured from the present time:

He had sent him a letter three weeks ago.

in appreciation of his efforts... more than forty years ago

2.3.4.4 PRESENT PERFECT MEANING WITH *mundhu*: An action started in the past and continuing into the present is usually rendered by the present tense in Arabic, whereas in English, the present perfect is used. The preposition *mundhu* is used to specify at which point in the past the action started. This structure may occur with verbal predications or with equational predications.

He has been working in the administration for two months.
I have been living here for five years.

I have loved singing since my childhood.

2.4 Summary of true Arabic prepositions (*Hurūf al-jaarr* حروف الجر)

One-letter prepositions:

- **bi-**
- **li-**
- **ka-**

Two-letter prepositions:

- **fii** في
- **min** من
- **'an** عن

Three-letter prepositions:

- **`ilaa** إلّى
- **'alaa** إلى
- **Hattaa** حتي
- **mundhu** منذ

3 Locative adverbs or semi-prepositions (*Zuruuf makaan wa-Zuruuf zamaa'an* ظروف مكان وظروف زمان)

These words function in many ways as prepositions but are not “true” prepositions because

1. they are derived from triliteral lexical roots and
2. they can be preceded by a true preposition or even another semi-preposition.

Usually they show accusative case marking with *fatHa*, to indicate their adverbial function. Under certain circumstances, that case marker can change. Like true prepositions, they are normally followed by a noun in the genitive case or a pronoun suffix.

Semi-prepositions or locative adverbs are used in concrete and figurative ways, but they do not have the extensive range of abstract meanings that true prepositions have, nor are they normally used in verb-preposition idioms. Included here are examples of some of the most common ones.

3.1 *'amaam-a* أمام ‘in front of; facing; in the face of; before; to'

The word *'amaam-a* refers to a position ‘in front’ or ‘before,’ both spatially and figuratively:

---

12 The fact that the case marker may change is considered an indicator of their close relationship to nouns.
Before us are many opportunities and many challenges.

Before me is splendid nature. He is responsible to ('before') the council.

3.1.1 ‘amaam-a as ‘against’ or ‘versus’

Idiomatically, ‘amaam-a is used in the context of sports teams to express the team ‘against’ which another team is playing.

They play another match against the Chinese team.

They won the first of their matches against Syria.

3.1.2 ‘amaam as forward position

Sometimes, ‘amaam is used as a noun referring to a forward position. When used this way it inflects for all three cases.

It represents a great step forward.

3.2 athnaa‘-a and fii ‘athnaa‘-i in ‘during’

The noun ‘athnaa‘ may be used in the accusative case to indicate ‘during’ or after the preposition fii (in the genitive case), with the same meaning.

3.3 bayn-a ‘between; among’

3.3.1 Repetition of bayn-a with pronoun

The semi-preposition bayn-a means ‘between’ two objects and also ‘among’ many objects. It has the peculiarity that when one or both of the objects are pronouns, bayn-a must be repeated.
3.3.2 *bayn-a* plus nouns

If both of the objects of the preposition are nouns, *bayn-a* is used only once and the second noun is conjoined to the first with the conjunction *wa-* ‘and.’ Both nouns are considered objects of the semi-preposition and both are in the genitive case. A dual noun or a plural noun may also follow *bayn-a*.

- **between the two countries**
  - *bayn-a l-balad-ayni*
  - *Daa‘-a bayn-a l-ziHaam-i.*

- **He got lost in (among) the crowd.**
  - *between the two countries*
  - *bayn-a l-balad-ayni*
  - *He got lost in (among) the crowd.*

- **between the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund**
  - *between the two countries*
  - *bayn-a l-balad-ayni*

- **between the Palestinian delegation and the Israeli delegation**
  - *between the two countries*
  - *bayn-a l-balad-ayni*

- **between the exchange of views among the Arab leaders**
  - *between the two countries*
  - *tabaadul-u l-aaraa‘-i bayn-a l-zu‘amaa‘-i l-arab-i*

- **the best method to create ways of understanding among nations**
  - *between the two countries*
  - *afDal-u wasiilat-in li-iijaad-i subul-i l-tafaahum-i bayna l-umam-i*

3.3.3 *bayn-a* after *min*

After the preposition *min*, *bayn-a* becomes *bayn-i*, as object of the preposition:

- **and among them [is] the Lebanese representative**
  - *between me and (between) you*
  - *wa-min bayn-i-him-i l-naa‘ib-u l-lubnaaniyy-u*
  - *between him and (between) her*
  - *bellahu wa-bayn-a haa*

3.4 *ba‘d-a* ‘after; in’

This function word is used as a semi-preposition and also as an adverb. As a semi-preposition, it has a *fatHa* (accusative case ending) and takes a noun or pronoun.
object. In some cases it might be preceded by a true preposition (usually \textit{min} or \textit{\d{z}ila\text{a}}), and its case marker then changes to genitive (final kasra). It still is followed by a noun or pronoun in the genitive case.

### 3.4.1 Locative \textit{ba’\text{d}-a}

The locative use of \textit{ba’\text{d}-a} includes both time and place.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{ba’\text{d}-a} \textit{\d{a}rba’at-i quruun-in} \quad \text{after four centuries}
  \item \textit{maadhaa Hadath-a la-hu \textit{ba’\text{d}-a dhaali\text{ka}}}? \quad \text{What happened to him after that?}
\end{itemize}

### 3.4.2 \textit{ba’\text{d}} after a preposition

Preceded by a true preposition, \textit{ba’\text{d}} inflects in the genitive:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{a\text{ka}laat-un xafifat-un li-\textit{ba’\text{d}-i muntaSaf-i l-layl-i}} \quad \text{light food for after midnight}
  \item \textit{fii \textit{ba’\text{d}-i l-Zuhr-i}} \quad \text{in the afternoon}
\end{itemize}

### 3.4.3 \textit{ba’\text{d}-u}

If there is no noun or pronoun following \textit{ba’\text{d}}, it is considered an adverb. In this case, devoid of a noun or pronoun object, \textit{ba’\text{d}} changes its final vowel to Damma. In this adverbial role, the final Damma is invariable. The expression \textit{ba’\text{d}-u} is used chiefly as an adverbial of time in negative clauses, meaning ‘[not] yet.’

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{lam yu-Haddad maw’id-u-hu \textit{ba’\text{d}-u}}. \quad \text{Its date has not yet been set.}
\end{itemize}

#### 3.4.3.1 THE EXPRESSION \textit{fii-maa ba’\text{d}-u} ‘LATER’

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{\textit{i’-mal-haa fii-maa ba’\text{d}-u}}. \quad \text{Do it later.}
  \item \textit{sa’u-talfin-u la-ka fii-maa ba’\text{d}-u}. \quad \text{I will telephone you later.}
\end{itemize}

\footnote{The final Damma on \textit{ba’\text{d}-u} and on certain other semi-prepositions (\textit{qabl-u}, \textit{taHt-u}) is considered to be a remnant of an old locative case. This Damma has two characteristics: (1) it is invariable, even after a preposition (e.g., \textit{min qabl-u}; \textit{min taHt-u}); (2) it cannot be on the first term of an ‘\textit{iDaafa}, that is, it cannot be followed by a noun in the genitive case or by a pronoun suffix. See Chapter 11, section 4.1.3, especially note 12.}
3.5 daaxil-a داخل 'inside, within'
The semi-preposition daaxil-a refers to a location inside or on the interior of something:

داخل الدولة الإسلامية

inside the Islamic state

ليغلىوا داخل الحدود
to be locked inside the borders

3.5.1 After a true preposition
After a true preposition, daaxil- inflects for the genitive case.

في داخل الأسفنج

fii daaxil-i l-isfanj-i
on the inside of the sponge

3.6 Didd-a ضد 'against; versus'

يشن حربا ضد الدولة التركية.
yu-shunn-u Harb-an Didd-a l-dawlat-i
l-turkiyyat-i.

Everything is against me.

3.7 Dimn-a ضمن 'within; inside; among'

 ضمن قوات الأمم المتحدة

Dimn-a quwwaat-i l-iunam-i l-muttaHidat-i
within the powers of the United Nations

أراض كان يجب أن تكون ضمن حصائتم

'araaD-in kaan-a ya-jib-u an ta-kuun-a Dimn-a HiSSat-i-him
lands [which] should have been [included] within their portion

3.8 duun-a بدون 'without'
The word duun by itself literally means 'below, under' and it can be used by itself marked with a fatHa as a semi-preposition meaning 'without.' However, it often occurs in combination with min or bi- as a compound prepositional phrase meaning 'without.'

3.8.1 duun-a

استخدام بعضها بدون بعضها الآخر

istixdaam-u ba‘D-i-haa duun-a ba‘D-i-haa l-‘aaxar-i
using some of them without the others
3.8.2 **min duun-i**

السلام غير ممكن من دون هذا البلد.

*al-salaam-u ghayru mumkin-in min duun-i haadha l-balad-i.*

Peace is not possible **without this country**.

من دون فرض رسم دخول

*min duun-i farD-i rasm-i duxuul-in*  
**without imposing an entrance fee**

3.8.3 **bi-duun-i**

قهوة بدون كافيين

*qahwat-un bi-duun-i kaafiin*

decaffeinated coffee (**‘without caffeine’**)

يبقى تعليمها بدون هدف.

*ya-bqaa ta‘liim-u-haa bi-duun-i hadaf-in.*

Teaching it remains aimless (**‘without a goal’**).

3.9 **fawq-a**  

‘above; upon; on top of; over’

يسير على عجلات فوقها.

*ya-stir-u ‘alaa ‘ajalaat-in fawq-a-hu.*

It goes along on wheels [which are] above it.

على الأرض و فوقها

*‘alaa l-ard-i wa-fawq-a-haa*

on the earth and over it

ما فوقه وما تحته

*maa fawq-a-hu wa-maa taHt-a-hu*

what is above it and below it

فوق سطح منزله

*fawq-a saTH-i manzal-i-hi*

on [top of] the roof of his house

3.10 **fawr-a**  

‘immediately upon; immediately after; right after’

نقل إلى مستشفى الجامعة فور إصابته.

*nuqil-a ‘ilaam mustashfua l-jaami‘at-i fawr-a ‘iSaabat-i-hi.*

He was transported to the university hospital **right after being hit**.

3.11 **Hasab-a**  

‘according to; in accordance with’

حسب نص القرار

*Hasab-a naSS-i l-qaraar-i*

according to the text of the resolution

3.12 **Hawl-a**  

‘about, regarding; around’

This semi-preposition has two distinct meanings, one being ‘about’ in the concrete physical sense of ‘surrounding’ or ‘around’ and the other being ‘about’ in the sense of ‘regarding’ or ‘with regard to.’
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التدخل الأمريكي حول العالم

al-tadaxxul-u l-‘amrikiyy-u Hawl-a l-‘aalam-i

American intervention around the world

 حول مواضيع ذات اهتمام مشترك

Hawl-a l-mawaaDii-i dhaat-i htimaam-in mushtarak-in

about topics of common concern

3.13 Hawaali ‘approximately’

The word Hawaali is not the typical locative adverb or semi-preposition ending in fatHa, yet it serves much the same function, being followed by a noun in the genitive case.

في جلساته حوالي منة باحت

fii jalsaat-i-hi Hawaali mi’at-i baaHith-in.

In its sessions [were] approximately 100 researchers.

3.14 ‘ibbaan-a ‘during’

إبان الشتاء

‘ibbaan-a l-shitaa-i

during the winter

3.15 ‘ithr-a ‘right after; immediately after’

إثر الاجتماعهم

‘ithr-a jtimaa‘-i-him

right after their meeting

3.16 ‘izaa‘-a ‘facing; in the face of’

إزاء القضايا المصرية

izaa‘-a l-qDaayaa l-miSriyyat-i

in the face of Egyptian problems

3.17 ladaa ‘at, by; upon; to; having’

This locative adverb denotes possession and proximity. Like ‘ilaa and ‘alaa, it changes its final ‘alif maqSuura to yaa’ when it has a personal pronoun suffix. See model inflectional chart of ‘alaa + pronoun suffixes, Chapter 12, section 2.3.
3.17.1 *ladaa* showing possession:

They [two] have many things in common.

ألعاب القوى لديها نجوم بارزين.

Track and field [sports] they have prominent stars.

3.17.2 *ladaa* as ‘to; at; with’

A particular use of *ladaa* is to denote the country to which an ambassador is designated.

the ambassador of Cyprus

the ambassador of Japan to Saudi Arabia

3.17.3 *ladaa* as ‘upon; at the time of’

and upon their refusal of that

upon the return of the ambassador to Tunis

3.18 *ma*-a ‘with’

The basic meaning of *ma*-a has to do with accompaniment or association and is almost always equivalent to English ‘with.’ Note that it is not used for indicating instrumental concepts; *bi*- is used for that. It is also possible to use *ma*-a to express possession of something concrete that people could “have with” them, such as a wallet or keys. This expression of possession does not indicate permanency or the concept of ‘belonging to.’

3.18.1 Accompaniment or association

with relatives and friends

with warmest wishes

14 The word *ma*-a may seem like a true preposition because it is a lexical primitive and is sometimes used in verb-preposition expressions (naaqaš-*ma*-a 'to discuss with,' *taa'aawa*a *ma*-a 'to equate with,' *ta'aawan*-a *ma*-a 'to cooperate with,' *ijtama*a *ma*-a 'to meet with'). The eighth-century Arabic grammarian Sibawayhi, however, cites the phrase *dhahab*-a min *ma*-a *hi* ‘he left him,’ showing that *ma*-a can sometimes be the object of another preposition. Sibawayhi 1970, l:177.
3.18.2 Possession
A sense of immediate possession (on or near a person) is conveyed by *ma*-a.

I have a problem with that man.  

She has the treasure inside the box.  

3.18.3 Use of *ma*-an معاً as ‘together’
To convey the meaning of ‘together’ *ma*-a takes an adverbial indefinite accusative ending -an:

living together in Jerusalem

3.19 *mithl*-a ‘like; as’
The semi-preposition *mithl*-a indicates similarity. It is close in meaning to the preposition *ka*- ‘like, as.’ However, it is more flexible than *ka*- because it can take suffix pronoun objects (see section 2.1.3 above).

like any other people  
like a strong medicine

3.19.1 *mithl* + demonstrative + noun ‘such as this/these; such a’
An idiomatic use of *mithl* occurs with a demonstrative pronoun, meaning ‘such a’ or ‘such as this/these.’
Prepositions and prepositional phrases

نجل هذه السنة في توقيع مثل هذا الاتفاق.
\( najaH-a \ haadhihi \ l-sanat-a \ fii \ tawqi'\(^{a}i \ mithl-i \ haadhaa \ l-ittifaaq-i. \)
This year he succeeded in signing such an agreement.

لا يستطيع العمل في مثل هذه الأجواء.
\( laa \ ya-staTii\(^{u} \ l-\'amal-a \ fii \ mithl-i \ haadhihi \ l-\'ajwaa\(^{z}i. \)
He cannot work in such an atmosphere.

مثل هذه الأشياء لها رنينها.
\( mithl-u \ haadhihi \ l-\'ashyaa\(^{z}i \ la-haa \ raniin-u-haa. \)
Things such as these have their resonance.

3.20 \( \text{naHw-} \) ‘toward; about; approximately’
This semi-preposition has either a directional meaning of ‘toward’ or a figurative use of ‘approximately, about.’

\( \text{لترويده نحو ثلاثين طائرة} \)
\( \text{li-tazwid-i-hi} \ \text{naHw-} \ \text{thaalaathiina} \)
\( \text{Taa'} \text{irat-an} \)
toward a more profitable tomorrow
to equip it with about thirty planes

3.20.1 \( \text{naHw} \) after a preposition
After a preposition or another semi-preposition, \( \text{naHw-} \) takes the genitive case:

\( \text{ب نحو ثلاثة بلايين دولار} \)
\( \text{bi-naHw-i} \ \text{thalaathat-i} \ \text{balaayiin-i} \ \text{duulaar-in} \)
by approximately three billion dollars

3.21 Words based on the root \( q-b-l \)
The root \( q-b-l \), which denotes anteriority, is used in several forms that signify different degrees or variations on the concept.

3.21.1 \( \text{qabl-} \) ‘before; prior to; ago’

ضبطت قبل آيام.
\( \text{DubiiT-at} \ \text{qabl-} \ \text{\^{a}yyaam-in.} \)
It was seized \{a few\} days ago.

قبل السباحة إلى البحر.
\( \text{qabl-} \ \text{l-sibaahat-} \ \text{\^{i}ila} \ \text{l-baHr-i} \)
before swimming to the sea

بعد ولادة بنتهما قبل سنة.
\( \text{ba}^{t} \text{d-a} \ \text{wilaadat-i} \ \text{bnat-i-himaa} \ \text{qabl-a} \ \text{sanat-in} \)
after the birth of their daughter a year ago

قبل السباحة إلى البحر.
\( \text{qabl-} \ \text{l-sibaahat-} \ \text{\^{i}ila} \ \text{l-baHr-i} \)
before swimming to the sea

الليلة قبل الماضية.
\( \text{al-laylat-a} \ \text{qabl-a} \ \text{l-maaDiyat-i} \)
the night before last
3.21.2 *qubayl-a*  قبيل ‘a little before, just before’

This is a diminutive form of *qabl-a* that denotes a short period of time.

\[
\text{قبيل العودة إلى الكويت} = \text{just before returning to Kuwait}
\]

\[
\text{قفيل the return to Sidon}
\]

3.21.3 *qubaalat-a*  قبالة ‘opposite; facing’

\[
\text{في مياه المحيط الأطلسي قبالة إيرلندا} = \text{in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean opposite Ireland}
\]

3.21.4 *muqaabil-a*  مقابل ‘opposite; in exhange for; opposed to’

\[
\text{كسبوا بهدفين مقابل هدف واحد} = \text{They won by two goals to one (‘as opposed to one’)}.
\]

3.21.5 *min qibal-i*  من قبل ‘on the part of; by’

\[
\text{من قبل زملائه في الحزب} = \text{on the part of his colleagues in the party}
\]

\[
\text{يتلاقى إقبالاً من قبل المراقبين} = \text{It meets with acceptance on the part of female citizens.}
\]

3.22 Words based on the root *q-r-b*

The root *q-r-b* denotes proximity and is used chiefly in two forms.

3.22.1 *quraabat-a*  قرابة ‘almost; close to’

\[
\text{قرابة ثلاثة عشر مليون دولار} = \text{close to thirteen million dollars}
\]

3.22.2 *qurb-a*  قرب ‘near; close to; in the vicinity of’

\[
\text{في جنوب تركيا قرب الحدود السورية} = \text{in southern Turkey near the Syrian border[s]}
\]
3.23 **siwaa** ‘other than; except’

Used following a negative clause, **siwaa** indicates an exception. This use of **siwaa** after the negative is a common way to phrase restrictive expressions that would normally be expressed in English with ‘only.’

لا يرى سوى سبيل واحد.

*laa ya-raa siwaa sabiil-in waaHid-in.*

He sees **only one way** (**‘he does not see but one way’**).

ليس معهما سوى مترجميهما.

*lays-a ma‘-a-humaa siwaa mutarjimay-himaa.*

Only their two translators were with them.

3.24 **taHt-a** ‘underneath, under; below’

This semi-preposition refers to a location below, underneath or under something else.

ٍلا تواصَل أنفسهم تحت التراب.

*‘athaar-a ‘alay-haa taHt-a l-turaab-i.*

He discovered it **under the ground.**  

**under the supervision of the United Nations**

3.25 **Tiwaal-a** ‘during; for’

طول السنوات الماضية

*Tiwaal-a l-sanawaat-i l-maaDiyat-i*  

during past years; in years past  

during/for more than four decades

3.26 **tujaah-a** ‘facing, opposite, in front of; towards’

تجاه الدول النامية

*tujaah-a l-duwal-i l-naamiyat-i*  

facing the developing nations  

the behavior of the West **towards the East**

3.27 **waraa’-a** ‘behind; in back of’

تركه المسلمين وراءهم.

*tarak-a-hu l-muslim-uuna waraa’-a-hum.*

The Muslims left it **behind (them).**  

ظل يسعى وراء هدفه.

*Zall-a ya-s‘aa waraa’-a hadaf-i-hi.*

He continued to pursue/run **after his goal.**
3.28 **wasT-a** ‘in the middle of; in the midst of; among’

وسط المدينة
wasT-a l-madiinat-i
in the middle of the city
among these alleyways

3.29 **xalf-a** ‘behind; in back of’

ما يكمى خلفها من حقائق
maa ya-kmun-u xalf-a-haa min Haqaa’iq-a
that which is hidden behind it of truths
هو مختبى خلف ستار.
huwa mustabi’t-un xalf-a sitaarat-in.

3.30 **xaarij-a** ‘outside; outside of’

داخل أو بيك وخارجه
daaxil-a ’uubiik wa-xaarij-a-hu
inside OPEC and outside of it

3.31 **xilaal-a** ‘during’; **min xilaal-i** ‘through’

خلال العصور الوسطى
xilaal-a l-’uSuur-i l-wusTaa
during the Middle Ages
خلال دراسة مطولة
xilaal-a diraasat-in muTawwalat-in
during an extended study

أصبح جميلًا من خلال الفن.
’aSbaH-a jamiiil-an min xilaal-i l-fann-i.
It was made beautiful through art.

3.32 **fi abr-a** ‘across, over’

ويمتد عبر قاراتين.
wa ya-mtadd-u ’abr-a qaarrat-ayni.
It extends across two continents.
عبر عقود من الزمن
’abr-a ’uquud-in min-a l-zaman-i
across decades of time

3.33 **’aqib-a** ‘right after, immediately after’

عقب إعلانها
’aqib-a ’i’laan-i-haa
immediately after her announcement
ذلك عقب تدخل عالي المستوى
dhaalika ’aqib-a tadaxxul-in ’aalii l-mustawaa
that was right after a high-level intervention
3.34 ‘ind-a’ ‘on the part of’; ‘in the opinion of’; ‘near, by, at, upon’; ‘chez’
The semi-preposition ‘ind-a’ denotes location in space or time. It can also denote temporary location at the “place” where someone lives or works (e.g., huwa ‘ind-a l-Tabiib-i ‘He’s at the doctor’s’).

In spoken Arabic, ‘ind-a’ plays a fundamental role in the expression of possession, and some of that possession role has crept into MSA, especially in the relating of conversations or interviews where people are quoted directly. The more usual preposition to use for possession in formal MSA is li-, or the semi-preposition ladaa.

3.34.1 ‘ind-a’ ‘on the part of; in the opinion of’

عدم الفهم عند الكثير من قرائي
‘adam-u l-fahm-i ‘ind-a l-kathiir-i min qurraa’-ii
the lack of understanding on the part of many of my readers

الإسلام يتساوى عندهم مع التطرف.
al-‘islaam-u ya-tasaawaa ‘ind-a-hum ma’a l-taTarruf-i.
Islam for them (‘in their opinion’) equates with extremism.

3.34.2 Location in time

عند إلقاء القبض عليه
‘ind-a ‘ilqaa’-i l-qabD ‘alay-hi
at the time of his arrest

بالقرب من شاطئ البحر عند انضمام المرأة
bi-l-qurb-i min shaaTi’i l-bahir-i

‘ind-a nsiHaab-i l-madd-i
near the seashore at ebb tide

3.34.3 Location in space

يجب التوقف عند
ya-jib-u l-tawaqquf-u ‘ind-a-hu.
It is necessary to stop at his [place].

على آخر الطابور
‘ind-a ‘aaxir-i l-Taabuuri
at the end of the line

3.34.4 Possession

عندى مشكلة مع هذا الرجل.
‘ind-ii mushkilat-un ma’a haadhaa l-rajul-i.
I have a problem with that man.

رائهم أصدقاء
‘ind-a-hum ‘aSdiqaa’-u.
They have friends.

3.34.5 Adverbial of time

‘ind-a may be suffixed with the adverbial markers -maa and -idhin to serve as an adverb denoting ‘time when.’ This expression is usually followed directly by a verb.
3.34.5.1 'ind-a-maa 'WHEN'

كان في العشرين من عمره عندما وصل إلى لندن.

kaan-a fii l-‘ishriina min ‘umr-i-hi ‘ind-a-maa waSaf-al ‘ilaa landan.

He was twenty years of age when he arrived in London.

عندما انخفض مستوى البحر

‘ind-a-maa nxafaD-a mustawaa l-baHr-i 'ind-a-maa nazal-uu ‘ilaa l-shaari‘i

when the sea level receded when they came down into the street

3.34.5.2 'ind-a-idhin ‘AT THAT POINT IN TIME; THEN’

بدأت عندما في عمل بعض الرسوم.

bada‘at ‘ind-a-idhin fii ‘amal-i ba‘Di l-rusuum-i.

She began at that point to make some drawings.

4 Prepositions with clause objects

Prepositions may take entire clauses as their objects, in which case they may be followed by the subordinating conjunctions 'an or 'anna. For more on subordinate clauses, see Chapter 19. Here are two examples:

كانت تأكل السمك

ka-‘anna-ka ta-‘kul-u l-samak-a waSaf-uu-hu bi-‘anna-hu jaww-un min-a l-thiqat-i.

as though you were eating fish They described it as an atmosphere of trust.
Questions and question words

Question formation and the use of question words in Arabic are not complex. In general, the interrogative word is placed at the beginning of a sentence. There is no inversion of word order, usually just the insertion of the question word.

The most common question words in Arabic include:

- **‘ayn-a** ‘where’
- **‘aayy** ‘which; what’
- **kam** ‘how much; how many’
- **kayf-a** ‘how’
- **li-maadhaa** ‘why’
- **maa** ‘what’
- **maadhaa** ‘what’
- **man** ‘who/whom’
- **mataa** ‘when’
- **hal** introduces yes/no question
- **‘a-** introduces yes/no question

1 **‘ayn-a** ‘where’

The question word **‘ayn-a** is invariable, even after a preposition. It always ends with fatHa.1

- إلى أين, يا سيدي؟
- من أين أنت؟
- أين هي اللجنة الوزارية؟
- ila‘a ‘ayn-a, yaa siidii?
- min ‘ayn-a ‘anta?
- ‘ayn-a hiya l-hajnat-u l-wizaariyyat-u?

Where to, Sir?
Where are you from?
Where is it, the ministerial committee?

---

1 Note that the question word **‘ayn-a** is not used as the locative adverb ‘where.’ To express an idea such as “at a university where he teaches,” the adverb **Hayth-u** is used for ‘where’: fi jaami‘at-in Hayth-u yu-darris-u. See Chapter 11, section 3.1.3 for more on Hayth-u.
1.1 *ayn-a-maa* ‘wherever’

With the addition of the function word *maa*, interrogative *ayna* becomes a conditional particle with the meaning of ‘wherever.’

أينما كنت

*ayn-a-maa kunt-a

*wherever you are*

2 *ayy-un* ‘which, what’

As a question word, *ayy-* can be an indefinite noun, meaning ‘which one?’ or as the first part of a construct phrase, it specifies ‘which + noun.’ It may alternatively be followed by a pronoun suffix (e.g., *أيهم؟* ‘*ayy-u-hum*? which of them?’). It takes the full set of three case endings, depending on its function and placement in the sentence.2

لأي دولة تذهب؟

*ayy-i dawlat-in ta-dhab-u?

To which country are you going?

أي أرنب؟

*ayy-u *arnab-in?

Which rabbit?

3 *kam* ‘how much, how many’

This question word is usually followed by a singular indefinite noun in the accusative case.3

كم نوعًا من الأسماك تعرفين؟

*kam naw-*an min-a l-*asmaak-i ta-*rif-iina-hu?

How many kinds of fish do you (f.) know?

كم درساَ أكملتَ؟

*kam dars-*an *akmal-tum?*

How many lessons have you (m. pl.) completed?

3.1 *kam* + nominative

When the interrogative word *kam* has the meaning of ‘how much [is],’ it is followed by a definite noun (either with the definite article or with a pronoun suffix) in the nominative case.4

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2 The word *ayy-* also has a non-interrogative use as a determiner meaning ‘any.’ For more on this see Chapter 9, section 5.2.

3 The accusative case after *kam* is considered to be a form of *tamyiz*, or accusative of specification. For more on *tamyiz*, see Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.7 and Chapter 11, section 6.

4 In this use of *kam*, it is actually a fronted predicate of an equational sentence; the noun is in the nominative as the subject/topic of an equational sentence.
4 kayf-ا ‘how’
The interrogative word kayf-ا is invariable in case. It always ends with fatHa. It may be followed by a verb or by a noun.

kayf-ا l-Haal-u?
How are you? (‘How is the condition?’)

kayf-ا ‘araf-ti?
How did you (f.) know?

5 li-maadhaa لمادا ‘why; what for’
This is a compound word consisting of the preposition li- ‘for’ and the question word maadhaa ‘what.’ Thus its meaning of ‘what for’ or ‘why.’

li-maadhaa tu-Hibb-u l-sibaaHat-a?
Why do you like swimming?

li-maadhaa ttajah-ta ilaa l-tamthiil-i?
Why did you turn to acting?

6 maa وما and maadhaa مادا ‘what’
The interrogatives maa and maadhaa have similar meanings but are used in different contexts. In general, maa is used in questions involving equational (verbless) sentences and maadhaa is used with verbs.5

6.1 maa ‘what’
Interrogative maa is used with verbless predications.

ma اسمك؟
What [is] your (m.) name?

maa ra’y-u-ki?
What [is] your (f.) opinion?

5 Interrogative maa is probably not used with verbs because it is a homonym with negative maa, which when used with a verb indicates negation (e.g., maa ‘adrii ‘I don’t know.’).
What is the difference?
What is the reason?

When used to ask a question with a longer noun phrase, *maa* may be followed directly by an independent third person personal pronoun acting as a copula in the question:

ما هي المهمة الأولى؟
*mää hiym l-mahammät-u l-'uulaa?*
What is the first task (‘What is it, the first task’)?

ما هي أهم مشاكل التلوث؟
*mää hiym 'ahammm-u maašākīl-ī l-talawwūth-i?*
What are the most important problems of pollution? (‘What are they, the most important problems of pollution’)?

6.2 *maadhā* ‘what’
The question word *maadhā* is used mainly with verbs:

ماذا جرى؟
*maadhā jaraa?*
What happened?

ماذا تعتقد؟
*maadhā ta-'taqīd-u?*
What do you think?

6.2.1 *maadhā* as pronoun
Sometimes *maadhā* is used like a relative pronoun meaning ‘that which,’ or ‘what’:

لا أفهم ماذا تقول.
*laa 'a-fham-u maadhā ta-qqul-u.*
I don’t understand what you are saying.

6.2.3 *maadhā* ‘*an* ‘what about’
The interrogative phrase *maadhā* ‘*an* is used to express a general query about a topic.

ماذا عن القيادة الآخرين؟
*maadhā ‘an-ī l-qaadät-ī l-'aa xaari-iina?*
What about the other leaders?
7 man مَنّ ‘who; whom’
This word is used both as an interrogative pronoun and as an indefinite pronoun. Because it ends in sukuun, it needs a helping vowel, kasra, if it precedes a consonant cluster.

من هو؟
ِمن الرئيس السابق؟
\[
\text{man huwa?} \\
\text{man-i l-ra’ is-u l-saabiq-u?}
\]
Who is he?
Who is the former president?

8 mataa مَتَى ‘when’
The question word mataa is also invariable, ending in ‘alif maqSuura. Note that mataa is used only as an interrogative, not as a connective adverb meaning ‘when.’

متى وجدته؟
متى انتشرت الحضارة؟
\[
\text{mataa wajad-ta-hu?} \\
\text{mataa ntasharat-i l-Hayaat-u l-Haariyyat-u?}
\]
When did you find it?
When did civilized life spread?

متى يرحل عن بيروت؟
متى وصلت؟
\[
\text{mataa ya-rHal-u ‘an bayruut-a?} \\
\text{mataa waSal-at?}
\]
When is he departing from Beirut?
When did she arrive?

9 hal and ‘a- -i ‘interrogative markers
Both hal and ‘a- are prefixed to statements in order to convert them into yes/no questions. They have equivalent functional meaning, but different distribution: hal is used with a wide range of constructions; ‘a- is restricted in that it is not used before a noun with the definite article or words that start with ‘alif plus hamza, such as ‘anta ‘you.’ Neither word is translatable into English, since shift in word order is the signal of yes/no question formation in English.

9.1 hal هل
هل أنا كمبيوتر؟
هل روعي الرأي العام؟
\[
\text{hal ‘anaa kumbyuutir?} \\
\text{hal ruu’iy-a l-ra’y-yu l’aamm-u?}
\]
Am I a computer?
Was public opinion taken into account?

هل بالإمكان أن نبدأ؟
هل أخذت الزجاجة من هنا؟
\[
\text{hal bi-l’imkaan-i ‘an na-bda²-a?} \\
\text{hal ’axadh-ta l-zujaajat-a min hunaa?}
\]
May we begin?
Did you take the glass from here?

6 See time adverbials in Chapter 18, and in Chapter 11, section 3.1.3.
9.2 'a- ī

This 'alif plus hamza is prefixed to a word, but not if the word begins with 'alif:

أليس كذلك؟
'ā-lays-a ka-dhaalika?
Isn’t that so?

أهذا سمير؟
'ā-haadhaa samiir-un?
Is this Samir?

9.2.1 'a-laa

Negative yes/no interrogatives are usually prefaced with 'a-laa:

لا يعني تعصبًا؟
'ā-laa ta-‘nii ta‘assSub-an?
Doesn’t it mean bigotry?

لا يعني تقهقرًا؟
'ā-laa ya-‘nii taqahqur-an?
Doesn’t it mean regression?
Connectives – words or phrases that connect one part of discourse with another – are a pervasive feature of MSA syntax.\(^1\) Arabic sentences and clauses within a text are connected and interconnected by means of words or phrases (such as *wa-* ‘and’) that coordinate, subordinate, and otherwise link them semantically and syntactically. This frequent use of connectives results in a high degree of textual cohesion in Arabic writing that contrasts significantly with the terser style of written English. Not only are parts of Arabic sentences coordinated or subordinated in various ways, but most sentences within a text actually start with a connective word that links each sentence with the previous ones.

Even paragraphs are introduced with connectives that connect them to the text as a whole. As Al-Batal remarks: “MSA seems to have a connecting constraint that requires the writer to signal continuously to the reader, through the use of connectives, the type of link that exists between different parts of the text. This gives the connectives special importance as text-building elements and renders them essential for the reader’s processing of text” (1990, 256).

Connective words that link sentences within a text are referred to as “discourse markers.”\(^2\) Analysis of discourse markers in English has tended to focus on spoken conversation whereas analysis of discourse markers in Arabic (Al-Batal 1990, Johnstone 1990, Kammensjö 1993) has focused particularly on the structure of written narrative. Arabic writing has been characterized as syndetic, that is, as using conjunctions to link discourse elements; and it has also been described as formulaic, that is, relying on “fixed sets of words” (Johnstone 1990, 218) to make

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1 I use the term “connective” after Al-Batal 1990, whose research on Arabic connectives has been crucial to our understanding of their nature and importance. He gives the following definition: “any element in a text which indicates a linking or transitional relationship between phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or larger units of discourse, exclusive of referential or lexical ties” (1994, 91). Other terms used to refer to these words include “connectors,” “function words,” and “particles.”

2 Schiffrin, in her work *Discourse Markers*, brings attention to the importance of cohesive elements as interpretive links that connect the “underlying propositional content” of one discourse element with another (1987, 9). She states that markers work “on the discourse level” and that they “have a sequencing function of relating syntactic units and fitting them into a textual or discourse context” (1987, 37).
semantic and syntactic links. In certain instances, short function words such as 
wa- ‘and,’ actually function in Arabic texts as punctuation marks would function 
in English texts. These connective words are therefore not always translatable 
because they sometimes perform strictly grammatical functions rather than 
adding semantic content. At the discourse or text level, the presence of appropri-
ate connectives is an important feature of “acceptability,” according to Al-Batal, 
who notes that although “no explicit or formal rules exist,” interconnection 
between sentences is essential to authentic Arabic texts.3

Connectives are therefore an important topic in studying Arabic. However, like 
the category of adverbials, the class of words and phrases used as connectives is 
large and heterogeneous. Different types of words and word groups serve as con-
nectives: conjunctions, adverbs, particles, and also certain idiomatic or set 
phrases. These elements link at different discourse levels (phrase, clause, sen-
tence, paragraph) and in different ways, some simply coordinating or introducing 
text elements, and others requiring particular grammatical operations (e.g., sub-
junctive mood on verb, accusative case on nouns). There are therefore differences 
in the form, distribution, and function of connectives.4 Moreover, different 
researchers classify members of these categories in different ways.

At the sentence level, traditional Arabic grammarians classify particles 
(حروف hurūf) according to whether or not they have a grammatical effect on 
the following phrase or clause. For instance, the particle kay كي ‘in order that’ 
requires the following verb to be in the subjunctive mood; the negative particle 
َلاَم لام requires the verb to be in the jussive mood; and the subordinating con-
junction َانْنَسَانَ أن ‘that’ requires the subject of the following clause to be either 
a suffix pronoun or a noun in the accusative case. Thus the operational effect 
(عمل ‘amal) of the function word is a primary feature in its classification. The 
effects of these particles on the syntax and inflectional status of sentence 
elements form a major component in the theoretical framework and analysis 
of Arabic syntax.5

Along these lines, connectives are presented here according to whether or not 
they exercise a grammatical effect on the following sentence element.

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3 Al-Batal points out that a lack of sentence-initial connectives in otherwise “perfectly grammatical” 
Arabic texts written by nonnative speakers of Arabic reveals a stylistic gap that affects the accept-
ability of such texts, whose structures do not correspond with “the frequent usage of connectives 
that is characteristic of Arabic written texts” (1990, 253).

4 For further discussion of the nature of Arabic connectives, see Al-Batal 1990 and 1994 as well as 
Johnstone 1990. For further description and exercises with Arabic connectives, see al-Warraki and 

5 For analysis of Arabic syntactic theory in English, see Beeston 1970; Bohas, Guillaume, and 
Kouloughli 1990, 49–72; Cantarino 1974–1976 (all three volumes); Holes 1995, 160–247 and 
Wright II:1–349.
In one class are the many connecting words that serve linking functions only, without requiring a grammatical change, called here “simple linking connectives.”

In the other class are the “operative particles” (Huruuf ’aamila حروف عاملة) that require inflectional modification of the phrase or clause that they introduce. This class includes, for example, particles that require the subjunctive or the jussive on following verbs, or particles that require the accusative case on nouns, adjectives, and noun phrases. These “operative particles” are dealt with under separate headings in this book. See the sections on subjunctive, jussive, negation and exception, ‘inna and her sisters, and the section on cases and their functions.

In some instances, a connective may have more than one function and may fall into both classes: simple linking and operative.

This chapter deals primarily with simple linking connectives.

1 wa- ‘and’ (waaw al-‘aTf واو العطف)

This connective is of the highest frequency of all (almost 50 percent of all Arabic connectives) and occurs at all levels of text to “signal an additive relationship” (Al-Batal 1990, 245).

1.1 Sentence starter wa-

Sentences within an expository text after the introductory sentence are often initiated with wa- ‘and’ and/or another connective expression. The following examples are beginnings of typical sentences. As a sentence-starter, wa- is considered good style in Arabic, but it is not usually translated into English because English style rules normally advise against starting sentences with ‘and.’

(And) the assistant minister of defense left Cairo yesterday . . .

(And) the two presidents arrived in the capital yesterday . . .
1.2 Coordinating conjunction wa-
The coordinating conjunction wa- ‘and’ functions as an additive term within sentences to link clauses, phrases, and words. In particular, Arabic uses wa- in lists where in English a comma would be used to separate each item. The items in the list retain the case determined by their role in the sentence.

وتنشئ مصادر كردية إلى أن

And there are scholars who believe that . . .

وتنشئ مصادر كردية إلى أن

(And) Kurdish sources indicate that . . .

منها مصر والأردن والكويت ولبنان وقطر وعمان ودولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة والمملكة العربية السعودية.

min-haa miSr-u wa-l- qurdiyyat-un wa-l-kuwayt-u wa-l-qatar-u wa- binaan-u wa-dawlat-u l-mamlakat-u l-sa fi arabiyyat-u.

Among them are Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Oman, the (‘State of’) the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

يتعلق بقضايا العراق والسودان وليبيا والصومال والبوسنة وكشمير والشيشان.

ya-ta’llaaq-u bi-QD-‘iraq-i wa-l-suudaan-i wa-liibyaa wa-l-Suumaal-i wa-l-buusinat-i wa-kashmiir-a wa-l-shiishaan-i.

It relates to the problems of Iraq, The Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Bosnia, Kashmir, and Chechnia.

مواد أدبية ولغوية وتاريخية وفلسفية

mawaadd-u adabiyyat-un wa-lughawiyyat-un wa-taaariixiyat-un wa-falsafiyyat-un literary, linguistic, historical, and philosophical materials

2 fa- ﴾‘and so; and then; yet; and thus’
This connector implies several different kinds of relationships with the previous text elements. It can have a sequential meaning ‘and then,’ a resultative meaning ‘and so’ (faa‘ al-sababiyya فاء السببية), a contrastive meaning ‘yet; but,’ a slight shift in topic ‘and also; moreover’, or a conclusive meaning, ‘and therefore; in conclusion.’

Beeston refers to it as “the most interesting of the ambivalent functionals” (1970, 98).

9 Al-Batal refers to it as “the most complex and the most interesting” connective in his research because of the different functions that it has (1990, 100). Cantarino 1975, III:20–34 has an extensive analysis of the functions of fa-, with examples taken from literary contexts.
It may start a sentence in a text or it may knit elements together within a sentence.

فيهم ما زالوا مهمّنين بأحداث الانتفاضة.
fa-hum maa zaal-uu muhtamm-iina bi-2ahdaath-i l-intifaaDat-i. Yet they are still interested in the events of the uprising.

و إذا لم يبلغ الآخر، فإنّه يتجاهل.
wa-2idhaa lam ya-ighi l-2aaxar . . . fa-2inna-hu ya-tajaahal-u-hu. If he doesn’t abolish the other . . . (then) he ignores it.

فُتحت الباب فانفتح.
fataH-tu l-baab-2a fa-nfataH-a. I opened the door and [so] it opened.

لمّا دام خارجة من الشرعية، فإنّ المقاطعة مستمرةّ.
maa daam-at xaarijat-an min-a l-sharriyyat-i, fa-2inna l-muqaaTa l-mustamirrat-un. As long as it remains outside the law, (then) the boycott will continue.

3 Contrastive conjunctions
These conjunctions indicate contrast in semantic content between two parts of a sentence.

3.1 bal بّلّ ‘rather; but actually’
The word bal is termed an “adversative” by Al-Batal because it introduces a clause whose semantic content conveys the idea of something additional but also different or contrastive from the main clause.10

وترجمت هذه الكتب إلى اللاتينية بل كتاب معظّمها بحروف عبرية.
wa-turjim-at haadhihi l-ku2utu2-b 2ilia l-laatiiniyyat-i 2al kutib-a mu2am-u-khaa bi-Huruuf-in ‘ibriyyat-in. These books were translated into Latin, but [actually] they were mostly written in Hebrew script (‘letters’).

ليس في الأمّرماة صقور أو حمائم بل هناك توزيع واسع للأدوار.
lays-a fii l-amri thammat-a Suquur-un ‘aw Hamaa2im-u 2al hunaaka tawzi2-un waasii2-un li-l-adwaari. There are in the matter neither hawks nor doves, but rather there is a wide distribution of roles.

10See also under “negative and exceptive expressions.”
3.2 "inna-maa 'but; but moreover; but also, rather’
This connective word has both confirmational and contrastive components to its meaning.11

لم تكن تسجيلًا فقط وإنما هو انعكاس للواقع الاجتماعي.
lam ta-kun tasjiil-an faqaT wa-'inna-maa huwa n‘ikaas-un li-l-waaq‘i-i l-iijtimaa‘iyy-i.
It was not only documentation, but moreover a reflection of social reality.

4 Explanatory conjunctions

4.1 'ay 'that is, i.e.’
This small word (which resembles in spelling the word 'ayy- ‘which’ but is unrelated to it) is an explicative particle equivalent to the Latin abbreviation i.e., for id est ‘that is,’ which is used in English texts.

أي كل ما هو واقعي
‘ay, kull-u maa huwa waaqi‘iyy-un
that is, everything that is real

5 Resultative conjunctions

5.1 'idh 'since,’ ‘inasmuch as’
This small word is a resultative particle that introduces a clause providing a rationale or reason for the main clause.

حقَّق الحزب الجمهوري الحاكم نصرًا ساحقاً على منافسيه إذ حصل على معظم المقاعد.
HaSal-a ‘alaa mu‘Zam-i l-maqaa‘id-i.
The ruling republican party realized an overwhelming victory over its opponents since it obtained most of the seats.

5.2 'idhan (spelled with nuun) and ‘idhan (spelled with nunation) ‘therefore; then; so; thus; in that case’
This connective word initiates a clause or question that comes as a result or conclusion from a previous statement. In more conversational style, it may also come at the end of the clause.

إذن لماذا يتوجب علينا ...
‘idhan li-maadhaa ya-tawajjab-u ‘alay-naa . . .
Then why do we have to . . .

إذن هناك منهجان ...
‘idhan hunaaka manhaj-aani . . .
Thus, there are two methods . . .

It'll be a big cat, then!

5.3 Hattaa + past tense: ‘until’

Hattaa followed by a past tense verb introduces a clause that shows the consequences or result of the previous clause. Used in this way, it refers to an event or action that has taken place in the past.12

wa-lam ta-zul fii l-namuww-i Hattaa ʕaSbaH-at min ʕahamm-i mudun-i l-minTaqaṭ-i.

It kept growing until it became [one] of the most important cities of the region.

6 Adverbial conjunctions

Adverbial conjunctions in Arabic fill the role of subordinating conjunctions in English such as ‘where,’ ‘when,’ ‘while,’ and ‘as.’ That is, they introduce a clause subordinate to the main clause by indicating a place, time, manner, or result relation between the two.

6.1 Adverbial conjunctions of place: Hayth-u ‘where’

The connective adverb Hayth-u denotes the concept of ‘where’ or ‘in which.’ It has an invariable Damma suffix.13 It is an extensively used conjunction of place. It also has non-locative meanings when used with other particles, such as min Hayth-u ‘regarding; as for’ or bi-Hayth-u ‘so that; so as to.’14

fii kulliyat-in Hayth-u tu-darris-u

in a college where she teaches

Hayth-u l-qadiim-u ya-xtalIF-u maʕ-a l-Hadiith-i

where the old mixes with the new

fii l-saʕ-uudiyyat-i Hayth-u ya-ʕal-u maʕ-a sharikat-in duwaliyat-in

in Saudi Arabia where he works for an international company

fii mustashfan Hayth-u ta-qʕ-u qiSaʕ-u Hubb-in

in a hospital where love stories take place

12 Hattaa may also be an operative particle with the meaning of ‘until; up to the point of,’ followed by a noun in the genitive case (Hattaa l-sanat-i l-maaDiyat-i ‘until last year’), but in that case it is considered a preposition. See Chapter 16, section 2.2.3. As a particle of purpose, it has the meaning of ‘in order to’ followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood (see Chapter 34, section. 2.2.6).

13 Note that the question word ‘where?’ is different: ʕayna. See Chapter 17, section 1.

14 For exercises on and further examples of the uses of Hayth-u, as well as the conjunctions Hayth-u ʕanna and bi-Hayth-u, see al-Warraki and Hassanein 1994, 93–97.
6.2 Adverbial conjunctions of time

This category includes expressions that link clauses by specifying how one clause is related to another in terms of time. These adverbials often consist of traditional Zurruuf, the semi-prepositions or locative adverbs, plus the indefinite relative pronoun maa, and sometimes the adverbial suffix -idhin.

The locative adverbs, as noted in the chapter on prepositions and prepositional phrases, are essentially nouns of place that act as prepositions by going into a construct relationship with another noun (e.g., بعد الحرب ba‘d-a l-Harb-i ‘after the war,’ قبل سنة qabl-a sanat-in ‘a year ago’). These nouns with the accusative marker are restricted to occurring only before other nouns or pronouns unless a buffer (such as maa or ‘idhin) is added to them. The locative adverb and buffer may be written together as one word, or they are written separately. By adding the buffer element, the semi-prepositions or locative adverbs are converted into adverbial elements that can directly precede verbs and entire clauses.

6.2.1 bayn-a-maa ‘while; whereas’

This connective word has both a temporal meaning ‘while, during the time that,’ and also a contrastive meaning of ‘whereas.’

ضُبطوا بينما كانوا يستهلكون المخدر.
They were arrested while they were consuming the drug.

فَكانت الثقافة العربية رسميَّة بينما ظلَّت اللاتينيَّة العامة لغة للناس.
Arabic culture was official whereas vernacular Latin remained a language of the people.

6.2.2 ba‘d-a-maa ‘after’

This connective is usually followed directly by a past tense verb. Note that the preposition ba‘d-a ‘after’ can be followed only by a noun or pronoun; it is necessary to use ba‘d-a-maa before a clause beginning with a verb.

بعدًا شاهده أحد المارة
ba‘d-a-maa shaahad-a-hu ‘aHad-u l-maarrat-i
after one of the passers-by saw him

بعدًا وقعت على الثلج
ba‘d-a-maa waqa‘-at ‘alaa l-thalj-i
after she fell on the ice

بعدًا قدَّم للرئيس تعازيه
ba‘d-a-maa quddim-a li-l-ra’iis-i ta’aazii-hi
after his condolences had been presented to the president
6.2.3 *ba'd-a 'an* 'after'

The expression *ba'd-a 'an* means essentially the same as *ba'd-a maa* when describing a situation that has taken place in the past. The phrase *ba'd-a 'an*, when referring to an event that has already taken place, is followed by a clause with a past tense verb.15

*غادر القاهرة أمس بعد أن قابل الرئيس*.

*ghaadar-a l-qaahirat-a 'ams-i ba'd-a 'an qaabal-a l-ra'iis-a.*

He left Cairo yesterday after he met with the President.

*بعد أن شارك اللاعبون في عدة مسابقات مختلفة*.

*ba'd-a 'an shaarak-a l-lla'ibuna fii 'iddat-i musaabaqaat-in muxtalifat-in* after the players had participated in several different contests

6.2.3 *ba'd-a-*idhin 'after that; then; subsequently'

This compound expression is equivalent in most situations to the adverbial conjunction *thumma* (see below 6.2.8):

*وبعدَّ انقل إلى دار كريم*.

*wa-ba'd-a-*idhin-i ntaqal-a 'ilaa daar-i kariim-in.* After that he moved to Karim’s house.

6.2.4 *Hiin-a-maa* حينَمَا and *Hiin-a* حينَ ‘when; at the time when’

*لكنَ الأزمة نشبت حينَما عرقلت الشرطة دخول الطلاب*.

*laakinna l-'azmat-a nabash-at Hiin-a-maa 'arqal-at-i l-shurTat-u duxuul-a l-Tullaab-i* but the crisis broke out when the police obstructed the entrance of students

*حينَما أصبحت العاصمة*.

*Hiin-a-maa 'aSbaH-at-i l-'aaSimonat-a* when it became the capital

6.2.5 *'ind-a-maa* عندَنَما ‘when; at the time when’

*عندَنما تتقام في الأمر*.

*'ind-a-maa ji'nna 'ilaa hunaa 'ind-a-maa ta-taqaddam-u fii l-'umr-i* when we came here when they grow older ('advance in age')

---

15 When referring to a non-past situation, or a hypothetical situation, *ba'd-a 'an* is followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood. For example,

*سندرس بعد أن نأكل*.

*sa-na-drus-u ba'd-a 'an na-'kul-a.* We will study after we eat.
6.2.6 ‘ind-a-‘idhin ‘then; at that point in time; at that time’

والبد عندند من طرح قضية الانسحاب.

wa laa budd-a ‘inda-‘idhin min TarHi qaDiyyat-i loinsiHaab.

Rejection of the issue of withdrawal was inevitable at that point.

6.2.7 qabl-a ‘an  وقبل أن subjunctive ‘before’

Contrasting with ba‘d-a ‘an, qabl-a ‘an refers to an action anterior to the action in the main clause. The verb after qabl-a ‘an is in the subjunctive mood, even if the main clause reference is past tense.

وصلت قوات الأمن إلى المطار قبل أن يهبط.

waSal-at quwwaat-u l‘amm-i ‘ilaal l-maTaari qabl-a ‘an ya-hbuTa.

The security forces arrived at the airport before he landed.

qabl-a ‘an tu-mazziq-a-hu l-Harb-u

before war tears it apart

6.2.8 thumm-a  ثم ‘then; and then; subsequently’

The connective particle thumm-a is an adverb that indicates a sequential action, coming later in time than the action in the preceding sentence or clause.

ثم ضعها فيما بعد في صندوق.

thumm-a Da‘haa fii-maa ba‘d-u fii Sanduuq-in.

Then put it in a box later.

6.3 Adverbial conjunctions of similarity

These expressions predicate a state of similarity with something that has gone before, either in a previous statement or earlier in the same sentence.

6.3.1 ka-maa كـما ‘as; just as; similarly; likewise’

The expression ka-maa is usually followed by a verb phrase.

كما ذكر المتحدث

ka-maa dhakar-a l-mutaHaddith-u

the spokesman likewise mentioned

كما فعلوا السنة الماضية

ka-maa fa‘al-uu l-sanat-a l-maaDiyat-a

just as they did last year

6.3.2 mithl-a-maa مثـلما ‘like; just as; as’

مثلا يقول أهلي ...

mithl-a-maa ya-quul-u ‘ahl-ii ...

as my family says ...
6.4 Adverbial conjunction of equivalence: qadr-a-maa قدرَما
‘as much as; just as; as . . . as’

إنَّ أمامنا كثيراً من الفرص قدرَما أمامنا من التحديات.

\[ \text{inna 'amaam-a-naa kathiir-an min-a l-furaS-i qadr-a-maa 'amaam-a-naa min-a l-taHaddiyaat-i.} \]

There are [just] as many opportunities before us as there are challenges.

6.5 Adverbial conjunction of reference or attribution: Hasab-a-maa حسابَما
‘according to; in accordance with; depending on’

This conjunction links one clause to another clause, expressing a relationship of reference or attribution.16

وحسبما تقول الأسطورة ...

wa-Hasab-a-maa ta-quul-u l-’usTuurat-u . . .

according to what legend says . . .

حسبما جرت تسميتها آنذاك

Hasab-a-maa jar-at tasmiyat-u-haa ‘aan-a-dhaaka

in accordance with its naming at that time

6.6 Adverbial conjunctions of potential or possibility

6.6.1 rubba-maa ربما ‘perhaps; maybe; possibly’17

ربَما كان كثيرون منهم مسجلين.

rubba-maa kaan-a kathiir-uuna min-hum musajjal-iina.

Perhaps many of them were registered.

ربَما لهذا السبب ...

rubba-maa li-haadhaa l-sabab-i . . .

perhaps for this reason . . .

ربَما كنت واقعاً من نفسي أكثر من اللزوم.

rubba-maa kun-tu waathiq-an min nafs-ii ‘akthar-a min-a l-Huzzum-i.

Perhaps I was overconfident.

7 Disjunctives

Arabic has a set of particles that indicate disjunction, that is, a distinction between one alternative and another. They include the following:

16 As for the expressions Hasab-a and bi-Hasabi ‘according to,’ these are not conjunctions but operative particles that are followed by a noun in the genitive case.

17 For another word meaning ‘perhaps’ see la’alla in Chapter 19 on inna and her sisters.
7.1 ‘aw أو ‘or’
This disjunctive indicates an option between two or more elements, but that option is inclusive, that is, it may include one, both, or all the elements.

They want him dead or alive (‘alive or dead’).

7.2 ‘am أم ‘or’
This disjunctive indicates an exclusive option; one or the other, but not both or all. Because it ends with sukuun, it sometimes needs a helping vowel, kasra.

[whether] they were professors or students

7.2.1 ‘a with ‘am
Sometimes the particle ‘a- is used on the first element of the exclusive disjunction:

He didn’t know whether to curse or laugh.

7.3 ‘immaا ... ‘aw أو ‘امা ... ناWa-‘immaا ... وإما ... أو ‘immaا ... وما ... إما ... ‘either ... or’
This two-part disjunctive conveys the idea of an exclusive choice: one or the other, but not both. Sometimes the first part of the disjunction is followed by ‘an plus a verb in the subjunctive, but not always.

This peace is either inclusive, or it is not at all.

Either you are with us or [you are] with terrorism.
8 Sentence-starting connectives

In addition to single words as sentence-introducers and connectors, there are also many fixed expressions or idiomatic phrases that serve to start sentences. This process of using a starting formula to introduce a sentence is especially common in journalistic and expository writing and gives it what Johnstone refers to as a certain “formulaicity.”¹⁸ Some of the more common phrasal starters are listed here.

8.1 Participle or adjective starters with min-a l-

A definite adjective or passive participle, often preceded by the partitive preposition min, is a common way of introducing a sentence, especially in journalistic prose. This use of min is termed “pleonastic” (superfluous or redundant).¹⁹ It is a way of opening a statement with a generic or general observation, just as “It is . . .” may be used in English.

It is expected that . . .

It is possible that . . .

It is natural that we undertake a visit . . .

8.1.1 Starters without min

Sometimes participle or adjective starters are used on their own, without min, but usually preceded by wa-

It is known that . . .

The strange [thing] is . . .

8.2 Passive and passive-like starters

With or without wa- a passive verb in the third person masculine singular may initiate a sentence by introducing a general, unattributed observation. In addition to the morphological passive, a Form V or Form VII verb with passive meaning is sometimes used.

¹⁸ Johnstone 1990, 223. ¹⁹ See also pleonastic min, Chapter 16, section 2.2.2.7.
8.3 Other idiomatic starters

Some other phrases used to start sentences typically include the following.

8.3.1 Topic shift: ‘ammā .. fa- .. َ‘امَٰما .. فَّا’ as for ..

This expression denotes a shift in topic from the previous sentence. It is in two parts, the first word, ‘ammā, signaling the new topic, and the second, fa-, introducing the comment on that topic. In English, the “as for” phrase is here followed by a comma, which introduces the second part of the sentence, or comment. Therefore fa- in this case fills the same function as the punctuation mark in English. Since ‘ammā introduces a new sentence and a new topic, the noun following is in the nominative case, as subject of the sentence.

‘امَٰما القسم المرمَعْ فَمْتَنُو ع جَدَا.
‘ammā l-qism-u l-mutarjam-u fa-mutanawwa‘-un jidd-an.
As for the translated part, it is very diverse.

‘اَمَٰما الامريْليِيْؤُون .. فَيقَولُون ..
‘ammā l-israa‘iliyy-uuna .. fa-ya-quul-uuna ..
as for the Israelis, they say ..

‘اُمَٰما المحضرَمْة ، فَقَد جَاءَت رابعَة.
‘ammā l-muxaDramat-u, fa-qad jaa‘-at raabi‘-at-an.
As for the old-timer, she came in fourth.

8.3.2 Addition: ‘illa dhaalika  إلى ذلك ‘in addition to that; moreover; furthermore’

This phrase is a shortened version of bi-l-‘iDaafat-i ‘illa dhaalika ‘in addition to that’:

‘يا لَهَا الصحافي ..
‘illa dhaalika ‘akkad-a l-saHaafiy-yu ..
Moreover, the journalist affirmed ..
In addition to that, the occupation forces continued operations...

8.3.3 Statement of contents: jaa’-a fii /wa-jaa’-a fii

The expression jaa’-a fii ‘it came in’ is an idiomatic way to start a sentence that reveals the contents of a letter, announcement, declaration, or other official document. The English equivalent usually omits this expression and begins with the document itself as the subject of the sentence.

وجاء في البيان أن...
wa-jaa’-a fii l-bayaan ‘anna...
(And) the declaration stated that...

وجاء في نص المشرع...
wa-jaa’-a fii naSS-i l-mashruu‘-i...
And the text of the plan stated that...

(‘And it came in the declaration that . . .’)  (‘And it came in the text of the plan . . .’)
Subordinating conjunctions: the particle ‘inna and her sisters

1 Introduction

This group of particles, referred to as ‘inna wa-’axawaat-u-haa إنَّ وأخواتِها and her sisters,’ are part of the class of Arabic words that are referred to as nawaasix نواسع, or words that cause a shift to the accusative case.¹ The members of this particular group are usually used as subordinating conjunctions, connecting two clauses, although ‘inna itself may also be used at the beginning of a sentence.

These particles include:²

- verily, indeed; that ‘inna إنَّ
- that ‘anna أنَّ
- but laakinna لكنَّ
- because li’anna لأنَّ
- perhaps la’alla لعلَّ

1.1 Grammatical effect

These particles have the grammatical effect of making the subject noun in the following clause accusative. If there is no overt subject noun in the clause, a suffix pronoun is affixed to the particle.

¹ For more on the nawaasix, see Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.8.

² The subordinating particle ‘an is also sometimes considered in this category, although it is different in that it is followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood, rather than a noun in the accusative case. For more on ‘an and the subjunctive, see Chapter 34, section 2.3.
1.2 Overt noun subject
When the subject noun in the following clause is overt, it receives the accusative case and usually follows directly after the particle. Note that the form of the accusative case may vary according to the declension of the noun.

*inna l-‘aamaal-a taHawwal-at *ilaa *awhaam-in.
(Indeed), the hopes have turned into delusions.

We believe that agriculture is a world language.

1.3 Separated subject
The accusative subject noun does not have to be immediately adjacent to the particle – it may be separated from the particle by an adverb or a prepositional phrase. It may not, however, be separated from the subordinating particle by a verb.3

But there are other animals

He mentioned that he has the official documents.

(‘that to-him are the official documents’)

1.4 Reduplicated pronoun subject
If the subject of the subordinated clause is shown only by the inflection of a verb, then a subject pronoun suffix duplicating the subject of the verb is affixed to

3 “The accusative case is not necessarily immediately subsequent to the particle; e.g., it may follow the predicate in a nominal sentence. A verb, however, may never be placed between a particle and the accusative it governs” Cantarino 1975, III:117.
the particle. The subject, whether a noun or a pronoun, must at all times come before its verb in this type of subordinate clause.

\[
\text{إنّنا نتمنّى لكم عيّادًا مباركةً.}
\]

\[
^3\text{inna-naa na-tamannaa la-kum } ^3\text{iid-an mubaarak-an.}
\]

(Indeed), we wish you a blessed holiday.

أدرك أنّه نسي اسمها.

\[
^3\text{adrak-a } ^3\text{anna-hu nasyy-a sm-a-haa.}
\]

He realized that he had forgotten her name.

1.5 Equational clause

If the clause after \(^{3}\text{inna}\) or one of her sisters is an equational sentence, the subject is a pronoun or a noun in the accusative case, but the predicate (xabar) is in the nominative case.

\[
\text{إنه تقبل جداً!}
\]

\[
^3\text{inna-hu thaqil-un jidd-an!}
\]

(Indeed,) it is very heavy!

\[
\text{إنّ المعلومات خاطئة.}
\]

\[
^3\text{inna l-ma'luumaat-i xaatTi'at-un.}
\]

(Indeed,) the information is incorrect.

لا تهرع إلى السلام لأنّها مكان خطر.

\[
laa ta-hra ^3\text{ilaa l-salaalim-i li-} ^3\text{anna-haa makaan-un xaTir-un.}
\]

Don’t run to the stairs because they are a dangerous place.

1.6 With invariable pronoun or noun

Sometimes \(^{3}\text{inna}\) or one of her sisters may be followed by an invariable noun or pronoun, in which case there is no overt accusative marker.

\[
\text{إنه هذا جريمة بشعة.}
\]

\[
^3\text{inna haadhihi jariimat-un bashi} ^3\text{at-un.}
\]

(Indeed,) this is a repugnant crime.

\[
\text{لكن هذا لا يكفي.}
\]

\[
^3\text{laakinna haadhaa laa ya-kfii.}
\]

But this is not enough.

1.7 With buffer pronoun: \(\text{Damiir al-sha}'\text{n}\)

Occasionally in MSA a subordinate clause may be preceded by a /-hu/ pronoun after the subordinating particle (e.g., \(^{3}\text{anna-hu}\) that does not seem to be necessary or even to agree with the subject of the verb. This pronoun refers not to the subject of the clause, but to the entire clause itself, and acts as a generic “buffer” between the subordinating particle and the following clause. In Arabic this particular use of the suffix pronoun is called \(\text{Damiir al-sha}'\text{n}\) ‘the pronoun of the fact’ or “pronoun which anticipates a whole subsequent clause.”

\[4\] According to traditional Arabic grammatical theory, the accusative marking is there in a “virtual” sense (muqaddar), even though it does not appear on the word.

\[5\] Definition from Cachia 1973, 57. See also Cantarino 1975, II:430–31.
Subordinating conjunctions: The particle *inna and her sisters

2 The particles

2.1 Sentence-initial *inna إن: ‘indeed, truly, verily’
The particle *inna has a truth-intensifying function when used at the beginning of a statement. It emphasizes that what follows is true. More frequently used in Classical Arabic than MSA, it nonetheless occurs occasionally in MSA, especially when reporting an official speech.6

 إنَّ الأمل تحولَت إلى أوهام.
*inna l-*aamaal-a taHawwal-at *ilaal *awhaam-in.  
(Indeed,) hopes have turned into delusions.

 إنَّي أَوَكَّد أَنَّ ...
*inna-nii u*akkid-u *anna . . .
(Indeed,) I affirm that . . .

 إنَّنا جمعيًا نعمل من أجل السلام.
*inna-naa jamii*-

Indeed, we are working all together on behalf of peace.

2.2 Subordinating *inna ‘that’
The particle *inna is also used as a way of introducing reported speech. As a subordinating conjunction, it is used exclusively after the verb *qaal-a ‘to say.’7

 وقال إنَّه ناقش هذا الموضوع.
wa-*qaal-a *inna-hu naaqash-a haadha l-mawDuu*-a.
He said that he had discussed this topic.

 قال المدرب إنَّه راضٍ.
*qaal-a l-mudarrib-u *inna-hu raaD-in.
The coach said that he was satisfied.

 قال إنَّ السياسيين يستخدمون مصطلحات دينية.
*qaal-a *inna l-siyaasiyy-iina ya-staxdim-uuna muSTalaHaat-in diiniyyat-an.
He said that the politicians use religious terminology.

2.3 *anna أنَّ ‘that’
The particle *anna is used to report factual information in a subordinate clause. It is used with the meaning of ‘that’ after perception verbs such as *sami-a ‘hear,’

6 Dahlgren, in his study of Arabic word order, reports that *inna is “a particle for marking the thematization of (mainly or exclusively) the subject by letting it precede the verb in the sentence”(1998, 217).

7 Note that in English the word “that” may be omitted in reporting speech, but *inna may not be omitted in Arabic.
i’taqad-a, iftkara ‘think’ or ‘believe,’ and also with verbs of communicating such as dhakar-a ‘mention,’ akkad-a ‘assert, declare,’ or a’lan-a ‘announce.’8 Belnap in his study of complementation in MSA states that “’anna occurs with verbs that assume or claim that the following clause’s assertion is statement of fact.”9

The verb in the main clause is referred to in some studies as the “matrix” verb because it determines the nature of the complementizer or subordinating particle that follows it (whether it is ’anna or ’an).10 Note that if the matrix verb requires a preposition, ’anna follows the preposition.

لا أظن أن المسرحيات كانت رديئة
lā ’a-Zann-u ’anna l-masraḥiyyāt-i kaan-at radi‘at-an.
I do not think that the plays were bad.

ذكر أن العرب أعطوه اسمها
dhakar-a ’anna l-’arab-a ’a’ Taw-haa sm-a-haa.
He mentioned that the Arabs gave it its name.

ووصفوه بأنه جو من الفئة
waSaf-u-hu bi-’anna-hu jaww-un min-a l-thiqat-i.
They described it as being (‘that it is’) an atmosphere of trust.

وتشير مصادر كردية إلى أن العدد الحقيقي قد يصل إلى ألف شخص.
wa-tushiir-u maSaadir-u kurdīyyat-un ’ilaa ’anna l-’adad-a l-Haqiqiyyy-a qad ya-Sil-u ’ilaa ’alf-i shaxS-in.
Kurdish sources indicate that the true number may reach a thousand persons.

لقد أردنا أن نثبت للجميع أننا فريق جيد.
la-qad ’arad-naa ’an nu-thbit-a li-l-jamii ’i ’anna-naa fariq-un jayyid-un.
We (indeed) wanted to prove to everyone that we are a good team.

8 Note that ’anna (+ noun in the accusative) and ’an (+ verb in the subjunctive) are related particles which differ in their distribution. According to LeComte (1968, 120), “la subordination complétive s’exprime avec ’an ou ’anna (que) qui ne sont que deux formes de la même particule. Elles se distinguent toutefois par leur emploi syntaxique: ’an entraîne normalement un verbe à l’inacc. subj. (subjunctive) . . . ’anna ne peut être suivie que d’un nom au cas direct ou d’un pronom affixe.” See also Chapter 34, section 2.3.

9 In a personal communication to the author, summarizing his findings in Belnap 1986. Note that matrix verbs indicating attitudes such as intention, feeling, possibility, need, or desire are followed by the subordinating particle ’an plus a subjunctive verb, not by ’anna. See Angehelescu 1999, 138 on ’anna, especially as compared with ’an; and Cantarino 1975, II: 234–35 and III:106–107.

10 See Persson 1999 for a study of matrix verbs and complement clauses in Arabic.
2.3.1 *ka-anna* ٌكاَنْ “as though”
The preposition *ka-* may be prefixed to the subordinating conjunction *’anna* “that” in order to form the expression “as though.” This expression is still a sister of *’inna* and has the same effect on the following clause.

وكاننا متفقون في الواقع على كل شيء
wa ka-*’anna-naa* muttafiq-uuna fii l-waaqi’i ‘alaa kull-i shay-in
**as though we actually agreed on everything**

كأنه مدرّج رقماني
*’anna-hu* mudraaj-un ruumaaniyy-un
**as though it were a Roman amphitheater**

2.4 *laakinna* “but”
This particle introduces a clause that contrasts with the previous clause.

ليس لبنانية، ولكنها سعت في لبنان.
lays-at lubnaaniyyat-an, wa-*laakinna-haa* sa’id-at fii lubnaan-a.
**She is not Lebanese, but she was happy in Lebanon.**

لكن هذه المساجد محتلة
*laakinna* haadhihi l-masaajid-a muHtallat-un
**but these mosques are occupied**

ولكن التحريّة تقلقني
*laakinna* l-tajribat-a tu-qliq-u-nii
**but the experiment disturbs me**

لكن البرنامج يبقى في الكمبيوتر
*laakinna* l-barnaamaj-a ya-bqaa fii l-kumbyuutir
**but the program remains in the computer**

2.4.1 *laakin* ٌلاَكْ ِكُنْ “but” / *wa-laakin* ٌلاَكْ ِكُنْ “but”
This variant of *laakinna*, written without the *shadda* or *fatHa* on the *nuun*, is not a sister of *’inna* and can therefore be followed directly by a verb. It is not as frequent in written Arabic as *laakinna*. In written text, it is almost impossible to tell the difference between these two particles, except that *laakin* may be followed by a verb.

ولكن يجب وضع ضوابط ومراقبة
*wa-laakin* ya-jib-u waD’-u DawaabîT-a wa-muraaqabat-in
**but it is necessary to put [into effect] regulations and surveillance**

2.5 *li’anna* ٌلَانْ “because”
This subordinating particle is followed by a clause that gives a rationale or reason.

لأنها تتحدث عن همومي
*li-’anna-haa* ta-taHaddath-u ‘an humuum-ii
**because she speaks about my concerns**

لأنها استحقاق ديموقراطي
*li-’anna-haa* stilHqaaq-un diimuuzzraatiyy-un
**because it is a democratic right**
لَانَ السِّنتينَ الآخرينَ كَانَتا مِنْ أَفْضلِ السنوَات

li-‘anna l-sanat-ayni l-‘axiirat-ayni kaan-ataa min ‘afDal-i l-sanawaat-i

because the last two years were among the best years

2.6 la‘alla لَعَلْ / wa-la‘alla لَعَلَّ ‘perhaps, maybe’

This particle is similar in meaning to rubba-maa ‘perhaps,’ but is a sister of ‘inna. Like ‘inna, it may start a sentence as well as a clause. If it is followed by a verbal sentence, the subject of the verb must reduplicate itself in the form of a pronoun prefix attached to la‘alla. Abboud and McCarus state that la‘alla “often has the implication of hopeful expectation” (1983, Part 1:519).

وَلَعَلَّنَا رَأَيْنا فَعَلًا أُولًا عَناصرَ مُخْطَأَة
dhaalika ya‘udd-u ilaa ‘anna ‘aghlab-a-hum ‘ajaanib-u.
Perhaps that is because (‘goes back to that’) the majority of them are foreigners.
Arabic verbs fall into two major groups, those with three-consonant roots (triliteral) and those with four-consonant roots (quadriliteral). Around each lexical root is structured a set of possible stem classes or verb forms (normally ten for triliteral roots and four for quadriliteral).\(^1\) Moreover, each Arabic verb has a corresponding verbal noun (masdar مصادر اسم فاعل), an active participle (ism fa‘il اسم فاعل), and often, a passive participle (ism maf‘ul اسم مفعول). Thus verbs and their derivatives form the foundation for substantial amounts of Arabic vocabulary and can be considered in some ways as the core of the Arabic lexicon.\(^2\)

1 **Verb roots**

Every Arabic verb has a lexical root, that is, a set of consonants or phonemes in a specific order that embody a broad lexical meaning, such as k-t-b ‘write’; h-n-d-s ‘engineer’; d-r-s ‘study’; l-m ‘know’. These roots may consist of three or four consonants, with three being the most common. Within these two different root types, there are phonological variations according to the nature of the consonant phonemes occurring in the root.

This is mainly to do with the fact that the semivowels /w/ (waaw) and /y/ (yaa’) are not full-fledged consonants; they are weak in the sense that there are restrictions on how they combine with and interact with vowels. Sometimes when these semi-consonants are root phonemes, they behave as regular consonants, sometimes, however, they shift into long vowels, or they may become short vowels, or they turn into hamza, or in some cases, they disappear altogether. This can be confusing when learners need to identify the consonant root of a word in order to look it up in a dictionary, so it is important for learners to have a basic understanding of how root types interact with rules for word formation.

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\(^1\) These stem classes are sometimes referred to in current literature on morphological theory as binyanim (singular binyan), using the Hebrew term. See Aronoff 1994, especially Chapter 5: 123–164. Note also that there are in fact fifteen (rather than ten) potential verb forms for triliteral verb roots. But Forms XI–XV are rare in MSA. For more on Forms XI–XV see Chapter 32.

\(^2\) Kouloughli (1994, 215) gives the following description of the “deverbal” derivatives: “Tout verbe a dans son sillage des formes déverbales qui lui sont associées et avec lesquelles il entretient des relations morphologiques, syntaxiques et sémantiques stables.”
There are phonotactic rules — rules of sound distribution — for Arabic words, many of which were deduced by Arabic grammarians as long ago as the eighth century (AD), and which remain valid today for MSA. Whenever possible here, these rules are described and applied in order to explain variations in word structure.

Arabic verb roots are classified into two major classes: SaHiiH ‘sound’ and mu’tall ‘weak.’ Sound roots are ones that do not contain either waaw or yaa√; “weak” roots contain waaw or yaa√ as one or more of the root phonemes. It is essential to know these classes because verb inflection affects the phonological structure of the verb root in all cases except the regular or sound triliteral root.

Within the two major classes of verbal roots, further classification occurs in several subcategories. Each of the subcategories manifests particular variation in the root. This variation is rule-governed, but complex.

1.1 Regular (sound) triliteral root (al-fi‘l al-SaHiiH al-saalim)الفعل الصحيح السالم
Sound or regular verbal roots consist of three consonants, all of which are different and none of which are waaw, yaa√, or hamza. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General meaning</th>
<th>Root consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hear</td>
<td>s-m-√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reveal</td>
<td>k-sh-f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>c-m-l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>س - م - ع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ك - ش - ف</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ع - م - ل</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Geminate verb root (al-fi‘l al-muDa‘√af)الفعل المضعّف
Geminate or doubled verbal roots are ones where the second and third consonant of the root are the same. They show an alternation between repetition of the geminate consonant, with a vowel between, and doubling of the consonant, under specific phonological conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General meaning</th>
<th>Root consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>respond, reply</td>
<td>r-d-d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cause</td>
<td>s-b-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solve</td>
<td>H-l-l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ر - د - ر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>س - ب - ب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ح - ل - ل</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad (d. ca. 791) pioneered Arabic phonological theory and developed the theory of root phonotactics in his introduction to the first Arabic dictionary, the Kitaab al-‘ayn. For more on this, see Sara 1991.


5 For an analysis of the nature of geminate root morphology, see Moore 1990.
1.3 Hamzated verb root (al-fi‘l al-mahmuuz الفعل المهموز)

A hamzated verb root is one where hamza (the glottal stop) occurs as the first, second, or third consonant. These verbs are considered a separate category because of morphophonemic rules that govern the occurrence and distribution of hamza, and also because of hamza spelling rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Arabic Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>٣-خ-ث</td>
<td>ث-خ-ث</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>٣-ك-ل</td>
<td>ل-ك-ل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>س-أ-ل</td>
<td>ل-أ-س</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin</td>
<td>ب-ر-أ</td>
<td>أ-ر-ب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>ق-ر-ء</td>
<td>ء-ر-ق</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Roots with semi-consonants

1.4.1 Assimilated verb root (al-fi‘l al-mithaal الفعل المثال)

“Assimilated” verb roots begin with a semi-consonant (waaw or yaa’), most often waaw. They are termed “assimilated” because this waaw, even though it is part of the root, often disappears in the present tense and in certain other situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Arabic Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arrive</td>
<td>و-ص-ل</td>
<td>ل-ص-و</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be abundant</td>
<td>و-ف-ر</td>
<td>ر-ف-و</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find</td>
<td>و-ج-د</td>
<td>د-ج-و</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be dry</td>
<td>ي-ب-س</td>
<td>س-ب-ي</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.2 Hollow verb root (al-fi‘l al-‘ajwa‘ الفعل الأجوف)

“Hollow” verbs are ones in which the second or middle root consonant is either waaw or yaa’. These two consonants undergo various mutations, turning into ‘alif, a short vowel, a hamza, or a long vowel depending on the word structure. In the past tense citation form, for example, the waaw or yaa’ is not present and is replaced by ‘alif. However, to look up one of these words or its derivation in a dictionary, one must know what the middle root consonant is. The root consonant often recurs in the present tense verb stem (as a vowel) and elsewhere, as will be shown. There are essentially three variations on the hollow verb, determined by which long vowel is present in the present-tense or imperfective stem: waaw, yaa’ or ‘alif.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Arabic Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>ق-و-ل</td>
<td>ل-و-ق</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>ك-و-ن</td>
<td>ن-و-ك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sell</td>
<td>ب-ي-ع</td>
<td>ع-ي-ب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live</td>
<td>ع-ي-ش</td>
<td>ش-ي-ع</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4.3 Defective verb root (al-fi‘l al-naaqis\textsuperscript{a})
“Defective” verb roots are ones where the final consonant is either waaw or yaa’. These semi-consonants may assume various forms and even seem to disappear in certain circumstances.

- be sufficient: \textit{k-f-y} [ك - ف - ي]
- forget: \textit{n-s-y} [ن - س - ي]
- complain: \textit{sh-k-w} [ش - ك - و]
- appear: \textit{b-d-w} [ب - د - و]
- build: \textit{b-n-y} [ب - ن - ي]

1.4.4 Doubly weak or “mixed” verb roots
Doubly weak verb roots have semi-consonants and/or hamza in two places, sometimes as the first and third consonants, and sometimes as the second and third. They are not many in number, but some of them are frequently used:

- come: \textit{j-y-y\textsuperscript{a}} [ج - ي - ء]
- come: \textit{s-t-y} [س - ت - ي]
- see: \textit{r-y-y} [ر - ي - ي]
- follow: \textit{w-l-y} [و - ل - ي]
- intend: \textit{n-w-y} [ن - و - ي]

1.5 Quadriliteral verb root (al-fi‘l al-rubaa\textsuperscript{a}iyy\textsuperscript{a})
Quadriliteral verb roots contain four consonants. Sometimes the four consonants are all different and sometimes they are reduplicated, that is, the first two consonants are repeated. Reduplicated quadriliteral roots are often considered to be onomatopoeic, that is, derived from particular sounds or repeated motions.

- crystalize: \textit{b-l-w-r} [ب - ل - و - ر]
- dominate: \textit{s-y-T-r} [س - ي - ط - ر]
- obstruct: \textit{`r-q-l} [ع - ر - ق - ل]
- flutter: \textit{r-f-r-f} [ر - ف - ر - ف]
- whisper: \textit{w-s-w-s} [و - س - و - س]
- hum: \textit{h-m-h-m} [ه - م - ه - م]
- shake, quake: \textit{z-l-z-l} [ز - ل - ز - ل]
1.6 Denominal verb roots

Normally, the verb is considered the most basic or elemental form of a lexical entry, but in a few instances, the verb is ultimately derived from a noun, and sometimes the concept is borrowed from another language. These denominals tend to exist chiefly in Forms II and V and rarely in other forms. They can be triliteral or quadriliteral. Some examples of denominal verbs include:

**Form II:**
- to unite *waHHada*  
- to appoint *‘ayyana*

**Form V:**
- to adopt *tabannaa*

**Form II quadriliteral:**
- to center *tamarkaza*  

2 Verb derivation patterns: *‘awzaan al-fi‘* أوزان الفعل

2.1 Comparison with English

In English, it is possible to modify verb meanings or even create verbs from other parts of speech through several morphological procedures, for example, prefixing the morpheme /un-/ as in *undo, unfasten, unlock, unpack*, indicating the reversal of an action. Nouns and adjectives can be converted into verbs by adding the suffix /-en/, as in *strengthen* or *widen* indicating an increase of that quality. Or one can, for example, create verbs by using the suffix /-ize/ as in *standardize, mechanize, minimize, maximize, formalize, or trivialize*, to indicate the act of adding that quality to something. And there are many more such procedures. Other parts of speech, such as prepositions, adverbs, and nouns are converted to verbs just by inflecting them as verbs: “to down a glass of water,” “to up the price,” “to impact a situation.”

Arabic verb derivation is much more restricted; Arabic verbs fall into a limited number of stem classes. It is much rarer for new verbs to be created in Modern Standard Arabic than in English because each Arabic verb belongs to a particular derivational and inflectional class. That is, it has a particular internal shape, or pattern.

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6 In this instance, the word *markaz*, ‘center,’ a noun of place from the triliteral root *r-k-z*, has taken on such a lexical identity of its own that a denominal verb form has emerged based on the four consonants, *m-r-k-z*. 
2.2 The ten-form template: ‘af‘aal mujarrada wa-‘af‘aal maziida

Arabic has a verb grid, or template of ten derived “forms” into which any triliteral verb root may theoretically fit. That is, the lexical root of three consonants can theoretically interlock with ten different patterns to produce ten lexical variants on the same root. These variants all have a central, related lexical meaning, but each verb form has a different semantic slant on that meaning. For example, different forms of the lexical root ‘-l-m produce verbs having to do with knowledge: Form I ‘alim-a means ‘to know, to be informed’ Form II ‘allam-a means ‘to teach’ (cause someone to know), Form IV ‘a‘lama means ‘to teach’ (cause someone to be informed), Form V ta‘allama means ‘to learn, to study’ (cause one’s self to know). The triconsonantal sequence ‘-l-m is common to all these lexical items.

The base form, or Form I is referred to in Arabic as fi‘l mujarrad, literally the ‘stripped’ form; meaning the morphologically simplest form. All other forms (II–X) are referred to as ‘aaf‘aal maziida, literally, ‘increased’ or ‘augmented’ forms, i.e., more morphologically complex.

In practice, not every lexical root occurs in all ten forms of the verb; some occur in very few forms, while others occur in four, five, or six forms. Dictionaries normally list all the forms in which a lexical root regularly appears.

The interlocking of the lexical root with the various verb form templates creates actual verbs whose meanings can often be analyzed or deduced through the use of compositional semantics. That is, the lexical meaning of the consonantal root plus the grammatical meaning of the particular template combine to yield an actual word. This two-part formula sometimes yields a very clear meaning derivable from the component parts, but other times, the meaning is not as clear because of its evolution over time.

Quadriliteral verbs have a more restricted grid of four possible templates or forms into which they fall.

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7 As mentioned in note 1, there are a possible five more forms, XI–XV, but they are much rarer.
8 As a concise summary of the interrelationships of the Arabic verb forms, Lecomte (1968, 34) writes: “Si l’on met à part la forme dérivée IX, qui est nettement en marge du système, et la forme VII, commune à tout le domaine sémitique et de constitution claire, on peut expliquer comme suit la formation des autres formes dérivées: les formes I, II, III et IV sont les quatre formes de base, auxquelles correspondent respectivement les formes VIII, V, VI et X, obtenues en principe par préfixation d’un t-, qui leur confère une valeur réfléchie-passive. Le principe est appliqué sans altération dans les formes dérivées V et VI. Dans la forme dérivée VIII, on observe une métathèse immédiatement perceptible. La forme dérivée X est issue non de la forme dérivée IV à préfixe hamza, mais d’une forme dérivée IV à préfixe s- qui a existé dans d’autres langues sémitiques (ex. assyrien tardif).”
2.2.1 Conventions

2.2.1.1 FORMS AND MEASURES (‘awzaan أوزان): The derivations or verb templates are identified by the morphological pattern that characterizes them and are often referred to in western grammars of Arabic as “forms” or “measures” of the verb. They are usually identified in English by a roman numeral, i.e., Form II or Form VI. In this convention, when the word “form” refers to a specific verb template, it is capitalized, e.g., Form II. Since this is a widespread convention in the United States and Europe, and because it is the way that verbs are identified in the most widely used Arabic-English dictionary, Hans Wehr’s Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, it is used in this reference grammar.

Arabic grammars term the verb forms ‘awzaan ‘weights’ or ‘measures’ (sg. wazn وزن), and refer to them via the medium of a model root (traditionally f-afi-l فعل يفعل) keyed into particular morphological patterns. The base form is mujarrad ‘stripped, bare’ and the derived forms are maziid ‘augmented’ on the model of a particular pattern, for example,

«انتخب» على وزن افعل
“intaxab” ‘alaa wazn-i ifta’al;
i.e., intaxab ‘he elected’ is on the model of ifta’al;

«تَجَنَّب» على وزن تفعَّل
“tajannab” ‘alaa wazn-i tafa’al;
tajannab ‘he avoided’ is on the model of tafa’al.

2.2.1.2 CITATION FORM FOR VERBS: The conventional way of citing Arabic verbal roots is to refer to them using the shortest verb inflection, the third person masculine singular, past tense. This is considered equivalent to using the English citation form, the infinitive (there is no infinitive verb form in Arabic⁹). It is helpful to cite the verb in its past and present forms together, and that is how they are presented in this book. For example:

to discuss  baHath-a/ya-bHath-u بحَثَ / يَبْحَثُ
to reveal  kashaf-a/ya-kshif-u  كَشَفَ / يَكْشِفُ

⁹ The verbal noun, or maSdar, is considered equivalent to the infinitive for several reasons: first, it is an abstraction of the action of a verb, and second it does not possess a time reference (i.e., tense marking) and is therefore non-finite. Moreover, in certain syntactic constructions it functions as an infinitive does in English. However, it is not used as a citation form for the verb.
2.3 The model root: \( f^{-} - l \) (\( fa\sqrt{a} - ayn - laam \) ف - ع - ل)

In order to exemplify patterns or prosodic templates in Arabic, a **model root** \( f^{-} - l \) is used so that any pattern can be referred to or expressed by fitting into it.\(^{10}\) This procedure was established centuries ago when Arabic grammarians first started extracting and analyzing the rules and structures of the language, and it is still the practice today. Any initial root consonant is represented by \( fa\sqrt{a} \), any medial consonant by ‘ayn, and any final root consonant by laam.\(^{11}\) The Form IV verb ‘\( arsala \) (‘to send’) would be said to be on the pattern of ‘\( af\sqrt{a}la \) (‘alaa wazn ‘\( af\sqrt{a}\)l-a على وزن فعل)’; the verb ‘\( katab\sqrt{a} \) (‘to write’) is on the pattern of ‘\( fa\sqrt{a}l-a \) (‘alaa wazn fa‘al-a على وزن فعل), and so forth.

If a root or stem has four consonants instead of three, then another laam is added to illustrate the pattern. Thus the verb ‘\( tarjam\sqrt{a} \) (‘to translate’) would be said to be on the pattern of ‘\( fa\sqrt{a}lal-a \) (‘alaa wazn fa‘al-a على وزن فعل)’.

The use of the root \( f^{-} - l \) as the prime exemplar for all Arabic words is a powerful symbolic formalization that provides a model of any morphological template or word pattern. This procedure is used not only to refer to verb forms but also to refer to any lexical item based on the root and pattern system. It is an efficient way of illustrating paradigmatic contrasts, and in keeping with this practice, this reference grammar uses the root \( f^{-} - l \) for points of reference and examples.

### 2.4 Morphological shifts

When a non-sound root interlocks with a particular pattern, a situation arises where rules of phonology intersect and may clash with rules of morphology, so a modification of the word-structure occurs. When this happens, the rules of phonology are primary. These instances result, therefore, in what are called morphophonemic processes, i.e., rule-governed changes in word structure. These rules generate particular inflectional classes (e.g., Form VIII hollow verbs) which are illustrated in paradigms.

Although it may seem that there are many exceptions to rules in Arabic, the fact is that Arabic phonological structure and rules of phonotactics are primary, and they determine the sequences of morphological alternations that occur. The phonological rules of Arabic and how they interact with the morphology result in morphological structures of Arabic being coherent and rule-governed.

---

\(^{10}\) The lexical root \( f^{-} - l \) has the base meaning of 'doing' or 'making.'

\(^{11}\) The letters/phonemes of the model root are referred to in Arabic as Huruf al-miizaan al-Sarfiyy ‘the letters of the morphological measure.’ As described by Abd al-Latif et al., “bi-Haythu ta-kuun-a haad-hihi l-Hurufu l-thalaathat-u mushakkalat-an bi-Harakaat-i ‘\( Ahrafi-l-kalimat-i l-muraad-i wazn-u-haa wazn-an Sarfiyy-an \)” (1997, 141). “In order that these three letters be vowelized with the vowels of the word whose pattern is desired.”
This reference grammar defines and describes some basic MSA morphophonemic processes in order to make clear the systematization in the language. However, learners who would prefer to focus on forms rather than rules can consult the paradigms without examining the morphophonemic processes.

2.5 The verb forms: patterns, meanings, deverbal substantives

Verb patterns are traditionally given in their citation forms, the third person masculine singular active past tense, as well as the third person masculine singular present tense. This is a standard procedure for citing Arabic verbs, since there is a stem change between past and present tense.

It is traditional to refer to the short vowel which follows the second root consonant of a verb as the “stem” vowel. Therefore in a present tense verb such as *ya-*rfuD-u ‘he refuses,’ the stem vowel is *Damma*. In a derived verb form such as Form VIII *ya-*HtafiZ-u ‘he maintains,’ the stem vowel is *kasra*.

Verb citations are provided in Arabic script and in transcription; for discussion of consonant–vowel patterning, consonant-vowel structures are also sometimes given, using the convention:

\[
\begin{align*}
C &= \text{Consonant;} \\
C_1 &= \text{represents the first root consonant,} \\
C_2 &= \text{represents the second and} \\
C_3 &= \text{represents the third.} \\
V &= \text{short vowel} \\
V V &= \text{long vowel} \\
C_4 &= \text{represents the fourth consonant (if any)}
\end{align*}
\]

In the following chapters, each verb form is described, with its particular patterns and meanings. Inflectional characteristics are noted, and examples are provided.

As mentioned at the start of this section, each verb form has in its wake a set of three deverbal substantives: a verbal noun (the name of the action, e.g., ‘defense,’ or ‘defending’), an active participle (describing the doer of the action: ‘defender’ or ‘[person] defending’) and a passive participle (describing the item which undergoes the action, e.g., ‘defended’). Whereas the verbal noun is used strictly as a noun, the participles, being descriptors, may function either as nouns or as adjectives. Different sections of this book describe the form and function of verbal nouns and participles, but because they form such an integral part of the lexical repository of each verb, they are also listed in the context of their deverbal derivations.
 Verb inflection: a summary

1 Verb inflection
Arabic verbs inflect for six morphological categories: gender, number, person, tense, mood, and voice. These inflections are marked by means of prefixes, suffixes, changes in vowel pattern, and stem changes. The first three categories, gender, number, and person, are determined by the subject of the verb. That is, the verb agrees with the subject in all those respects.

1.1 Agreement markers: gender, number, and person
Agreement markers ensure that the verb inflects in accordance with the nature of its subject. Arabic verbs inflect by means of affixes attached to a verb stem. In the past tense, the inflectional marker is a suffix that carries all the agreement markers: gender, number, and person. For example: the suffix /-at/ on a past tense stem such as katab- (katab-at  كتابت) carries the information: third person, feminine, singular: i.e., “she wrote.”

In the present tense, the verb stem has a prefix as well as a suffix. For example, prefix ya- on a present tense stem such as -ktub- carries partial information: third person. The suffix on the present tense stem carries more information: therefore the suffix -uuna (as in ya-ktub-uuna  يكتُبون ‘they write’) gives information on number (plural) and gender (masculine), as well as mood (indicative). This combination of information is uniquely marked on each member in a verb paradigm.¹

1.1.1 Gender: masculine or feminine
Arabic verbs are marked for masculine or feminine gender in the second and third persons. The first person (I, we) is gender-neutral.

¹ In technical linguistic terms, Arabic is a “pro-drop” (i.e., “pronoun-drop”) language. That is, every inflection in a verb paradigm is specified uniquely and does not need to use independent pronouns to differentiate the person, number, and gender of the verb. For Modern Standard Arabic that means that there are thirteen different inflections in every verb paradigm. Consult Haegeman 1994, 19–25 and 454–57 for more on pro-drop languages and the pro-drop parameter in general.
1.1.2 Number: singular, dual, plural
Arabic verbs are inflected for three number categories: singular, dual, or plural. The dual in Arabic verbs is used in the second person (“you two”) and in the third person (“they two”), but not the first person.

1.1.3 Person: first, second, third
The concept of “person” refers to the individual/s involved in the speech act: the one/s speaking (first person), the one/s spoken to (second person), and one/s spoken about (third person). Arabic verbs inflect for: first person (I, we), second person (you), and third person (she, he, they).

1.2 Tense
The two basic Arabic verb tenses differ in terms of stems as well as inflectional markers.

1.2.1 Verb stems
Each Arabic verb has two stems, one used for the perfect/past tense and one for the imperfect/present. The past tense stem takes suffixes in order to inflect, and the present tense stem takes both prefixes and suffixes. Because of the salience of the prefix in the present tense and of the suffix in the past tense, certain scholars refer to these tenses as “the prefix set” and “the suffix set,” respectively.\(^2\)

In Form I verbs, the present tense inflectional stem is not usually predictable from the past tense stem, but in the derived forms and quadriliteral verbs, the present stem is predictable. In this text, stems are usually written with a hyphen where they would connect with inflectional formatives,\(^3\) e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Past tense stem</th>
<th>Present tense stem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>katab-</td>
<td>katab-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-kub-</td>
<td>-ktub-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete</td>
<td>َakmal-</td>
<td>َakmal-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-kmil-</td>
<td>-kmil-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet</td>
<td>ijtama‘-</td>
<td>ijtama‘-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-jtami‘-</td>
<td>-jtami‘-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use</td>
<td>istaxdam-</td>
<td>istaxdam-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-staxdim-</td>
<td>-staxdim-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2 Tense/Aspect
Arabic verbs show a range of tenses, but two of them are basic: past and present. These tenses are also often referred to as perfect and imperfect, or perfective and imperfective.\(^2\)\(^3\)

\(^2\) For example, see Holes 1995, 86–90 and Beeston 1970, 71–86.

\(^3\) Where the prefix or suffix merges with the verb stem (as in the past tense of defective verbs or the present tense of passive assimilated verbs) the morpheme boundary is blurred and therefore not indicated.
imperfective, but those latter terms are more accurately labels of aspect rather than tense.

Tense and aspect can be described as two different ways of looking at time. Tense usually deals with linear points in time that stretch from the far past into the future, in relation to the speaker. Aspect, on the other hand deals with the degree of completeness of an action or state: is the action completed, partial, ongoing, or yet to occur? So the perspectives of tense and aspect are different: tense focuses on the point on the timeline at which the action occurs, whereas aspect is focused on the action itself – whether it is complete or not.4

The difference between tense and aspect can be subtle, and the two categories may overlap to a significant extent. It is theorized that Classical Arabic was more aspect-specific than tense-specific, but in dealing with the modern written language, some linguists and teachers find it more pragmatic to describe Arabic verbs in terms of tense.5

In this work, I often use the term “past tense” to refer to what is also called the perfect, or the perfective aspect; and I use the term “present tense” to refer to what is also called the imperfect tense or the imperfective aspect. In general, I prefer to stick with timeline terms (“past” and “present”) when using the term “tense” because I have found this to be less confusing to learners.6

4 “Tense involves the basic location in time of an event or state of affairs, in relation to the time of speaking (or writing), while aspect relates more to the internal nature of events and states of affairs, such as whether they are (or were) finished, long-lasting, instantaneous, repetitive, the beginning of something, the end of something, and so on” (Hurford 1994, 240). Abboud and McCarus use the terms “perfect tense” and “imperfect tense” (1983, part 1:263): “The perfect tense denotes completed actions; the imperfect tense denotes actions which have not taken place or have not been completed.”

Likewise, Haywood and Nahmad state (1962, 95–96): “Arabic, in common with other Semitic languages, is deficient in tenses, and this does not make for ease in learning. Moreover the tenses do not have accurate time-significances as in Indo-European languages. There are two main tenses, the Perfect الماضي al-maadDii, denoting actions completed at the time to which reference is being made; and the Imperfect المضارع al-muDaari’, for incompletely completed actions.”

5 For a thorough and lucid discussion of Arabic verb aspect and tense see Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1975, 245–56. More concisely, Wright states the following: “A Semitic Perfect or Imperfect has, in and of itself, no reference to the temporal relations of the speaker (thinker or writer) and of other actions which are brought into juxtaposition with it. It is precisely these relations which determine in what sphere of time (past, present, or future) a Semitic Perfect or Imperfect lies, and by which of our tenses it is to be expressed – whether by our Past, Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future-perfect; by our Present, Imperfect, or Future. The Arabian Grammarians themselves have not, however, succeeded in keeping this important point distinctly in view, but have given an undue importance to the idea of time” (1967, I:51).

6 The terms “perfect” and “imperfect” are sometimes misleading for English-speaking learners of Arabic because they often compare the terms to European languages they have studied, such as French, for example, where “imparfait” refers to a continuing state or action in the past. Note the definition of “imperfect” in Webster’s Third (unabridged: 1986, q.v.): “of or relating to or being a verb tense used to designate a continuing state or action esp. in the past” (my italics).
1.2.3 The present tense (the imperfect): \textit{al-muDaari}\textsuperscript{c}

1.2.3.1 **FORM:** The present tense is formed from the present tense stem of a verb, to which both a prefix and a suffix are added. The stem by itself is not an independent word; it needs the prefixes and suffixes to convey a complete meaning. The prefixes are subject markers of person while the suffixes show mood and number.\textsuperscript{7} In MSA, thirteen present tense inflectional forms are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present tense stem -\textit{ktub}- ‘write’</th>
<th>Present tense indicative conjugation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>أكتبُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>تكتبُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>تكتبُ مهذب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>يكتبُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>تكتبُ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prefix and suffix together give the full meaning of the verb. They are sometimes referred to together as a “circumfix” because they surround the stem on both sides.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{7} The term \textit{muDaari}‘ literally means ‘resembling.’ This term was adopted because of the fact that the present tense mood markers on the verb (the suffixed \textit{Damma} of the indicative and the \textit{fatHa} of the subjunctive) resemble the case markers on nouns (especially the nominative and accusative). In other words, whereas the past tense verb has only one mood (the indicative) the present tense verb shifts its mood depending on the syntactic context, just as a noun shifts its case depending on its role in the sentence. The present tense therefore “resembles” a noun in this ability to shift its desinence.

\textsuperscript{8} The term “circumfix” refers to a combination of prefix and suffix used with a stem to create a lexical item, such as the English word “enlighten.” As Anderson states, they “involve simultaneous prefixation and suffixation that correspond to a single unit of morphological form” (1992, 53). The discontinuous inflectional affixes on Arabic present tense verbs may be considered circumfixes, but the concept of circumfix as a separate morphological category is disputed. See Golston 1996, 731, esp. note 8, as well as Anderson 1992, 53, 59, and 389.
1.2.3.2 MEANING: The present tense, or imperfect, refers in a general way to incomplete, ongoing actions or ongoing states. It corresponds to both the English present and present continuous tenses. There is no distinction between these in Arabic.

I write; I am writing

ناكتب

we study; we are studying

ندرس

they (m.) translate, are translating

يترجمون

they (f.) meet; they are meeting

يجتمعون

Examples:

I write; I am writing

ناكتب

we study; we are studying

ندرس

they (m.) translate, are translating

يترجمون

1.2.4 Future tense: al-mustaqbal

1.2.4.1 FORM: The future tense is formed by prefixing either the morpheme sa- or the particle sawfa to a present tense indicative verb. The verb may be active or passive. The particle sa- is identified by some grammarians as an abbreviation of sawfa.

1.2.4.2 MEANING: This procedure conveys an explicitly future action.

It will help to a great extent.

سأفكر في ذلك.

I’ll think about that.

The decision will be taken.

سوف يمثلون بلادهم.

They will represent their country.

1.2.5 Past tense: al-maadii

1.2.5.1 FORM: The past tense in Arabic is formed by suffixing person-markers to the past tense verb stem. The person markers in the past tense also denote
number (singular, dual, plural) and gender. In MSA, thirteen person markers are used in the past tense paradigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past tense stem <em>katab</em> ‘wrote’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katab-tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katab-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katab-ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katab-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katab-at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.5.2 SPELLING: The third person masculine plural suffix, /-uu/ is spelled with a final *'alam*, which is not pronounced, sometimes called “otiose” *'alam*. It is simply a traditional spelling convention. It is deleted if the verb has a pronoun object suffix, e.g.,

- *katab-uu* katab-uu-haa.
  - they wrote They wrote it.
- *istaxdam-uu* istaxdam-uu-hu.
  - they used They used it.

1.2.5.3 MEANING
(1) **Action in the past**: The Arabic past tense refers to a completed action and thus equates in most respects with English past tense and past perfect.9

---

9 See Chapter 2, section 4.2.1.3, subsection (3.3).
10 See Wright 1967, II:1-4 for further analysis of the past tense.
He tried to save a man’s life.

They (m.) delivered a statement.

She returned from a vacation.

Thank you for everything you (m.pl.) have done.

Non-past action: Depending on the context, the Arabic past tense may also be used to convey other meanings. For example:

We are almost there (lit. ‘we have almost arrived’).

God bless you (lit. ‘God has blessed you’).

1.3 Moods of the verb

Mood or “mode” refers to the Arabic verb properties indicative, subjunctive, jussive, and imperative. These categories, or morphosyntactic properties, reflect contextual modalities that condition the action of the verb. For example, the indicative mood is characteristic of straightforward, factual statements or questions, while the subjunctive mood reflects an attitude toward the action such as doubt, desire, intent, wishing, or necessity, and the jussive mood, when used for the imperative, indicates an attitude of command, request, or need-for-action on the part of the speaker.

In Arabic, mood marking is done only on the present tense or imperfective stem; there are no mood variants for the past tense. The Arabic moods are therefore non-finite; that is, they do not refer to specific points in time and are not differentiated by tense. Tense is inferred from context and other parts of the clause. For more extensive description of the moods and their uses, see Chapters 34 and 35.

The question of mood marking (on verbs) is a central one in Arabic grammar, along with case marking (on nouns and adjectives). Moods fall under the topic of morphology because they are reflected in Arabic word structure, that is, they are usually indicated by suffixes or modifications of suffixes attached to the present tense verb stem, and the phonological nature of the verb stem determines what form the suffix will take. Moods also, however, fall under the topic of syntax because their use is determined either by particles which govern their occurrence, or by the narrative context in general, including attitude of the speaker and intended meaning. They are therefore referred to in some reference works and theoretical discussions as “morphosyntactic” categories.
1.3.1 Indicative mood

We welcome our customers.  He leaves Cairo today.

1.3.2 Subjunctive mood

It is necessary that we undertake a visit.

1.3.3 Jussive mood

The jussive mood in MSA is used most often with the negative particle *lam* to negate the past tense, and as a basis for forming the imperative.

1.3.4 Imperative

Open, Sesame! Permit me. Don’t forget!

1.4 Voice: active or passive

Whereas the tense of a verb conveys temporal or time-related information, the “voice” of a verb conveys information on the topical focus of a sentence. The active voice is used when the doer of the action is the subject of the verb (“I ate the cake”), and the passive voice is used when the object of the verbal action is the subject (“The cake was eaten.”).

Generally speaking, the passive voice is used in Arabic only if the agent or doer of the action is unknown or not to be mentioned for some reason. This contrasts with English where one may mention the agent in a passive construction through use of the preposition “by” (“The cake was eaten by me.”) Rarely is the agent mentioned when the passive is used in Arabic.

The Arabic passive may be internal, through a change in the nature of the internal vowels (e.g., *‘uqid-a* ‘it was held’) or derivational (e.g., *in’aqad-a* ‘it was held’).

For example, the following sentence is in the active voice:

The king held the meeting.
where *al-malik-u* 'the king' is the subject of the verb as well as the agent or doer of the action, ‘*aqad-a*, and the object of the verb is *al-ijtimaa*-u ‘the meeting.’

If the sentence were re-phrased as a passive construction, the object of the verb becomes the subject of the sentence, and the verb is marked for passive. The internal morphological change that signals the Arabic passive is a change in the vowel pattern of the verb:

\[ \text{عَدَدُ الْإِجْتِمَاعُ} \]
\[ ‘uqid-a l-ijtimaa-u. \]
The meeting was held.

where *al-ijtimaa-u* is now the subject, and the verb is inflected for passive voice through the vowel sequence /-u-i/ instead of /-a-a/.

Another way of expressing the passive is to use another form of the verb which is passive or reflexive in meaning, usually the Form VII verb, if it exists, or Form V:

\[ \text{إِنْعَدَدُ الْإِجْتِمَاعُ} \]
\[ in‘aqad-a l-ijtimaa-u. \]
The meeting was held.

where the Form VII verb is active in form, but passive in meaning, and the subject of the Form VII verb is *al-ijtimaa-u*. Passive and passive-like structures are described at greater length in Chapter 38.

2 Complex predicates: compound verbs, *qad*, and verb strings

Arabic verbal expressions may consist of more than the main verb. Auxiliary verbs may be used in conjunction with a main verb to express variations of tense and aspect, and the verbal particle *qad* is also used to convey information about aspect.

2.1 Compound verbs

Compound verbs are tenses that consist of the verb *kaan-a* plus a main verb. They are as follows:

2.1.1 The past progressive

To convey the idea of continued or habitual action in the past, the verb *kaan-a* is used in the past tense in conjunction with the present tense of the main verb. Both parts of this compound verb are inflected for person, gender, and number. The main verb always comes after *kaan-a*; if there is a specific subject mentioned, it comes between the two parts of the verb.

This tense of the verb is used for expressing what in English would be “used to,” or “was _____ ing.” Sometimes, with certain verbs in certain contexts it is used to
express a concept of an action that took place in the past, but extended or endured over a period of time, rather than taking place at a discrete moment in time. This is especially true of experiential verbs that denote states of mind, such as knowing, feeling, liking. In those cases, the English equivalent is often just a simple past tense.

She was wearing a blue shirt.

They used to wake up daily at 6:00.

2.1.1.1 PAST PROGRESSIVE WITH EXPERIENTIAL VERBS: A state of knowing, feeling, or understanding is one that is considered to extend over a period of time in the past, and therefore such verbs are often expressed with the past continuous tense rather than the simple past in Arabic. English does not usually express these concepts with the past progressive tense, but with the simple past.

They knew [over a period of time] the Iberian peoples.

2.1.1.2 PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE MEANING WITH PRESENT TENSE AND mundhu:\n
When a state or action begins in the past and continues into the present, with specific reference to the length of time that the state or action continued, the present tense is used in Arabic although the past perfect progressive is used in English. In equational sentences the present tense is expressed without a verb. This meaning occurs most frequently with the particle mundhu ‘since; for; ago.’ (See also Chapter 16, section 2.3.4.)

(1) Verbal sentences:

أُعِيَشَ هُنَا مِنْ ذَٰلِكَ خَمْسِ سَنَوْاتِ
‘a-‘iish-u hunaa mundhu xams-i sanawaat-in
I have been living here for five years.
يعمل في دائرة البلدية منذ شهرين.
\[ ya^{	ext{mal-u}} 	ext{ fii daa'}^{	ext{3}}^{	ext{irat-i l-baladiyyat-i mundhu shahr-ayni.}} \]
He has been working in the county administration for two months.

(2) Equational sentences: In these two sentences, an active participle is used instead of a verb with past perfect progressive meaning.

تجارتها قائمة على التصدير والاستيراد منذ زمن طويل.
\[ tijaarat-u-haa qaa^{	ext{imat-un}} ^{	ext{a'ala}} 	ext{l-taSdiir-i wa-l-istiiraad-i mundh-u zaman-in Tawiil-in.} \]
Its trade has been based on export and import for a long time.

هذا الحرف مستمر منذ ملايين السنين.
\[ haadhaa l-zafiir-u mustamiir-un mundh-u malaayiin-i l-saniina. \]
This reptile has been [in] continuous [existence] for millions of years.

2.2 Pluperfect or past perfect: anteriority
To express an anterior action, i.e., an action in the past that is over with and which serves as a background action for the present, the past tense of \textit{kaan-a} is used with a past tense of the main verb\textsuperscript{14}. The particle \textit{qad} may be optionally inserted just before the main verb. Note that the subject of the verb, if mentioned as a separate noun, goes between the auxiliary verb and the main verb. If the subject noun is human and plural, the main verb inflects for plural, although the auxiliary verb remains singular because it precedes the subject.

2.2.1 With subject noun

كان السفير قد وصل مساء الجمعة.
\[ kaan-a l-safiir-u \text{(qad) waSal-a masaa'}^{	ext{a}} ^{	ext{l-jum'}^{	ext{at-i}}.} \]
The ambassador had arrived Friday evening.

وكان العلماء توافدوا إلى مدينة بغداد.
\[ wa-kaan-a l-\text{ulamaa'}^{	ext{u}} \text{ tawaafad-uu } ^{	ext{a llaa madiinat-i baghdaad-a.}} \]
The scholars had flocked to the city of Baghdad.

كان محاموٍن أمريكيون شاركوا.
\[ kaan-a muHaam-uuna ^{	ext{a}}^{	ext{amriikiyy-uuna shaarak-uu.}} \]
American lawyers had participated.

\textsuperscript{14} An alternative but less frequently used way of expressing the pluperfect in MSA is to use the expression \textit{sabaq-a 'an 'it preceded that'} before the main verb:

سبق أن التقى مراراً قادة الأكراد.
\[ sabaq-a \text{'an-i litaqaa maraa'an qaadaat-a l-akraad-i.} \]
He had [already] met with the leaders of the Kurds many times.
The mosque had been built thirteen centuries ago.

They had been working with Amman. He had accused them of provoking him.

She had not requested protection.

To indicate a state or action expected to be completed in the future, the present or future tense of \( \text{kaan-a} \) is used with a past tense main verb:

and if not, it will have failed in its role . . .

To describe an action that would or could have taken place, but actually did not, the past tense of \( \text{kaan-a} \) is used with the future tense of the main verb. This is called an unreal condition or a contrary-to-fact condition.

She would not have known [how] to read and write ('reading and writing').

I was going to use something else.

The team would have won in the competitions if the committee had permitted them to participate.
2.5 The particle *qad*

The particle *qad* is used with verbs. It has no exact lexical equivalent in English and various theories have been put forth as to its function. One theory is that it is used to emphasize or confirm aspect; that is, whether or not an action has been completed, and to what degree. Used with the past (or “perfect”) tense, *qad* emphasizes and asserts that the action has indeed happened. In this context it may be translated as ‘indeed,’ ‘already,’ or ‘really’ but sometimes it is not translatable.

With the imperfect or present tense, it emphasizes the possibility of the action or its potentiality rather than its actual achievement. In this case it is usually translated as ‘may,’ ‘might,’ or ‘perhaps.’

Used in conjunction with the compound pluperfect tense verb (*kaana qad*), it is part of the compound verb structure, coming after the auxiliary verb *kaan-a* and before the past tense main verb. Rarely is *qad* used when the verb is negative.

As with other words that end in *sukuun*, *qad* needs a helping vowel *kasra* if it occurs before a consonant cluster.

### 2.5.1 *qad* with past (perfect) tense

Used with the past tense, *qad* may occur on its own, but it may also be prefixed with the particles *wa-* and *la-* or *fa-*. These particles do not change the meaning of *qad* although they may imply a temporal sequence such as “and then.” Depending on context, the past tense verb with *qad* may be equivalent either to the simple past or to the past perfect. The use of *qad* here serves to confirm the meaning of the past tense by emphasizing that the action did indeed happen. Sometimes the insertion of the word “indeed” in English is appropriate.

*قد حققت أخيراً.*

*qad* taHaqqaq-at 'axiir-an.

It was finally / has finally been realized.

*وقد وجدته في الصندوق.*

*wa-la-qad* wajad-tu-hu fii l-Sanduuq-i.

And (then) I found it in the box.

*قد ارتکب هذه الجريمة منفرداً.*

*qad-i* rtakab-a haadhihi lJariimat-a munfarid-an.

(Indeed) He committed / has committed this crime on his own.

*ولذلك فقد حافظوا على المخطوطات.*

*wa-li-dhaalika fa-qad* HaaafaZ-uu 'alaal 1-maxTuuTaat-i.

And therefore they (indeed) kept the manuscripts.

---

15 See Bahloul 1996 for an in-depth analysis of the nature and uses of *qad*.


17 “The modal particle *qad* tends quite often to occur inside the verbal complex, that is, between the auxiliary verb and the thematic verb” (Bahloul 1996, 37).
Verb inflection: a summary

2.5.1.1 \textit{fa-qad} + PAST TENSE: This conjunction introduces a clause in the past tense that acts as circumstance or background to the previous clause, stating an action or state that precedes the action in the previous clause chronologically or logically.\textsuperscript{18} As Abboud and McCarus state (1983, part 1:537), “this construction indicates a completed action whose results are still in effect” with regard to the previous clause. This is considered a type of Haal or circumstantial structure.

\textit{lam ya-jib shay\textsuperscript{-an}. fa-qad ghariq\textsuperscript{-a} fii nawm\textsuperscript{-in} fi amiiq\textsuperscript{-in}.}  
He did not answer anything, \textit{having fallen} into a deep sleep.  
(Kouloughli 1994, 274)

2.5.2 \textit{qad} with present (imperfect) tense = possibility  
Used with the indicative present tense, \textit{qad} implies possibility.

\textit{bal qad ya-kuun\textsuperscript{-u} hunaaka thalj\textsuperscript{-un}.}  
There might even be snow.  
\textit{qad ya-tabaad\textsuperscript{-ar\textsuperscript{-u}} \textit{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{-}i}laa dhihn\textsuperscript{-i-ka}.} It might cross your mind.

\textit{qad ta-ttaxidh\textsuperscript{-u} \textit{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{-}a}shkaal\textsuperscript{-an} muxtalifat\textsuperscript{-an}}.}  
They may adopt different shapes.  
\textit{qad ta-kuun\textsuperscript{-u} \textit{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{-}akthar\textsuperscript{-a}} \textit{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{-}ahamiyyat\textsuperscript{-an}}.} It might be of greater importance.

2.6 Verb strings or serial verb constructions  
Certain verbs can directly precede others, thereby modifying the meaning of the main verb and acting as auxiliary verbs. Whenever the verb phrase consists of two or more verbs, the subject, if mentioned, is usually put between them. These verbs fall into several classes.

\textsuperscript{18}Haywood and Nahmad state: “The particle \textit{qad} is sometimes used before the Perfect verb. It is a confirmatory particle, which may make the verb definitely Past perfect . . . However, this particle may also make the verb Pluperfect . . . according to context” (1962, 100).
2.6.1 Verbs of appropinquation

These verbs indicate proximity or nearness to an action, but not quite the achievement of it, referred to by Wright as verbs of “appropinquation” (1967, II:106). These include verbs such as *kaad-a/yaa-kaad-u* ‘to almost [do something]; be on the point of [doing something]’ and *‘awshak-a yuushik-u* ‘to be on the verge’ of doing something.

The subject was almost erased from Arab memory.

The sun had almost risen.

The subject was almost erased from Arab memory.

It almost changed into hand-to-hand combat.

Sometimes, *kaad-a* or *‘awshak-a* are followed by the subjunctivizing particle *‘an*, in which case the following verb is in the subjunctive:

**They almost believed** in the existence of a conspiracy (*belief verged*).

**Used in the negative,** the implication of *kaad-a* is that an action has just barely taken place, usually translatable as ‘hardly,’ or ‘scarcely.’

**Sometimes, with ‘awshak-a, a verbal noun may be used instead of a following verb:**

- *‘awshak-naa ‘an na-squot-a.* We almost fell (were on the verge of falling).

- *‘awshak-a ‘an ya-s’al-a ‘an-i sm-i-haa.* He almost asked about her name.

19 Blachère and Goudefroy Demombynes refer to them as “verbes d’imminence” (1975, 268).
2.6.2 Inceptive verbs

Another set of helping verbs is inceptive or inchoative. They convey the idea of starting or setting about an action and are usually used in the past with a present tense main verb. In MSA these verbs include:

- to set about: \( \text{ja‘al-a (literally ‘to make’)} \)
- to start: \( \text{‘axadh-a (literally, ‘to take’)} \)
- to start: \( \text{bada‘-a (literally, ‘to begin’)} \)
- to set about: \( \text{Saar-a (literally, ‘to become’)} \)

\( \text{Ja‘al-a} \) (literally ‘to make’)
\( \text{‘Axadh-a} \) (literally, ‘to take’)
\( \text{Bada‘-a} \) (literally, ‘to begin’)
\( \text{Saar-a} \) (literally, ‘to become’)

\( \text{Bada‘-a yu-lfit-u l-nazara.} \)

\( \text{It started to attract attention.} \)

2.6.3 Verbs of continuation

These verbs, when used as auxiliaries, convey the concept of continuing an action or a state:

- \( \text{baat-a} \) (بات)

\( \text{Baat-ul balad} \text{ t‘aruf} \text{ bi al-yum.} \)
\( \text{Baat-at-i l-bilaad-u tu-‘raf-u bi-hi l-yawm-a.} \)

The country is still known by it today.

- \( \text{Zall-a} \) (ظل)

\( \text{Zal-l yu-raddid-u l-fi ibaarat-a.} \)
\( \text{Zall-a ya-s‘aa waraa‘-a hadaf-i-hi} \)

He kept repeating the expression. He continued to pursue (‘after’) his goal.

- \( \text{maa zaal-a} \) (ما زال)

\( \text{Al-‘umur la zaal-hu takhtaa} \text{ ilaa kun min al-jahd-i.} \)
\( \text{Matters still require much effort.} \)

- \( \text{maDaa} \) (مضى)

\( \text{Wa-maDaa ya-sha’iru l-xuDaara.} \)

He went on to buy vegetables.
The problem kept getting dangerous and [then] subsiding.

2.6.4 Simultaneous verbal action (al-\textit{Haal})

Certain concepts are conveyed by verbs describing simultaneous states or actions. The subject may remain the same for both verbs, or it may be different. This structure is a form of \textit{Haal}, or adverbial expression that describes what someone was doing at the time of the action of the main verb.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{With same subject:}

\begin{quote}
وضمي يقول …
\end{quote}

\textit{wa-maDaa ya-quul-u} …

He continued, saying …

\textbf{With different subject:}

\begin{quote}
شاهدها ترش طلاء. لا تتركك تنتظر.
\end{quote}

\textit{shaahad-a-haa ta-rushsh-u \textit{Tilaa}'-an. laa ta-truk-u-ka ta-ntaZir-u.}

He saw her spattering paint. It doesn’t leave you waiting.

\textsuperscript{20} On the \textit{Haal}حال construction, see Chapter 11, section 2.3.1, and also Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.3.
1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern
Form I is considered the base form because of its fundamental structure. In Arabic, this form is termed mujarrad: \('bare; stripped'\) because it is the simplest stem of all. The base pattern for Form I past tense is \(\text{CaCVC}\), that is, consonant-fatHa-consonant-short vowel-consonant. Although the first short vowel is consistently fatHa, the second, or stem vowel, may be fatHa, kasra or Damma: \(\text{fa‘al-a \, fa‘al-a \, fa‘ul-a}\).

The present tense stem vowel (the vowel that follows the second root consonant) is also variable in Form I. It may be \(/a/, /u/, or /i/\).

1.2 Meaning
Form I is the closest indicator of the meaning of the lexical root. There are shades of meaning associated with the stem vowel differences in the past tense citation forms, but these semantic differences are very subtle. Note that every verb and verbal noun has a range of meanings, sometimes extensive. Glosses or English equivalents provided here are not exclusive or exact meanings but represent common standard usage.

1.3 Transitivity
Form I covers a wide semantic range and may be either intransitive or transitive. Occasionally it is doubly transitive.

1.4 Inflection
A particular inflectional characteristic of Form I verbs is that the present tense subject-marker vowel is fatHa (e.g., \(\text{ya-drus-u, ya-wadd-u, ya-‘nii}\)).

1.5 Root types
The nature of the three root consonants determines the root type. Phonological and morphophonemic rules apply to various kinds of sound and irregular roots,
as follows.\(^1\) Paradigm charts for all Form I root types are located at the end of this chapter.

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root (\(\text{al-fi'}\lrl \text{al-SaHiiH al-saalim}\) الفعل الصحيح السالم)

Sound or regular verbal roots consist of three consonants, all of which are different and none of which are \(\text{waaw}\), \(\text{yaa}\), or \(\text{hamza}\). The Form I verbs are presented here by their stem types, which fall into three groups.\(^2\)

2.1 Past tense stem vowel is \(\text{fatHa}\)

When the past tense stem vowel is \(\text{fatHa}\), the present tense stem vowel may be \(/a/\), \(/u/\), or \(/i/\), so there are three subgroups within this class. Occasionally, the present tense may show two different stem vowels.

2.1.1 \(\text{fa}^-\text{al-a/ ya-f}^-\text{al-u}\)

Here \(\text{fatHa}\) is the stem vowel in both the past and present tenses. There is some indication that the present tense medial vowel in this verb form is conditioned by the nature of its contiguous consonants, which would be the second and third root consonants. The general theory is that a \(\text{fatHa}\) in the present tense is associated with a back (pharyngeal or glottal) consonant.\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Form</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to gather, to collect</td>
<td>(\text{jam'a^-a/ya-jma^-u})</td>
<td>جمع/جمع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to open; to conquer</td>
<td>(\text{fataH-a/ya-ftaH-u})</td>
<td>فتح/فتح</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to go</td>
<td>(\text{dhahab-a/ya-dhhab-u})</td>
<td>ذهب/ذهب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to grant</td>
<td>(\text{manaH-a/ya-mnaH-u})</td>
<td>منع/منع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to remove, take off</td>
<td>(\text{xala^-a/ya-xla^-u})</td>
<td>خلع/خلع</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 \(\text{fa}^-\text{al-a/ ya-f}^-\text{il-u}\)

This type of Form I verb has \(\text{fatHa}\) in the past tense stem and \(\text{kasra}\) as the medial vowel in the present tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Form</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to return, to go back</td>
<td>(\text{raja^-a/ya-rji^-u})</td>
<td>رجع/رجع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to dig</td>
<td>(\text{Hafar-a/ya-Hfir-u})</td>
<td>حفر/حرف</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Traditional Arabic grammar divides verb roots into two major classes: (1) \(\text{SaHiiH}\) صحيح ‘sound’ and (2) \(\text{mu'tall}\) معتل ‘weak.’ Sound roots are ones that do not contain either \(\text{waaw}\) or \(\text{yaa}\); weak roots contain \(\text{waaw}\) or \(\text{yaa}\) as one or more of the root phonemes. In this text, I have allotted separate categories for doubled and hamzated verbs because they sometimes involve stem changes when inflected, even though they are considered \(\text{SaHiiH}\), or ‘sound,’ in Arabic grammatical terms.

\(^2\) Certain roots may have more than one stem in the past. Sometimes this indicates a meaning difference, sometimes not. For example, \(\text{shamal-a/ya-shmal-u}\) ‘to contain, include’ and also \(\text{shamil-a/ya-yashmal-u}\) with the same meaning.

\(^3\) For more analysis of the Form I stem-vowel alternation see McCarthy 1991, esp. pp. 69–70, and see also McOmber 1995, 178–85.
to carry | Hamal-a/ya-Hmil-u | حَمَلُ / يَحْمِلُ
to know | ‘araf-a/ya-‘rif-u | عَرَفُ / يَعْرُفُ
to acquire, possess | malak-a/ya-mlik-u | مَلِكُ / يَمْلِكُ

2.1.3 fa‘al-a/ ya-f’ul-u

The past tense stem vowel is fatHa, the present tense stem vowel is Damma.

| to rub | farak-a/ya-fruk-u | فَرَكُ / يَفْرَكُ
to leave | tarak-a/ya-truk-u | تَرَكُ / يَتَرَكُ
to request, ask for | Talab-a/ya-Tlub-u | طَلَبُ / يَطْلُبُ
to study | daras-a/ya-drus-u | دَرَسُ / يَدْرُسُ
to transfer | naqal-a/ya-nqul-u | نَقَلُ / يَنْقَلُ

2.2 Past tense stem vowel is kasra: fa‘il-a/ ya-f‘al-u

When the past tense stem vowel is kasra, the present tense stem vowel is normally fatHa.

| to drink | sharib-a/ya-shrab-u | شَرِبُ / يَشْرِبُ
to do, make; to work | ‘amil-a/ya-‘mal-u | عَمَلُ / يَعْمَلُ
to know | ‘alim-a/ya-‘lam-u | عَلِمُ / يَعْلَمُ
to hear | sami‘-a/ya-sma‘-u | سَمِعُ / يَسْمَعُ

2.3 Past tense stem vowel is Damma: fa‘ul-a/ ya-f‘ul-u

This Form I stem has Dammas as both stem vowels. This stem class generally denotes states of being, or the acquisition or increase of a certain quality. These roots therefore also are the roots of many adjectives. This type of Form I verb is usually intransitive.

| to be heavy | thaqul-a/ya-thqul-u | ثَقُلُ / يُثَقَّلُ (تَقْرِيلُ)
to grow or be big; grow older | kabur-a/ya-kbur-u | كَبِيرُ / يَكْبِرُ (كَبِيرُ)
to be good | Hasun-a/ya-Hsun-u | حَسَنُ / يَحْسَنُ (حَسَنُ)

2.4 Examples of Form I sound verbs in context

*야-히틀-우 l-thalj-u ‘ala’ l-jibaa-l-i.*  
Snow falls on the mountains.

*야-도사-우우나 l-thaman-а.*  
They are paying the price.
A number of representatives attended the meeting. It opened the door.

3 Geminate verb root (al-fi’l al-muDa′af)

Geminate or doubled verbal roots are ones where the second and third consonant of the root are the same. In the citation form of Form I, the doubled or geminate consonant is written only once, with a shadda above it to show that it is double.

3.1 Stem shifts

Geminate verbs have two stems in the past and also two in the present. This is because of a phonological rule that prevents two identical consonants from being in sequence with a short vowel between them when they are directly followed by a vowel, e.g., instead of *radad-ا it is radd-ا (’he replied’), instead of *ya-HTuT-uuna, it is ya-HTuT-uuna (’they put’).

However, if the second identical stem consonant is followed by another consonant, the identical consonants remain separated, e.g., radad-tu (’I replied’), ya-HTuT-na (’they (f.) put’). This second type of stem, where the identical consonants are split, is referred to here as the “split stem.”

In the past tense conjugation, many of the inflectional suffixes start with consonants (-tu, -ta, -ti, -tumaa, -naa, -tunna, -tum, -na), so the split stem in the past tense is fairly common; in the present tense, however, the only suffix that starts with a consonant is the -na of the second and third persons feminine plural (e.g., ya-rdud-na ’they (f.) reply’).

3.2 Stem types

Doubled Form I verbs fall into three stem types, according to their stem vowels. The citation forms of the past tense third person singular all look alike, so in order to know the stem type, it is necessary to know the stem vowel in the present tense. The first person singular past tense and the third person feminine plural present tense are given as examples for these verbs to illustrate the stem vowels.

3.2.1 fa‘al-ا/ya-f’ul-ا (a/u) –> fa‘l-ا/ya-fu‘l-ا

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>to show, indicate</th>
<th>dall-ا/ya-dull-ا</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>past tense split stem:</td>
<td>dalal-tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present tense split stem:</td>
<td>ya-dlul-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 The technical Arabic term for “doubled” is given as muDa′af in ‘Abd al-Latif et al. (1997, 140) and as muDaa by Wright 1967 (I:69).

5 Abboud and McCarus 1983 (Part 2:81–88) have a detailed description of the phonological rules and the forms of the doubled Form I verb.
to put, place  
\[ \text{HaTT-a/ya-HuTT-u} \]

past tense split stem:  
\[ \text{HaTaT-tu} \]

present tense split stem:  
\[ \text{ya-HTuT-na} \]

3.2.2 fa’al-a/ya-f’il-u (a/i) –> fa’il-a/ya-fi’l-u

be small, few; diminish  
\[ \text{qall-a/ya-qill-u} \]

past tense split stem:  
\[ \text{qalal-tu} \]

present tense split stem:  
\[ \text{ya-qil-na} \]

to be complete  
\[ \text{tamm-a/ya-timm-u} \]

past tense split stem:  
\[ \text{tamam-tu} \]

present tense split stem:  
\[ \text{ya-tmim-na} \]

3.2.3 fa’il-a/ya-f’al-u (i/a) –> fa’il-a/ya-f’l-u

In this stem type, the past tense stem vowel kasra shows up only in the split stem, when the verb has a suffix that starts with a consonant. In the citation form, it has been deleted because of phonological restrictions.6

3.1 Examples of Form I geminate verbs in context

تم الاتفاق  
\[ \text{tamm-a} \text{ l-ittifaaq-u.} \]

The agreement was completed.  
\[ \text{sayyaarat-un ta-murr-u fii l-shaari)\text{-i} } \]

car passing by in the street

ردت على سؤال  
\[ \text{radd-at ‘alaa su’aal-in.} \]

She responded to a question.  
\[ \text{kayf-a ta-timm-u ‘amaliyyaat-u l-‘ixlaa)\text{-i}? } \]

How are the evacuation operations accomplished?

6 Wehr (1979) gives both the citation form and the split-stem form for this stem type of doubled verb.
4 Hamzated verb root (الفعل المهمور)

A hamzated verb is one where any one of the root consonants is hamza. It may occur as the first, second, or third consonant. These verbs are considered a separate category because of rules that govern the occurrence and distribution of hamza, and also because of hamza spelling rules. As the verbal roots inflect within conjugations or as they shift into derived forms, the seat of hamza may change.

4.1 Hamza-initial Form I verbs

to eat \textit{akal-a/ya-kul-u}  

4.2 Hamza-medial Form I verbs

to ask (s.o. s.th.) \textit{sa’al-a/ya-s’al-u}  

to repair, to bandage \textit{la’am-a/ya-l’am-u}  

4.3 Hamza-final Form I verbs

to begin \textit{bada’-a/ya-bda’-u}  

to read \textit{qara’-a/ya-qra’-u}  

Examples of Form I hamzated verbs in context:

\textit{fi layn-anan bda’-u min l-Sifr-i. fii bayrut-ya bda’-u siHr-u l-sharq-i.}

5 Assimilated verb root (الفعل المثال)

Assimilated verb roots begin with a semi-consonant (\textit{waaw} or \textit{yaa’}), most often \textit{waaw}. They are called assimilated in English because the initial \textit{waaw}, even though it is part of the root, often disappears in the present tense, deleted or assimilated to the subject-marker prefix. The \textit{yaa’} does not normally get assimilated.\footnote{Wright 1967 (I:78–81) provides an extensive analysis of this verb type in Classical Arabic.}

5.1 First root consonant deleted in present tense

This group consists of a number of frequently occurring verbs in MSA. They fall into two groups: those with \textit{fatHa} in the past tense stem and \textit{kasra} in the present tense, and those with \textit{fatHa} as the stem vowel in both tenses.

5.1.1 \textit{fatHa/kasra}

\begin{itemize}
  \item to arrive \textit{waSal-a/ya-Sil-u}
  \item to be \textit{wajab-a/ya-jib-u}
  \item to find \textit{wajad-a/ya-jid-u}
  \item to weigh \textit{wazan-a/ya-zin-u}
\end{itemize}
5.1.2 fatHa/fatHa

to fall  waqa\textsuperscript{-a}/ya-qa\textsuperscript{-a}u  وَقَعَ / يَقعُ
to put  waDa\textsuperscript{-a}/ya-Da\textsuperscript{-a}u  وَضَعَ / يَضعُ

5.2 First root consonant not deleted in present tense

This group consists of waaw-initial verbs whose stem vowel in the past is kasra or Damma, and of verbs whose initial root consonant is yaa\textsuperscript{\textdegree}. They behave as regular or sound verbs.

5.2.1 kasra/fatHa

to ache, hurt  waji\textsuperscript{-a}/ya-wja\textsuperscript{-a}u  وَجَعَ / يَجعُ
to like, love  wadd-a/ya-wadd-u\textsuperscript{8}  وَدَ / يَودُ

5.2.2 Damma/Damma

to be wide  wasu\textsuperscript{-a}/ya-wsu\textsuperscript{-a}u  وَسَعَ / يَسُعُ

5.2.3 yaa\textsuperscript{-}-initial

to be easy  yasir-a/ya-ysir-u\textsuperscript{9}  يَسِرَ / يَسرُ
to wake up  yaqiZ-a/ya-yqiZ-u\textsuperscript{10}  يَقَظَ / يَقظُ

Examples of Form I assimilated verbs in context:

\begin{quote}

\textbf{y}a\textbf{-jib}-\textbf{u}  \textbf{\textsuperscript{-}an} ta-tawaqqaf-a.  \\
\textbf{w}a\textbf{Saf}-\textbf{uu}  \textbf{haa}.  \\
They must stop (\textit{it is necessary that they stop}).  \\
They described her.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}

\textbf{w}a\textbf{Sal}-\textbf{-a}  \textbf{l-ra\textsuperscript{-}iis}  \textbf{-u}  \textbf{\textsuperscript{-}ilaa} tuunis-a \textbf{\textsuperscript{-}ams-i}.  \\
The president arrived in Tunis yesterday.
\end{quote}

6 Hollow root (al-fi\textsuperscript{\textdegree}l al-\textsuperscript{\textdegree}ajwaf) (الفعل الأجوف)

Hollow verbs are ones in which the second root consonant is actually a semi-consonant: either waaw or yaa\textsuperscript{\textdegree}. These two semi-consonants undergo various mutations, turning into ʼalif, a short vowel, or a long vowel depending on the word structure and derivation. In the past tense citation form, for example, the waaw or yaa\textsuperscript{\textdegree} is not present and is replaced by ʼalif. However, to look up one of these words

\textsuperscript{8} This verb is geminate as well as assimilated. Phonotactic rules prevent the initial waaw from becoming assimilated in this case.

\textsuperscript{9} Also ya-sur-a/ya-ysur-u ʼto be small; to be easy.  

\textsuperscript{10} Also ya-qiZ-a/ya-yqiZ-u.
in a dictionary, one must know what the medial root consonant is, either waaw or yaa’. The medial root consonant often shows itself in the present tense verb stem (as a long or short vowel) and elsewhere, as in the verbal nouns or participles.

There are essentially three variations on the hollow verb root, determined by which long vowel is in the present tense or imperfective stem: waaw, yaa’, or ‘alif.

6.1 Hollow-waaw
These verbs have waaw as their medial radical. The stem vowel in the past tense is ‘alif when it is long and Damma when it is short. Examples of both stems are given. The first person singular is used to exemplify the short stem. The stem vowel in the present tense is waaw when long and Damma when short. The third person feminine plural is used to exemplify the short stem.

- to say qaal-a (qul-tu)/ya-quul-u (ya-quul-na)
- to visit zaar-a (zur-tu)/ya-zuur-u (ya-zur-na)

6.2 Hollow yaa’
These verbs have yaa’ as the medial radical. The stem vowel in the past tense is ‘alif when it is long and kasra when it is short. Examples of both stems are given. The first person singular is used to exemplify the short stem. The stem vowel in the present tense is yaa’ when long and kasra when short. The third person feminine plural is used to exemplify the short stem.

- to live ‘aash-a (‘ish-tu)/ya-‘iish-u (ya-‘iish-na)
- to sell baa‘-a (bi-‘tu)/ya-bii‘-u (ya-bii‘-na)

6.3 Hollow ‘alif
These verb roots have either medial waaw or yaa’ but do not show it in the present tense, using ‘alif instead. The stem vowel in the past tense is ‘alif when it is long and kasra when it is short. Examples of both stems are given. The first person singular is used to exemplify the short stem. The stem vowel in the present tense is ‘alif when long and fatHa when short. The third person feminine plural is used to exemplify the short stem.

- to sleep naam-a (nim-tu)/ya-naam-u (ya-nam-na) (root: n-w-m)
- to fear xaaf-a (xif-tu)/ya-xaaf-u (ya-xaf-na) (root: x-w-f)
- to obtain naal-a (nil-tu)/ya-naal-u (ya-nal-na) (root: n-y-l)
6.3.3 Examples of Form I hollow verbs in context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يعيش مرحلة انتقالية.</td>
<td>It is living [through] a transitional stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عادوا إليها.</td>
<td>They returned to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لا أنهم ما إذا نقول.</td>
<td>It is up to the state to undertake its role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وعلى الدولة أن تقوم بدورها.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Defective verb root (الفعل الناقص)
Defective verb roots are ones where the final consonant is either waaw or yaa’. These final semi-consonants may take on various forms and even seem to disappear under certain circumstances. In the past tense citation form, these roots all have final ‘alif. Roots where yaa’ is the final consonant appear with ‘alif maqSuura or yaa’; roots where waaw is the final consonant are written with ‘alif Tawiila.11

7.1 waaw-defective roots
- to appear, to seem badaa/ya-bduu بدأ/يدعو
- to hope; wish; request rajaa/ya-rjuu رجاء/يرجع
- to call, invite da‘aa/ya-d‘uu دعا/يدعو

7.2 yaa’ defective roots
Yaa’ defective Form I verbs fall into two main categories: ones that end in -aa (‘alif maqSuura) and ones that end with yaa’. The ones ending in -aa usually inflect in the present tense with -ii; the ones that end with yaa’ in the past tense usually take -aa in the present tense. A few verbs take -aa in both the past and the present.

7.2.1 -aa/-ii verbs
- to build banaa/ya-bnii بنى/يبني
- to be sufficient kafaa/ya-kfii كفى/يكلف
- to walk mashaa/ya-mshii مشى/يمشي

7.2.2 -ya/-aa verbs
- to remain baqiy-a/ya-bqaa بقي/يبقى
- to forget nasiy-a/ya-nsaa نسي/ينسى
- to encounter laqiy-a/ya-lqaa لقى/يلقي

11 For a concise phonological analysis of hollow and defective verbs, see Timothy Mitchell 1981.
7.2.3 -aa/-aa verbs

to move forward; to strive  
\( sa^\prime aa/ya-s^\prime aa \)

7.2.4 -ya/-ii verb

to be near; to follow; to govern  
\( waliy-a/ya-lii \)

7.3 Examples of Form I defective verbs in context

They spend their nights in prayer. This is not enough.

They grow slowly.

A number of voters complained.

8 Doubly weak or “mixed” verb root

Doubly weak verb roots have semi-consonants and/or hamza in two places, sometimes as the first and third consonants, and sometimes as the second and third. They are not many in number, but some of them are frequently used:

8.1 Hollow and hamzated

to come  
\( jaa^\prime a/ya-jii^\prime u \)  
(root: \( j-y \))

8.2 Hamzated and defective

to come  
\( ^\prime ataa/ya-^\prime tii \)  
(root: \( ^\prime -y \))

to see  
\( ra^\prime a/ya-raa \)  
(root: \( r-y \))

8.3 Assimilated and defective (al-fi/al-lafi/al-mafruuq)

These roots have waaw or yaa in the first and third root consonants.

to perceive, be aware of  
\( wa^\prime a/ya-^\prime ii \)  
(root: \( w-y \))

to be near; to follow; to govern  
\( waliy-a/ya-lii \)  
(root: \( w-l-y \))
8.4 Hollow and defective (الفعل اللَّفِيف المقرَون)
Where a root is both hollow and defective, the medial root semi-consonant (usually waaw) appears as a regular consonant:

- to intend nawaa/ya-nwii (root: n-w-y)
- to narrate rawaa/ya-rwii (root: r-w-y)

8.5 Examples of Form I doubly weak verbs in context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>اسْتَرِى</th>
<th>لَآَلَتِي</th>
<th>عَلَى</th>
<th>أَهْوَى</th>
<th>رَكُوب</th>
<th>الخَيْل</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sa-taraa</td>
<td>li’ann-i</td>
<td>‘a-hwii rukuub-a</td>
<td>‘alay-hi</td>
<td>‘an ya-’tiy-a</td>
<td>’ilaa hunaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ll see!</td>
<td>l-xayl-i</td>
<td>He has to come here.</td>
<td>because I am fond of riding horses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Verbal nouns of Form I

Form I verbal nouns have many variations of pattern. Wright lists forty-four possible verbal noun patterns for Form I or as he terms it, “the ground form” of the ordinary triliteral verb (1967, I:110–112); Ziadeh and Winder (1957, 71–72) list eighteen of the most commonly used ones in MSA. ‘Abd al-Latif, ‘Umar and Zahran give an extensive list (in Arabic) with examples and some explanations (1997, 83–86). To some extent, particular verbal noun patterns may be associated with particular Form I verb stem types. For a discussion of this, see Blachère and Demombynes 1975, 78–84. See also Bateson 2003, 15–21 for a general discussion of Arabic noun derivation. The most common forms of Form I verbal nouns are listed here by root type. Sometimes the meaning of the verbal noun is abstract and sometimes it has acquired a specific, concrete denotation.

Note that many verbs have more than one verbal noun. In this case, the nouns usually have different connotations. Owing to space restrictions, I have not listed all verbal noun options for Form I, only typical examples.

9.1 Form I sound root verbal nouns

The most common verbal noun patterns of Form I regular or sound verbs are:

- support fa’il da’m دَعْم
- jumping qafz قَفْز

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fa‘al</th>
<th>xaTar</th>
<th>honor</th>
<th>sharaf</th>
<th>threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fu‘l</td>
<td>bu‘d</td>
<td>life-span, age</td>
<td>‘umr</td>
<td>age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fi‘l</td>
<td>fikr</td>
<td>root</td>
<td>jidhr~jadhr</td>
<td>honor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| fi‘la ~ fu‘la ~ fa‘la |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| error, mistake | ghalTa     | expertise     | xibra  |
| wisdom      | Hikma      | license, permit | ruxSa  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fu‘uul</th>
<th>HuDuur</th>
<th>feeling</th>
<th>shu‘uur</th>
<th>feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fi‘uula</th>
<th>buTuula</th>
<th>flexibility</th>
<th>muruuna</th>
<th>flexibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fi‘aal</th>
<th>mizaaj</th>
<th>scope, sphere</th>
<th>niTaaq</th>
<th>scope, sphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fi‘aala ~ fa‘aala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>splendor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fu‘laan ~ fi‘laan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maf‘il ~ maf‘ila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2 Form I geminate root verbal nouns

Common verbal noun patterns for Form I geminate verbs include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fa‘l ~ fu‘l</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fa‘al

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Sabab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>`adad</td>
<td>`adad</td>
<td>`adad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

fa‘uula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Necessity</th>
<th>Daruura</th>
<th>ضرورة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fa‘aala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indication</th>
<th>Dalaala</th>
<th>دلالة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fi`la

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paucity</th>
<th>Qilla</th>
<th>قِلَّة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9.3 Form I Hamzated Verbal Nouns

fa`l, fu`l, fi`l

- Command: `amr  أمر  جزء
- Light; Brightness: `awr  ضوء  عباء
- Part: juz  جزء
- Burden: `ib  عباء

fu`aal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Su’aal</th>
<th>سؤال</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fi`aala, fa`aala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Qira<code>a</code>a</th>
<th>قراءة</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Badaa`a/bidaaya</th>
<th>بداية</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fu`uul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Nushuu`</th>
<th>نشوء</th>
<th>Refuge</th>
<th>Lujuu`</th>
<th>لجوء</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9.4 Form I Assimilated Root Verbal Nouns

‘ila: In this form of verbal noun, assimilated roots delete the first root semi-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Jiha</th>
<th>جِهَة</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Thiqa</th>
<th>ثِقَة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fa`l

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promise</th>
<th>Wa`d</th>
<th>وعد</th>
<th>Delegation</th>
<th>Wafd</th>
<th>وَفَد</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fu`uul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>WuSuul</th>
<th>وصول</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>WuDuuh</th>
<th>وضوح</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

fi`aala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Wikaala</th>
<th>وكالة</th>
<th>Sovereignty</th>
<th>Wilaaya</th>
<th>ولاية</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fiʿlaan
feeling; ecstasy  wijdaan  وجدان

mafaʿla
wishing, wanting  mawadda  مودة

9.5 Form I hollow root verbal nouns
Common hollow verb verbal noun patterns include:

faʿl
victory  fawz  فوز  shame  ʿayb  عيب
sleep  nawm  نوم  living; life  ʿaysh  عيش

faʿla
revolution  thawra  ثورة  return  ʿawda  عودة

fuʿl: This pattern in combination with a hollow root yields a long vowel /uu/ in the middle of the word.

length  Tuul  طول  intensity; lute  ʿuud  عود

fiʿaal and fiʿala: When hollow verbs use this pattern for the verbal noun, the medial semi-consonant often takes the form of yaaʾ even if the root consonant is waaw.13

establishing,  qiyaam  قيام  mathematics;  riyaDa  رياضه  sports
(setting up: q-w-m) (root: r-w-D)

visit  ziyaara  زيارة  increase  ziyaada  زيادة
(root: z-w-r) (root: z-y-d)

faʿlaa
chaos; disorder  fawDa  فوضى

faʿlaan
flying  Tayaraan  طيران  flooding  fayaDaan  فيضان

mafaal ~ mafiil ~ mafiila: These are miimii maSDars.

destiny  maSiir  مصير  obtaining  manaal  منال

livelihood  maʿiisha  معيشة  procession  masiira  مسيرة

13 The phonological sequence /-iw/- is usually avoided in Arabic. Therefore hypothetical forms like *
ziwaara  and  *qiwaam  shift to become ziyaara  ‘visit’ or qiyaam  ‘establishing.’
9.6 Form I defective root verbal nouns

fa’il

pardon; ‘afw عقو negation nafy نف

kindness

fa’aal ~ fi’aal; In this verbal noun pattern, the final root semi-consonant shifts to hamza.

building binaa’ بناء space faDaa’ فضاء

singing ghinaa’ غناء meeting liqaa’ لقاء

fi’aala

building binaaya بناء protection Himaaya حماية

fu’uul: This pattern is often found with final-waaw verbs. The combination of the long /uu/ vowel in this pattern with the final waaw consonant yields a doubled waaw:

height, ‘uluww علو growth numuww نمو

altitude

fa’laa: Because these nouns terminate with an added /-aa/ suffix, they are feminine in gender.

piety taqwaا تقوى complaint shakwaا شكوى

fi’laan ~ fu’laan

aggression; ‘udwaan عدوان forgetting; nisyaan نسيان

hostility

maf’an (maf’al مفعل)

meaning ma’nан معنى effort; striving mas’an مساع

9.7 Form I doubly weak or ‘mixed’ verb roots

9.7.1 Hollow and hamzated

maf’il:

coming majii مجي

9.7.2 Defective and hamzated

fa’il

opinion ra’y رأي

fu’la

seeing ru’ya رؤية
9.7.3 Hollow and defective

fiʿla and faʿl: In these verbal noun patterns, the medial waaw assimilates to the yaaʾ, yielding a double yaaʾ:

intent niyya نیَّة ironing kayy کی

When a hollow root combines with a defective root, the medial waaw is maintained in these verbal noun patterns:

fiʿaala:

narrative riwaaya رواَیَة hobby; hiwaaya هوَآیَة amateurism

faʿaal

medicine, dawaaʾ دَوَاء remedy

9.8 Form I verbal nouns in context

قبل السباحة إلى البحر نحتاج إلى مجهر لرؤيته. qabl-a l-sibaHait-i ʿilaH l-baHHi before swimming to the sea We need a microscope to see it.

ما معنى هذا؟ maʿnaa haadhaa? qiyaam-u dawlat-i l-qaanuuni establish a state of law What is the meaning of this?

10 Form I participles

10.1 Form I active participle (AP): faaʿil فاعل

APs that refer to living beings take the natural gender of the referent; APs that refer to non-living things may be either masculine or feminine. For more detail on AP morphology and syntax see Chapter 6 on participles. Examples are provided here of how the various root types fit into the pattern. The items are categorized as either noun or adjective, but many have both noun and adjective functions.

10.1.1 Strong/regular root

Nouns:

writer kaatib/ کاتب base qaaʿida/ قاعدة researcher baalHith/ باحث university jaamiʿa/ جامعة
Adjectives:

former saabiq سابِق empty faarigh فارِغ

10.1.2 Geminate root: faa'īl

In the active participle of the geminate root, the usual form of the AP is faa'īl, that is, the second and third radicals are together (written with shadda), with no vowel between them.

Noun:

commodity; material maadda/mawaadd

Adjective:

dry jaaff جافَ hot Haarr حارَ

important haamm هامَ urgent, pressing maass ماسَ

10.1.3 Hamzated root

Certain spelling rules for the hamza apply in the AP hamzated root, depending where in the word the hamza occurs.

Noun:

reader qaari'/qurraa' قارِئ / قراءَ

accident; Taari'a/Tawaari' طارِئ / طوارِئ

emergency

refugee laaji / laaji'una

Adjective:

final; last 'aaxir/aawaaaxir~'aaxir-uuna آخِير / أخِيرٍـ أخِيرٌونَ

calm, peaceful haadi هادِئ

10.1.4 Assimilated root: faa'īl

Assimilated roots are regular in Form I active participle formation.

Noun:

mother waalida/-aat واليَة / والدَة import/s waarid/-aat واردٌ / واردات

---

14 The plural mawaadd is the form that the plural pattern fawaa'īl takes in geminate nouns because of the phonological restriction on sequences that include a vowel between identical consonants.

15 From the hamzated root 'x-r; the initial hamza followed by the long jaaj of the fua'īl pattern creates j'aaj, spelled with 'alif madda.
father waalid/-uuna والد / والد/ون duty; homework waajib/-aat واجب / واجبات

Adjective:
wide, broad waasi'c واسع dry; arid yaabis يابس

10.1.5 Hollow root: faa'il
Hollow roots of Form I have hamza between the long /aa/ and the short /i/ of the AP pattern.

Noun:
visitor/s zaa'ir/zuwwaar زائر / زوار
fluid; liquid/s saa'il/sawaal'il سائل / سوائل
being/s kaa'in/-aat كائن / كائنات
circle/s; department/s daa'ira/dawaa'ir دائره / دوائر

Adjective:
visiting zaa'ir/zaa'ir-uuna زائر / زائرون dreadful haa'il هائل

10.1.6 Defective root: faa'in فاع
The defective root shows its weakness in the AP form by having its final waaw or yaa' in the form of kasrataan on the base masculine form, putting it into the defective declension. In feminine APs the weakness is regularized into an /-iya / ending.

Noun:
judge/s qaaDin/quDaah قاض / قضاء
corner/s zaawiya/zawaayaa زاوية / زوايا
club/s naadin/ andiya ~ nawaad-in ناد / أندية ~ نوار
pedestrian/s; infantry maashin/mushaat ماس / م沙ات

Adjective:
walking maashin ماس / ماس(last; past maaDin ماض / ماض
remaining baaqin باق / باق (adequate kaafin كاف / كاف

10.1.7 Examples of Form I AP in context

المشاريع الباقية في حاجة ماسة إلى المساعدة
al-mashaarii'i-cu l-baaqiyat-u fii Haajat-in maassat-in 2 ilaal l-musaa'adat-i
the remaining projects in urgent need of help
الثلاثاء الجاري
al-thulaathaa‘u l-jaarii
this (‘current’) Tuesday

قوافل Airways زمان
qawaafil-u t‘ayyam-i zamaan-in
the caravans of yesteryear

في جلسة طارئة
fit jalsat-in Taari‘at-in
at an emergency session

ظلمت في غيابية تامة
Zall-at ghaybuubat-in taammat-in.
She remained in a complete coma.

10.2 Form I passive participle (PP): maf‘uul

The maf‘uul pattern is maintained in most root types except for the hollow and defective:

10.2.1 Strong/regular root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Concept/s</th>
<th>مفهوم / مفاهيم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>concept/s</td>
<td>mafhuum/mafaahiim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Plan/s</th>
<th>مشروع / مشروعات - مشاريع</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plan/s</td>
<td>mashruu‘/aat-mashaarrii</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Prisoner/s</th>
<th>مسجون / مسجونون</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prisoner/s</td>
<td>masjuun-uuna</td>
<td>مسجون / مسجونون</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Group/s</th>
<th>مجموعة / مجموعةผล</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>group/s</td>
<td>majmuu‘/aat</td>
<td>مجموعة / مجموعة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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10.2.2 Geminate root

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10.2.3 Hamzated root

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<td>ma‘huul</td>
<td>مأهول</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.2.4 Assimilated root

Noun:
- topic, mawDuu
- subject

Adjective:
- present; mawjuud
- inherited mawruuth

10.2.5 Hollow root
In the hollow root, the maf‘uul pattern becomes mafuul for roots whose middle radical is waaw, and mafiiil for roots whose middle radical is yaa:
- blamed maluum (l-w-m) ملوم
- sold mabii (b-y-‘) مبيع

10.2.6 Defective root
In the defective root, the maf‘uul PP pattern becomes mafuww for roots whose final radical is waaw and maf‘iyy for roots whose final radical is yaa:

Adjective:
- invited maduww (d-‘-w) مدعو
- stuffed maHshuww محسو محشو
- forgotten mansiyy (n-s-y) منسي منسي
- spoken maHkiyy (H-k-y) محكي محكي

10.2.7 Examples of Form I PP’s in context

| طالواة محجوزة | من مصادر موثوق بها |
| Taawilat-un maHjuuzat-un | min maSaadir-a mawthuuq-in bi-haa | a reserved table | from trusted sources |

| تمور مكبوسة | خطها مفروء |
| tumuur-un makbuusat-un | xaTT-u-haa maaqruu‘-un. | pressed dates | Her handwriting is legible. |

| محشو بالقش | العربية المحكية |
| maHshuww-un bi-l-qashsh-i | al-‘arabiyyat-u l-maHkiyyat-u | stuffed with straw | spoken Arabic |

36 In spoken Arabic this PP is often converted to maHshiyy, used especially when referring to stuffed meat or other food items.
### Form I Sound root: 

**AP:** فعل، يفعل، يفعل **PP:** مفعول **VN:** فعل، لَجِنْبٌ **عَمَّال**

**Meaning:** 'to do; to make'

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| | أنا | أفعل | فعلت | أفعلت | أفعلت | أفعلت | أفعلت |
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| | أنتَ | تفعلين | تفعلنا | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما |
| | أنتَ | يفعل | فعل | فعلنا | فعلتما | فعلتما | فعلتما |
| | أنتمَا | معنا | فعلنا | فعلتما | فعلتما | فعلتما | فعلتما |
| | هما | يفعلان | فعلنا | فعلتما | فعلتما | فعلتما | فعلتما |
| | هما | تفعلنا | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما |
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| | أنتمُ | تفعلوا | فعلتما | تفعلتم | تفعلتما | تفعلتما | تفعلتما |
| | هم | يفعلوا | فعلوا | تفعلوا | فعلتما | فعلتما |فعلتما |
| | هن | يفعلن | فعلن | تفعلون | تفعلتما |فعلتما |فعلتما |
### Form I Geminate root: دَالَّةُ ‘to indicate’

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</table>

- AP: مَدَلَّلَةُ你َدَلَّ ‘You indicate’
- PP: مَدَلَّلَةُ ‘to indicate’
- VN: دَالَّةُ ‘to indicate’

Form I Geminate root: دَالَّةُ ‘to indicate’
Form I: The base form triliteral verb

### Form I hamza-initial root: أَكَلَّ, يَأَكَلُ

**AP:** أَكَلَّ, مَأَكُولٌ

**PP:** أَكَلَّ

**VN:** ‘to eat’

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### AP: أَكَلَّ, مَأَكُولٌ

**PP:** أَكَلَّ

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### PP: أَكَلَّ

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### VN: ‘to eat’

Form I: The base form triliteral verb 477
### A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic

**Form I** hamza-medial root: سأَلْ، يَسأَلُ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AP: سؤال</th>
<th>PP: مَسْأَؤُول</th>
<th>VN: ‘to ask’</th>
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Form I: The base form triliteral verb

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Form I hamza-final root: ِقَرَا، يُقْرِأُ 'to read'
**A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic**

**Form I Assimilated root:** وضع، يضع، وضع

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**AP:** تضع

**PP:** تضع

**VN:** توضع

‘to put, to place’
### Form I: The base form triliteral verb

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### Form I Hollow, Medial waaw root: مَزَور ‘to visit’

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\*‘to visit’\*
### Form I Hollow Medial yaa’ root: بَيِّعُ ‘to sell’

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**AP:** بائعٌ | **PP:** بائعٌ | **VN:** بيعَ | *‘to sell’*
Form I: The base form triliteral verb

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أَخَافُ، حَفَّتُ، مَخَافَ دَيْرُ، يَخَافُ، مَخَافَنَ، نُخَافُنَ

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Form I Hollow, Medial 'alif root: خَافَ، مَخَافَنَ ‘to fear’

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أَخَافُ، حَفَّتُ، مَخَافَ دَيْرُ، يَخَافُ، مَخَافَنَ

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√
alif root: أَخَافُ، حَفَّتُ، مَخَافَ دَيْرُ، يَخَافُ، مَخَافَنَ

AP: ∞ُفَّنَ | PP: أَخَافُ، حَفَّتُ، مَخَافَ دَيْرُ، يَخَافُ، مَخَافَنَ
VN: مَخَافَنَ ‘to fear’
Form I Defective root (waaw): دعا، يدعو 'to call, invite'

### AP: داع

### PP: مدعو

### VN: دعوة / دعاء

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Form I Defective root (waaw): دع، دع ‘to call, invite’
### Form I Defective root (-aa/-ii):

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### Notes:
- **Form I** is the base form triliteral verb.
- **Active** and **Passive** forms are differentiated.
- **Perfect** and **Imperfect** tenses are shown.
- **Indicative**, **Subjunctive**, **Jussive**, and **Imperative** moods are provided.
- Root forms are given for m/f genders.

---

**AP:** بَنَىَ - بنى
**PP:** مَبَنِيَ - بني
**VN:** ‘to build’

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### Form I Defective (iy/-aa)

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**AP:** نسيَ، نسيَ

**PP:** منسيَ

**VN:** نسيَان

‘to forget’
### Form I: The base form triliteral verb

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**Form I Hollow and hamzated root:**

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This verb has a replacive form for the imperative.
Form I Doubly weak root: رَأَيْ , يَرِى 

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Form I Doubly weak root:

- m/f: رَأَيْتُما, يَرِىَتُما
- m: يَرِىَتُم
- f: يَرِىَتُن

AP: راء 
PP: رَأَيْ 
VN: رَأَيْ  ‘to see’
Form I Doubly weak: ‘to perceive’

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Form I Hollow, defective root: ِنَوُيَةَ، ينويَةَ  

AP: ناوِ  

PP: مَنوِيَةَ  

VN: ‘to intend’
Form II

1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: fa'al- / yu-fa'il-

Form II verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that the medial consonant is doubled. They have the stem patterns C1aC2aC3 in the past tense and yu-C1aC2iC3- in the present. The medial root consonant retains its doubled status throughout the past and present tense conjugations.

1.2 Meaning

Form II verbs are often causative of transitive Form I verbs, or, if Form I is intransitive, Form II may have transitive meaning. Another shade of meaning that is said to be conveyed by Form II is intensive or repeated action (kassara 'to smash, to shatter'). Form II may also be denominative, used to form verbs out of nouns (e.g., Sawwar-a ‘to photograph’ from Suura, ‘picture’).

1.3 Transitivity

Form II is normally transitive but may sometimes be intransitive. It may also be doubly transitive, taking two direct objects (e.g., darras-a ‘to teach (s.o. s.th.’)).

1.4 Inflection

A particular inflectional characteristic of Form II verbs is that the present tense subject-marker vowel is Damma and the present tense stem vowel is kasra (yu-darras-u).

---

1 In Arabic, the verb is usually considered the most elemental form of a lexical entry, but in a few instances, the verb is derived from a noun. These “denominal” verbs tend to exist in Forms II and V and rarely in other forms. They can be triliteral or quadriliteral. Denominal verbs rarely have a Form I. Some examples of Form II denominal verbs include:

- to unite: waHHad- / yu-waHHid-u (وَاحِدَ / يَوْحَدَ) (from ‘one’ waalHid)
- to head: ra’as- / yu-ra’as-u (رَأْسَ / يَرَئِسُ) (from ‘head’ ra’s)
- to name: sammaa- / yu-sammii- (سَمَّى / يَسْمَيْ) (from ‘name’ ism)

2 Kouloughli 1994, 201 states that Form II is transitive 95 percent of the time. Likewise he states that Form II is “l’une des plus vivaces de l’arabe moderne” (ibid.).
Paradigm charts for Form II verbs of various root types are located at the end of this chapter.

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root

These are examples of verbs that have sound triliteral roots:

- **to prefer**  
  \( \text{faDDal-a/yu-faDDil-u} \)  
  فضَلُ / يفضَلُ

- **to arrange**  
  \( \text{rattab-a/yu-rattib-u} \)  
  رَتَبُ / يَرَتَبُ

- **to clean**  
  \( \text{naZZaf-a/yu-naZZif-u} \)  
  نَظَفُ / يَنظَفُ

- **to appreciate**  
  \( \text{qaddar-a/yu-qaddir-u} \)  
  قَدَرُ / يَقِدَرُ

3 Geminate (doubled) root Form II

Geminate roots in Form II have the following stem patterns: \( C_1aC_2C_2aC_2 \) in the past tense and \( yuC_1aC_2C_2iC_2 \) in the present. The doubling of the medial consonant changes the geminate root in Form II so that it inflects as a regular Form II, that is, there is no stem shift as there is in Form I geminates. For example:

- **to cause**  
  \( \text{sabbab-a/yu-sabbib-u} \)  
  سَبِبُ / يسَبِبُ

- **to decide, determine**  
  \( \text{qarrar-a/yu-qarrir-u} \)  
  قَرَرُ / يقَرِرُ

- **to criticize**  
  \( \text{naddad-a/yu-naddid-u} \)  
  نَدَدُ / ينَدَدُ

- **to analyze**  
  \( \text{Hallal-a/yu-Hallil-u} \)  
  حَلَلُ / يَحَلِّلُ

4 Hamzated roots in Form II

A hamza may occur in the first, second, or third position in the triliteral root. Depending on its position, and the surrounding vowels, the hamza may have to change its “seat” when the verb inflects for person and tense in Form II.

4.1 Initial hamza

Hamza-initial verbs in Form II have ʼalif as the hamza seat in the past tense, and waaw as the hamza seat in the present tense. The hamza seat is determined by its position in the word, according to the orthographical rules for hamza described in Chapter 2, section 3.3. In Form II verbs, initial hamza shifts from word-initial position in the past tense stem to word-medial position in the present tense stem and is influenced by the Damma of the present tense subject-marking prefix so that its seat shifts from ʼalif to waaw.

- **to delay**  
  \( \text{ajjal-a/yu-`ajjil-u} \)  
  أَجَلَ / يَوَجَلُ

- **to establish, found**  
  \( \text{assas-a/yu-`assis-u} \)  
  أَسَسَ / يَوْسِسُ

- **to affirm**  
  \( \text{akkad-a/yu-`akkid-u} \)  
  أَكَدَ / يَوْكَدُ

- **to affect**  
  \( \text{aththar-a/yu-`aththir-u} \)  
  أَثْثَرَ / يَوْثَرُ
4.2 Medial hamza
The seat for medial hamza shifts from ʼalif in the past tense to yaa’ in the present tense (because of the shift of stem vowel from fatHa to kasra).

to appoint as head  ra’as-a/ yu-ra’as-u  رأس / يرأس

4.3 Final hamza
The seat for final hamza in Form II, as in other forms, shifts according to the rules for word-final hamza; note that certain inflectional suffixes extend the word length, and therefore the seat for hamza is affected (e.g., hanna’-uu-haa هنّوها ‘they congratulated her’).

to free  barra’-a/ yu-barri’-u  برأ / يبرئ

to congratulate  hanna’-a/ yu-hanni’-u  هنّ / يهني

to hide  xabba’-a/ yu-xabbi’-u  خبأ / يخبئ

to heat, warm  daffa’-a/ yu-daffi’-u  دفا / يدفئ

5 Assimilated roots in Form II
Assimilated roots, where the first radical is either waaw or yaa’, are inflected as sound roots in Form II; the waaw or yaa’ remains stable in both tenses.

to sign, endorse  waqqae-ayu-waqqi’-u  وقع / يوقع

to stop, halt  waqqaf-a/ yu-waqqif-u  وقف / يوقف

6 Hollow roots in Form II
Hollow roots behave as sound roots in Form II, the waaw or yaa’ that is the second radical functions as a stable consonant.

to create  kawwan-alyu-kawwin-u  كوان / يكون

to change  ghayyar-alyu-ghayyir-u  غير / يغير

to photograph  Sawwar-alyu-Sawwir-u  صور / يصور

to appoint  ‘ayyan-alyu-‘ayyin-u  عين / يعين

7 Defective roots in Form II
Defective roots, where the final radical is either waaw or yaa’, behave as -aa/-ii verbs in Form II. They depend on the stem vowel for the nature of the final radical, and the stem vowel is consistently /a/ in the past tense and /i/ in the present tense.
to cover  
ghaTTaa/yu-ghaTTii  غطَّي / يغطّي

to pray  
Sallaa/yu-Sallii  صلى / يصلي

to sing  
ghannaa/yu-ghannii  غنَى / يغني

to sacrifice  
DaHHaa/yu-DaHHii  ضحَى / يضحي

8 Doubly weak roots in Form II

These roots have two forms of weakness which may occur at any point in the root.

8.1 Hamzated and defective

to carry out; to perform (s.th.)  ّaddaalyu-ّaddii  أدَّى / يَؤُدَّي

8.2 Hamzated and hollow

to help, aid (s.o. or s.th.)  ّayyadalyu-ّayyid-u  أيدَ / يُؤيدُ

8.3 Hollow and defective

to greet; keep alive; grant long life  Hayyaalyu-Hayyi  حيَّى / يحيّي

9 Examples of Form II verbs in context

الله يسلمُك.
allaah-u yu-sallim-u-ka.
(May) God keep you safe.

yu-hanni’a-l-ra’is-a l-jadiid-a.
He congratulates the new president.

nu-raHHib-u bi-kum.  DaHHay-tum kathiir-an.
You (pl.) have sacrificed much.

أصدر بياناً نَدَّت فيه بستمرار الاحتلال.
’aSdar-a bayaan-an naddad-a fii-hi bi-stimraar-i l-iHtilaal-i.
He issued a statement in which he criticized the continuation of occupation.

10 Form II verbal nouns

Verbal nouns from Form II most often have the form taf‘il تفعيل; occasionally taf‘ila تفعيلة. Variations on Form II verbal nouns also include taf‘aal تفعال and tif‘aal تفعَال and taf‘ila تفعيلة.

3 For an extensive list of Form II verbal noun variants in Classical Arabic see Wright 1967, I:115–16.
### 10.1 Sound/regular root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arrangement</td>
<td>ترتيب</td>
<td>statue</td>
<td>تتمثال</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reminder; souvenir</td>
<td>تذكار</td>
<td>experiment</td>
<td>تجربة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.2 Geminate root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>repetition</td>
<td>تكرار</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>renewal</td>
<td>تجدید</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.3 Hamzated root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>founding</td>
<td>تأسيس</td>
<td>visa</td>
<td>تأشيرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>congratulating</td>
<td>تهنئة</td>
<td>heating</td>
<td>تدفئة</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 10.4 Assimilated root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unification</td>
<td>توحید</td>
<td>clarification</td>
<td>توضیح</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.5 Hollow root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>creation</td>
<td>تكوین</td>
<td>appointing</td>
<td>تعیین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographing</td>
<td>تصویر</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>تغییر</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.6 Defective root

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>naming</td>
<td>تسمیة</td>
<td>covering</td>
<td>تغطیة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.7 Doubly weak

Here are a few examples of doubly weak Form II verbal nouns.

#### 10.7.1 Hamzated and defective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>carrying out; performing</td>
<td>تادیة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 10.7.2 Hamzated and hollow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assistance</td>
<td>تأیید</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 10.7.3 Hollow and defective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>greeting, salutation</td>
<td>تحیة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10.8 Borrowing from Form I

Occasionally a Form II verb uses a verbal noun derived from Form I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singing</td>
<td>غناء</td>
<td>praying, prayer</td>
<td>صلاة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ghinaa'</td>
<td>Salaat</td>
<td>Salat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(For the sake of completeness, the Arabic equivalents are also included, but their translation is not necessary for understanding the English content.)
10.9 Examples of Form II verbal nouns in context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>تدفئة مركزية</td>
<td>central heating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta’dfi‘at-un markaziyyat-un</td>
<td>self-determination (‘deciding its future’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تعيين اللواء مديرًا للدائرة</td>
<td>appointing the general as director of the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta‘yiin-u l-liwaa‘-i mudiir-an li-l-daa’irat-i</td>
<td>political changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Form II participles

Form II participles occur as nouns and as adjectives. Examples are provided wherever possible.

11.1 Form II active participle (AP): *mufa‘il* مفعون

11.1.1 Sound/regular root

- coordinator; munassiq منسق smuggler muharrib مهرب
- inspector mufattish مفتتش drug/s muxaddir/-aat مخدرات

11.1.2 Geminate root

- editor muHarrir محرر analyst muHallil محلل

11.1.3 Hamzated root

- muezzin mu‘adhdhin مؤذن congratulating muhanni مهنئ

11.1.4 Assimilated root

- connecting muwaSSil موصل

11.1.5 Hollow root

- distinctive mumayyz مميز creator; mukawwin مكون component

11.1.6 Defective root

The active participle of defective roots is inflected as a defective noun or adjective (declension six) and ends with the defective marker of kasratayn:

- praying4 muSall-in مصل singer/singing mughann-in مغن

4 Also, ‘person in prayer.’
11.1.7 Examples of Form II active participles in context

فِي عُمُرِ مِيْكَرَ
fi‘ umr-in mubakkir-in
at an early age

منَسِّقَ نشاطات الأمم المتّحدة
munassiq-u nashaTaat-i l-’umam-i
the coordinator of UN activities

مَهَرِيَّة المخدرات
muharrib-u l-mukhaddir-aat
(smugglers of drugs)

drug smugglers

مَحلِّل الشؤون السياسيّة العسكريّة
muHallil-u l-shu’uun-i l-siyaasiyyat-i
l-‘askariyyat-i
political-military affairs analyst

مَنظَمَة الأقطار العربية المصدرة للنفط
munaZZamat-u l-‘aqTaari-i l-arabiyyat-i l-muSaddirat-i li-l-nafTi
the organization of Arab oil-exporting countries

11.2 Form II passive participle (PP): mufa‘al مُفعَّل

11.2.1 Sound/regular root

volume; tome mujallad مَجلِّد complicated mu’aqqad مُعَّقِد

triangle muthallath مُثل cubic; cubed muka‘ab مُكَب

square murabba مَرْبَع armed musallaH مَسلَح

12.2 Assimilated root

employee muwaZZaf موظفِ مُوقَف successful; lucky muwaffaq مُوفق

12.3 Geminate root

shattered mufakkak مَفَكَّك set, delineated muHaddad مُحدّد

12.4 Hamzated root

nationalized mu’ammam مُؤْمَم foundation mu’assassa مؤَسَّسة

12.5 Hollow root

illustrated muSawwar مُصوَّر appointed, mu’ayyan مُعيّن

12.6 Defective root

The passive participle of defective roots ends with ْalif maqSuura and is inflected as an indeclinable noun or adjective (declension seven).

educated, raised; murabban مَرَبَّنَت covered mughatta مَغْطَى

preserves, jam
### 11.2.7 Examples of Form II passive participles in context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Clauses</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mu'jam-un mufaSSal-un</td>
<td>a detailed lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-quwwaat-u l-musallaHat-u</td>
<td>the armed forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fii maw'id-in muHaddad-in</td>
<td>at a set time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maSaaliH-u mu'ammat-un</td>
<td>nationalized interests/assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qamus-un muSawwar-un</td>
<td>an illustrated dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-safiir-u l-mu‘ayyan-u</td>
<td>the ambassador-designate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Form II Sound root:** ṭarb, ṭarib

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Sound root</th>
<th>Indicative</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Jussive</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭarib</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Ana</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**AP:** ṭariba, ṭarib, ṭarib

**PP:** ṭariba, ṭarib, ṭarib

**VN:** ṭariba, ṭarib, ṭarib

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*Note: The table above shows the conjugation of the verb ṭarb*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
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<td>Imperfect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>Jussive</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Form II Geminate root: Quôn≤oJ, nQsônb

AP: Quôn≤oe
PP: Qsôn≤oe
VN: QGônb, ôjôr≤J
'to decide'
Form II hamza-initial root: ṁoḡ ‘to delay’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Passive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>Jussive</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
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### Form II hamza-final root: منى، يمنى

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
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<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Active</th>
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<tr>
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<th>Subjunctive</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أنا</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>أنتَ</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>f</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>يَهَنَى</td>
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<tr>
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<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>يَهَنَى</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| هُنَى | يَهَنَى | يَهَنَى |

| هُنَى | يَهَنَى | يَهَنَى |

### AP: Åuæn¡oe | PP: CÉsæn¡oe | VN: ‘to congratulate’

#### Final root: oÅuæn¡oj , nCÉqæng

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hamza</th>
<th>aktiv</th>
<th>passiv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نَهَى</td>
<td>نَهَى</td>
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Form II Defective root: غطى، يُغَطَّي ‘to cover’
1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: faa‘al-a  / yu-faa‘il-u
Form III is augmented from Form I by insertion of the long vowel /aa/ after the first radical of the root. It has the basic stem patterns C₁aaC₂aC₃- in the past tense and -C₁aaC₂iC₃- in the present tense, maintaining the long vowel in both tenses.

1.2 Meaning
In terms of meaning, Form III often has the meaning of involving another person in the action. For this reason it is termed “associative.” Related semantic modifications conveyed by this inflectional class include reciprocal action, repeated action, and attempted action.¹

1.3 Transitivity
Form III verbs are usually transitive, but may occasionally be intransitive.

1.4 Inflection
A distinctive inflectional characteristic of Form III verbs is that the present tense subject-marker vowel is Damma and the present tense stem vowel is kasra (yu-saa‘id-u).

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root
These verbs are examples of Form III sound triliteral roots:

- to experience: maaras-a/yu-maarís-u مارس / يمارس
- to defend: daafa‘-a/yu-daaffi‘-u دافع / يدافع
- to assist, help: saa‘ad-a/yu-saa‘id-u ساعد / يساعد
- to observe: raaqab-a/yu-raaqib-u راقب / يراقب

¹ For an extensive analysis of Form III and its semantic implications, see Fleisch 1979, II:288–301.
2.1 Associative meaning
Arabic Form III associative verbal concepts are often directly transitive whereas English would need to use the word “with” to indicate reciprocality or associativeness:

- to correspond with (s.o.) raasal-a/ru-raasil-u
- to share with (s.o.) shaarak-a/ru-shaarik-u
- to deal with (s.o., s.th.) ‘aalaj-a/ru-‘aalij-u
- to compete with (s.o.) saabaq-a/ru-saabiq-u

3 Geminate (doubled) root Form III
It is rare to find geminate roots in Form III. The ones that do exist have two variant patterns: one where the identical consonants are written together with a shadda and one where they are written separately, with an intervening fatHa. The following stem patterns occur: C1aaC2C2-a (faa‘-a-) and C1aaC2aC2-a (faa‘a‘a-) in the past tense, and yu-C1aaC2C2 - (yu-faa‘-a-) or yu-C1aaC2iC2 - (yu-faa‘i‘-i-) in the present.²

- to punish qaaSaS-a/ru-qaaSiS-u

4 Hamzated roots in Form III
The hamza may occur in the first, second, or third position in the triliteral root. Depending on its position, and the surrounding vowels, the hamza may have to change its seat when the verb inflects for person and tense.

4.1 Initial hamza
In Form III, initial hamza merges with the long vowel -aa of the first syllable in the past tense and it written as one ‘alif with madda. In the present tense, initial hamza sits on a waaw seat because it is preceded by the Damma of the person-marking prefix:

- to censure, to blame ‘aaxadh-a/ru-‘aaxidh-u
- to consult ‘aamrar-a/ru-‘aamir-u

4.2 Medial hamza
The medial hamza sits aloof in the past tense of Form III.³ In the present tense it sits on a yaa‘ seat because it is followed by a kasra.

² See Wright 1967, I:71 for further discussion of this variation.
³ This is because it is situated after a long vowel /aa/ and before a short vowel /a/. It would have an ‘alif seat, but the general rule is that two ‘alifs cannot follow each other in Arabic script, so the hamza here floats aloof.
to match; to be suitable for \( \text{lā‘am-} / \text{لاأم} \)  
\( \text{yu-lā‘im-u} / \text{يلاام ت} \)

to question, interrogate \( \text{saa‘al-} / \text{سأأل T} \)  
\( \text{yu-saa‘il-u} / \text{ييسأل ت} \)

4.3 Final hamza

Final hamza sits on an ‘ālif seat in the past tense and on a yaa’ seat in the present tense, but because it is the final consonant in the stem, the seat of the hamza may shift with inflectional suffixes.

- to surprise \( \text{faaja‘-} / \text{فااج T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-faaji-u} / \text{ييااج T} \)
- to reward; to be commensurate with \( \text{kaafa‘-} / \text{كاف ت} \)  
  \( \text{yu-kaafi-u} / \text{يكافي T} \)

5 Assimilated roots in Form III

Assimilated roots, where the first radical is either waaw or yaa’, are inflected as sound roots in Form III; the waaw or yaa’ is stable.

- to agree with \( \text{waafaq-} / \text{يوافق T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-waafiq-u} / \text{يوافيق T} \)
- to face, confront \( \text{waajah-} / \text{ياجه T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-waajih-u} / \text{يياجي T} \)

6 Hollow roots in Form III

Hollow roots behave as strong roots in Form III, the waaw or yaa’ that is the second radical functions as a consonant.

- to answer \( \text{jaawab-} / \text{ياوب T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-jaawib-u} / \text{يياوب T} \)
- to try, attempt \( \text{Haawal-} / \text{يحاول T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-Haawil-u} / \text{ييحاول T} \)
- to consult with \( \text{shaawar-} / \text{يشاور T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-shaawir-u} / \text{يياشور T} \)
- to be gentle with \( \text{laayan-} / \text{يلاين T} \)  
  \( \text{yu-laayin-u} / \text{ييلاين T} \)

7 Defective roots in Form III

Defective roots, where the final radical is either waaw or yaa’, behave as -aa/-ii verbs in Form III. They depend on the stem vowel for the nature of the final radical, and the stem vowel is consistently /a/ in the past tense and /i/ in the present tense.

- to call; summon; invite \( \text{naadaa} / \text{يندادي} \)  
  \( \text{yu-naadii} / \text{ييندادي} \)
- to compete (with) \( \text{baaraa} / \text{يباري} \)  
  \( \text{yu-baarii} / \text{ييباري} \)
- to endure, to suffer (s.th.) \( \text{‘aanaa} / \text{يعانى} \)  
  \( \text{yu-‘aanii} / \text{ييعانى} \)
8 Doubly weak roots in Form III
Hollow and defective:

to be equivalent to; \textit{saawaa/yu-saawii}

to equalize

9 Examples of Form III verbs in context

\textit{tu-HaaDir-u} \text{fii jaami‘aat-in muxtalifat-in.} \textit{sa-yu-saafir-u} \text{ghad-an.}

She lectures at different universities. He will travel tomorrow.

\textit{fii kutub-i-hi \textit{yu-‘aalij-u} \textit{l’-awDaa‘-a l-siyaasiyyat-a fii l-sharq-i l-‘awsaT-i.}

In his books he deals with political conditions in the Middle East.

\textit{sa-yu-qaaSiS-uuna-hu.} \textit{yu-‘aanii} \text{min-a l-tamazzuq-i.}

They will punish him. It suffers from fragmentation.

10 Form III verbal noun
The verbal noun of Form III verbs takes two basic forms: \textit{mufaa‘ala} and \textit{fi‘aal}. Usually, one of these verbal nouns is used for a particular Form III verb, but occasionally, a verb may use both of these Form III verbal nouns, with either equivalent or slightly different meanings. For example:

**Form: Form III Haawar-a ‘talk, debate, argue’**

\begin{tabular}{llll}
argument, & \textit{muHaawara} & \textit{muhawar} & \textit{Hiwaar} \text{حوار} \\
debate & & & \\
dispute & & & \\
\end{tabular}

**Form: Form III kaafaH-a ‘to combat, fight, struggle’**

\begin{tabular}{llll}
confrontation, & \textit{mukaafaHa} & \textit{muhafah} & \textit{kifaaH} \text{كِفاح} \\
battle & & & \text{strife} \\
\end{tabular}

For the most part, however, one of these two verbal nouns suffices for a Form III verb. Both of these verbal noun patterns take the sound feminine plural.

10.1 Sound/regular root

\textit{mufaa‘ala} \text{مُفاعلة}

\begin{tabular}{llllll}
lecture & \textit{muHaaDara} & \textit{muhaasar} & debate & \textit{munaaqasha} & \textit{munaqas} \text{مناقشة} \\
boycott & \textit{muqaaTa} & \textit{muqaat} & initiative & \textit{mubaadara} & \textit{mubardo} \text{مبادرة} \\
review & \textit{muraaja} & \textit{muraqa} & conversation & \textit{mukaalama} & \textit{mukala} \text{مَكالَة} \\
\end{tabular}
**fi‘aal فعال**

- struggle \( \text{niDaal} \)
- combat \( \text{kifaaH} \)
- struggle \( jihaat \)
- defense \( \text{difaa} \)

**10.2 Hamzated root**

**10.2.1 Hamza initial**
The hamza sits on a waaw seat.

- censure, mu‘aaxadha مواقعة
- blame
- consultation; mu‘amara مءامرة
- plotting

**10.2.2 Hamza medial**
In these verbal nouns, the hamza “floats” aloof by itself and has no chair.

- suitability; appropriateness mulaa’ama ملاءمة
- questioning, interrogation musaa’ala مسألة

**10.2.3 Hamza final**
In these verbal nouns, hamza sits on \(^{2}\text{alif}.\)

- surprise mufaaja‘a مُفاجأة
- reward mukaafa‘a مكافأة

**10.3 Assimilated root**
The assimilated root behaves as a sound root in the Form III verbal noun.

- agreement muwaafaqa مُوفقة
- balance muwaazana موارنة

**10.4 Hollow root**
The hollow root behaves as a sound root in the Form III verbal noun.

- attempt muHaawala محاولّة
- negotiation mufaawaDa مفاوضة
- vicinity jiwaar حوار
- dialogue; Hiwaar حوار
- conversation

**10.5 Defective root**
In verbal nouns of defective Form III verbs, the second radical is followed by an \(^{2}\text{alif} \) and \( \text{taa}^{*} \) marbuuTa.

- legal defense muHaamaat محاامة
- equality musaawaat مساواة
- suffering, mu‘aanaat معاناة
- enduring
- suffering, competition, mubaaraat مبارة
10.6 Examples of Form III verbal nouns in context

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| wizaarat-u l-difaa^{c}-i | laa mu`aaxadhat-a!
| ministry of defense     | No offense [intended]! |

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<tr>
<th>صراع الحضارات</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ba<code>d-a muHaawalaat-in </code>iddat-in faashilat-in</td>
<td>Sira`a^{c}-u l-HaDaaraat-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after several failed attempts</td>
<td>culture wars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<code>the struggle of cultures</code>)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

11 Form III participles

Form III participles occur as nouns and as adjectives. In some cases they occur in both functions.

11.1 Form III active participle (AP): *mufa`i with مفاعل

11.1.1 Sound/regular root

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<tr>
<th>lecturer</th>
<th>mulaHadir</th>
<th>مواضير</th>
<th>similar</th>
<th>mumaathil</th>
<th>مماثيل</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>musaanid</td>
<td>مساعد</td>
<td>contemporary</td>
<td>mu`aaSir</td>
<td>معاصر</td>
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<tr>
<td>farmer</td>
<td>muzaari`e</td>
<td>مزارع</td>
<td>adjacent</td>
<td>mutaaxim</td>
<td>متاحم</td>
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<tr>
<td>observer</td>
<td>muraaqib</td>
<td>مراقب</td>
<td>appropriate</td>
<td>munaasib</td>
<td>مناصب</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11.1.2 Hamzated root

The final root *hamza sits on a yaa" because it is preceded by kasra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>surprising</th>
<th>mufaaqi`a</th>
<th>مفاجئ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11.1.3 Assimilated root

Assimilated roots behave as sound roots in the Form III AP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>citizen</th>
<th>muwaatIn</th>
<th>مواطن</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11.1.4 Hollow root
Hollow roots also behave as sound roots in the Form III AP.

- on duty: munaawib
- neutral: muHaayid
- neighboring, adjacent: mujaawir

11.1.5 Defective root
The Form III defective root AP falls into declension six, the defective declension, where the indefinite form of the noun shows the final root consonant as two kasra in the nominative and genitive cases. See Chapter 7, section 5.4.3.

- lawyer: muHaamin

11.1.6 Examples of Form III APs in context

الفنون المعاصرة  
al-funun-u l-mu‘aaSirat-u  
contemporary arts  
al-duwal-u l-mu‘aaridat-u  
the opposing states

الضابط المناوِب  
al-DaabiT-u l-munaawib-u  
the officer on duty  
dawlat-un muHaayidat-un  
a neutral country

على المقعد المجاور  
‘alaa l-maq‘ad-i l-mujaawir-i.  
on the adjacent seat  
muHaam-uuna ’amrikiyy-uuna  
American lawyers

11.2 Form III passive participle (PP): mufaa‘al
This particular type of passive participle is infrequent, but does exist:

- blessed: mubaarak

شهر رمضان المبارك  
shahr-u ramaDaan-a l-mubaarak-u  
the blessed month of Ramadan
Form III Sound root: ساعد

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<tr>
<td>Jussive</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AP: مساعد</th>
<th>PP: مساعد</th>
<th>VN: مُساعدة</th>
<th>‘to help’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>مساعد</td>
<td>مساعد</td>
<td>مُساعدة</td>
<td>‘to help’</td>
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<td>مساعد</td>
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<td>مُساعدة</td>
<td>‘to help’</td>
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<td>‘to help’</td>
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Form III hamza-final root: فاجأ، يفاجئ AP: فاجأ PP: فاجأ VN: ‘to surprise’

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Form III Assimilated root: 

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AP: 
PP: 
VN: ‘to face, confront’
Form III triliteral verb

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Form III Hollow root: حاولُ، يحاولُ. AP: حاولَ, يحاولَ. PP: حاولةً. VN: ‘to try’
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Form III Defective root: ًنادِي | ًنادِي, يُنادِي

AP: ًنادِي
PP: ًنادِي
VN: ًنادِي
‘to call’
Form IV triliteral verb

1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: `af'al-a / yu-f'il-u

Form IV is augmented from Form I by the prefixing of hamza plus fatHa on the past tense stem. It has the stem pattern `aC1C2aC3 in the past tense and the stem pattern yu-C1aC2iC3 in the present tense.

1.2 Meaning

Form IV verbs are often causative of Form I. If the Form I verb is intransitive, Form IV is transitive; if the Form I verb is transitive, Form IV may be doubly transitive, taking two objects. Form IV verbs may have meanings similar to Form II verbs. For example, xabbar-a and `axbar-a, both mean 'to inform'; waqqaf-a and `awqaf-a both mean 'to halt, to stop.' Sometimes the meanings of Form II and Form IV verbs are close but not exactly the same. For example, `'allam-a means 'to teach' whereas `a`lam-a means 'to inform.'

1.3 Transitivity

Form IV verbs are usually transitive and sometimes doubly transitive. Intransitive Form IV is rare.

A doubly transitive Form IV verb may take two objects. It often has the option of marking the indirect object (or beneficiary) with a dative-marking preposition such as li.

سِبْعَطُيَّهَا التذكرة
sa-yu-'Tii-haa l-tadhkarat-a.

He will give her the ticket.

1 Sterling 1904, 51–53 lists four other less common semantic modifications of Form IV: "finding [estimative]," "change," "motion to," and "to be in season," with examples from Classical Arabic.

2 Wright 1967, I:34–36 gives also a denominative meaning for Form IV.

3 Kouloughli 1994, 203 estimates 80 percent of Form IV verbs are transitive.

4 One example is: "to grow dark" `aZlam-a/yu-Zlim-u.

أَظَلْمُ / يُظَلَّمُ
1.4 Inflection
Inflectional characteristics of Form IV verbs include:

(1) the present tense subject-marker vowel is Damma and the present tense stem vowel is kasra (’akmal-a/yu-kmil-u).
(2) the prefixed hamza plus fatHa in the past tense disappears in the present tense, replaced by the subject markers.\(^5\)
(3) the prefixed hamza in the past tense is stable (hamzat al-qaT’) and is not deleted when pronounced after a vowel.

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root: \(\text{‘}a\text{f’al-}\ a/\ yu-\text{f’il-}\ u\) \(\text{يَفْعَلُ}\)
These verbs are examples of Form IV sound triliteral roots:

- to include, insert: \(\text{‘}adraj-a/\ yu-drij-u\)
- to disturb, bother: \(\text{‘}az’aj-a/\ yu-z’ij-u\)
- to announce: \(\text{‘}a’lan-a/\ yu-lin-u\)
- to supervise: \(\text{‘}ashraf-a/\ yu-shrif-u\)
- to send: \(\text{‘}arsal-a/\ yu-sil-u\)
- to please: \(\text{‘}ajab-a/\ yu-‘jib-u\)

3 Geminate (doubled) root Form IV: \(\text{‘}a\text{fa’e-}\ a/\ yu-\text{f’i-}\ i\) \(\text{يَفْعَلُ}\)
The geminate root in Form IV behaves very much as Form I geminates. The geminate or doubled consonant is doubled and written with shadda when followed by a vowel suffix and it separates into two separate consonants when followed by a suffix that begins with a consonant.

- to feel, perceive, sense: \(\text{‘}aHass-a/\ yu-Hiss-u\)
- to like, to love: \(\text{‘}aHabb-a/\ yu-Hibb-u\)
- to persist in, insist on: \(\text{‘}aSarr-a/\ yu-Sirr-u\ ‘alaa\)
- to prepare: \(\text{‘}a’add-a/\ yu-‘idd-u\)

\(^5\) This has the effect of making unvoweled Form IV verbs resemble Form I verbs in written Arabic. For verbs which exist in both forms (for example, Sadar-a/ ya-Sdur-u ‘to emanate, come out’ and ‘aSadara/ yu-Sdir-u ‘to publish’), context is used to disambiguate form as well as meaning.
4 Hamzated roots in Form IV

4.1 Initial hamza
In Form IV, initial root hamza merges with the prefix hamza in the past tense and they are written as one ‘alif with a madda over it. In the present tense, initial hamza sits on a waaw seat because it is preceded by the Damma of the person-marking prefix:

- to believe, have faith: ‘aaman-a/yu-‘min-u
- to rent out, to lease: ‘aajar-a/yu-‘jir-u

4.2 Medial hamza
The medial hamza sits on an ‘alif seat in the past tense. In the present tense it sits on a yaa seat because it is followed by a kasra.

- to comply with someone’s request: ‘as‘al-a/yu-s‘il-u

4.3 Final hamza
Final hamza may sit on an ‘alif seat in the past tense, but because it is the final consonant in the stem, the seat of hamza may shift with certain suffixes:

- to set up, establish: ‘ansha‘-a / yu-nshi‘-u
- to extinguish: ‘aTja‘-a/yu-Tfi‘-u

5 Assimilated roots in Form IV: ‘af‘al-a / yuu-il-u
In the past tense of Form IV, the initial waaw or yaa of the assimilated root behaves as a regular consonant. In the present tense, however, it assimilates to the vowel /u/ of the subject-marking prefix and becomes long /uu/.

- to explain, clarify: ‘awDaH-a/yuuDiH-u
- to halt, stop: ‘awqaf-a/yuuqif-u
- to awaken: ‘ayqaZ-a/yuuqiZ-u
- to bring, convey: ‘awSal-a/yuuSil-u

6 Hollow roots in Form IV: ‘afaal-a/ yu-fiil-u
The semi-consonants waaw and yaa of hollow roots in Form IV show up as ‘alif (long stem) and fatHa (short stem) in the past tense and yaa and kasra in the present tense stem. The pattern is ‘afaal-a / yu-fiil-u. Examples of both stems are given...
in both tenses: in addition to the standard citation form of third person masculine singular, first person singular (in the past), and third person feminine plural (in the present).

- to broadcast: ʿadhaa-ta (ʿadha-tu)
- to manage, administer: ʿadaar-ta (ʿadar-tu)

7 Defective roots in Form IV: ʿaf-aa / yu-ṭii
Defective roots, where the final radical is either waaw or yaa, behave as -aa/-ii verbs in Form IV. They depend on the stem vowel for the nature of the final radical, and the stem vowel is consistently /a/ in the past tense and /i/ in the present tense.

- to eliminate: ʿalghaa/yu-lghi
- to conduct, to run: ʿajraa/yu-jrii
- to throw; to deliver (a speech): ʿalqa/yu-lqii
- to give: ʿa-Taa/yu-Ṭii

8 Doubly weak roots in Form IV

8.1 Hamza-initial, hollow, and defective
- to shelter, accommodate: ʿaawa/yu-ʾwi6
  (from ʾ-w-y ʿto seek refugeʿ)

8.2 Hamza-medial and defective
- to show (s.o. s.th.): ʿaraa/yu-rii
  (ʿto cause to seeʿ)

8.3 Hamza-final and hollow
- to harm, to hurt: ʿasaa-ya/yu-sii-3-u

9. Exclamatory Form IV (fi-l al-taʿajjub َفعل التعبِ )
A Form IV verb in the citation form (3 m.sg. past tense) may be used in written Arabic preceded by the function word maa to indicate surprise, wonder, or astonishment.

6 The initial root hamza merges with the prefix hamza in the past tense and the initial vowel /a/ lengthens to /aa/.
7 This verb in Form IV has lost its root hamza completely and inflects as a defective -aa/-ii verb.
at a certain quality or characteristic of something or someone. It is followed by a
noun in the accusative, or a pronoun suffix that denotes the possessor of the qual-
ity. The occurrence of this construction in media Arabic is rare, but it is found in
literary contexts.

The verbs used in this type of construction are usually related to adjectival roots
and are sometimes referred to as “adjectival verbs.” They are also termed “verbs
of surprise or admiration” (Cowan 1964, 177). Cantarino describes the word fol-
lowing maa as “an elative in the accusative of exclamation” (1974–76, II:210), that
is, as a comparative adjective. See also in this book Chapter 7, section 5.3.3.12 on
“less frequent accusatives.”

ما أجمل البيت!  
maa *ajmal-a l-bint-a!  
How beautiful the girl is!

ما ألطفهم!  
maa *alTaf-a-hum!  
How nice they are!

10 Examples of Form IV verbs in context

يَا أَحَرِّى مَا مَهْتَصِدُ:  
fa-*awDaH-at maa ta-qSid-u-hu.  
She clarified what she meant.

لا يضيف أشياء جديدة.  
laa yu-Diff-u *ashyaa3-a jadidat-an.  
It does not add anything new (‘new things’).

هناك أفضلية من يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية.  
hunaaka *afDaliiyat-un li-man yu-jiid-u  
1-Hughat-a l-*inkliiziyyat-a.  
There is a preference for whomever is proficient in English.

أجري محادثات مع بعض المسؤولين.  
*a'jraa muHaadathat-in ma*3-a ba*D-i  
l-mas’uul-iina.  
He conducted talks with some officials.

أهديني كتاباً قيماً.  
*ahdaa-nii kitaab-an qayyim-an.  
He gave me a valuable book.

أعربت عن أسفها.  
*a’rab-at an *asaf-i-haa.  
She expressed her sorrow.

11 Verbal noun of Form IV: *if’aal  
إِفْعَال
The verbal noun of Form IV normally has the pattern *if’aal.

11.1 Sound/regular root

announcement *i1aan إِلْعَانَ  
sending *irsaal إِرسَالَ  
disturbance, bother *iz’aaj إِزْعَاجَ  
bankruptcy *iflaas إِفْلاسَ  

9 These examples are taken from The MECAS Grammar 1965, 239. See also Fischer 2002, 80.
11.2 Geminate root

The geminate root maintains the 
\[i^\prime\text{faal}\] pattern, splitting the doubled consonant:

- perception,  \(i^\prime\text{Hsaa}s\) إحساس
- preparation,  \(i^\prime\text{daad}\) إعداد
- injury, harm,  \(i^\prime\text{draar}\) إضرار
- insistence,  \(i^\prime\text{sraar}\) إصرار
- persistence,  \(i^\prime\text{daad}\) إصرار

11.3 Hamzated root

11.3.1 Hamza-initial root

The verbal noun of hamza-initial roots in Form IV lengthens the kasra of the initial syllable into long /\textit{ii}/ and deletes the root hamza:

- faith,  \(i^\prime\text{imaan}\) إيمان
- rent, renting,  \(i^\prime\text{ijaar}\) إيجار

11.3.2 Hamza-final root

In this verbal noun, the hamza sits aloof after the \(^\prime\text{alif}\).

- establishment,  \(i^\prime\text{inshaa}\) إنشاء
- extinguishing,  \(i^\prime\text{ifa}\) إطفاء

11.4 Assimilated root:  \(i^\prime\text{aal}\) إعالة

In the verbal nouns of Form IV assimilated verbs, the initial waaw or yaa\(^\prime\) of the root is assimilated to the kasra /\textit{i}/ of the initial hamza, and it lengthens to /\textit{ii}/, i.e.,  \(i^\prime\text{faa}\) إطالة.

- clarification,  \(i^\prime\text{DaaH}\) إيضاح
- conveying,  \(i^\prime\text{Saal}\) إصال
- stopping,  \(i^\prime\text{qaaf}\) إيقاف
- halting,  \(i^\prime\text{qaaZ}\) إيقاظ

11.5 Hollow root:  \(i^\prime\text{aala}\) إفالة

The verbal noun of Form IV hollow roots is  \(i^\prime\text{f\text{aala}}\) إفالة, ending with taa\(^\prime\) marbu\text{Tu}.

- inflicting,  \(i^\prime\text{Saaba}\) إصابة
- administration,  \(i^\prime\text{daara}\) إدارة
- broadcasting,  \(i^\prime\text{tha\text{a}}\) إذاعة
- repetition,  \(i^\prime\text{aada}\) إعادة

11.6 Defective root:  \(i^\prime\text{a}\) إفعة

In the Form IV verbal noun of defective verbs, the defective semi-consonant (waaw or yaa\(^\prime\)) disappears and is replaced by hamza, i.e.,  \(i^\prime\text{aal}\) becomes  \(i^\prime\text{a}\) إفعة.

- elimination,  \(i^\prime\text{laa}\) إلغاء
- conducting,  \(i^\prime\text{ijaar}\) إجراء
- giving,  \(i^\prime\text{Taa}\) إعطاء
- delivery (of a speech),  \(i^\prime\text{qaa}\) إلقاء
11.7 Examples of Form IV verbal nouns in context

- Inaash-\(u \) l-iqtiSaad-\(i \): reviving the economy
- Isaaf-\(u \) l-difaa-\(e^c \)-\(i \) l-madaniyy-\(u \) l-fawriyy-\(u \): emergency civil defense aid

laa yu-rid-\(u \) israa-ul-\(u \) quwaat-\(u \)-\(u \) amrikiyyat-\(u \)-\(u \) ila l-xaaraj-\(i \).

He doesn't want to send American forces abroad.

12 Form IV participles

Form IV participles occur as nouns and as adjectives. In some cases they occur in both functions.

12.1 Form IV active participle (AP): \( muf^e \) مَفْعُول

12.1.1 Sound/regular root

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<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
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<tr>
<td>supervisor; supervising</td>
<td>mushrif</td>
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<tr>
<td>director (stage or screen)</td>
<td>muxrij</td>
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</table>

12.1.2 Geminate root: \( muf^e \) مَفْعُول

The final two consonants of the geminate root are written together, with no intervening vowel. Thus instead of being in the pattern \( muf^e \), they are of the pattern \( muf^e \).

- Tedious, boring: mumill |
- Injurious, harmful: muDirr |
- Insistent, determined: muSirr |

12.1.3 Hamzated root

12.1.3.1 Hamza-INITIAL

- Faithful: mu\( ^{min} \) |
- Regrettable: mu\( ^{sif} \)
12.1.3.2 Hamza-Final:

founder munshi  مَنْشَى mistaken muxTi  مُخْطَى

12.1.4 Assimilated root: muu’il موعَل

In this root type, the initial waaw assimilates to the Damma of the miim-prefix and yields a long /-uu/- as the first vowel.

clarifying muuDiH موضَح consignor, depositor muudi مورَع originator muujid موجَد deep-reaching muughil مورَع

12.1.5 Hollow root: muu’il مَعِيل

ocean muHiT مُحيط manager; director mudiir مُدير

broadcaster mudhiit مُديع beneficial mufiid مُفيد

12.1.6 Defective root: muu’in مَعِن

giver; giving muTin مَعْتَن mufti, giver of formal muftin مَفْتَن legal opinions

12.1.7 Examples of Form IV APs in context

اللجنة المشترفة بتقديم كل المساعدة الممكنة
al-lajnat-u l-mushrifat-u bi-taqdiim-i kull-i l-musaa’adat-i l-mumkinat-i
the supervising committee by offering all possible aid

شيء مؤسف جدا
bi-sur’aat-in mudhhilat-in shay’un mu’sif-un jidd-an
with amazing speed a very regrettable thing

المحيط الأطلسي سماحة المفتى
al-muHiT-u l-’aTlasiyy-u samaaHat-u l-muftii
the Atlantic Ocean His Eminence the Mufti

12.2 Form IV passive participle (PP): muf’al مُفعَل

12.2.1 Sound/regular root

lexicon mu’jam مَعْجَم compacted mudmaj مَدْمَج

singular word mufrad مُفرَد attaché, officer mulHaq مُلْحَق

12.2.2 Geminate root: muu’a مَعْن

The final two consonants of the root fall together, with no intervening vowel.

ready, prepared mu’add مَعَد
12.2.3 Hamzated root

foundation, establishment; munsha'a مُنشأة
installation

12.2.4 Assimilated root: muu'āl موعل

summary muujaz موجز

12.2.5 Hollow root: mufeel مُفَاءل

melted, dissolved mudhaab مَذَاب injured, afflicted muSaab مصأب

12.2.6 Defective root: mufaan مُفَعان

abolished; abrogated mulghan مُلغى cast off; discarded mulqan ملقى

12.2.7 Examples of Form IV PPs in context

mulHaq-u l-shu‘uun-i l-thaqaafiyyat-i cultural affairs attaché
Halqat-un mufraghat-un a vicious circle (‘a seamless circle’)

mu‘jam-un mufaSSal-un a detailed lexicon
qurS-un mudmaj-un a compact disk

muujaz-u l‘axbaar-i summary of the news
al‘uuksjiin-u l-mudhaab-u fii l-maa‘-i oxygen dissolved in water
### Form IV Sound root: ارسال، يرسِلُ

**AP:** مُرسَلٌ

**PP:** مُرسِلٌ

**VN:** ‘to send’

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**Form IV Sound root:** ارسال، يرسِلُ

**AP:** مُرسَلٌ

**PP:** مُرسِلٌ

**VN:** ‘to send’
Form IV Geminate root: نَآَرَتْ، يُعَدُّ، يُعَدُّ، يُعَدُّ ‘to prepare’

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### Form IV triliteral verb

**Form IV Assimilated root:** [\(\text{o"ip°VƒoJ}\), \(\text{nín°VrhnCG}\)]

**AP:** [\(\text{íp°Vƒoe}\)]

**PP:** [\(\text{ín°Vƒoe}\)]

**VN:** ['to clarify']

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| Form IV Assimilated root: \[\text{o"ip°VƒoJ}\), \(\text{nín°VrhnCG}\] | AP: [\(\text{íp°Vƒoe}\)] | PP: [\(\text{ín°Vƒoe}\)] | VN: ['to clarify'] |
**Form IV Hollow root:** أذاع، يذيع

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**AP:** ™jòoe  
**PP:** ´Gòoe  
**VN:** ánYGPpEG  'to broadcast'

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**Form IV Hollow root:** أذاع، يذيع

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**AP:** ™jòoe  
**PP:** ´Gòoe  
**VN:** ánYGPpEG  'to broadcast'
Form IV Defective: إلغاء

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Form IV triliteral verb

AP: ملَّغِيَ، يَلَغَي PP: مَلَّغَةً VN: ‘to abolish’
1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: \textit{ta}f\textsuperscript{a}c\textsuperscript{a}l\textsubscript{a} / ya-ta\textsuperscript{a}c\textsuperscript{a}l\textsubscript{u}

Form V verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that the medial consonant of the triliteral root is doubled (as in Form II) and a prefix \textit{ta}- is added to the stem.\footnote{The prefixed \textit{ta}-, used as a derivational affix is often characterized as a marker of reflexive action or even of the passive. "Its main derivational function is that of the passive" (Cowell 1964, 85). In more recent studies of this form, it is said often to represent "unaccusative" constructions in Arabic. See Mahmoud 1991 for further discussion of both Form V and Form VII as Arabic counterparts for unaccusative structures.}

In the present tense, the subject-marking prefix vowel is \textit{fatiHa} and the two stem vowels are \textit{fatiHa}. Form V verbs thus have the stem patterns \textit{ta}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{1}\textit{a}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{2}\textit{a}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{3} in the past tense and \textit{ya-ta}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{1}\textit{a}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{2}\textit{a}\textsubscript{C}\textsubscript{3} in the present.\footnote{Note that in the present tense, there is both an inflectional prefix (the subject marker) and a derivational prefix (the \textit{ta}- of Form V).}

1.2 Meaning

In many cases Form V is the reflexive of the Form II verb, meaning that the action expressed in Form II is done to or happens to one’s self. This is sometimes referred to by grammarians as mediopassive.\footnote{"No grammatical distinction is made in Arabic verbs between ‘reflexive’ acts and spontaneous developments – what one does to one’s self and what simply happens to one are equally accommodated by the mediopassive" (Cowell 1964, 238).}

Form V may also be resultative of Form II, showing the result of the Form II action, e.g., \textit{kassar-tu-haa fa-takassar-at} ‘I broke it (Form II) and it broke (Form V).’\footnote{The Arabic term used to refer to the resultative meaning of derived forms (especially V, VII, and VIII) is \textit{muTaawi}’a مطاوعة ‘obedience, conformity’ or \textit{muTaawi}’ مطاوع ‘obedient, conforming’ – that is, conforming with a particular, lexically related action. Fleisch 1979 states (II:305) "Ce \textit{muTaawi}’ exprime l’état dans lequel se trouve un sujet, sous l’action ... [d’un verbe] précédente."}

Other semantic modifications embodied in this form include gradual progress in an activity or state (e.g., \textit{taHassan-a} ‘to improve,’ \textit{tadaxxal-a} ‘to meddle, to interfere,’ \textit{tamazzaq-a} ‘to be ripped apart, fragmented’) and acquisition or imitation of a quality (e.g., \textit{ta’assaf-a} ‘to be or act sorry’; \textit{ta’addab-a} ‘to behave courteously’).
1.3 Transitivity
Form V verbs are often reflexive or intransitive, but they may be transitive as well.

1.4 Inflection
Inflectional characteristics of Form V verbs:

1. The present tense subject-marker vowel is \textit{fatHa} and the present tense stem vowel is \textit{fatHa} (\textit{taqaddam-a}/\textit{ya-taqaddam-u}).

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root
These verbs are examples of Form V sound triliteral roots:

- to breathe: \textit{tanaffas-a}/\textit{ya-tanaffas-u}
- to move, be in motion: \textit{taHarrak-a}/\textit{ya-taHarrak-u}
- to require: \textit{taTallab-a}/\textit{ya-taTallab-u}
- to speak: \textit{takallam-a}/\textit{ya-takallam-u}
- to get, to receive: \textit{tasallam-a}/\textit{ya-tasallam-u}
- to avoid: \textit{tajannab-a}/\textit{ya-tajannab-u}

3 Geminate (doubled) root Form V
Geminate roots in Form V have the following stem patterns: \textit{taC1aC2aC2} in the past tense and \textit{yataC1aC2aC2} in the present. For example;

- to hesitate: \textit{taraddad-a}/\textit{ya-taraddad-u}
- to feel (s.th.); handle, touch (s.th.): \textit{taHassas-a}/\textit{ya-taHassas-u}

4 Hamzated roots in Form V
The \textit{hamza} may occur in the first, second, or third position in the triliteral root. Depending on its position, and the surrounding vowels, the \textit{hamza} may have to change its “seat” when the verb inflects for person and tense.

4.1 Initial \textit{hamza}
In \textit{hamza}-initial Form V verbs, the \textit{hamza} sits on \textit{’alif} in both tenses:

- to be late: \textit{ta’axxar-a}/\textit{ya-ta’axxar-u}
- to be affected (by): \textit{ta’aththar-a}/\textit{ya-ta’aththar-u bi-}
- to be sorry: \textit{ta’assaf-a}/\textit{ya-ta’assaf-u}
to be composed (of) \( ta’\text{allaf-a/}ya-ta’\text{allaf-u min} \)

contemplate (s.th.) \( ta’\text{ammal-a/}ya-ta’\text{ammal-u} \)

4.2 Medial hamza

to be at the head; to chair \( ta’\text{as-a/}ya-ta’\text{as-u} \)

4.3 Final hamza

to get prepared \( tahayya’-a/ya-tahayya’-u \)
to predict, forecast \( tanabba’-a/ya-tanabba’-u \)

5 Assimilated roots in Form V

Assimilated roots, where the first radical is either \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \), are inflected as sound roots in Form V; the \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \) remain in both tenses.

to be extended, spread out \( tawassa’-a/ya-tawassa’-u \)
to be abundant, plentiful \( tawaffar-a/ya-tawaffar-u \)
to expect, anticipate \( tawaqqqa’-a/ya-tawaqqqa’-u \)
to stop; stand still \( tawaqqaf-a/ya-tawaqqaf-u \)

6 Hollow roots in Form V

Hollow roots behave as sound roots in Form V, the \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \) that is the second radical functions as a normal consonant, with \( \text{shadda} \).

to change (intr.) \( taghayyar-a/ya-taghayyar-u \)
to volunteer \( taTawwa’-a/ya-taTawwa’-u \)

7 Defective roots in Form V: \( tafa’-aa \) يتَفَعَّلُ / \( ya-tafa’-aa \)

Defective roots, where the final radical is either \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \), behave as -\( a \)-\( a \) verbs in Form V.\(^5\)

to receive, accept \( talaqqaa/ya-talaqqaa \)
to wish \( tamannaa/ya-tamannaa \)
to trespass, to transcend \( ta’addaa/ya-ta’addaa \)
to challenge \( taHaddaa/ya-taHaddaa \)

\(^5\) They depend on the stem vowel for the nature of the final radical, and the stem vowel is consistently /\( \text{a} / \) in the past tense and also /\( \text{a} / \) in the present tense.
8 Doubly weak roots in Form V
These roots have two forms of weakness which may occur at any point in the root. For example:

8.1 Assimilated and defective

to take charge of; tawallaaya-tawallaay
be entrusted with (root: w-l-y)

9 Examples of Form V verbs in context

Iraq has adopted a new military strategy.

It changes from bad to worse.

We wish you a blessed holiday.

10 Form V verbal nouns: tafa’ul

10.1 Sound roots

Form V verbal nouns of regular or sound verbs have the pattern taCa2Ca2Cu2.

breathing tanaffus تنفس
avoidance tajannub تجنب
progress taqaddum تقدم
interference tadaaxul تدخل

10.2 Geminate roots

hesitation taraddud تردد
feeling, touching taHassus تحس

10.3 Hamzated roots

The placement of hamza on a particular seat is determined by contiguous vowels.

lateness ta’axxur تأخر
being affected ta’aththur تأثر
prediction tanabbu تنبؤ
chairmanship tara’us تروس
10.4 Assimilated roots

- Being extended: tawassu\(\text{ توسع}\) penetration, tawaghul\(\text{ تغول}\)
- Spreading out: tawaffur\(\text{ توفر}\) tension, tawattur\(\text{ توتر}\)
- Abundance: tawaffur\(\text{ توفر}\) availability
- Absorption: tawaghul\(\text{ تغول}\)

10.5 Hollow roots

- Change: taghayyur\(\text{ تغير}\) development, taTawwur\(\text{ تطور}\)
- Volunteering: taTawwu\(\text{ تطوع}\) pollution, talawwuth\(\text{ تلوث}\)

10.6 Defective roots: tafa\(\text{ تنفع}\)

The verbal nouns of defective verbs in Form V inflect as defective nouns (declension six in this book).

- Accepting: talaqqin\(\text{ تلقّن}\) wishing, tamannin\(\text{ تمنّن}\)
- Transcending: ta‘addin\(\text{ ت تعدّ}\) challenge, taHaddin\(\text{ تتحدّ}\)
- Overtaking

10.7 Examples of Form V verbal nouns in context

- It suffers from fragmentation. since his assumption of the presidency
- State of alert: non-interference

11 Form V participles

The great majority of Form V participles occur as active participles. The Form V AP may have active, passive, or reflexive meaning. Few occur as passive participles.

11.1 Form V active participle (AP): mutafa\(\text{ متَفَعَل}\)

The Form V active participle may have an active meaning but it may also have a passive or reflexive sense because of the reflexive or resultative meaning of many verbs of this form.

11.1.1 Strong/regular root

- Spokesperson: mutakallim\(\text{ متكلم}\) frozen, mutammid\(\text{ متجمّد}\)
- Extremist: mutaTarrif\(\text{ متطرف}\) married, mutazawwij\(\text{ متزوج}\)
11.1.2 Geminate root

specialist  mutaxaSSI  متَخصِصً  renewed  mutajaddid  مُتَجَدَدً

11.2.3 Hamzated root

sorry, regretful  muta’assif  مُتأسفً  late  muta’axxir  مُتأخَرً

11.2.4 Assimilated root

abundant  mutawaffir  متَوفَرً  middle  mutawassiT  مُتوسطً

11.2.5 Hollow root

volunteer  mutaTawwi  مَتطوعً

11.2.6 Defective root:  mutafa’  مُتَقَعَ

These participles inflect as defective nouns (declension six).

challenger;  mutaHaddin  متَحدً  wishing  mutamannin  مُتمنً

challenging

11.2 Form V passive participle (PP):  mutafa’  مُتَقَعَ

Occurrences of these are few due to the passive-like or reflexive meaning of the many Form V verbs. A few examples include:

forced, feigned  mutakallaf  مُتَكلفً

requirement/s  mutaTallab/aat  مُتطلبً / أت

expected  mutawaqqa  مُتوقَعً

11.3 Form V participles in context

11.3.1 Active participle

البحر الأبيض المتوسط
al-muHiiT-u  l-mutajammid-u  l-shimaaliiyy-u  the Mediterranean Sea (‘the middle white sea’)

البحر الأبيض المتوسط
al-baHru  l-’abyaD-u  l-mutawassiT-u  the Arctic Ocean (the ‘frozen northern’ ocean)

يغادر القاهرة اليوم متوجهًا إلى باريس.
yu-ghaadir-u l-qaahirat-a  l-yawm-a  mutawajjih-an  ‘ila baariis.

He leaves Cairo today heading for Paris.
### 11.3.2 Passive participle

من المتوقع أن...

min-a l-mutawaqqa‘-i ‘an ...

it is expected that

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Form V Geminate root: تردد، يتردد
AP: تردد، يتردد
PP: تردد، يتردد
VN: ‘to hesitate’

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Form V hamza-initial root: تآخُرُ، يتآخُرُ  

**AP:** متآخُرُ  

**PP:** ‘to be late, delayed’  

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- **Anthem**
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**Form V hamza-final root:** 
- Active: التنبأا
- Imperfect: التنبأا
- Subjunctive: التنبأا
- Imperative: التنبأا

**AP:** التنبأا
**PP:** التنبأا
**VN:** التنبأا

**VN:** ‘to predict’
Form V Hollow root: تطبَّع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع

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PP: VN: تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع تتطَّوع

'to volunteer'
**Form V Assimilated root:** o™sbnƒnJ, n™sbnƒnJ

**AP:** ™ubnƒnàoe  
**PP:** ™sbnƒnàoe  
**VN:** ™tbnƒnJ

*to expect*

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Form V Defective root: تَحَدَّى، يَتَحَدَّى

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Form V: تَحَدَّا تَحَدَّب تَحَدَّى تَحْدِي نَتَحَدَّى

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\[\text{‘to challenge’}\]
1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: tafa‘al-a 
Form VI verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that there is a prefixed /ta-/ and a long vowel /-aa-/ inserted after the first consonant of the triliteral root. It looks like a Form III verb with a /ta-/ prefix. In the present tense, the subject-marking prefix vowel is faHa and the two stem vowels are faHa. Form VI verbs thus have the stem patterns taC₁aaC₂aC₃- in the past tense and ya-taC₁aaC₂aC₃- in the present.

1.2 Meaning
In many cases Form VI is the reciprocal of the Form III verb, meaning that the action expressed in Form VI is mutual and happens to two (or more) parties (e.g., ‘to embrace one another’ ta‘aanaq-a/ya-ta‘aanaq-u). Other meanings of this form of the verb include gradual, continuous movement or increase in a quality (e.g., ‘to diminish, grow smaller’ taDaal-a/ytaDaal-u), and also pretending or feigning something (e.g., ‘to feign ignorance’ tajaahal-a/yta-jajaahal-u).

1.3 Transitivity
Form VI verbs are often reciprocal or intransitive, but sometimes they are transitive.

1.4 Inflection
The present tense subject-marker vowel is faHa and both the past and present tense stem vowels are faHa (e.g., tabaadal-a/yta-baadal-u ‘to exchange’).

2 Regular (sound) triliteral root
These verbs are examples of Form VI sound triliteral roots:

1 See LeTourneau 1998 for discussion of Form VI reciprocality.
to retire, be pensioned  
taqaa‘ad-a/ytaqaa‘ad-u

to correlate (with)  
taraafaq-a/y-taraafaq-u (ma‘a)

to understand each other  
tafaaham-a/y-tafaaham-u

3 Geminate (doubled) root Form VI  
Geminate roots in Form VI have the following stem patterns: taC1aaC2C2aC2- in the past tense and ya-taC1aaC2C2aC2-u in the present. These are very rare. No examples occurred in the corpus.

4 Hamzated roots in Form VI  
The hamza may occur in the first, second, or third position in the triliteral root. Depending on its position, and the surrounding vowels, the hamza may have to change its “seat” when the verb inflects for person and tense:

4.1 Initial hamza  
When an initial root hamza meets the ’alif infix of Form VI, they are written together as ’alif madda:

to deliberate; to conspire  
ta‘amar-a/y-ta‘amar-u

to harmonize (with each other)  
ta‘aallaf-a/y-ta‘aallaf-u (ma‘a)

4.2 Medial hamza  
The medial hamza in Form VI sits aloof, after the long vowel ’alif in the past tense. In the present tense it also sits aloof after the ’alif.2

to be optimistic  
tafua’al-a/y-tafua’al-u

to be pessimistic  
tashaa‘am-a/y-tashaa‘am-u

to be mended; be in harmony  
tala‘am-a/y-tala‘am-u

to diminish  
taDaa‘al-a/y-taDaa‘al-u

4.3 Final hamza  
Final hamza may sit on an ’alif seat in the past tense, but because it is the final consonant in the stem, the seat of hamza may shift with certain suffixes.

---

2 This is because it is situated after a long vowel /aa/ and before a short vowel /a/. It would have an ’alif seat, but two ’alifs cannot follow each other in Arabic script, so it floats aloof.
be equal to; to counterbalance
\( \text{takaafa'-a/ya-takaafa'-u} \)

5 Assimilated roots in Form VI
Assimilated roots, where the first radical is either \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \), are inflected as sound roots in Form VI; the \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \) remains.

to coincide; agree with each other
\( \text{tawaafaq-a/ya-tawaafaq-u} \)

to be in equilibrium
\( \text{tawaazan-a/ya-tawaazan-u} \)

6 Hollow roots in Form VI
Hollow roots behave as sound roots in Form VI, the \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \) that is the second radical functions as a normal consonant.

to deliberate; consult one another
\( \text{tashaawar-a/ya-tashaawar-u} \)

to cooperate with one another
\( \text{ta'awan-a/ya-ta'awan-u} \)

to coexist
\( \text{ta'aayash-a/ya-ta'aayash-u} \)

to deal with; treat
\( \text{tanaawal-a/ya-tanaawal-u} \)

7 Defective roots in Form VI
Defective roots, where the final radical is either \( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \), behave as -aa/-aa verbs in Form VI. They depend on the stem vowel for the nature of the final radical, and the stem vowel is consistently /a/ in the past tense and /a/ in the present tense.

to take, undertake, pursue (a task)
\( \text{ta'aaTaa/ya-ta'aaTaa} \)

to meet each other, come together
\( \text{talaaqaa/ya-talaaqaa} \)

to be equivalent to; be in balance
\( \text{tasaawaa/ya-tasaawaa} \)

8 Examples of Form VI verbs in context

\( \text{ya-taDaa'al-u} \) tadriijiyy-an.
\( \text{qad ya-tabaadar-u} \) 'ilaa dhihn-i-ka.

It diminishes gradually. It might cross your mind.
This correlated with complaints of some of the voters.

أن الإسلام يتساوى عندهم مع التطرف... "anna l-islam-a ya-tasaawaa 'ind-a-hum ma-a l-tarruf-i... that for them, Islam equates with extremism ...

9 Form VI verbal noun: \textit{tafa‘ul} تفاعَل
The verbal noun from Form VI has the pattern CaCaaC:  

9.1 Strong/regular root
- embracing \textit{ta‘aanuq} تعاشق \textit{partition} taqaasum تقاسم
- retirement \textit{taqaa‘ud} تقاءعد \textit{mutual} tafaahum تفاهم
  \textit{understanding}

9.2 Geminate root
This is rare in Form VI.

9.3 Hamzated root

9.3.1 Hamza-initial
Here the root \textit{hamza} combines with the infixed \textit{‘alif} of Form VI to result in \textit{‘alif} madda:  
- harmony; \textit{ta‘aaluf} تَأَلْف conspiracy \textit{ta‘amur} تَأْمُر
- camaraderie

9.3.2 Hamza-medial
In these verbal nouns, the \textit{hamza} sits on a waaw seat because it is followed by Damma.
- optimism \textit{tafaa‘ul} تَفَاوْل pessimism \textit{tashaa‘um} تَشَاوْم

9.3.3 Hamza-final
In these verbal nouns, \textit{hamza} sits on waaw because it is preceded by Damma:
- equivalence, sameness \textit{takaafu} تَكَافُو

9.4 Assimilated root
Assimilated roots preserve their initial root consonant and behave as regular roots in the Form VI verbal noun.
- congruity; coinciding \textit{tawaafu} تَوَافِق

وتنافق ذلك مع شكاوى من بعض الناخبين. wa-taraafaq-a dhaalika \textit{ma‘-a} shakaawaa min ba‘D-i l-naaxib-iina.

A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic
9.5 Hollow root
The hollow roots behave as regular roots in the Form VI verbal noun.

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<th>Arabic</th>
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<td>increase</td>
<td>تزايدٌ</td>
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<td>joint</td>
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<td>consultation</td>
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9.6 Defective root
In verbal nouns of defective Form VI verbs, the noun is defective:

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<td>sameness</td>
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9.7 Examples of Form VI verbal nouns in context

التواصل بين قوة النظام وشرعّته

al-taraabuT-u bayn-a quwwat-i l-niZam-i wa-shar‟iyyat-i-hi

the interconnection between the power of the system and its legitimacy

لقاء التسامح والتعايش السلمي بين الشعوب

qiyaam-u l-tasaamuH-i wa-l-ta‟aayush-i l-silmiyy-i bayn-a l-shu‟uub-i

establishing mutual tolerance and coexistence among peoples

قد يقود إلى تقاسم ثنائي.

qad ya-quud-u ‟ilaq taqaasum-in thunaa‟iyy-in.

It might lead to a bilateral partition.

مجلس تعزيز التفاهم العربي البريطاني

majlis-u ta‟ziiz-i l-tafaahum-i l-arabiyy-i l-bariIlaaniyy-i

the council for strengthening Arab-British (mutual) understanding

بعد أن اتهمهم بالتآمر مع الحكومة

ba‟d-a „an-i ttaham-a-hum bi-l-ta‟aamur-i maʻ-a l-Hukuumat-i

after it accused them of conspiracy with the government

صدر الكتاب بالتعاون مع مجلس السفراء العرب.

Sadar-a l-kitaab bi-l-ta‟awun-i maʻ-a majlis-i l-sufaraa‟-i l-arabi-i.

The book was published with the cooperation of the council of Arab ambassadors.

10 Form VI participles
As with other participle forms, Form VI active and passive participles occur both as nouns and as adjectives. The active participle is much more frequent in occurrence.
10.1 Form VI active participle (AP): *mutafa‘il مُتفاعلَ

10.1.1 sound/regular root

- synonym *mutaraadif مُترادِفَ* scattered *mutanaathir مُتناذرُ
- retired *mutaqaa‘id مُتقاعدُ* mutual, *mutadaamin مَتَضامِنُ reciprocal

10.1.2 Geminate root

This is rare in Form VI.

10.1.3 Hamzated root

10.1.3.1 *Hamza*-INITIAL

- harmonious *muta‘aalf مُتَألفَ* corroded *muta‘akil مُتَأكِل

10.1.3.2 *Hamza*-MEDIAL

- optimistic *mutafa‘il مُتَفائلِ* pessimistic *mutashaa‘im مَتْشَائِم

10.1.3.3 *Hamza*-FINAL

- commensurate, alike *mutakaafi مُتكافِئِ

10.1.4 Assimilated root

- balanced *mutawaazin مِتَوازنَ* continuous *mutawaaSil مَتَواصلِ

10.1.5 Hollow root

- increasing *mutazaayid مَتَزايدِ* alternating, *mutanaawib مَتناوِبَ rotating

10.1.6 Defective root

- successive, following *mutataalin مُتَتالِ

10.1.7 Examples of Form VI APs in context

الاهتمام المتزايد بالإسلام، مبارة متكافئة

*al-ihtimaam-u l-mutazaayid-u bi-l‘islaam-i* mubaaraat-un *mutakaafi‘at-un*

the increasing interest in Islam an equal match
fii sanawaat-in mutataaliyat-in ‘ilab-un mutanaathirat-un
in successive years scattered containers

10.2 Form VI passive participle (PP): mutafa‘al
This participle form is not frequent in MSA, but a few examples are provided here.

10.2.1 Sound/regular root

mutual, reciprocal  mutabaadal متبادل

10.2.2 Hollow root

prevailing, mutadaawal متناول availability; reach; mutanaawal متناول available

current

10.2.3 Examples of Form VI PPs in context

bi-l-ma‘naa l-mutadaawal-i al-ihtiraam-u l-mutabaadal-u
in the current meaning mutual respect
### Form VI Sound root: تتقاعد / يتتقاعد

**AP:** تتقاعد

**PP:** تتقاعد

**VN:** ‘to retire’

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**AP:** تتقاعد

**PP:** تتقاعد

**VN:** ‘to retire’

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Form VI hamza-initial root: تآمَرُ / يتآمَرُ  
AP: متآمَر  PP: VN: ‘to conspire’

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Form VI triliteral verb
Form VI hamza-medial root: تَفَاءَلُ / يَتَفَاءَلُ  

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*AP:* تَفَاءَلُ / يَتَفَاءَلُ  

*PP:* تَفَاءَلُ / يَتَفَاءَلُ  

*VN:* ‘to be optimistic’
Form VI triliteral verb: تَكَافُوُا "to be equal"

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### Form VI hamzat-final root: 

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### PP: 

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### 'to be equal'
Form VI Defective root: تِداَعِيِّ تِداَعِيِّ يِتَداَعِيِّ AP: تِداَعِيِّ PP: تِداَعِيِّ VN: ‘to decline, subside’

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AP: تِداَعِيِّ PP: تِداَعِيِّ VN: ‘to decline, subside’

Form VI Defective root: تِداَعِيِّ تِداَعِيِّ يِتَداَعِيِّ AP: تِداَعِيِّ PP: تِداَعِيِّ VN: ‘to decline, subside’
1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: infa\'al-a  انفعال
Form VII verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that a prefix /n/ is added to the Form I stem. Form VII has the past tense stem inC₁aC₂aC₃ and the present tense stem -nC₁aC₂iC₃. A prefixed elidable hamza with kasra is added to the past tense stem of Form VII; this hamza and its vowel are deleted in the present tense, replaced by the present tense subject markers. There is a restriction on the roots that can be used in Form VII: roots beginning with the consonants hamza, waaw, yaa, raaw, laam, or nuun do not have a Form VII.¹ In these instances, either Form V or Form VIII is used instead.

1.2 Meaning
Form VII verbs may be reflexive, resultative, passive, or mediopassive in meaning. They may express the consequences of a Form I verb action and have been classified also as verbs that express ergative and “unaccusative” constructions in Arabic.² The Arabic term for referring to their meaning is muTaawi³ ‘obeying, corresponding with’ – that is, Form VII verbs show the result of Form I action, e.g., fataH-tu l-baab-a fa-nfataH-a ‘I opened (Form I) the door and it opened (Form VII).’³

1.3 Transitivity
Form VII verbs are intransitive.

1.4 Inflection
The prefixed hamzat al-waSl with kasra in the past tense stem is deleted in the present tense and replaced by the subject-marker prefix. The vowel of the present

¹ The prefixed /n/ of Form VII is considered phonologically incompatible with these consonants. In addition, roots whose initial consonant is miim are relatively rare in Form VII in MSA.
² See Mahmoud 1991 for further discussion and definition of Arabic unaccusatives.
³ For more on muTaawi² see Chapter 26 on Form V, note 4.
tense subject-marker prefix is *fatHa* and the stem vowel in the present tense is *kasra* (e.g., *inSaraf-a/ya-nSarif-u* ‘to leave, go out’).

## 2 Regular (sound) triliteral root

### 2.1 Intransitive

- **to explode**  
  *infajar-a/ya-nfajir-u*  
  انفاجر / ينفاجر

- **to be at ease, be happy**  
  *inbasaT-a/ya-nbasiT-u*  
  انبساط / ينبساط

- **to sink, decline**  
  *inxafaD-a/ya-nxafiD-u*  
  انخفاض / ينخفاض

- **to withdraw; be withdrawn**  
  *insaHab-a/ya-nsaHib-u*  
  انسحب / ينسحب

### 2.2 Passive/reflexive

Form VII is often the passive, resultative, or reflexive of Form I:

- **to be separated, divided**  
  *inqasam-a/ya-nqasim-u*  
  انقسام / ينقسم

- **to be cut off**  
  *inqaTa-pr-a/ya-nqaTi-pr-u*  
  انقطع / ينقطع

- **to be reflected**  
  *inºkas-a/ya-nºkas-u*  
  انعكس / يعكس

- **to be held, convened**  
  *inºaqad-a/ya-nºaqad-u*  
  انعقد / يعقد

## 3 Geminate (doubled) root Form VII

Geminate roots in Form VII have the following stem patterns: *inC1aC2C2-* in the past tense and *ya-nC1aC2C2-* in the present.

- **to affiliate; join (with)**  
  *inDamm-a/ya-nDamm-u* ('ilaa)  
  انضم / ينضم

- **to disintegrate**  
  *inHall-a/ya-nHall-u*  
  انحل / ينحل

- **to split, crack**  
  *inshaqq-a/ya-nshaqq-u*  
  انشقق / ينشقق

## 4 Hamzated roots in Form VII

The *hamza* may occur in the second or third position of the triliteral root in Form VII, but not in root-initial position. Depending on its position and the surrounding vowels, the *hamza* may have to change its “seat” when the verb inflects for person and tense:

### Medial hamza

- **to be extinguished**  
  *inTafa-pr-a/ya-nTafi-pr-u*  
  انطفأ / ينطفئ

4 Also, ‘to be spread out’; *s.v. basaT-a* in Wehr 1979.
5 Assimilated roots in Form VII
These do not occur (see 1.1).

6 Hollow roots in Form VII

Hollow roots in Form VII are inflected with 'alif as the long vowel and fatHa as the short vowel in the present and in the past: inC1aaC3-a /ya-nC1aaC3 -u.

- to take sides, align: inHaaz-a/ya-nHaaz-u
- to decline, collapse: inhaar-a/ya-nhaar-u

7 Defective roots in Form VII
Defective roots in Form VII inflect as -aa/-ii defectives.

- to be necessary; ought to: inbagh-a/ya-nbaghii
- to elapse; expire: inqaDaa/ya-nqaDii
- to be folded; be absorbed⁵: inTawaa/ya-nTawii

8 Examples of Form VII verbs in context

The situation exploded in the streets.
She easily got involved in her new life.
The electric current was cut off.

9 Form VII verbal noun: infi‘aal

9.1 Strong/regular root

- reflection: in‘ikaas
- explosion: infijaar

9.2 Geminate root

The Form VII verbal noun of geminate roots has the regular pattern infi‘aal, the alif coming between the identical second and third root consonants:

- affiliating: inDimaam
- disintegration: inHilaal

⁵ Used with the preposition ‘alaa, inTawaa means ‘to contain.'
9.3 Hamzated root
extinguishing inTifaa’ انْعِطفاء

9.4 Assimilated root
These do not occur.

9.5 Hollow root: infiyyaal انْفِيِّءال
The verbal noun for Form VII hollow verbs has a yaa’ as the medial consonant, no matter what the root of origin.

alignment inHiyaaz انْحِيَاز  انْهِيَاز  انْهِيَاز  انْهِيَاز

9.6 Defective root: infi’aa’ انْفِعَاء
The verbal noun of defective Form VII verbs is of the pattern infi’aa’, with hamza after the long [-aa-].

expiration, elapsing inqiDaa’ انْضِفَاء ا نْضِفَاء ا نْضِفَاء ا نْضِفَاء
introversion inTiwaa’ انْطِوَاء انْطِوَاء انْطِوَاء انْطِوَاء

9.7 Examples of Form VII verbal nouns in context

الانحلال السياسي
al-inHilaal-u l-siyasiyy-u
political disintegration

قبل انقضاء عام على ذلك
qabl-a nqiDaa’-i ‘aam-in ‘alaa dhaalika
before the elapsing of a year after that

هو انعكاس للواقع الاجتماعي.
huwa n‘ikaas-un li-l-waaq‘-i
i-ijtimaa‘-iyy-i.
It is a reflection of social reality.

10 Form VII participles

10.1 Form VII active participle (AP): munfa‘il منْفَعٍ

10.1.1 Sound/regular root
isolated mun‘azil مُنْعَزِل  منْعَزِل  منْعَزِل  منْعَزِل
introverted; shrunk munkamish مُنْكَمِش  منْكَمِش  منْكَمِش  منْكَمِش
sloping munHadir مُنْحَدِر  منْحَدِر  منْحَدِر  منْحَدِر
sliding munzaliq مُنْزَلِق  منْزَلِق  منْزَلِق  منْزَلِق

10.1.2 Geminate root: munfa‘cc منْفَعٍ
The active and passive participles for geminate roots in Form VII have the same pattern; munfa‘cc. If the verb itself has a passive, reflexive, or intransitive meaning,

Because of the shift of the semi-consonant (waaw or yaa’) to hamza, this verbal noun winds up looking like the verbal noun for hamza-final roots.
the AP will carry that passive or reflexive meaning. It is therefore sometimes difficult to tell the Form VII AP and PP apart.

closely packed; munDamm مُتضمِن and separatist munshaqq منشق

10.1.3 Hamzated root

extinguished munTafi منتطفئ

10.1.4 Assimilated root

These do not occur.

10.1.5 Hollow root: munfaal مُنفَع

The active and passive participles for hollow roots in Form VII have the same pattern; munfaal. If the verb itself has a passive, reflexive, or intransitive meaning, the AP will carry that passive or reflexive meaning. It is often difficult to distinguish between the Form VII AP and PP.

aligned munHaaz مُتاحاز

10.1.6 Defective root

introverted munTawin منطوق

10.2 Form VII passive participle (PP): munfaal منفعل

These are not frequent in occurrence because of the intransitivity or reflexivity of the meaning of this form. Form VII PPs that do occur tend to be used as nouns of place.

10.2.1 Sound/regular root

slope, incline munHadar مَحنَر and starting point munTalaq مَنطلق

lowland munxafaD منخفض

10.2.2 Geminate root: munfae منفعه

As noted in 10.1.2, the passive participle and active participle are indistinguishable in form.

10.2.3 Hamzated root

This does not occur.

10.2.4 Assimilated root

This does not occur.
10.2.5 Hollow root: *munfaal* مَنْفَالِ
As noted in 10.1.5, the passive participles and active participles of hollow roots in this form are identical.

10.2.6 Defective root: *munfa‘an* مَنْفَعٍ
enclosed, folded in  

10.3 Examples of Form VII participles in context

الدول غير المنحارة  
باب منزليق
al-duwal-u ghayr-u l-munHaazat-i  
baab-un munzaliq-un
non-aligned states  
a sliding door

tطروق منحدراته الأشجار.
tu-Tawwiq-u munHadaraat-i-hi l-ashjaar-u.
Trees encircle its slopes.
Form VII triliteral verb

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Form VII Sound root: انبسط، ينبسط

AP: أنبسط
PP: تنبسط
VN: ‘to be glad, happy’
Form VII  Geminate root: مَنَضِمَ / يَنَضِمُ 'to join with, affiliate with'

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Form VII triliteral verb: أَنْحَازُ/يْنَحَازُ ‘to take sides’

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Form VII Hollow root: أَنْحَازُ/يْنَحَازُ ‘to take sides’
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Form VII Defective root: انقض/انقضى

AP: أَنْقض
PP: أَنْقض
VN: ‘to elapse, expire’
Form VIII triliteral verb

1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: ifta‘al-a / ya-fta‘il-u

Form VIII verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that an infix /t/ is added to the Form I stem after the first radical. Thus Form VIII has the past tense stem iC₁taC₂aC₃ and the present tense stem -C₁taC₂iC₃. A prefixed elidable hamza with kasra is added to the past tense stem of Form VIII in order to make it pronounceable; this hamza and its vowel are deleted in the present tense, replaced by the present tense subject markers.

1.2 Meaning

Form VIII verbs may be reflexive or medio-passive in meaning, but they also express a wide range of meanings that are difficult to predict. They may express the consequences of a Form I verb action and are sometimes considered resultative (muTaaWi مطاوع), in the same way that Form VII verbs may be resultative of the action of a Form I verb. This is especially true for verb roots starting with the consonants hamza, waaw, raα, laam or nuun, because these roots do not occur in Form VII and often use Form VIII instead to express the resultative (e.g., Form I rafa‘-a/ya-raf‘-u ‘to raise’ and Form VIII irtafa‘-a /ya-rafta‘i-‘u ‘to be raised, to rise’). Form VIII is distinguished from Form VII by the ability to have a reciprocal meaning, that is, the action takes place mutually among several entities, e.g., Form I jama‘-a/ya-jma‘-u ‘to collect, gather (s.th.)’ and Form VIII ijtama‘-a /ya-jtami‘-u ‘to meet with each other; collect together.’¹

1.3 Transitivity

Form VIII verbs may be transitive or intransitive. Some are doubly transitive, such as i’tabar-a /ya‘- tabir-u ‘to consider (s.o.) (s.th.).’

¹ On this point see Fleisch 1979, II: 311.
1.4 Inflection

The prefixed hamzat al-waSl with kasra in the past tense stem is deleted in the present tense and replaced by the subject-marker prefix. The vowel of the present tense subject-marker prefix is fatHa and the stem vowel in the present tense is kasra (e.g., intaxab-a ‘to elect’).

1.5 Special phonological characteristics of Form VIII

The insertion of the extraneous consonant /t/ within the root sometimes affects the spelling and pronunciation of Form VIII verbs. Various forms of assimilation of the infixed taa√ to the initial root consonant occur, and with assimilated verb roots the taa√ itself assimilates the initial waaw or yaa√ completely.

1.5.1 Progressive assimilation

In progressive assimilation, the taa√ is influenced by the preceding sound in the word.

1.5.1.1 VELARIZATION: Where the initial root consonant is velarized (S, D, T, Z) and the infixed taa√ acquires the velarization feature. This results in a spelling change from taa√ to Taa√.

- to crash (into); collide with: iSTadam-a/ya-STadim-u (bi-) (root: S-d-m)
- to be disturbed, agitated: iDTarab-a/ya-DTarib-u (root: D-r-b)
- to be aware; examine, look into: iTTala√-a/ya-TTal√-u (alaa) (root: T-l-√)

1.5.1.2 VOICED ALVEOLARS: Where the initial root consonant is voiced and alveolar (d or z)

1. (1) daal-initial root: The taa√ assimilates totally to the daal.

- to be inserted; to assimilate: iddagham-a/ya-ddaghim-u (root: d-gh-m)
- to allege, claim: idda√-aa/ya-dda√-ii (root: d-√-w)

2. (2) zaay-initial root: In the zaay-initial root, the infixed taa√ partially assimilates to the /z/ sound by becoming a voiced dental stop (daal) instead of a voiceless dental stop (/t/). That is, instead of ifta√-al-a it becomes ifda√-al-a.
to flourish  
izdahar-a/ya-zdahir-u  
(root: z-h-r)

to be crowded  
izdaHam-a/ya-zdaHim-u  
(root: z-H-m)

to be doubled, be paired  
izdawaj-a/ya-zdawij-u  
(root: z-w-j)

to increase  
izdaad-a/ya-zaa-d-u  
(root: z-w-d)

### 1.5.1.3 INTERDENTALS: Where the initial root consonant is interdental (th, dh, Z)

The infixed *taa* assimilates completely to the interdental root consonant.

1. **thaa'-initial root**
   - to avenge, get revenge  
     iththa^a^r-a/ya-ththa^a^riv-u  
     (root: th-tha^a^)

2. **dhaal-initial root**: In *dhaal*-initial roots, the *dhaal* and infixed *taa* mutually influence one another, assimilating together as two *daals* (the *dhaal* loses its interdental quality, the *taa* acquires voicing):
   - to amass, save  
     iddaxar-a/ya-ddaxir-u  
     (root: dh-x-r)

3. **Zaa'-initial root**:
   - to be wronged, suffer injustice  
     iZZalam-a/ya-ZZalim-u  
     (root: Z-l-m)

### 1.5.2 Form VIII regressive assimilation

In regressive assimilation, the initial root consonant *waaw* or *yaa* is affected by the infixed *taa* and is assimilated into it. That is, for example, instead of the shape "*iwtaHad-a" (from the root w-H-d) the actual Form VIII verb is *ittaHad-a*.

- to be united  
  ittaHad-a/ya-ttaHid-u  
  (root w-H-d)

- to expand  
  ittasa^a^/ya-ttasi^a^  
  (root: w-s^a^)

- to face, take the direction of  
  ittajah-a/ya-ttajih-u  
  (root: w-j-h)

- to accuse  
  ittaham-a/ya-ttahim-u  
  (root w-h-m)
2 Regular or sound roots

to celebrate, have a party  
iHtafal-a/ya-Htafil-u

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>احتفال / يحتفل</td>
<td>celebrate, have a party</td>
</tr>
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</table>

to respect  
iHtaram-a/ya-Htarim-u

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<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>احترم / يحترم</td>
<td>respect</td>
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to earn  
iktasab-a/ya-ktsib-u

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<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>اكتسب / يكتسب</td>
<td>earn</td>
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to be different; to differ  
ixtalaf-a/ya-xtalif-u

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<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>اختلاف / يختلف</td>
<td>be different; to differ</td>
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2.1 Initial-nuun roots

A number of intransitive Form VIII verbs are from roots whose initial consonant is /n/, since these do not assume Form VII.

to move, be transferred  
intaqal-a/ya-ntaqil-u

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<tr>
<td>نقل / ينقل</td>
<td>move, be transferred</td>
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to spread out  
intashar-a/ya-ntashir-u

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<tr>
<td>نشر / ينشر</td>
<td>spread out</td>
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to elect  
intaxab-a/ya-ntaxib-u

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<td>انتخب / ينتخب</td>
<td>elect</td>
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3 Geminate (doubled) root Form VIII

to be interested, concerned (with)  
ihtamm-a/ya-htamm-u (bi-)

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<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>يهتم / بهتم</td>
<td>be interested, concerned (with)</td>
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to be spread, extended  
imtadd-a/ya-mtadd-u

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<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يمتدد / يمتد</td>
<td>be spread, extended</td>
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to occupy  
iHtall-a/ya-Htall-u

<table>
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<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يحتل / يحتل</td>
<td>occupy</td>
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4 Hamzated roots in Form VIII

4.1 Hamza-initial

to deliberate; to plot  
i’tamar-a/ya-’tamir-u

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<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>يتأمر</td>
<td>deliberate; to plot</td>
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to go well together; form a coalition  
i’talaf-a/ya-’talif-u

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يتألف</td>
<td>go well together; form a coalition</td>
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4.2 Hamza-medial

to be healed, to heal  
ilta’am-a/ya-lta’im-u

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<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يلتئم / يلتئم</td>
<td>be healed, to heal</td>
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4.3 Hamza-final

to begin  
ibtada’-a/ya-btadi’-u

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<td>يبدأ / يبدأ</td>
<td>begin</td>
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to be filled  
imtala’-a/ya-mtali’-u

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<tr>
<td>يملأ / يملأ</td>
<td>be filled</td>
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A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic
5 Assimilated roots in Form VIII
In Form VIII, the inflixed taa’ assimilates the initial semi-consonant waaw or yaa’, and doubles in strength (see above 1.5.2).

6 Hollow roots in Form VIII 
Hollow roots in Form VIII are usually inflected with 'alif as the long vowel and fatHa as the short vowel in the present and in the past iC1CaaC3-a /ya-C1CaaC3-u.

- to need: iHtaaj-ya Htaaj-u
- to assassinate: ightaal-ya-ghtaal-u
- to choose: ixtaar-ya-xtaar-u

6.1 Retention of medial semivowel
In some cases, a hollow root in Form VIII keeps its medial semi-consonant, as follows:

- to be doubled, paired: izdawaj-ya-zdawij-u
- to contain: iHtawaa-ya-Htawii

7 Defective roots in Form VIII
Defective roots in Form VIII inflect as -aa/-ii defectives:

- to meet, encounter (s.o.): iltaqaa-ya-ltaqii
- to be content, satisfied: iktafa-ya-ktafi
- to wear, be dressed (in): irtadaa-ya-rtadii

7.1 Hollow and defective
The hollow-defective Form VIII verb keeps its medial semi-consonant (usually waaw) as a strong consonant:

- to contain (s.th.): iHtawaa-ya-Htawii

8 Examples of Form VIII verbs in context
wa-ktashaf-a ’ayD-an ’axTaa-an and he also discovered mistakes
m aa ya-Htawii haadhaa l-mathHaf-u
what this museum contains

ta-ijdhib-u I-Tullaab-a I-jayyid-iina. It attracts good students.
Ya-truk-u li-kull-i insaan-in ’an ya-xtaar-a.
He leaves [it] to every person to choose.
9 Verbal nouns of Form VIII

9.1 Sound/regular root: ifti‘aaal

- respect: ihtiraam
- election: intixaab

9.1.1 With assimilation of taaʼ

- collision, crash: istidaam
- disturbance, unrest: idTiraab

9.2 Geminate root

- interest, concern: ihtimaam
- spreading: imtidaad

9.3 Hamzated root

- coalition: i’tilaaf

9.4 Assimilated root

- union:ittiHaad

9.5 Hollow root

- reserve; precaution: iHtiyaaT
- pleasure, delight: irtiyaaH

9.6 Defective root

In the defective root Form VIII verbal noun, the final defective root consonant is represented by a hamza.

- membership; intima’
- belonging
- disappearance ixtifaa’

2 In this particular root, the waaw behaves as a strong consonant. See section 6 above.
9.7 Form VIII verbal nouns in context

‘adam-u rtiyaaH-i l-jaanib-ayni
the discomfort of both sides

laa Htiraam-a lî-l-Huquq-i l-shaxSiyyat-i lî-l-insaan-i.
There is no respect for the personal rights of humans.

10 Form VIII participles

10.1 Form VIII active participle (AP): mufta‘il
In addition to carrying the meaning of doer of the action, the AP of Form VIII may sometimes convey a passive or resultative meaning, especially when derived from a resultative verb, e.g., muqtani ‘convinced’ or muttaHid ‘united.’

10.1.1 Sound/regular root: mufta‘il

respecting muHtarim
listener mustami
objecting mu‘tariD

10.1.2 Geminate root: mufta

Because of the sequence of identical second and third root consonants, the stem vowel kasra is deleted from this AP form. That is, instead of "mufta‘i‘, the form is mufta‘e. As a result of the deletion of the stem vowel in this AP form, the AP and PP are identical.

occupying muHtall

10.1.3 Hamzated root
Hamza-final: mufta

beginning mubtadi
filled mumtali

3 This stems from phonological restrictions on identical consonants separated by a short vowel.
10.1.4 Assimilated root: *mutta‘il* مُتَّعِلَ

united *muttaHid* مَتَّعدَ facing *muttajih* مُتَجِهَ
contacting *muttaSil* مَتَّصلِ accusing; *muttahim* مَتِّهمَ

10.1.5 Hollow root: *muftaal* مُفِتَال

relaxing; *murtaaH* مُرَتَاح double *muzdawij* مَزْدِوجُ
satisfied
accustomed *mu’taad* مَعْتَادٌ upon needing *muHtaaj* مَحْتَاجَ
(to); usual *(‘alaa)*

10.1.6 Defective root: *mufta‘in* مُفَتِعٌ

belonging *muntam-in* مَنْتِمَ containing *muHtaw-in* مَحتَورُ

10.1.7 Form VIII APs in context

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<tr>
<th>United States</th>
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<th>a double bind</th>
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<td>al-‘umam-u l-muttaHidat-u</td>
<td>maaaziq-un muzdawij-un</td>
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</table>

They have become convinced.

10.2 Form VIII passive participle (PP): *mufta‘al* مُفَتَعَلُ

In addition to acting as an adjective, in many cases the Form VIII passive participle acts as a noun of place, denoting the location where the Form VIII verbal activity takes place.

10.2.1 Strong/regular root: *mufta‘al* مُفَتَعَلُ

respected *muHtaram* مُحْتَرُمَ common
society *mujtama‘* مُجْمَعَ document *mustanad* مَسْتَنَادَ
elected *muntaxab* مُنتَخَبَ informed *muTTala‘* مُطَلَعَ

4 See note 2.
10.2.2 Geminate root: *mutfa*’

The AP and PP of geminate Form VIII verbs are identical. Context is often needed to differentiate the meaning.

occupied *muHtall* مَحْتَلٍ

---

10.2.2 Hamzated root

*Hamza- initial: mutfa*’*al* مُتْعَلٍ

conference *mu’tamar* مُتْمَرٍ

---

10.2.3 Assimilated root: *mutfa*’*al* مُتْعَلٍ

accused; suspected *muttham* مُتَّهٍ

---

10.2.4 Hollow root: *muftaal*

The AP and PP of hollow Form VIII verbs are identical. Context is needed to differentiate the meaning.

excellent, *mumtaaz* مُمَتَّازُ chosen *muxtaar* مُخَتَّارٌ distinguished

---

10.2.5 Defective root: *mutfa*’*an* مُفْتَعِيٍّ

required *muqtaD-an* مُقْتَدٍ level *mustaw-an* مُسْتَوِٰٓ

---

10.2.6 Examples of Form VIII PPs in context

- مصادر مطلعة *maSaadir-u muTTala’t-un*  helye المستندات الرسمية
- مُهتمٌ مُعاون *muTTala fi t-un laday-hi l-mustanadaat-u l-rasmiyyat-u.*
- اليوم *jadwal-u ’a’maal-in mushtarak-un*  جدول أعمال مشترك
- في الأراضي المحتلة *fi l-araaDii l-muHtallat-i*  in the occupied territories
- مُختارٌ مُختار *chosen muXtaar* مَخَتَّارٌ
- مُشتركة مُشتركة *mustaw-an fii l-araaDii l-muHtallat-i*
- مُهتمٌ مُعاون *muttham* مَتَّهٍ
- مُعْتَلٍ مُعْتَلٍ *mu’tamar* مُتْمَرٍ
- مُعْتَلٍ مُعْتَلٍ *mutfa’al* مَعْتَلٍ
- مُتْعَلٍ مُعْتَلٍ *muftaal* مَعْتَلٍ
Form VIII Sound root: **احترام، يُحترمُ**

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AP: Ωpônàrëoe
PP: Ωnônàrëoe
VN: ΩGôpàrMpG

‘to respect’
Form VIII Geminate root: ُتَحَلَّلُ 'to occupy'

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**ÉfCG oâr∏n∏nàrMpG tπnàrMnCG sπnàrMnCG**

**rπp∏nàrMnCG**

**oâr∏p∏oàrMoG tπnàrMoCG**

**sπnàrMnCG**

**nârfCG nâr∏n∏nàrMpG tπnàrënJ sπnàrënJ**

**rπp∏nàrënJ rπp∏nàrMpG**

**nâr∏p∏oàrMoG tπnàrëoJ**

**or**

**sπnàrënJ**

**n»pg râs∏nàrMpG tπnàrënJ sπnàrënJ**

**rπp∏nàqënj**

**sπoàrMoG tπnàrëoj**

**or**

**sπnàrënJ**

**ɪoàrfCG-ɪm/f ɪoàr∏n∏nàrMpG p¿qÓnàrënJ qÓnàrënJ qÓnàrënJ qÓnàrMpGÉ ª oàr∏p∏oàrMoG p¿qÓnàrëoj**

**nƒog sπnàrMpG tπnàrënj sπnàrënj**

**rπp∏nàqënj**

**sπoàrMoG tπnàrëoj**

**or**

**sπnàrënj**

**ɪog-ɪm qÓnàrMpG p¿qÓnàrënj qÓnàrënj qÓnàrënj qÓoàrMoG p¿qÓnàrëoj**

**ɪog-ɪf Éàs∏nàrMpG p¿qÓnàrënJ qÓnàrënJ qÓnàrënJÉ à s∏oàrMoG p¿qÓnàrëoj**

**ºoàrfnCG rºoàr∏n∏nàrMpG n¿ƒ q∏nàrënJG ƒ q∏nàrënJG ƒ q∏nàrënJG ƒ q∏oàrMoG n¿ƒ q∏nàrëoj**

**søoàrfnCG søoàr∏n∏nàrMpG nør∏p∏nàrënJ nør∏p∏nàrënJ nør∏p∏nàrënJ nør∏p∏oàrMoG nør∏n∏nàrëoj**

**ºogG ƒ q∏nàrMpG n¿ƒ q∏nàrënjG ƒ q∏nàrënjG ƒ q∏nàrënjG ƒ q∏oàrMoG n¿ƒ q∏nàrëoj**

**søog nør∏n∏nàrMpG nør∏p∏nàrënj nør∏p∏nàrënj nør∏p∏nàrënj nør∏p∏oàrMoG nør∏n∏nàrëoj**

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'to occupy'
Form VIII hamza-final root: ابتدأ, ابتدئ

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AP: 'to begin'
Form VIII triliteral verb

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Form VIII Hollow root: مُّخَتَارَ مُّخَتَارَ مُّخَتَارَ مُّخَتَارَ مُّخَتَارَ ‘to choose’

AP: مُّخَتَأَرَ PP: مُّخَتَأَرَ VN: مُّخَتَأَرَ

---

Form VIII triliteral verb 577
Form VIII Defective root: المُتَقَيَّمُ، يَتَقِيُّ "to encounter, meet"

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Form IX triliteral verb

1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: if'all-a / ya-f'all-u يَفْعَل
Form IX verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that the final root consonant is doubled and the first and second root consonants are not separated by a vowel. Form IX has the past tense stem icasC2aC3 and the present tense stem -C1C2aC3C3. A prefixed elidable hamza with kasra is added to the past tense stem of Form IX to make it pronounceable; this hamza and its vowel are deleted in the present tense, replaced by the present tense subject markers. The vowel of the present tense subject marker in Form IX is fatHa.

1.2 Meaning
Form IX verbs generally denote the acquisition of a color or a physical trait. They are normally based on roots occurring in the 'af'al adjectival pattern, as the colors, e.g., 'aswād 'black,' 'aHmar 'red,' or adjectives that describe physical defects. These verbs are infrequent in MSA.1

1.3 Transitivity
Form IX verbs are intransitive.

1.4 Inflection
The prefixed hamzat al-waSl with kasra in the past tense stem is deleted in the present tense and replaced by the subject-marker prefix. The vowel of the present tense subject-marker prefix is fatHa and the stem vowel in the present tense is fatHa.

2 Sound/regular roots in Form IX: if'all-a / ya-f'all-u يَفْعَل
   to be or become green ixDarr-a/ya-xDarr-u إِخْضَرُ / يَخْضِرُ

1 Kouloughli (1994, 207) reports their occurrence as 0.5 percent of all the augmented forms of the verb (II-X).
to be or become red; to blush  
\( \text{ihmarr-a/ya-hmarr-u} \)  
 harmed / harmed

to be or become yellow;  
to become pale  
\( \text{ifsarr-a/ya-sfarr-u} \)  
اصفر / يصفر

3 Geminate (doubled) roots in Form IX
These roots are rare in Form IX.

4 Hamzated roots in Form IX
These roots are rare in Form IX.

5 Assimilated roots in Form IX
These roots are rare in Form IX.

6 Hollow roots in Form IX
The semi-consonant of the hollow root stabilizes in Form IX and acts as a strong consonant (\( \text{waaw} \) or \( \text{yaa} \)):

- to become black  
\( \text{iswadd-a/ya-swadd-u} \)  
سود / يسود

- to be or become white  
\( \text{ibyaDD-a/ya-byaDD-u} \)  
 أبيض / بيبيس

- to squint; be cross-eyed  
\( \text{iHwall-a/ya-Hwall-u} \)  
احول / بحول

- to become crooked  
\( \text{i\\text{'s}wajj-a/ya-\\text{'}s}wajj-u} \)  
اعوج / يعوج

7 Defective roots in Form IX: rare

8 Form IX verbs in context
\( \text{i\\text{'s}wadd-a/ya-swadd-u} \)  
The tree became crooked.

9 Verbal nouns of Form IX

9.1 Sound/regular root: \( \text{if\\text{‘}ilaal} \)  
\( \text{ixDiraar} \)  
أخضرار

- greenness  

- blushing  
\( \text{ihmiraar} \)  
حرار

- yellowness; pallor  
\( \text{ifsiraar} \)  
اصفرار
9.2 Hollow root: *ifaalaal*

- squinting \( iHwilaal \)
- crookedness \( i`wijaaj \)

10 Form IX participles

10.1 Form IX participles (AP and PP): *mufo'all*

Form IX active participles and passive participles have the same pattern. However, passive participles in this form are exceedingly rare, since the verbs are intransitive.

**Strong/regular root:**

- blushing \( muHmarr \)

**Hollow root:**

- blackening \( muswadd \)
Form IX Sound root: ṭāḥāra, ṭāḥāra  
AP: ṭāḥāra  
PP: ṭāḥāra  
VN: ‘to become red’

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*Form IX Sound root: ṭāḥāra, ṭāḥāra  
AP: ṭāḥāra  
PP: ṭāḥāra  
VN: ‘to become red’*
Form IX trilateral verb

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Form IX Hollow root: أسودة | سودة | مسودة | مسودة | مسودة |

AP: أسودة | PP: سودة | VN: ‘to turn black’
Form X triliteral verb

1 Basic characteristics

1.1 Pattern: \textit{istaC}_1C_2aC_3- / \textit{ya-staC}_1C_2iC_3-

Form X verbs are augmented with respect to Form I in that a prefixed \textit{-st-} is added and the first and second root consonants are not separated by a vowel. Form X has the past tense stem \textit{istaC}_1C_2aC_3- and the present tense stem \textit{-staC}_1C_2iC_3-. A prefixed elidable hamza with kasra is added to the past tense stem of Form X to make it pronounceable; this hamza and its vowel are deleted in the present tense, replaced by the present tense subject markers. The vowel of the present tense subject marker in Form X is \textit{fatHa}.

1.2 Meaning

Form X verbs may be requestative or estimative but may also reflect other semantic modifications of the base form. Examples of requestatives include:

- to request guidance \textit{istarshad-a/ya-starshid-u} \\
  (from s.o.)
- to request or seek explanation \textit{istafsar-a/ya-stafsir-u} \\

Examples of estimatives include:

- to consider (s.th.) good \textit{istaHsan-a/ya-staHsin-u} \\
- to consider (s.th.) strange \textit{istaghrab-a/ya-staghrib-u} \\

Form X may be the reflexive of Form IV: Wright writes (1967, I:44): “Form X converts the factitive signification of Form IV into the reflexive or middle.” For example, Form IV \textit{a’add-a} / \textit{yu-idd-u} ‘to prepare (s.th.)’ and Form X \textit{ista’add-a/ya-sta’idd-u} ‘stayed ‘to prepare one’s self, get ready.’

1.3 Transitivity

Form X verbs may be transitive or intransitive.\footnote{Kouloughli (1994, 208) reports that Form X is transitive more than 75 percent of the time.}
1.4 Inflection
The prefixed *hamzat al-wasl* with *kasra* in the past tense stem is deleted in the present tense and replaced by the subject-marker prefix. The vowel of the present tense subject-marker prefix is *fatHa* and the stem vowel in the present tense is *kasra* (e.g., *istaqbal-a* /y-a-staqbil-u ‘to receive (s.o.)’).

2 Sound/regular root
- to consume: *istahlap-a/y-stahlik-u*
- to discover; invent: *istahnabT-a/y-stanbiT-u*
- to disdain; detest: *istankar-a/y-stankir-u*
- to invest: *istathmar-a/y-stathmir-u*

3 Geminate (doubled) roots in Form X
- to continue, to last: *istamarr-a/y-stamirr-u*
- to be independent: *istaqall-a/y-staqill-u*

4 Hamzated roots in Form X
- to rent, to hire: *ista’jarp-a/y-sta’jir-u*
- to resume: *ista’naf-a/y-sta’nif-u*

5 Assimilated roots in Form X
The root-initial semi-consonant *waaw* or *yaa* acts as a regular consonant in the inflected verb forms.
- to import: *istawrad-a/y-stawrid-u*
- to colonize, settle: *istawTan-a/y-stawTin-u*
- to awaken, wake up: *istayqaZ-a/y-stayqiZ-u*

6 Hollow roots in Form X
Hollow roots in Form X, whether based on roots with *waaw* or *yaa* as the medial semi-consonant, inflect with long /ii/ in the present tense stem.
- to benefit (from or by): *istafaad-a/y-stafiid-u (min)*
- to be able (to do s.th.): *istaTaTii-a/y-staTii-u*
7 Defective roots in Form X
Defective roots in Form X inflect as -aa/-ii defectives.

- to resign: istaqaal-a/ya-staqiil-\(u\)
  (root: \(q-y-l\) / \(q-y-l\))
  \(\text{استقال / يستقيل} \)

8 Examples of Form X verbs in context

- Hattaa \(\text{ind-a-maa} \ \text{staDaafat-i} \ \text{l-qimmat-a} \)
  \(\text{لا يستطيعون} \ \text{الذهاب} \)
  even when it hosted the summit [conference]
  \(\text{They are not able} \ \text{to go} \).

- \(\text{fii ziyarat-in li-faransa} \ \text{ta-staghriq-u} \ \text{\(\text{\^usbuu\(\text{\-an} ; \text{on a visit to France that lasts} \ \text{a week} \)} \)
  \(\text{تستمر فترة الخلوج من} \ \text{تشرين الثاني} \ \text{حتى} \ \text{آذار} \)
  \(\text{ta-stamirr-u} \ \text{fatrat-u} \ \text{l-thuluuj-i} \ \text{min tishriin-a} \ \text{l-thaani} \ Hattaa \ \text{\(\text{\^aadhaar-a} \)} \)
  The snow season lasts from November until March.

9 Form X verbal nouns: \(\text{istif\text{\'aal}} \)

9.1 Sound/regular root

- inquiry: istixbaar \(\text{\(\text{استخبأر} \)} \)
- use: istixdaam \(\text{\(\text{استخدام} \)} \)
- investment: istithmaar \(\text{\(\text{invest} \)} \)
- disdair: istinkaar \(\text{\(\text{disdair} \)} \)

9.2 Geminate root

The verbal noun of the geminate Form X verb is regular, using the \(\text{istif\text{\'aal}} \) pattern and splitting the identical second and third root consonants:

- continuation: istimraar \(\text{\(\text{استمرأر} \)} \)
- merit, worthiness: istiHqaaq \(\text{\(\text{استحقاق} \)} \)
- claim
- preparation: isti\text{\'}daad \(\text{\(\text{استعداد} \)} \)
- independence: istiqlaal \(\text{\(\text{استقلال} \)} \)

9.3 Hamzated root

The verbal noun of hamzated roots of Form X is usually regular in formation. The \text{hamza} takes a seat appropriate to its phonetic context.

- renting: isti\text{\'}jaar \(\text{\(\text{استيجار} \)} \)
- resumption: isti\text{\'}naaf \(\text{\(\text{استئناف} \)} \)
9.4 Assimilated root: استِعَال
In the verbal noun of assimilated-root Form X, the root-initial waaw assimilates to the preceding kasra and becomes long /ii/:

importation  istiiraad
awakening  istiqaaZ

9.5 Hollow root: استِفَاعَة
The verbal noun of Form X hollow verbs has the form istifaala استِفاَة spelled with taa’ marbuuTa.

benefit  istifaada
response  istijaaba

9.6 Defective root: استِفَعَاء
The verbal noun of defective roots in Form X has the pattern istif fi ثَمَرَت استِفاَة. The weakness of the final root element converts into hamza:

exception  istithnaa
plebiscite, referendum

9.7 Form X verbal nouns in context

لأنها استحقاق ديمقراطيّة إلى استثمار بلايين الدولارات
لي-الناه stiiHqaq-un ilaa stithmaar-i balaayiin-i
ديموعقرااتيي-وان ldiiulaaarrii-
because it is a democratic claim to the investment of billions of dollars

في العيد الخامس لاستقلال لبنان
فِي الْعَيْدِ السَّادِسِ لِلْفْلَتَامِيْنِ ذِلْقَلَانِ-ان l-istiqlaal-i lubnaan-a
on the 50th [anniversary] celebration of the independence of Lebanon

10 Form X participles

10.1 Form X active participle (AP): mustaf’il

10.1.1 Sound/regular root

consumer  mustahlık
orientalist  mustashriq

\[^2\) Instead of *istiwraad or *istiwTaan. The sequence /iw/ is usually avoided in Arabic.\]
10.1.2 Geminate root: mustafi

continuous mustamirr
ready musta‘idd
entitled; worthy

10.1.3 Hamzated root

tenant, renter

10.1.4 Assimilated root

importer colonizer

10.1.5 Hollow root: mustafi

circular

10.1.6 Defective root: mustaf

doing without

10.1.7 Form X APs in context

10.2 Form X passive participle (PP): mustaf

In addition to acting as an adjective, the Form X passive participle may also serve as a noun of place, denoting the location where the Form X activity takes place.

10.2.1 Sound/regular root: mustaf

laboratory colony
future strange
swamp used

10.2.2 Geminate root

This root type is rare in the passive participle.
10.2.3 Hamzated root

resumed musta’naf مُسْتَأنَفُ rented musta’jar مَسْتَأْجِرُ

10.2.4 Assimilated root: mustaf’al مُسْتَفْعَلُ

settlement mustawTana مَسْتوطنةٌ imported mustawrad مَسْتوّرُ

10.2.5 Hollow root: mustafaal مُسْتَفْالُ

borrowed; false; musta’aar مَسْتَعَار counsellor mustashaar مَسْتَشاَرٌ

10.2.6 Defective root: mustaf’an مَسْتَفْعَانُ

hospital mustashfan مُسْتَشْفَان مُسْتَثْنَى excepted mustathnan مَسْتَثْنَى

10.2.7 Form X PPs in context

أسماء مستعارة

asmaa’-un musta‘arat-un

pseudonyms (‘borrowed names’) setting the foundation stone for the hospital

في المستقبل القريب

fii l-mustaqbal-i l-qariib-i

in the near future

A hundred million dollars is not unusual.
**Form X Sound root:** طفال طفال طفال طفال طفال طفال

**AP:** طفال

**PP:** طفال

**VN:** طفال 'to use'

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**A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic**

590
Form X Geminate root: استمرُ، يستمرُ AP: مستمر في | PP: VN: 'to last'

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Form X triliteral verb 591
Form X hamza-initial root: مَسَّأِجَرَّ ِّيَسَّأِجَرُّ ِّيَسَّأِجَرُّ ِّيَسَّأِجَرُّ ‘to rent’

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Form X Assimilated root: استورد، يستورد

AP: مستورد
PP: مستورد
VN: مستورد

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**Indicative**

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**Subjunctive**

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**Imperative**

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**Form X Hollow root:** `إِسْتَطَاعَ، إِسْتَطَيعَ`  
**AP:** `مُسْتَطَيعَ`  
**PP:** `مُسْتَطَاعَ`  
**VN:** `‘to be able’`
### Form X Defective root: ِمُستَثنِيِّن، بِمُستَثنِيِّن ِ‘to except’

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### Indicative | Subjunctive | Jussive | Imperative |
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### AP: ِمُستَثنِيِّن, PP: أَتَنْي | VN: أَتَنْي، يُستَثنِيِّن ‘to except’
These forms of the triliteral verb are chiefly archaic and/or poetic in use. For the sake of completeness, they are described briefly here, but few examples occurred in the corpus, and even in Classical Arabic, they are rare. Examples are taken from Wright 1967, I:43–47 or Fleisch 1979, II: 330–40.¹

1 Form XI: if’aal-a افعال / ya-f’aal-u
This form is related to Form IX and usually denotes a similar concept: the acquisition or existence of a color or physical trait.² It is prefixed with hamzat al-wasl and is distinguished by the lengthening of the stem vowel from fatHa to ’alif, and the doubling of the final consonant, giving the pattern iC₁C₂aaC₃C₃-a/ya-C₁C₂aaC₃C₃-u. It is intransitive.

- to become temporarily red: iHmaarr-a/ya-Hmaarr-u
- to become temporarily yellow: iSfaarr-a/ya-Sfaarr-u
- to be dark brown: ismaarr-a/ya-smaarr-u

1.1 Verbal noun: if’ilaal افعال
turning temporarily red: iHmiiraar

2 Form XII: if’aw-al-a افعال / ya-f’aw’il-u
Form XII has the pattern iC₁C₂awC₃C₃-a/ya-C₁C₂awC₃C₃-u, with doubling of the medial radical and insertion of a waaw between the two doubled radicals. It is

¹ Fleisch (1979, II:330–35) provides examples and discussion of the etymology of these forms.
² See Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 185. Wright (1967, I:43–44) states: “According to some grammarians, the distinction between the ninth and the eleventh forms is, that the ninth indicates permanent colours or qualities, the eleventh those that are transitory or mutable . . . Others hold that Form XI indicates a higher degree of the quality than IX.”
prefixed with *hamzat al-waṣl*. In meaning it, like Form IX, usually indicates color or physical quality.

- to be convex; be humpbacked: *iḥdawdab-a ʿay-Hdawdib-u* 

2.1 Verbal noun: *iḥdawdab-a* 

- becoming humpbacked: *iḥdīdaab* 

2.2 Active participle: *muḥdawdib* 

- mounded; humpbacked: *muḥdawdib* 

3 Form XIII: *iḥawwal-a / ya-ʿawwil-u* 

Form XIII inserts a doubled waaw between the second and third root consonants, yielding the pattern iC₁C₂awwaC₃ -a/ya-C₁C₂awwiC₃ -u. It, too, usually denotes color or quality but may also denote an action.

- to last long: *ixrawwaT-a/ya-xrawwiT-u* 
- to mount a camel without a saddle: *iʿlawwaT-a/ya-ʿlawwiT-u* 

3.1 Verbal noun: *iḥiwwaal* 

- lasting long: *ixriwwaaT* 

4 Form XIV: *iḥanlaal-a / ya-ʿanllil-u* 

Form XIV has the pattern iC₁C₂anC₃aC₄ -a/ya-C₁C₂anC₃iC₄-u, with doubling of the third radical and insertion of a *nuun*³ between the second and third radicals. It is prefixed with *hamzat al-waṣl*. In meaning it, like Form IX, usually indicates color or physical quality.

- to be dark: *iṣḥankaak-a* 

4.1 Verbal noun: *iṣḥiṅlaal* 

- being dark: *iṣḥinkaak* 

5 Form XV: *iḥanlaa / ya-ʿanllii* 

Form XV resembles Form XIV in that there is an inserted *nuun* between the second and third radicals of the root. However, there is an added suffix /-aa/ which turns

³ Note that this form with its inserted *nuun* correlates closely with Form III of quadriliteral verbs (also very rare): e.g., *ibranshaq-a / ya-ibranshiq-u* ‘to bloom.’ The difference is that in the quadriliteral, the third and fourth root consonants are different. See Chapter 33, section 4.
the verb into a defective of the -aa/-ii type. It has the pattern $iC_1C_2anC_3aa/ya-C_1C_2anC_3ii$.

- to be stout and strong: $i\text{‘}lan\text{‘}a/y\text{‘}lan\text{‘}di$  
- to conquer, vanquish: $i\text{sr}an\text{‘}a/y\text{sr}an\text{‘}di$

5.1 Verbal noun: $if^{\text{‘}in\text{‘}a}$  
- conquering: $i\text{sr}in\text{‘}aa$

\begin{align*}
\text{اعْلَنْي} & / \text{اعْلَنْي} \\
\text{اسْرَنْدُي} & / \text{اسْرَنْدُي}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{اصْرَنْدِاء} & / \text{اصْرَنْدِاء}
\end{align*}
1 Basic characteristics of quadriliteral verb roots (‘af‘aal rubaa‘iyah)

Quadriliteral verb roots contain four consonants instead of three (e.g., zaxraf-a / yu-zaxrif-u ‘to embellish, adorn’ or fahras-a / yu-fahris-u ‘to compile an index, to index’). Sometimes the four consonants are all different and sometimes they are reduplicated.

1.1 Reduplicated quadriliteral verbs
In reduplicated quadriliteral verbs the first two consonants repeat themselves (somewhat like English words such as chitchat, zigzag, or mishmash). These verbs usually refer to repeated motion or sound. When referring to a sound, they are onomatopoeic; that is, they reflect or mimic the sound itself (e.g., rafraf-a / yu-rafrif-u ‘to flutter,’ waswas-a / yu-waswis-u ‘to whisper’).

1.2 Complex roots
Complex roots combine elements from more than one root into a quadriliteral verb (e.g., basmala / yu-basmil-u ‘to say bi-smi llaah-i ‘in the name of God’).

1.3 Borrowed roots
Quadriliteral verb patterns are sometimes used to borrow verbal concepts from another language (e.g., talfan-a / yu-talfin-u ‘to telephone’).

1.4 Forms
Quadriliteral roots occur in four different forms or stem classes, labeled with roman numerals I-IV, along the same lines as the labeling system for the ten forms of the triliteral verb. Forms I and II of the quadriliterals are by far the most common in MSA.

2 Form I: fa‘al-l-a / yu-fa‘al-l-u

2.1 Pattern
The consonant-vowel distribution pattern for Form I of the quadriliteral verb mirrors Form II of the triliteral: C1aC2C3aC4 / yu-C1aC2C3iC4. This is possible because
the triliteral Form II is increased by one consonant by virtue of the doubling of its second radical. The difference between them is that in a quadriliteral verb Form I, the two middle consonants are different, whereas in a Form II triliteral, they are the same.

2.2 Transitivity
Form I quadrilaterals may be transitive or intransitive.

2.3 Regular quadrilaterals
In regular or sound quadrilateral roots, all the consonants are different. Most quadrilaterals of this type contain a “liquid” consonant: /r/, /l/, /n/.1

2.4 Reduplicated quadrilaterals
In these roots the first two consonants are repeated, either in imitation of a sound or to refer to a movement, especially a repeated movement.2

2.5 Complex roots

2.5.1 Acronymic roots
This involves taking the initial letters of a string of words in a traditional, formulaic saying, or an often-repeated phrase, and turning them into a lexical root. It is

---

1 Certain quadriliteral verbs appear to be expanded triliterals, with liquid or continuant phonemes /r/, /l/, /m/, /n/, or /w/ added to the root. They are called *mulHaqaat bi-l-rubaa* for example: zaHlaf-a, zaHlif-u ‘to roll along’ from z-H-f ‘advance slowly.’

2 For a semantic analysis of reduplicated quadriliteral verbs see Procházka 1993.
somewhat like creating an acronym, but in Arabic this particular usage creates verbs that denote saying a set phrase.

basmal-a/yu-basiml-u

وسم / يَبَسَمُ

to say: bi-ism-i  الله (‘in the name of God’)

Hawqal-a/yu-Hawqil-u

حوَلُ / يَحوَلُ

to say:

لا حَوَلَ وَلَا قَوَةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

(There is no power and no strength save in God)

fadhlak-a/yu-fadhlik-u

فَذَلَكَ / يَفْذَلِكُ

to say

فَذَلَكَ كَذَا وَكَذَا

fa-dhaalika kadhaa wa-kadhaa . . .

(‘And that is thus and so . . .’)

2.5.2 Compound roots
These verbs combine consonants from two roots. They are mostly of older usage.

to worship the sun

‘absham-a/yu-‘abshim-u

عبِشَمُ / يَعِشُّمُ

(from roots: ‘-b-d ‘to serve, to worship’ and ش-م-س ‘sun’)

to be petrified

jalmad-a/yu-jalmid-u

جَلَّمَ / يَجَلَّمُ

(from roots: ج-م-د ‘freeze’ and ج-م-د ‘harden’)

2.6 Borrowed quadriliterals
Verbal concepts from foreign languages can sometimes be transferred into Arabic through use of the quadriliteral verb pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Quadriliteral Verb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to telephone</td>
<td>talfan-a/yu-talfin-u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to televise</td>
<td>talfaz-a/yu-talfiz-u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to philosophize</td>
<td>falsaf-a/yu-falsif-u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Form II quadriliterals: tafa‘lal-a / ya-tafa‘lal-u

3.1 Pattern
The consonant-vowel distribution pattern for Form II quadriliterals mirrors Form V of the triliteral verb: taCaCCaC-a /ya-taCaCCaC-u.
3.2 Meaning
In meaning, this form is often the reflexive, resultative, or passive of the Form I quadriliteral.

- become electrified: takahrab-a/ya-takahrab-u
- to decline, go down: tadahwar-a/ya-tadahwar-u
- to be crystallized: tabalwar-a/ya-tabalwar-u
- to adorn one’s self, dress up: tabahraj-a/ya-tabahraj-u
- to acclimatize (o.s.): ta’aqlam-a/ya-ta’aqlam-u
- to become dilapidated: taDa’Da’-a/ya-taDa’Da’-u

3.3 Denominals
Form II quadrilaterals may be denominalizations, as in the following verb:

- to concentrate, be centered: tamarkaz-a/ya-tamarkaz-u
  - concentrated

(from the noun of place, markaz ‘center’ from the root r-k-z)

3.4 Verbs of comportment
Form II quadrilaterals may also have a meaning of acting or behaving in a certain way, e.g.,

- to play the philosopher: tafalsaf-a/ya-tafalsaf-u
- act like a philosopher
- to act American: ta’amrak-a/ya-ta’amrak-u

4 Form III: if’anfal-a / ya-f’annil-u
This form of the quadrilateral verb is rare in MSA. It has an infix /n-/ inserted between the second and third radicals of the root and corresponds in meaning to form VII of the triliteral roots. It is normally intransitive. No occurrences of this form of the verb occurred in the data covered for this book. Examples include:

- to bloom, to flourish: ibranshaq-a/ya-branshiq-u
  (Wright 1967, I:49)
- to be proud, raise the nose: ixranTam-a/ya-xranTim-u
  (Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 263)

3 Whereas Wright (1967) as well as Haywood and Nahmad (1962) give this Form as III, other authors, including the MECAS grammar (1965, 225) and Sterling (1904, 26) give it as Form IV of the quadrilateral, and Form IV as Form III.
5 Form IV: \textit{if\'alall-a} / \textit{ya-f\'alill-u}\\نَفَعْلُ / نَفَعْلُ\\Form IV of the quadriliteral corresponds in meaning to Form IX of the triliteral verb. The final radical is doubled, giving the pattern \textit{iCCaCaCC-a}, \textit{ya-CCaCiCC-u}. It denotes an intensity of quality or degree and is intransitive.

- to be calm, serene, reassured: \(\text{iTma}^*\text{ann-a/ya-Tma}^*\text{inn-u}\) 
  \(\text{اطمَانُ / رَطْمَانُ}\)
- to vanish away, disappear: \(\text{iDmaHall-a/ya-DmaHall-u}\) 
  \(\text{بضمَحلُ / ضَمْحُالِ}\)
- to shudder: \(\text{iqsha}^*\text{arr-a/ya-qsha}^*\text{irr-u}\) 
  \(\text{أَقْسَعُ / يَقْسُعُ}\)
- to stretch: \(\text{ishra}^*\text{abb-a/ya-shra}^*\text{ibb-u}\) 
  \(\text{إِشْرَبُ / يِشْرَبُ}\)
- to shrink, shudder, recoil: \(\text{ishma}^*\text{azz-a/ya-shma}^*\text{izz-u}\) 
  \(\text{اِشْمَازُ / يِشْمَازُ}\)
- to become dark, gloomy: \(\text{ikfaharr-a/ya-kfahirr-u}\) 
  \(\text{اًكَفَهُ / يَكَفُهُ}\)

6 Examples of quadriliteral verbs in context

Form I:

\(\text{بَحْلَقُ فِي عَيْنِهَا.} \quad \text{الكِتَابُ الَّذِي لَمْ تُفْقِرَ.}\)

\(\text{b}a\text{Hlaq-a} \ fii \ ʻayn-ay-haa. \quad \text{al-kutub-u} \ llatii \ lam \ tu-fahras}\)

He stared into her eyes.

\(\text{يَتَرَجَّمُ إِلَى لُغَتِهِ.} \quad \text{وَيَتَرَجَّمُونَهُ خَطَاً.}\)

\(\text{yu-tarjim-u}^*\text{ilaa lughat-i-hi.} \quad \text{wa-yu-tarjim-uuna-hu} \ xaTT-an.}\)

He translates into his language.

And they translate it literally.

Form II:

\(\text{تَزَاحَّجَ الصَّخَرَة.} \quad \text{شَيْبَاً فِي شَيْبَاً يَمْكُنُ أَنْ يَتَزَاحَّجُ.}\)

\(\text{tazaHzaH-at-i} \ l-Saxrat-u. \quad \text{shay}^*-\text{an fa-shay}^*-\text{an yu-mkin-u}^*\text{an} \ ya-tadaHraj-a.}\)

The rock moved.

It can deteriorate (‘it is possible that it deteriorate’) bit by bit.

Form IV:

\(\text{وضعُ بِطَمَانَةٍ فِي جَمِيعِ الْمَواطِنِين.} \quad \text{هَيْثُ تَشْرَبُ الْطَّرِيق.}\)

\(\text{w}a\text{D}^*-\text{un} \ ya-Tma^*\text{inn-u} \ fii-hi \ jamii^-\text{u} \ l-muwaaTin-iina} \quad \text{Hayth-u} \ ta-shra^*\text{ibb-u} \ l-Tariiq-u\)

where the road stretches

a situation in which all citizens can be reassured
7 Quadriliteral verbal nouns

7.1 Form I quadriliteral verbal nouns:

7.1.1 *fa’lala* ~ *fi’lila*

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>chattering</td>
<td>tharthara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>link, chain</td>
<td>silsila</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.2 *fu’laal* ~ *fa’laal* ~ *fi’laal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proof, evidence</td>
<td>burhaan earthquake zilzaal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 Form II quadriliteral verbal nouns: *tafa’lul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deterioration</td>
<td>tadahwur sequence; tasalsul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Form III quadriliteral verbal nouns: *if’inlaal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flourishing</td>
<td>ibrinshaq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4 Form IV quadriliteral verbal nouns: *if’illaal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>serenity</td>
<td>iTmi’naan vanishing iDmiHlaal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5 Quadriliteral verbal nouns in context:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to stop the decline of the dinar a chain of mountains</td>
<td>li-waqf-i <em>tadahwur</em>-i l-diinaar silsilat-u jibal-in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Form I quadriliteral participles

Quadriliteral verb participles are formed on the same basis as participles of triliteral verb roots. There are active and passive participles, all prefixed with /mu-/ and differentiated by a stem vowel /-i-/ for the active participle and stem vowel /-a-/ for the passive participle. They occur both as nouns and as adjectives.

8.1 Quadriliteral active participle (QAP)

8.1.1 Form I QAP: *mufa’lil*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engineer</td>
<td>muhandis explosive mufarqi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

804  A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic
8.1.2 Form II QAP: muta‘il

deteriorating mutadahwir crystalline mutabalwir

8.1.3 Form III QAP: rare

8.1.4 Form IV QAP: muf‘alil

serene, calm muTma‘inn dusky, gloomy mukfahirr

8.1.5 QAPs in context

هم في حال صحة متدهمة.
hum fii Haal-i SiHHat-in mutadahwirat-in.
They are in a deteriorating state of health.

بناءيات حي المهندسين
binaayaat-u Hayy-i l-muhandis-iina
the buildings of the Muhandisin (‘engineers’) quarter

8.2 Quadrilateral passive participle (QPP)

8.2.1 Form I passive participle: mufa‘il

camp mu‘askar embellished muzarkash
series musalsal crystallized mubalwar
old-timer muxaDram electrified mukahrab

8.2.2 Form II QPP: mutafa‘il

This form is rare.

8.2.3 Form III and Form IV QPP

These are rare.

8.2.4 Quadrilateral PPs in context

مسلسل جديد
musalsal-un jadiid-un
a new series

مقالات مترجمة من العربية
maqaalaat-un mutarjamat-un min-a l-arabiyat-i
articles translated from Arabic
Moods of the verb I: indicative and subjunctive

Mood or “mode” refers to the Arabic verb properties indicative, subjunctive, and jussive. These categories reflect or are caused by contextual modalities that condition the action of the verb. For example, the indicative mood tends to be characteristic of straightforward, factual statements or questions, while the subjunctive mood reflects an attitude toward the action such as doubt, desire, intent, wishing, or necessity, and the jussive mood, when used for the imperative, indicates an attitude of command, request, or need for action on the part of the speaker.

In Arabic, mood marking is only done on the present tense or imperfective stem; there are no mood variants for the past tense. The Arabic moods are therefore non-finite; that is, they do not refer to points in time and are not differentiated by tense. Tense is inferred from context and other parts of the clause.

1 The indicative mood: al-muDaari al-marfuu

The indicative mood is considered the basic mood; it is used in factual statements or straightforward questions. It is also used in statements about the future, either with the future markers sa-n`°S or sawfa سوف, or in a context that refers to a future action. A full paradigm of the indicative mood for a regular Form I verb is as follows:

1 An additional mood, the “energetic” exists in Classical Arabic but not in MSA. It denotes an intensified affirmation of action. See Wright 1967, I:61ff. and Fischer 2002, 110 and 118 for more on the energetic mood.

2 The question of mood marking (on verbs) is a central one in traditional Arabic grammar, along with case marking (on nouns and adjectives). Moods fall under the topic of morphology because they are indicated in Arabic word structure, that is, they are usually marked by suffixes or modifications of suffixes attached to the present tense verb stem. Moods also, however, fall under the topic of syntax because their use is determined either by particles which govern their occurrence, or by the narrative context in general, including attitude of the speaker and intended meaning. They are therefore referred to in some reference works and theoretical discussions as “morphosyntactic” categories, combining features of morphology and syntax.
1.2 Indicative mood paradigm

Present tense stem -َrif - عرف - 'know'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>أَرِفْ</td>
<td>نَرِفْ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفَانَ</td>
<td>تَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>نِرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>تَرِفُ</td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td>تَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>تَرِفُ</td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td>تَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>يَرِفْ</td>
<td>يَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>يَرِفُانَ</td>
<td>يَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>يَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>تَرِفُ</td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td>تَرِفُونَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>تَرِفُانَ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the suffix on the verb that indicates the mood. The indicative mood shows the full form of the suffixes, and that is one reason why it is considered the base form. Particular indicators of the indicative are:

1. the short vowel *Damma* (-َu-) suffix on five of the persons (I, we, you m.sg., he and she);³
2. the /-na/ suffix after the long vowel /-uu- / in the second and third persons masculine plural and after /-ii/ in the second person feminine singular;
3. the /-ni/ suffix after the long vowel /-aa- / in the dual.

1.3 Examples of indicative in context

1.3.1 Statements

She knows everything. We welcome our customers.

³ It is this *Damma* suffix that leads to the name of the mood, because the *Damma* mood marker resembles the *Damma* case marker on nouns. Both the indicative mood and the nominative case are called *marfuع* in Arabic.
He leaves Cairo today. They include it in the programs.

We are honored. It lasts two hours.

1.3.2 Questions

ماذا تفعل؟ لماذا تحب؟

What does it (f.) do? Why do you like it (m.)?

1.3.3 Future tense

1.3.3.1 WITH FUTURE MARKER

سَيْعِقُونِ اجْتِمَاعًا.

It will get better. They will hold a meeting.

1.3.3.2 BY CONTEXT

يَغَادِرُ العَاصِمَةُ غَدًا.

He leaves (will leave) the capital tomorrow.

1.3.4 Passive indicative

The indicative may occur in the passive voice, for example:

أسعار لا تُصِدَقْ!

Unbelievable prices!

‘السَّبِيعَاتُ لَيْسَ أَوَّرًا.

It is used to make papers. ('prices that are not believed')

2 The subjunctive mood: al-muDaari al-manSuub

The subjunctive mood is a form of the present tense, or imperfect, that occurs under specific circumstances in Arabic, taking the form of a distinct subset of inflectional endings on the imperfect verb stem, in other words, a separate conjugation. It has the following features: the short inflectional vowel suffix is fatHa (instead of the Damma of the indicative). For the longer verb suffixes, such as
Moods of the verb 1: indicative and subjunctive

[u-nun], [i-nun], and [a-nun], the nun and its short vowel are dropped, so the suffixes are left as long vowels [u-uu], [i-ii], [a-aa].

Because of the use of fatHa instead of Damma as the short vowel suffix, the subjunctive mood is referred to in Arabic as al-muDaari al-manSuub المضارع المنصوب, using the same term for the subjunctive as for the accusative case on nouns and adjectives (al-manSuub المنصوب).

**Subjective mood paradigm**

Present tense stem -rif -‘know’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td>อุรฟ์</td>
<td>นิรฟ-</td>
<td>นิรfs-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'a-rif-a</td>
<td></td>
<td>na-rif-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
<td>ทิรฟ-</td>
<td>ริฟ-</td>
<td>ริฟ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>ta-rif-a</td>
<td></td>
<td>ta-rif-uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>ta-rif-i</td>
<td></td>
<td>ta-rif-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
<td>ยิรฟ-</td>
<td>ริฟ-</td>
<td>ริฟ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>ya-rif-a</td>
<td></td>
<td>ya-rif-uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>ta-rif-a</td>
<td></td>
<td>ya-rif-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the subjunctive mood is determined by an attitude toward the verbal action such as volition, intent, purpose, doubt, attempting, expectation, permission, hope, ability, or necessity. In Arabic, the subjunctive is also syntactically determined by the presence of particular ‘subjunctivizing’ particles. Those particles include lan لنّ, which negates the future; a series of particles that express purpose (li-l, kay كك, li-kay لكي, Hattaa حتّى), and the subordinating conjunction particle ُاَn, which links a subordinate clause to a main clause. The subjunctive mood may also occur in the passive voice.

2.1 Negative particle: lan لنّ ‘will not; shall not’

After the negative particle lan the subjunctive is used. This combination of lan + subjunctive yields a future negative.

---

*4 For the history and development of the Arabic subjunctive, see Testen 1994.*
They will not prevent them from being Arabs. We will not forget.

2.2 Particles of purpose

These particles are subordinating conjunctions that denote the sense of ‘in order to’ or ‘in order that.’ With certain particles a verbal noun may be substituted for the subjunctive verb.

2.2.1 َلِّ ‘for; to; in order to, in order that’

The purpose particle َلِّ may be followed by a verb in the subjunctive, or by a verbal noun in the genitive case.

2.2.1.1 WITH SUBJUNCTIVE

لَأَذْهَبُ فِي نَزْهَا

li-’aaxudh-a-hu fii nuzhat-in

in order that I take him for a walk

لِيُنْهَلِقُوا دَاخُلَ الْحُوَّرِد

li-ya-nghaliq-uu daaxil-a l-Huduud-i

in order that they be closed inside the borders

2.2.1.2 WITH VERBAL NOUN

لِلْدَفْعِ عَنْ نفْسِهِ

li-l-difaa’-i ‘an nafs-i-hi

in order to defend himself

2.2.2 َكِي ‘in order that, in order to’

كِي نَسْتَعْدِ عَلَى الْامْتَحَانِ

kay na-sta’idd-a li-l-imtiHaan-i

in order for us to get ready for the exam

2.2.3 َلاَ ‘in order not to’

كِي لا أَقْولُ . . .

kay laa ‘a-qul-a . . .

in order that I not say . . .

كِي لا يَبْقِ قوَيَاً

kay laa ya-bqaa qawiyy-an

so that it not remain strong

2.2.4 َلِكَي ‘in order to; in order that’

لِكَيْ يَهْبَوُ إِلَى بَلَادِهِ

li-kay ya-‘uud-a ‘ilaa bilaad-i-hi

in order to return to his country

لِكَيْ يَحْفَظُ عَلَى مَوْقُوْعِهِ

li-kay yu-HaafiZ-a ‘alaa mawqi’-i-hi

in order to maintain his position
2.2.5 *li-kay-laa* 'in order not to'

*li-kay-laa* *ta-dxul-a l-maktab-a*
in order that she not enter the office

2.2.6 *Hattaa* ‘in order that’
The particle *Hattaa* has other meanings, as well (‘until’ or ‘even’), but when used with a verb in the subjunctive it indicates purpose.

*Hattaa nu-drik-a Su’uubat-a haadhaa l-’amal-i*
in order that we realize the difficulty of this work

2.2.7 *Hattaa laa* ‘in order not to; so that . . . not’

*Hattaa laa ya-shuTT-a fii ta’yiid-i l-insiHaab-i*
so that it does not go too far in supporting withdrawal

2.3 Subordinating conjunction: *’an* + subjunctive

The particle / *an/ أَنَ follows certain types of verbs in order to conjoin a complement clause to the verb. These verbs (sometimes called “matrix” verbs) usually denote attitudes or feelings toward the action such as liking, disliking, expecting, deciding, intending, wanting, wishing, requesting, possibility, attempting, needing. For example:

- to like, love: *aHabb-a* أَحْبَبْ أَنَ to be possible: *amkan-a* أَمْكَان أَنَ
- to decide: *qarrar-a* قَرَّرْ أَنَ to be able: *istaTaa-a* إِسْتَطَعْ أَنَ
- to want: *araad-a* أَرَادْ أَنَ to be able: *qadar-a* قَدْر أَنَ
- to be on the verge of: *awshak-a* أَوْشَكْ أَنَ to be able: *tamakkan-a* تَمَكَّن مَن أَنَ
- to try to: *Haawal-a* حَاوْل أَنَ to intend: *qaSad-a* قَصَد أَنَ

---

5 Cantarino states: “after verbs that present their objects as something striven for or simply as a possibility or capability of a future action, only *an* will be used” (1975, III:107). See his extensive section on *’an* 1975, III: 107–16. Compare these verbs to verbs followed by the particle *’anna*, which is used to report factual information in a subordinate clause (see Chapter 19, section 2.3).
In most cases, the ‘an + subjunctive structure is replaceable with a verbal noun. Thus it is possible to have sentences such as:

\[\text{ناحب أن نقرأ.}\]
\[\text{nu-Hibb-u ‘an na-qra’-a.}\]
We like to read (lit. ‘we like that we read’).\(^6\)

or

\[\text{ناحب القراءة.}\]
\[\text{nu-Hibb-u l-qiraa’at-a.}\]
We like to read (lit. ‘we like reading’).

Sentences in English may use the infinitive (e.g., “to read”) as the equivalent of either structure. For example:

\[\text{لا نريد أن ننسى.}\]
\[\text{laa nu-riid-u ‘an na-nsaa.}\]
We don’t want to forget (‘that we forget’).

\[\text{نستطيع أن نفعله.}\]
\[\text{na-staTii’-u ‘an na-f’al-a-hu.}\]
We are able to do it (‘we are able that we do it’).

\[\text{ثم طلبت أن يكون الموعد بعد غد.}\]
\[\text{thumm-a Talab-at ‘an ya-kuun-a l-maw‘id-u ba’d-a ghad-in.}\]
Then it requested that the appointment be [the day] after tomorrow.

2.3.1 qabl-a ‘an ‘before’ and ba’d-a ‘an ‘after’
The particle ‘an also follows certain semi-prepositions so that they may be followed by a verb phrase or entire clause.\(^7\)

2.3.1.1 qabl-a ‘an ‘BEFORE’: The semi-preposition qabl-a قبل أن قبل ‘BEFORE’ by itself must be directly followed by a noun or a pronoun suffix. Using ‘an as a buffer, qabl-a may be followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood. Tense is inferred from context.

(1) Present tense meaning:

\[\text{قبل أن نفكر بهذاك qabl-a ‘an nu-fakkir-a bi-dhaalika} \quad \text{قبل أن يمرَقه الحرب qabl-a ‘an tu-mazziq-a-hu l-Harb-u} \]
\[\text{before we think of that} \quad \text{before war rips it apart}\]

\(^6\) For more detailed description of the use of the verbal noun in such structures, see Chapter 5, section 1.3.

\(^7\) Normally, prepositions and semi-prepositions are followed by a noun in the genitive case or by a pronoun.
(2) Past tense meaning:

قال ذلك قبل أن يخفَّف العقوبة.
qaal-a dhaalika qabl-a 'an yu-xaffif-a l'-uquubat-a.
He said that before he lightened the penalty.

2.3.1.2 ba'd-a 'an بعد أن ‘AFTER’: The phrase ba'd-a 'an may be followed either by a verb in the subjunctive mood or by a past tense verb. It requires a verb in the subjunctive if the situation is not yet an actual fact, that is, if the situation is in the future or is still a possibility.

However, if the situation is in the past and has already taken place, ba'd-a 'an بعد أن is followed by a past tense verb. The latter case is one of the few situations where the particle 'an is followed by anything other than a subjunctive.8

(1) Describing the past:

بعد أن أتهمهم بالتآمر
ba'd-a 'an-i ttaham-a-hum bi-l-ta'aamur-i
after he accused them of conspiracy

(2) Discussing the future:

سنأكل بعد أن ندرس.
sa-na-kaul-u ba'd-a 'an na-drus-a.
We will eat after we study.

2.3.2 Impersonal verbs + subjunctive
Certain impersonal verbal expressions followed by /'an/ أن plus a verb in the subjunctive indicate necessity or possibility:

it is necessary that  ya-jib-u 'an9

it ought to be that ya-nbaghii 'an

it is possible that yu-mkin-u 'an

من الممكن أن

8 Al-Warraki and Hassanein (1994, 51) state it clearly: “If ba’d-a ‘an is preceded by a perfect [verb] in the main clause, it is also followed by a perfect; if it is preceded by imperfect or future in the main clause, it is followed by a subjunctive.” They devote an entire chapter to ba’d-a ‘an and qabl-a ‘an.

9 The phrase ya-jib-u an may include the use of the preposition ‘alaa to specify for whom the action is necessary, e.g., ya-jib-u ‘alay-naa 'an nu-faawiD-a 'We have to negotiate (it is necessary) upon us that we negotiate’.
يمكن أن نتحول إلى فخ.
yu-mkin-u ‘an ta-taHawwal-a ila‘a faxx-in.
It could turn into a trap.

يجب أن نقوم بزيارة.
ya-jib-u ‘an na-quum-a bi-ziyaarat-in.
It is necessary that we undertake a visit.

يجب على الولايات المتَّحدة أن تدعم الاتفاق.
It is necessary for the US to support the agreement.

وينبغي أن يصبح جزءًا لا يتَّجزأ من سياسَّتهم.
ya-nbaghii ‘an yu-ShBiH-a juz‘-an laa yu-tajzza‘-u min siyaasat-i-him.
It ought to become an indivisible part of their policy.

2.3.2.1 NEGATION OF NECESSITY involves prefixing the negative particle laa before the verb of necessity:

ألا يجب علينا أن ندافع عن أنفسنا؟
‘a-laa ya-jib-u ‘alay-naa ‘an nu-daafii‘-a ‘an ‘anfus-i-naa?
Isn’t it necessary (‘for us’) that we defend ourselves?

2.3.2.2 NEGATION OF ACTION involves prefixing the negative particle laa before the subjunctive verb. Sometimes ‘an + laa أن لا + laa is contracted into one word: ‘allaa ألا:

ينبغي أن لا يشعر بقلق.
ya-nbaghii ‘an laa ya-sh‘ar-a bi-qalaq-in
He must not feel anxious.

يجب ألا يُغضِب النظر عنه.
ya-jib-u ‘allaa ya-ghiDD-a l-naZar-a ‘an-hu.
It is necessary that he not disregard it.

2.3.3 PAST TENSE OF IMPERSONAL VERBS: These impersonal verbs are put into the past tense through the use of the past tense verb kaan-a as an auxiliary verb:

أراضٍ [كان يجب أن تكون ضمن حصنهم]
[‘araaDin] kaan-a ya-jib-u ‘an ta-kuun-a Dimn-a HiSSat-i-him
[lands which] should have been [included] within their portion

2.3.3 ‘alaa + ‘an على أنال + subjunctive
The preposition ‘alaa may indicate necessity or incumbence “upon” someone to do something. It may be used with a pronoun suffix or with a noun in the genitive, followed by ‘an and a verb in the subjunctive.
We must begin from zero.

It is incumbent upon the state to assume its role.

2.3.4 Adjective + 'an أن + subjunctive

The particle 'an may be used with an adjective or participle used to express a feeling, expectation, or opinion.

Tabii fi iyy-un jidd-an 'an nu-Hibb-a bilaad-a-naa.
[It is] very natural that we love our country.

al-mustaghrab-u 'an na-ta’axxar-a.
[It is] strange that we delay.

wa-min-a l-muqarrar-i 'an yu-fajjir-a xubaraa-u l-mufarqi’aat-i l-qanaabil-a.
It has been determined that explosives experts will detonate the bombs.
The jussive mood is restricted in occurrence. It does not carry a particular semantic content; rather, it is a mood of the verb required in written Arabic under specific circumstances. The distinctive feature of jussive inflection is the absence of a final short inflectional vowel. Where the indicative mood inflects with Damma and the subjunctive mood inflects with fatHa, the jussive mood inflects with sukuun.

Like the subjunctive, the jussive shortens the longer verb suffixes, such as /-uuna/, /-iina/, and /-aani/, by deleting the nuun and its short vowel, so those suffixes are left as long vowels /-uu/, /-ii/, /-aa/. Again, as with the subjunctive and indicative, the /-na/ of the second and third persons feminine plural is retained.

### 1.1 Jussive mood paradigm: sound Form I verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moods of the verb II: jussive and imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The absence of an inflectional vowel in the first person singular and plural, the second person masculine singular and the third persons feminine and masculine singular causes certain pronunciation and spelling changes in geminate, hollow, and defective verbs.

1.2 Jussive mood paradigm: geminate Form I verb
When the jussive mood is used with geminate verbs, the deletion of the inflectional short vowel in the first person singular and plural, the second person masculine singular, and the third persons feminine and masculine singular causes a consonant cluster to occur at the end of the inflected verb, and this violates the phonological rule against word-final consonant clusters in MSA. To counteract this, a short vowel /a/ is added to these persons of the verb in order to make them pronounceable. However, the addition of the short vowel /a/ has the effect of making the jussive of geminate verbs look exactly like the subjunctive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-رَدَ - rudd - 'return; reply'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Jussive mood paradigm: hollow Form I verb
Hollow verbs inflected in the jussive mood have both a long vowel stem and a short vowel stem. The long vowel stem is only used when the inflectional suffix is a vowel, as follows:
### 1.3.1 Hollow-waaw verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rπobnCG</td>
<td>أَقِلٌ</td>
<td>نَقِلٌ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-qul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |          |            |             |
| **Second person**|          |            |             |
| m.               | تَقُولَ    | تَقُولَا    | تَقُولُوا    |
| ta-qul           |          | ta-quul-aa |             |
| f.               | تَقُولَى   | تَقُولَا    | تَقُولُنَّ    |
| ta-quul-ii      |          | ta-quul-aa |             |

|                  |          |            |             |
| **Third person** |          |            |             |
| m.               | يَقُولَ    | يَقُولَا    | يَقُولُوا    |
| ya-qul           |          | ya-quul-aa |             |
| f.               | تَقُولَ    | تَقُولَا    | تَقُولُنَّ    |
| ta-qul           |          | ta-quul-aa |             |

### 1.3.2 Hollow yaa verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r™pHnCG</td>
<td>أَبِعَ</td>
<td>نَبِعَ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-bi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |          |            |             |
| **Second person**|          |            |             |
| m.               | تَبِيعَ    | تَبِيعَا    | تَبِيعُوا    |
| ta-bi           |          | ta-bii-aa  |             |
| f.               | تَبِيعِي   | تَبِيعَا    | تَبِيعُنَّ    |
| ta-bii-ii       |          | ta-bii-aa  |             |

|                  |          |            |             |
| **Third person** |          |            |             |
| m.               | يَبِيعَ    | يَبِيعَا    | يَبِيعُوا    |
| ya-bi            |          | ya-bii-aa  |             |
| f.               | تَبِيعَ    | تَبِيعَا    | يَبِيعُنَّ    |
| ta-bi           |          | ta-bii-aa  |             |
1.3.3 Hollow 'alif verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-nam- / -naam- 'sleep'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اَنْام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ْتَنَام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تَنَام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يَنَام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Jussive mood paradigm: Defective Form I verb

The effect of the *sukuun* of the jussive on certain inflectional forms of defective verbs is to shorten the long vowel ending to a short vowel. As a short vowel it usually does not appear in written text.

1.4.1 Jussive of *yaa*-defective verb (-aa/-ii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-bni- / -bniy- 'build'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اَبِن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ْتَبِن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تَبِن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.4.2 Jussive of yaa\(^{-}\)-defective verb (-ii/-aa)

**-bni- / -bniy- 'build'**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>ya-bni</td>
<td>ya-bniy-aa</td>
<td>ya-bnii-aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>ta-bni</td>
<td>ta-bniy-aa</td>
<td>ya-bnii-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.4.3 Jussive of waaw-defective verb

**-bdu- / -bduw- 'seem, appear'**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>a-bdu</td>
<td>na-bdu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>ta-bdu</td>
<td>ta-bdu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 Use of the jussive

The jussive is used in essentially five ways: with conditional sentences, with the negative particle *lam* لم; with the negative imperative particle *lāa* لا, the indirect imperative particle *lī/لَِِْ", and as a basis for forming the imperative.

Most often, the jussive mood in MSA is used with the negative particle *lam* to negate the past tense, and with the imperative.

1.5.1 In conditional sentences

The jussive in conditional sentences occurred rarely in the MSA database covered for this analysis. This particular function of the jussive is more common in literary and classical texts.¹ For discussion of this use of the jussive see Chapter 39 on conditional and optative expressions.

If you (f.) go, I’ll go with you.

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¹ See, for example, Cantarino’s extensive description of conditional clauses in literary Arabic, Cantarino 1975, III:311–71, and Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 290–300.
If a person breaks the tooth of another, (then) his tooth shall be broken.

1.5.2 With lam لَمْ

The negative particle *lam* is used to negate the past tense. However, it is not used with a past tense verb. Instead, it is used with the jussive form of the verb, conveying a meaning of past tense. In Arabic grammatical terms if is said to “transform the [meaning of] the verb following it to the past.”

| لَمْ نَتَّمَ | لَمْ تَنْجِحُ حَتَّى الَّذِي الْآنَ. |
| lam na-‘ti. | lam ta-njaH Hattaa l-‘aan-a |
| We did not come. | She has not yet succeeded. |
| لَمْ أَنْمَ | إِصَالَاتُ لَمْ تَكْتُمَ مِنْ عَامِينَ |
| lam ‘a-nam. | ُiSlah-aat-un lam ta-ktamil mundh-u |
| I didn’t sleep. | aam-ayni |
| لم تنكن تدفع الإيجار. | مَهَلَّو زَمَلاهُم. |
| lam ta-kun ta-dfa‘-u l-‘iijaara. | lam yu-bligh-uu zumalaa‘-a-hum. |
| She didn’t used to pay the rent. | They did not notify their colleagues. |
| لم يَبَلَّغَوا زَمَلاهُم. | لم تَكُنْ تَدْفَعُ الإِيْجَارَ. |

For further examples of *lam* لَمْ plus the jussive, see Chapter 37 on negation and exception, section 2.2.1.

2 The imperative: al-‘amr الأمر

The imperative or command form of the verb in Arabic is based upon the imperfect/present tense verb in the jussive mood. It occurs in the second person (all forms of “you”), for the most part, although it occasionally occurs in the first person plural (“let’s”) and the third person (“let him/her/them”).

2.1 To form the imperative

The general rule for forming the imperative is to take the second person form of the jussive verb and remove the subject marker (the ta- or tu- prefix). If the remaining

---

2 From Ziadeh and Winder 1957, 160.
verb stem starts with a consonant-vowel (CV) sequence, then the stem is left as it is because it is easily pronounceable. If the remaining stem starts with a consonant cluster, then it needs a helping vowel prefix. The nature of the helping vowel depends on the verb form and (in Form I) the nature of the stem vowel.

For example, the verb *katab-a* ‘to write’ in the present tense, jussive mood, second person is:

- you (m. sg.) write: *ta-ktub*
- you (f. sg.) write: *ta-ktub-*ii
- you two write: *ta-ktub-*aa
- you (m. pl.) write: *ta-ktub-*uu
- you (f. pl.) write: *ta-ktub-*na

To create the imperative, the *ta-* prefix is dropped, leaving:

- *ktub*
- *ktub-*ii
- *ktub-*aa
- *ktub-*uu
- *ktub-*na

Because these forms start with consonant clusters, they violate a phonological rule in Arabic that prohibits word-initial consonant clusters. They therefore need a helping vowel to be pronounceable. The helping vowel selected in this case is /u/ because the stem vowel of the verb is /u/. However, another rule in Arabic prohibits words from starting with vowels, so the /u/ vowel is preceded by hamza, and the hamza plus short vowel sit on an *ālif* seat. This yields the pronounceable forms:

- Write! *u-ktub*
- *u-ktub-*ii
- *u-ktub-*aa
- *u-ktub-*uu
- *u-ktub-*na

This helping vowel is used with *hamza al-wasl*, that is, elidable hamza, which is normally not written and drops out if it is preceded by another vowel, as in:

- Read and write! *i-qra*wa-*ktub*
Note that although the prefix hamza drops out in pronunciation, the ´alif seat remains in the spelling of the word.

The deletion of the subject-marker prefix (ta- or tu-) does not always leave a stem that starts with two consonants. For example, in the Form II verb fassara "to explain":

- you (m. sg.) explain tu-fassir
- you (f. sg.) explain tu-fassir-ii
- you two explain tu-fassir-aa
- you (m. pl.) explain tu-fassir-uu
- you (f. pl.) explain tu-fassir-na

The imperative forms stripped of the subject marker are:

- Explain! fassir!
- fassir-ii!
- fassir-aa!
- fassir-uu!
- fassir-na!

These are pronounceable just as they are, so they need no initial helping vowel and are left as they are in the imperative.

2.1.1 Summary
The word-initial helping vowel is needed in the imperative of Forms I, IV, VII, VIII, and X of the verb. Forms II, III, V, and VI do not need helping vowels in the imperative. The specifics of the Forms are summarized here.

2.2 Form I imperatives
Form I imperatives usually require initial helping vowels, either /i/ or /u/. The nature of the helping vowel is determined by the stem vowel of the present tense. If the stem vowel is fatHa or kasra, the helping vowel is kasra; if the stem vowel is Damma, the helping vowel is Damma.

2.2.1 Sound verbs

2.2.1.1 STEM VOWEL fatHa

- i-ťaH yaa simsim-ul
- i-rfa yad-ay-ka!
- i-smal-li!

Open, Sesame! Raise your (two) hands! Permit (f. sg.) me!
2.2.1.2 STEM VOWEL kasra

أَحْفَرْ هَنَا!  
i-Hfir hunaa!  
i-"dhir-nii.
Dig here!  
Forgive me/Excuse me.

2.2.1.3 STEM VOWEL Damma

ادْخِلْ!  
u-dxul!  
u-nZur jayyid-an!
Enter!  
Look well/look closely!

2.2.2 Hamzated verbs

Form I verbs with initial hamza tend to drop the hamza entirely in the imperative in order to avoid less acceptable phonological sequences that involve two hamzas in sequence such as *u’ kul or *u’xudh:

كُلُ الْجُزِرَ clocks!  
kul-i ljazar-a.  
xudh haadhahi!
Eat the carrots.  
Take this!

Verbs with medial hamza may behave as regular verbs or may drop the initial hamza:

سَلَّ عن معنى أيْ كلمة.  
i-s’al! ∼ sal!  
is’al ‘an ma’naa ‘ayy-i kalimat-in.
Ask!  
Ask about the meaning of any word.

Verbs with final hamza behave regularly in the imperative:

إِبْنِي!  
i-qra’!  
i-bda’-ii!
Read!  
Begin(f. sg.)!

2.2.3 Geminate verbs

Form I geminate verbs are mixed as to whether or not they take a helping vowel prefix. They do not take the hamza prefix in the forms that end with a long vowel, but they may or may not take the hamza in the second person masculine singular. If the hamza is omitted, the imperative in this person takes a final fatHa in order for it to be pronounceable. A hamza prefix is used in the second person feminine plural.

Respond!  
rudd-a ∼ u-rud!  
أَرْدُداً  
rudd-ii  
رُدْدِي  
rudd-aa  
رُدْداً
2.2.4 Assimilated verbs

Most verbs whose initial root consonant is waaw or yaa (such as waDa—a/ ya-Da—u ‘to put, place’) delete that consonant in all moods of the present tense. Therefore when the subject prefix is deleted from the jussive mood in order to form the imperative, it leaves a very short but pronounceable stem. For example:

- **Put!** Da—a!
- **Da—a-ii!**
- **Da—a-aa!**
- **Da—a-uu!**
- **Da—a-na!**

من فضلك قل.  
*Da—a-haa fii kitaab-i-ka.*  
Please **stop**.  
*min faDl-i-ka qif.*

**2.2.5 Hollow verbs**

Form I hollow verbs, just as regular verbs, make the imperative based on the jussive forms without the subject-marker prefix. There are two stem variants in the jussive of hollow verbs, short-vowel and long-vowel. Both stems are pronounceable without the need for a helping vowel prefix. For example:

**2.2.5.1 HOLLOW waaw VERB: qaal—a/ ya-quul—u ‘TO SAY’**

- **Say!** qu!  
- **quul—ii!**  
- **quul—aa!**  
- **quul—uu!**  
- **quul—na!**

2.2.5.2 HOLLOW yaa√ VERB: baa—a/ ya-bii—u ‘TO SELL’

- **Sell!** bi—a!  
- **bii—a-ii!**
Moods of the verb II: jussive and imperative

2.2.5.3 HOLLOW 'alif VERB: nam-a/naam-aa ‘TO SLEEP’

Sleep! nam!
naam-ii!
naam-aa!
naaam-uu!
nam-na!

2.2.6 Defective verbs

Defective verbs have either waaw or yaa’ as their final root consonant. In the jussive mood, this consonant undergoes shifts in length and quality. The imperative of defectives is based on the jussive form, with no changes except the deletion of the subject marker and the addition of the helping vowel prefix. As with regular verbs, the nature of the short helping vowel prefix depends on the stem vowel of the verb.

2.2.6.1 Yaa’-DEFECTIVE VERBS: The yaa’-defective verbs are of two types: ones that end in -aa ('alif maqSuura) and ones that end with yaa’ in the past tense. The ones ending in -aa usually inflect the present tense with -ii; the ones that end with yaa’ in the past tense take -aa in the present tense. These verbs take kasra as their imperative prefix helping vowel.

(1) /-aa-ii/ verb: ramaa رَمَى ‘to throw’

Throw! i-rmi! إِرمَى
i-rm-ii! إِرمَي
i-rmiy-aa! إِرمَيًا
i-rm-uu! إِرمَوا
i-rmii-na! إِرْمِنَى
2.2.6.2 Waaw-DEFECTIVE VERBS: The waaw-defective verbs end in -aa (‘alif Tawiila) in the past tense citation form, and in waaw in the present tense. In the jussive mood, the waaw shifts and sometimes shortens. The prefix helping vowel for these imperative forms is Damma.

(1) /-aa-uu/ verb: shakaa / ya-shkuu ُيَشَكُو ‘to complain’

Complain! u-shku! ُعَشَكُو
u-shk-ii! ُعَشَكُي
u-shkuw-aa! ُعَشَكُوْا
u-shk-uul! ُعَشَكُوْهَا
u-shkuu-na! ُعَشَكَعَوْا

2.2.7 Doubly defective verbs

Doubly defective verbs have semi-consonants and/or hamza in two places, sometimes as the first and third consonants, and sometimes as the second and third. Their imperatives are defective in more ways than one. Two examples are given here, the verb ra’aa رَأَي / ya-raa ُيَرَى ‘to see’ and the verb wa’aa وَعَي / ya-ii ُيَعَي ‘to heed, pay attention.’

2.2.7.1 IMPERATIVE OF ra’aa رَأَي / ya-raa ُيَرَى

See! ra~ rah! رَهُ رَا
ray! رَيُ
ray-aa! رَيَا
raw! رُوُأ
ray-na! رِينَا

4 Taken from Wright 1967, I:93. Note that the verb ra’aa is used primarily in written Arabic and is not normally used in the vernacular forms of the language.
2.2.7.2 IMPERATIVE OF wa‘aa / ya-‘ii

Pay attention!  ‘i! ع !
‘ii! ع !
‘iy-aa! عِا !
‘-uu! عا !
‘ii-na! عِن !

2.2.8 Replacive imperative verb: ta‘aal / تَعَال ‘come’

The verb jaa‘a / ya-jii ‘to come’ has a different form in the imperative, based on another root entirely.\(^5\)

Come! ta‘aal-a! تَعَال
ta‘aal-ay! تَعَالِي
ta‘aal-aal! تَعَالَا
ta‘aal-aw! تَعَالَوَّا
ta‘aalay-na! تَعَالَنِينَ

تَعَالُ هَنَا!
ta‘aal-a hunaa!
Come here!

2.3 Form II imperative

Form II imperatives do not require the addition of an initial helping vowel. Examples include:

خَبِّرْنِي! فَكْرُ فِي مَا تَأْكِلْهُ.
xabbir-nii! fakkir fii-maa ta-‘kul-u-hu.
Tell me! Think about what you eat.

سَلَّمُ لِي عَلَيْهِ.
sallim lii ‘alay-hi. sakkir-uu kutub-a-kum.
Greet him for me. Close (m. pl.) your books.

2.4 Form III

Form III imperatives do not require the addition of an initial helping vowel. Examples include:

\(^5\) Based on the Form VI defective verb ta‘aalaaj yo-ta‘aala ‘to rise, ascend, be sublime.’ For discussion of this “suppletive imperative” see Testen 1997.
Catastrophic governmental violence!
qaaTi-il-baDaa‘i-a l-yuabaaniyyat-a!
Boycott Japanese goods!

Save the city.
saari‘ ila’a ighlaaq-haa.
Hasten to turn it off.

2.5 Form IV
Form IV verbs are prefixed by the vowel /a/ (fatHa) and a non-elidable hamza (hamzat al-qaT):

أغلقِ يا سمسم!
‘aghliq yaa simsim!
Close, Sesame!

أجب عن سؤالِي!
‘ajib ‘an su’aal-ii!
Answer my question!

2.6 Form V
Form V imperative verbs do not require a prefix vowel.

 telaawwut ِ بالدخول.
tafaDDal bi-l-duxuul-i.
Please come in.

2.7 Form VI
Form VI imperative verbs do not require a prefix vowel.

تعاونوا!
ta‘aawan-uu!
Cooperate (m. pl.)!

2.8 Form VII
Form VII verbs require a prefixed /i/ vowel (kasra) and hamzat al-waSl.

انصرفِ من هنا.
inSarif min hunaa.
Leave here.
2.9 Form VIII
Form VIII verbs require a prefixed /i/ vowel (kasra) and hamzat al-ваSl.

Get away (m. pl.) from here! Wait a minute!

2.10 Form IX
This form is rarely used in the imperative.

2.11 Form X
Form X verbs require a prefixed /i/ vowel (kasra) and hamzat al-ваSl.

Use this key. Relax! Hurry up!

2.12 Quadriliteral imperatives
Using the identical process of stripping the subject prefix from the second person jussive verb forms, one gets, for example, in the Form I quadriliteral verb tarjam-a ‘to translate’:

Base form jussive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Jussive form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>you (m. sg.)</td>
<td>tu-tarjim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (f. sg.)</td>
<td>tu-tarjim-ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you two</td>
<td>tu-tarjim-aa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (m. pl.)</td>
<td>tu-tarjim-uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (f. pl.)</td>
<td>tu-tarjim-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The imperative forms stripped of the subject marker are:

Translate! tarjim! tarjim-ii! tarjim-aa! tarjim-uu! tarjim-na!

These are pronounceable so they need no initial helping vowel and are left as they are in the imperative. Form I is by far the most frequent in usage, since the
quadriliteral Form II (for example, tabalwar-ا تبلور ‘to be crystallized’) is often reflexive or passive in meaning.

3 The permissive or hortative imperative: laam al-‘amr لام الأمر
An “indirect” type of imperative may be used to exhort or enjoin someone to do something. This may occur in the first (I, we) or third (he, she, they) persons. In this type of imperative structure, the jussive verb is used (no deletion of subject marker), preceded by the particle /li-/، implying the idea of permission or encouragement to do something:

Let’s look in the basket.

Sometimes the /li-/ لام particle is preceded by the particle /fa-/ في، in which case the vowel is dropped from /li-/ making it just /l-/.

(So) let’s go. Let’s hurry.

4 The negative imperative: laa ي + jussive
The negative imperative is formed by using the negative particle laa plus the jussive form of the (second person) verb. Note that in the negative imperative, the jussive verb form preserves its prefix.

Don’t go back!

Examples:

Don’t (f. sg.) open the window. Don’t forget! Don’t smoke.
Don’t (m. pl.) be afraid! Don’t (m. pl.) wait. Don’t hurry.

Don’t postpone today’s work to tomorrow. Don’t disturb yourself/don’t bother.
Verbs of being, becoming, remaining, seeming (kaan-a wa-√axawaat-u-haa)

Verbs of being, becoming, and remaining have special status in Arabic. Because these verbs resemble each other in meaning and in syntactic effect, they are referred to as “sisters” of the verb ‘to be,’ kaan-a (‘axawaat-u kaan-a). All of them describe states of existence (e.g., being, inception, duration, continuation) and each of them requires the accusative marker on the predicate or complement (xabar kaan-a, e.g., kaan-a za‘im-an ‘He was a leader.’ The subject of kaan-a (ism kaan-a) and her sisters, if mentioned specifically, is in the nominative case (e.g., kaan-a l-rajul-u za‘ im-an, ‘The man was a leader’).

Another special characteristic of kaan-a and her sisters is that they function as auxiliary verbs. In particular, kaan-a is used for forming compound tenses such as past progressive and future perfect. Some examples of this are offered here, but the topic is presented in detail in Chapter 21.

Verbs of seeming or appearing also mark their complements with the accusative case, but they are not usually classified among the “sisters” of kaan-a.

1 The verb kaan-a ‘to be’

This verb is unusual in that it is not generally used in the present tense indicative. It is omitted from the syntax of a simple predication.

1.1 Omission of kaan-a in simple present tense predication

These verbless sentences are usually termed “equational” sentences in English descriptions of Arabic syntax; in Arabic they are called “nominal sentences” (jumal ismiyya). For more on equational sentences, see Chapter 4, section 2.

أنا متأكدٌ.  `anaa muta‘akkid-un.  هي محظوظةٌ.  hiya maHŽuuZat-un.

I [am] certain.  She [is] fortunate.

1 For more extensive discussion of kaan-a wa-‘axawaat-u-haa in Classical Arabic, see Wright 1967, II:99–109.

2 Arab grammarians actually term any sentence that starts with a noun a “nominal sentence” even if it includes a verb. Following the practice of Cantarino (1974, I:2), I use the terms “nominal sentence” and “equational sentence” as equivalents.
1.2 Use of kaan-

The verb kaan-a enters when the predication is anything but present tense indicative. It takes a subject in the nominative and it requires that the complement be in the accusative case.

1.2.1 Past tense

I was certain.

She was fortunate.

They were late. He was the king.

1.2.2 Future tense

I will be certain.

She will be fortunate.

They will be late. He will be the king.

1.2.3 Further examples

Here are some examples of kaan-a in various tenses and moods:

1.2.3.1 PAST TENSE

He was a spy.

Many of them were registered.

It was a storehouse for spices.
1.2.3.2 NEGATIVE PAST WITH lam لم JUSSIVE MOOD OF kaan-a كان

يمكن القول إن هذا الاجتماع لم يكن ضرورياً.
yu-mkin-u l-qawl-u 'inna haadhaa l-i'timaaf-a lam ya-kun Daruuriyy-an.
It could be said that this meeting was not necessary.

لم يكن حلماً عاديًا.
lam ya-kun Hulm-an 'aadiyy-an.
It was not a regular dream.

1.2.3.3 PAST TENSE FOR OPTATIVE/CONDITIONAL

كم كنت سعيداً!
kam kun-naa su‘adaa'-a!
How happy we would be!

1.2.3.4 FUTURE TENSE

لبنان سيكون غائباً عن القمة.
lubnaan-u sa-yu-kuun-u ghaa‘ib-an ‘an-i l-qimmat-i.
Lebanon will be absent from the summit [meeting].

1.2.3.5 SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

لا يمكن أن يكون عربياً.
laa yu-mkin-u 'an ya-kuun-a 'arabiyy-an.
It is not possible that he is an Arab.

1.3 The use of kaan-a as auxiliary verb

An important function of kaan-a is as an auxiliary verb in conjunction with main verbs to construct compound verb forms that convey different temporal meanings. Compound verbs are discussed at greater length in Chapter 21, section 2.

1.3.1 Past progressive

For habitual or continual action in the past, the past tense of kaan-a is used with the present tense of the main verb. Both the main verb and the auxiliary are inflected for person, number, and gender.

أنا من عائلة كانت تعمل في المدينة.
'anaa min 'aa'ilat-in kaan-at ta-'mal-u fi l-madiinat-i.
I am from a family that used to work in the city.
1.3.2 Pluperfect or past perfect
To express an action in the past that is over with and which serves as a background action for the present, the past tense of kaan-a is used with a past tense of the main verb. The particle qad قد may be optionally inserted just before the main verb.

كأنوا (قد) عملوا معهم على إعادة فتح السفارة.

They had worked with them on re-opening the embassy.

كأن السفير (قد) وصل مساء الجمعة.

kaana l-safiir-u (qad) waSal-a masaa‘-a l-jum‘at-i.
The ambassador had arrived Friday evening.

كنت (قد) أبتعد وضع مصر على القائمة.

kun-tu (qad) ‘ayyad-tu waD- a miSr-a ‘alaa l-qaa‘imat-i.
I had supported putting Egypt on the list.

2 The verb lays-a ليس ‘to not be’
This irregular verb negates the present tense. It is discussed in detail in Chapter 37, section 1. It is noted here because it is a sister of kaan-a and requires a complement in the accusative case. Although it is inflected as a past tense verb, it conveys negation of the present tense.

ليس محامياً.
lays-a muHaamiy-an.
This is not our friend.

لا هم نشطاء سدیق.

haadhaa lays-a Sadiiq-a-naa.

3 Verbs of becoming: baat-a يتأتت, ‘asbaH-a, صار، Saar-a
Verbs that indicate a change of state or condition are also sisters of kaan-a.

3.1 baat-a يتأتت ‘to become; come to be’
The verb baat-a/yaa-yiit-u indicates a change of state (or sometimes the continuation of a state) and is used chiefly in the past tense. It may be used as a main verb or as an auxiliary verb.

بات من الضروري.
baat-uu muqtani‘-ina.
They have become convinced.

بات البلد تعرف به اليوم.
baat-at-i l-bilaad-u tu‘ra‘-u bi-hi l-yawm-a.
The country has become to be known for it today.
3.2 ‘aSbaH-a /yu-SbiH-u ‘to become’
This is a Form IV verb that has an inceptive meaning: ‘to start to be,’ or ‘to become.’

قد أصبح أمرًا ضرورياً.
qad ‘aSbaH-a ‘amran Daruuriyy-an.

It has become an essential matter.

واتصب بجزءًا أكثر أهميّة.
wa-sa-yu-SbiH-u juz-an ‘akthar-a

And it will become a more important part.

3.3 Saar-a /ya-Siir-u ‘صار ‘يصير’ ‘to become; to come to be’
The verb Saar-a was not found to be very frequent in the material covered for this work. When used as the main verb it has the same meaning and effect as ‘aSbaH-a.

صارت ثقافتها أطلسية عالميّة.
Saar-at thaqafaat-u-haa ‘aalamiyyat-an.

Its culture became global.

3.3.1 As an auxiliary verb
When used as an auxiliary verb, Saar-a denotes inception and continuation:

منذ الستينات صارت تأخذ دورًا أكبر.
mundhu l-sittinaat-i Saar-at ta-xudh-u dawran ‘akbar-a.

Since the sixties it has come to play a greater role.

3.3.2 Saar li-
When used with the preposition li- expressing possession, it conveys the idea of ‘come to have’ or ‘come to possess’:

صار الولاء للعثمانيين شكيلاً.
Saar-a l-wila‘-u li-l-‘uthmaaniyy-iina shakliyy-an.

The Ottomans came to have allegiance in form.

(‘Allegiance came to be to the Ottomans in form’).

4 Verbs of remaining: baqiy-a ‘بقي’، Zall-a ‘ظل’، maa zaal-a ‘ما زال’، maa daam-a ‘ما دام’
Several verbs and verbal expressions that are sisters of kaan-a denote the concept of remaining in a particular state or condition. They may be used independently or as auxiliary verbs. These include:
4.1 baqiy-a / ya-bqaa ‘to stay; remain’

στασκότες των επιστήμης.
sa-bqaa siriyy-an.
It will remain secret.

4.2 Zall-a / ya-Zall-u ‘to keep, keep on, to remain’

στασκότες των επιστήμης.
Zall-a fii ghuwwbaat-in taamat-in.
He remained in a complete coma.

4.3 maa zaal-a / laa ya-zaal-u ‘to remain; to continue to be; to still be’

This expression consists of a negative particle (maa plus the past tense; lam plus the jussive; or laa plus the imperfect) plus the verb zaal-a ‘to cease,’ thus it means literally ‘to not cease to be.’ In terms of tense, both the past tense form and the present tense usually have present tense meaning. Sometimes in context, however, they may refer to the past, or be equivalent to an English past tense.

4.3.1 maa zaal-a As an auxiliary verb

As an auxiliary verb maa zaal-a conveys the idea of continuation of a state or action. It is followed by a present tense main verb.

4.3.2 maa zaal-a As an auxiliary verb

As an auxiliary verb maa zaal-a conveys the idea of continuation of a state or action. It is followed by a present tense main verb.
4.3.1.1 WITH EQUATIONAL SENTENCES

\[\text{لا يزال عندي وقت.} \quad \text{ما زلت في مرحلة التحضير.} \]
\[\text{lā ya-zaal-u ‘ind-a-naa waqt-un.} \quad \text{maa zil-tu fī marHalat-i l-taHDîrî.} \]

We still have time
I am still in the preparation stage.

(‘there is still time to-us’).

4.4 maa daam-a ‘as long as’

The expression maa daam-a مَا دَامَ ‘that which’ or ‘what’ and the verb daam-a دَامَ ‘to continue,’ ‘to remain,’ or ‘to last.’

\[\text{ما دامت خارجة من الشرعية، فإن المقاطعة مستمرة.} \]
\[\text{maa daam-at xaarijat-an min-a l-shar’iyyat-i, fa-‘inna l-muqaaTa ‘at-a mustamîrrat-un.} \]

As long as it remains outside legality, the boycott will continue.

5 Verbs of seeming or appearing

These verbs are not considered sisters of kaan-a but are similar in that they take an object complement in the accusative case even though they are not transitive.

5.1 badaa / ya-bduu بَدَا / يَبَدُو ‘to seem; to appear’

\[\text{لا يبدو متفائلًا.} \quad \text{يَبَدُو عتيقاً جدًا.} \]
\[\text{lā ya-bduu mutafa‘il-an} \quad \text{ya-bduu ‘attiq-an jidd-an.} \]

He does not seem optimistic.
It looks very ancient/antique.

5.2 Zahar-a/ya-Zhar-u ظَهَرَ / يُظْهَرُ ‘to seem; to appear’

\[\text{يَظهِرُ ضعيفًا.} \]
\[\text{ya-Zhar-u Da‘iif-an.} \]

He seems weak.
Negation and exception

Arabic uses a variety of means to express negation and exception. This is accomplished primarily through the use of negative or exceptive particles, which often affect the following phrase by requiring a particular case on a noun or noun phrase, or a particular mood of the verb. There is also a verb, lays-a لَيْسَ, which has a negative meaning ‘to not be.’ Each of these negative or exceptive expressions could be the topic for extensive grammatical analysis, but here their description is limited to their basic functions in MSA.

1 The verb lays-a لَيْسَ ‘to not be’
This verb is exceptional in two ways:

1. it is inflected only as a past tense verb but it negates the present tense of “be”;
2. it is a sister of kaan-a كانَ and therefore requires its complement to be in the accusative case.

1.1 Chart: conjugation of lays-a لَيْسَ ‘to not be’
The verb lays-a لَيْسَ has only one type of conjugation. It appears on the surface to resemble a past tense verb because it is inflected with the past tense suffixes, but in terms of meaning, it negates the present tense. Like a hollow verb, lays-a لَيْسَ has two stems; a short one, las- لَيْسَ, used when the suffix starts with a consonant, and a longer stem, lays- لَيْسَ, used when the suffix starts with a vowel or is only a vowel.2

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1 Negation of the perfect or past tense of “be” is not done with lays-a, but with the use of the negative particle lam plus the jussive form of kaan-a ‘to be.’ Similarly, the future tense of “be” is negated through the use of the future negative particle lan plus the subjunctive of kaan-a. The verb lays-a, therefore, is specialized and limited to negating the present tense of “be.”

2 Lecomte (1968, 87) states that lays-a “est une curieuse particule pseudo-verbale dotée d’une conjugaison d’allure concave.”
1.2 Discussion and examples of \(\text{lays-a} \) 

\(\text{ليس لَيس} \) الأستاذْ مُؤْرَخًا. 

\(\text{lays-a l-}^{2}\text{ustaadh-u mu’arrix-an.} \)

The professor is not a historian.

In the above example, the verb \(\text{lays-a} \) لَيسْ starts the sentence, followed by the subject noun \(\text{al-}^{2}\text{ustaadh-u} \) الأستاذْ in the nominative case. The predicate or complement of the verb \(\text{lays-a} \) لَيسْ (\(\text{mu’arrix-an} \) مُؤْرَخًا) is in the accusative case because \(\text{lays-a} \) لَيسْ is a “sister” of the verb \(\text{kaan-a} \) كان and thus belongs to a group of verbs that (although intransitive in the traditional sense of the term) take their complements in the accusative case.\(^3\)

If the sentence were not negative, it would be equational and verbless. The subject would be \(\text{al-}^{2}\text{ustaadh-u} \) الأستاذْ and the predicate \(\text{mu’arrix-un} \) مُؤْرَخْ, both in the nominative case, as is the rule with equational sentences:

\(\text{الأستاذْ مُؤْرَخْ.} \)

\(\text{al-}^{2}\text{ustaadh-u mu’arrix-un.} \)

The professor is a historian.

In another example,

\(\text{ليس لِبنانيّة.} \)

\(\text{las-tu lubnaaniyyat-an.} \)

I am not Lebanese.

\(^3\) See Chapter 36, on verbs of being, becoming, remaining, seeming (\(\text{kaan-a wa’}^{2}\text{aaxawaat-u-haa} \) كانْ وأخواتها).
The verb is inflected for the first person ("I") and the predicate or complement consists of just one word, an adjective, in the accusative case: lubnaaniyyat-an لبنانیّة. It is feminine because the writer is feminine and speaking of herself. If the sentence were not negative it would be:

Ana لبنانیّة.

'anaa lubnaaniyyat-un.

I [am] Lebanese (f.).

with a pronoun subject ('anaa أنا 'I'), no overt verb, and the adjective as predicate, in the nominative case. For more extensive discussion of equational sentences, see Chapter 4, section 2.

1.3 Further examples
Here are a few more examples of lays-a لیّس in context:

1.3.1 Predicate of lays-a لیّس is a noun or adjective in the accusative case

This is not a noble man.

haadhaa lays-a rajul-an shariif-an.

She is not an archaeologist.

This is not a noble man.

haadhaa lays-a l-sabab-a.

This is not the reason.

sum'at-u-ka lays-at jayyidat-an.

1.3.2 Predicate of lays-a لیّس is a prepositional phrase

The predicate or complement of lays-a may be a prepositional phrase rather than a noun, noun phrase, or adjective. In this case, the preposition causes the following noun to be in the genitive case.

Isn't it so (‘like that’)?

'a-lays-a ka-dhaalika?

It is not necessary.

lays-a min-a l-Daruuriyy-i.

Isn't it so (‘like that’)?

لست نوعاً إبّاعاً كاّف على الموضوع.

las-tu 'alaa TTilaai-in kaaf-in 'alaa l-mawDuu'-i.

I am not informed enough about the subject.

1.3.3 Predicate of lays-a لیّس is an adverb

The predicate of lays-a may also be an invariable adverb that does not take case inflections. In the following sentence, the adverb hunaaka هنّاك is the predicate and Siraa'-un صرّاع 'struggle' is the subject of lays-a لیّس.
There is no struggle (‘There is not a struggle’).

2 Negative particles and their effects

2.1 laa ُّ ‘no; not; there is no’

The negative particle laa has five functions: (1) by itself, it can mean simply ‘no’ in response to a statement, question, or a request; (2) it negates the present tense of verbs; (3) it is used for the negative imperative; (4) to indicate categorical negation; and (5) when repeated, indicates ‘neither . . . nor.’

2.1.1 laa = ‘no’

لا. لا تَسْتَ مَصْرِيَّا.
laa. las-tu miSriyy-an.
Are you Egyptian?
No. I am not Egyptian.

2.1.2 laa ُّ = not; negation of present tense verb

The negative particle laa is used to negate present tense verbs. The verb remains in the indicative mood.4

لا أَفْهِمُ ماذا تَقْوَلُ. laa l-a-fham-u maadhaa ta-quil-u.
I do not understand what you are saying.

لا أَدْخَنُ. laa l-u-daxxin-u.
I do not smoke.

لا يَحاوَلُ الْخُروِجُ. laa l-yu-Haawil-u l-xuruuj-a.
He is not trying to leave.

لا أَحْبَبُ الْجِزْرَ. laa l-u-Hibb-u l-jazar-a.
I do not like carrots.

لا يَشْكَلُ ضَمَانَةُ. laa l-yu-shakkil-u Damaanat-an.
It does not constitute a guarantee.

لا يَجْوِرُ. laa ya-juuz-u.
It is not possible/ permissible.

2.1.3 laa ُّ with the subjunctive

2.1.3.1 ُّ َّaalla lَّا = ُّ ‘an َّا + laa ُّ: The negative particle laa may negate a verb in the subjunctive if there is a subjunctivizing element present. In the following

4 In his 1996 article “Negative polarity and presupposition in Arabic” Elabbas Benmamoun proposes that “negative laa has three different suppletive forms that correlate with different temporal interpretations: laa which occurs in the present tense . . . , lam which carries past tense . . . , and lan which carries future tense” (Benmamoun 1996, 51). While all three particles are negations, and all start with the letter laam, they have different effects on the following verb and are presented separately here.
sentences, the subjunctivizing phrase *ya-jib-* ‘an (‘it is necessary that’) is followed by *lāa* plus a verb in the subjunctive, and the subjunctivizing verb phrase, *qarrar-* ‘an ‘to decide to’ is also followed by *lāa* plus a verb in the subjunctive. The particles ‘an and *lāa* are joined together in a contraction, *‘al-lāa*:

*قَرَّرتَ أَلَّا أُعْمَلُ فِيهِ.*

*qarrar-tu ‘al-lāa ‘a-*‘mal-*a fii-hi.*

I decided not to work in it.

2.1.3.2 *lāa* /H11001 AFTER *Hattaa* حَتَّى: The subjunctivizing particle *Hattaa* حَتَّى ‘in order that, so that’ may be followed by *lāa* /H11001 plus a verb in the subjunctive:

*حَتَّى لا يُشْتَهَّ فِي تَأْيِيدِ سَيَاسَتُهُم.*

*Hattaa lāa ya-shuTT-*a fii ta’yiid-i siyaasat-i-him

so that it does not go too far in supporting their policy.

2.1.4 *lāa* /H11001 + verb as modifier

A negative verb phrase is occasionally used to express a negative adjectival or adverbial concept in Arabic. This phrase usually takes the form of an indefinite relative clause:

*حِمْرَةُ لَّا تَتَهَدَّأ قَرْبَ السَّمَّى.*

*Harakat-un lāa-ta-hda-*u qurb-a l- masjid-i

non-stop motion/movement near the mosque

*تَعْطِي لِلسَّيَاحَةِ مَعْنِى خَاصٍ لَا يَمْكُنَ إِنْكَارُهُ.*

*tu-Tii li-l-siyaaHat-i ma’n naaSS-an lāa yu-nkin-u ‘inkaar-u-hu.*

It gives to tourism an *undeniably* special meaning.

2.1.5 The negative imperative with *lāa* /H11001

The negative imperative is formed by using *lāa* plus the jussive form of the verb in the second person (“you”).

*lāa tu-z’ij nafs-a-ka.*

Don’t disturb yourself/don’t bother.

*lāa ta-staxdim-i l-miS’ad-a.*

Don’t use the elevator.

2.1.6 The *lāa* /H11001 of categorical or absolute negation: (*laa al-naatiya li-l-jins* لا النافية للجنس)

This is a special use of *lāa* that negates the existence of something absolutely. The particle *lāa* precedes a noun which is in the accusative, but with no nunation

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5 For further discussion of the imperative, see Chapter 35.
and no definite article. This type of negation is used in a number of idiomatic expressions.

لا سبيل لدفه 
laa sabil-a li-daf’ti-hi
There is no way to defend it.

لا قلب لها 
laa qalb-a la-haa.
She is heartless (‘there is no heart to her’).

لا شكر لها 
laa shak-k-Fi-hi.
There’s no doubt about it.

لا بأس به 
laa ba’s-sa bi-hi.
It’s not bad (‘There is no harm in it’).

لا حقه 
laa fii waajib-i.
‘There is no thanking for a duty’
(used as a polite response to an expression of thanks). = ‘Don’t mention it.’

2.1.6.1 RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS WITH laa لم OF ABSOLUTE NEGATION

لا إله إلا الله 
laa ‘illaah-a ‘illaah ilaah-u.
There is no god but God.

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله 
laa Hawl-a wa-laah quwwat-a ‘illaah bi-ilaah-i.
There is no power and no strength but in God.

2.1.7 laa... wa-laah لم... لم ‘neither... nor’
The two-part formation of laa... wa-laah لم... لم is used for the coordinate negative ‘neither... nor’ or ‘don’t... even...’. In response to a negative statement, the wa-laah لم... لم part may be used at the start of the response.

Me either/me neither
(depending on context)

لا في فاس ولا في مراكش 
laa fii faas-a wa-laah fii marraakash-a
neither in Fez nor in Marrakesh

لا الولايات المتحدة ولا الاتحاد السوفيتي 
laa l-wilaayat-u l-muttaHidat-u wa-laah l-ittiHaad-u l-suufiyaatiyy-u
neither the United States nor the Soviet Union
2.1.8 *laa* ُّ as component of compound

Because of its ability to negate a noun or adjective directly, *laa* enters actively into the formation of compound words that include concepts of negation. They include both adjectives and nouns. For example,

- invertebrate: *laa-faqaariyy*
- never-ending: *laa-nihaa’iyy*
- decentralization: *al-la’a-markaziyya*
- the unconscious: *al-la’a-wa’y*

*نقِّطة الْلَا رِجُوع* (nuqTat-u *l-la’a-rujuu‘-i*)

the point of no return

2.2 Negation of the past

2.2.1 *lam* ُّ نمّ + jussive

The most common way to negate a past tense verb in written Arabic is to use the negative particle *lam* followed by the verb in the jussive mood.

- *lam* na-ti.
  - We did not come. (*The police did not reveal his identity.*)

- *lam* ya-qa* Haadith-un.
  - No accident happened. (*It is unprecedented.*)
  - ('an accident did not happen')
  - ('an equivalent has not preceded it')

- *lam* ya-mut *’aHad-un.*
  - No one died. (*What happened in Syria did not happen [here].*)

2.2.2 *maa* ما + past tense verb

This way of negating the past is rare in written Arabic, although it is widely used in spoken Arabic vernaculars. The only instance of it that occurred in the database was in a negation of a future perfect verb:

*ما كنتَ ستَعْرَفْ القراءة والكتابةُ* (maa kaan-at *sa-ta-rif-u l-qiraa’at-a wa-l-kitaabat-a*)

She would not have known how to read and write ('reading and writing').
2.2.3 lan لن plus subjunctive to negate the future tense
To negate a proposition in the future the particle lan لن is used followed by the verb in the subjunctive mood.

lan 'a-nsaa. I won't forget.
lan ya-kuun-a l-axiir-a min naw'i-hi. It will not be the last of its kind.

lan ya-tawaqqaf-a. He will not stop.
lan tu-'arqil-a l-htifaaq-a. It will not obstruct the agreement.

2.2.4 Use of ghayr غَيْر ‘other than; non-

The noun ghayr is used in three ways: as a noun plus pronoun suffix, as the first term of a construct phrase with another noun, and as the first term of a descriptive construct phrase whose second term is an adjective.

It conveys the idea of “otherness” or that something is different from something else.6

2.2.4.1 USE OF ghayr غَيْر PLUS PRONOUN SUFFIX: The pronoun suffix on ghayr غَيْر reflects the number and gender of the noun or pronoun antecedent.

ta-xtalif-u ʽan ghayr-i-haa mithl-a ghayr-i-haa min-a l-munaZZamaat-i
She differs from others like other (‘other than it’) organizations (‘other than she’).

misr-u wa-ghayr-u-haa min-a l-bilaad-i l-arabiyyat-i
Egypt and other Arab countries

2.2.4.2 USE OF ghayr غَيْر AS FIRST TERM OF NOUN CONSTRUCT: Used as the first term of a construct phrase or ʼidāfa إضافة, ghayr غَيْر carries the meaning of ‘other than.’

lāa ya-ʽkul-u ghayr-a l-ḥam-i wa-l-baTaaTaa He doesn’t eat [anything] other than meat and potatoes.

2.2.4.3 *ghayr* غَيْرٍ + ADJECTIVE: ‘NON-; IN-; UN-; OTHER THAN; -LESS’: In this construction, the noun *ghayr* ‘non-; un-; in-, other than’ is used as the first term of a construct phrase or *iDaafa* إضافة in order to express negative or privative concepts denoting absence of a quality or attribute. The second term of this kind of construct phrase is an adjective. As the first term of a construct, *ghayr* غَيْرٍ carries the same case as the noun it modifies. As a noun which is the first term of an *iDaafa*, it cannot have the definite article.

The second term of the *iDaafa* construction is an adjective or participle in the genitive case which agrees with the noun being modified in gender, number, and definiteness. Therefore, it is the second term of this descriptive construct that shows agreement with the modified noun. Here are some examples:

- non-Islamic: *ghayr-*u ʾislaamiyy-in غَيْرِ إِسْلَاميَّ
- unusual: *ghayr-*u ʾaadiyy-in غَيْرِ عَادِيٌّ
- non-oil-exporting: *ghayr-*u muSaddir-in li-l-nafTi غَيْرِ مُسَدِّرٍ لِلْنَفْطِ
- unsuitable: *ghayr-*u munaasib-in غَيْرِ مَنَاسِبٍ
- indirect: *ghayr-*u mubaashir-in غَيْرِ مَباشِرٍ
- unofficial: *ghayr-*u rasmiyy-in غَيْرِ رَسْمِيٌّ

1) **Modifying definite noun**: To modify a definite noun, *ghayr* غَيْرٍ is followed by an adjective with the definite article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the non-Islamic countries</td>
<td>al-bilaad-u ghayr-u l-ʾislaamiyyat-i</td>
<td>the non-Islamic countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-aligned states</td>
<td>al-duwal-u ghayr-u l-munHaazat-i</td>
<td>non-aligned states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the non-Arab Muslim countries</td>
<td>al-duwal-u l-ʾislaamiyyat-u ghayr-u l-ʿarabiyyat-i</td>
<td>the non-Muslim reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the non-Arab</td>
<td></td>
<td>the non-Muslim reader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) **Modifying indefinite noun**: To modify an indefinite noun, *ghayr* غَيْرِ is followed by an indefinite adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a non-pedigreed dog</td>
<td>kalb-un ghayr-*u ʾaSill-in غَيْرِ أَصْبِلٍ</td>
<td>a non-pedigreed dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is untrue what he says.</td>
<td>ghayr-*u SaHiiH-in maa ya-quul-u-hu. غَيْرِ صَحِيحٍ ما يَقُولُهُ.</td>
<td>It is untrue what he says.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 For more examples, see *ghayr* غَيْرٍ in Chapter 10, section 7.2.
bi-shakl-in ghayr-i muntaZam-in
in a disorganized manner

bi-turuq-in ghayr-i qaunuuniyyat-in
in illegal ways

2.2.4.3 ghayr غیر Following negative verb: Following a negative verb, ghayr غیر has the meaning of ‘only’ or ‘merely.’

لَم يَقْدِمُ غَيْرَ الْقَلِيلِ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
lam yu-qaddim ghayr-a l-qailil-i min-a l-anwaal-i.
It offered only a little money (‘It did not offer other than a little money’).

2.2.5 ‘adam عَدْمٌ + noun ‘non-’
The noun ‘adam ‘lack; absence; nonexistence’ may be annexed to another noun as the first term of a genitive construct to create a compound lexical item equivalent to various kinds of privative or negative expressions. Although the annexation structure or ‘iDaafa is a two-word expression in Arabic, it may carry a non-compositional meaning.9

non-interference ٌ ‘adam-u tadaxxul-in
nonexistence ٌ ‘adam-u wujuud-in
neutrality; non-alignment ٌ ‘adam-u nHiyaaz-in
instability ٌ ‘adam-u stiqraar-in

‘adam-u da’m-i ‘ayy-i Harakat-in kurdiiyyat-in the non-support of any Kurdish movement
‘adam-u taHqiq-i taqaddum-in the non-realization of progress

من المهم عَدْمَ تَقْدِيمٍ الكَثِيرُ مِنَ التَّنازِلَا
min-a l-muhimm-i ٌ ‘adam-u taqdiim-i l-kathiir-i min-a l-tanaazulaat-i.
It is important not to offer [too] many concessions.

3 Exceptive expressions
This category of expressions includes connectives and adverbs with meanings that contrast with previous propositional content. It includes items that have meanings such as “except for,” “however,” “nevertheless” and “despite; in spite of.” Sometimes these items consist of one word, other times they are phrases. They are also referred to as “adversative” expressions.

9 See also Chapter 8, section 1.7.1.
3.1 *bal* : ‘but; rather; but rather’

This word introduces a subordinate clause that contrasts in meaning with the main clause.\(^{10}\) The verb in the main clause is normally negative, with *bal* introducing a contrary affirmation.

\[
\text{ليست رائدة بل من أصل الكلمة.}
\]

\[
\text{lays-at zaa'idat-an bal min 'aSl-i l-kalimat-i.}
\]

It is not an affix; rather, it is [part] of the root of the word.

\[
\text{ليس فقط في الشرق الأدنى بل في العالم كله.}
\]

\[
\text{lays-a faqaT fii l-sharq-i l-adnaa bal fii l-aalam-i kull-i-hi.}
\]

Not only in the Near East, but [also] in the whole world.

3.2 *'illa* /’ɪlːa/: ‘except; but; but for’

This is a frequently used exceptive word in modern written Arabic. Its effect on the following phrase varies depending on whether the main clause is a negative or positive assertion.

3.2.1 Affirmative clause + *'illa* /’ɪlːa/

When the main clause is affirmative and *'illa* introduces an exception to that statement, it is followed by a noun in the accusative.

\[
\text{الساعة الخامسة إلا ربعاً}
\]

\[
\text{al-saa’at-a l-xaamisat-a 'illa rub’-an}
\]

at a quarter to five (‘the fifth hour except for a quarter’)

\[
\text{جاء كل الطلاب إلا نجيباً.}
\]

\[
\text{jaa’-a kull-u l-Tullab-i 'illa najiib-an.}
\]

All the students came except Najib.

3.2.2 Negative clause + *'illa* /’ɪlːa/

When the main clause is negative, *'illa* /’ɪlːa/ is followed by a noun that takes whatever case its role in the sentence requires. That is, *'illa* /’ɪlːa/ has no grammatical effect on the noun. In the following sentences, for example, the noun phrase after *'illa* /’ɪlːa/ fills the logical role of subject of the verb and is therefore in the nominative case.\(^{11}\)

\[
\text{لا يوجد إلا أقلية صغيرة.}
\]

\[
\text{laa yuujad-u 'illa qa'alliyat-un Saghiirat-un.}
\]

There is only a small minority. (‘There is not \textbf{but a small minority.’)"

---

\(^{10}\) See al-Warraki and Hassanein 1994, 62. In this book, see also Chapter 18, section 3.1.

\(^{11}\) It is interesting to note that verb-subject gender agreement does not extend across *'illa* back to the verb. Although the logical subject in all these cases is feminine singular, the verb is masculine singular.
لا يفصل المغرب عن إسبانيا إلا بمسافة كيلومترات
lā ya-fṣīl-u l-maghrīb-a ‘an isbaanyaa ‘illaa biD ‘at-u kiluumittiraat-in.
Only a few kilometers separate Morocco from Spain (‘there does not separate Morocco from Spain but a few kilometers’).
لا يفصل نشأة الإسلام عن نشأة المسيحية إلا قرون قليلة
Only a few centuries separate the birth of Islam from the birth of Christianity (‘there does not separate the birth of Islam from the birth of Christianity but a few centuries’).

3.2.3 ‘illaa إلا + prepositional phrase
A prepositional phrase may follow ‘illaa, especially after a negative main clause.
لا عودة للمهاجرين إلا من خلال الوزير
lā ‘awdat-a li-l-mahjar-iina ‘illaa min xilaal-i l-wazīr-i.
There is no return for exiles except through the minister.

هذه الفرصة لا تجدها إلا في القاهرة
haadhihi l-furSat-u lā na-jid-u-haa ‘illaa fii l-qāahirat-i.
This opportunity is found only in Cairo.
(‘We do not find this opportunity except in Cairo.’)
لا يخرج من مخابئه إلا خلال الليل
lā ya-xruj-u min maxaabi’-i-hi ‘illaa xilaal-a l-layl-i.
He doesn’t leave his hiding places except at night.

3.2.4 ‘illaa ‘anna ‘ однако; nonetheless; but’
This exceptive phrase introduces a clause or a sentence which contrasts with or balances out the previous one. Following the subordinating particle ‘anna is either a noun in the accusative case, or else a suffixed pronoun. In the following sentences, ‘illaa ‘anna is the initial element, relating the sentence to one that came just prior to it.
لا أن تطورا أكثر إذارة بدأ يلغت النظر
However, a more exciting development has started to redirect attention.
لا أن هذا لم ينجح حتى موعد قريب
However, it wasn’t completed until recently.
However, justice will take its course.

In the following sentences, "illaa 'anna l-'adaalat-a sa-ta-'xudh-u majraa-haa."

However, justice will take its course.

In the following sentences, "illaa 'anna l-'udaalat-a sa-ta-'xudh-u majraa-haa."

However, justice will take its course.

In the following sentences, "illaa 'anna l-'udaalat-a sa-ta-'xudh-u majraa-haa."

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In the following sentences, "illaa 'anna l-'udaalat-a sa-ta-'xudh-u majraa-haa."

However, justice will take its course.

In the following sentences, "illaa 'anna l-'udaalat-a sa-ta-'xudh-u majraa-haa."

However, justice will take its course.
There remained only a few months (‘there did not remain but a few months’).

In the box were only precious jewels (‘There was not in the box but precious jewels’).

even if you don’t see but one film a year

The semi-preposition ma‘-a n™ne means ‘with’ but it may also convey a sense of contrast or exception, as in these two expressions.

although I do not know the details

The word raghm is a noun which goes into an iDaafa relationship with the following noun or noun phrase, which is thus in the genitive case. It may be used by itself, or with bi- or with ‘alaa.

Despite this strong comeback
3.7 ‘alaa raghm-i  ‘anna: ‘despite [the fact] that’

The phrase ‘alaa raghm-i  ‘anna may be directly followed by the subordinating conjunction ‘anna and a subordinate clause. In this case, the entire clause acts as the second term of an ‘iDaafa after raghm. It is often followed by another exceptive clause introduced by ‘illaa ‘anna ‘nevertheless.’

wa-‘alaa raghm-i  ‘anna mas’uul-iina fii l-wizaarat-i qaal-uu . . . ‘illaa ‘anna-hu yu-‘taqad-u ‘anna . . .

despite the fact that ministry officials said . . . it is nevertheless considered that . . .

fa-‘alaa raghm-i  ‘anna l-xalaafat-a l-casaadi-r a Sinaa fi at-i l-ghaaz-i l-Tabii

despite the fact that the company did not announce the cost of the plan, nevertheless, natural gas industry sources . . .

3.8 wa-‘in: ‘even though; even if; despite the fact that’

This phrase is a combination of the conjunction wa- and the conditional marker, ‘in.

wa-‘in kaan-a hunaaka muHaafiZ-uuna ya-rfuD-uuna l-p‘idh‘aan-a li-haadhaa l-taghyiir-i
even though there were conservatives who refused to comply with this change

3.9 law-laa: ‘had it not been for; if it were not for’

This word is a conjunction with exceptive meaning created through the contraction of two particles, law  ‘lu (contrary to fact conditional) + laa  ‘la (negative), resulting in the meaning of hypothetical negation: ‘had it not been for.’ It is generally followed by a noun in the nominative case but may also be followed by a suffix pronoun.12

law-laa l-sab‘una timim-an-i ilati nhamar-‘at ‘alaa l-bilaad-i

had it not been for the 70 millimeters [of rain] that poured on the country

12 No instances of law-laa  ‘lu ‘laa ‘lu followed by a suffix pronoun were encountered in the data. For further discussion and examples, including suffix pronouns, see Cantarino 1975, III:326–30.
had it not been for their close contact with the Greek peoples.

The theater would have almost been forgotten had it not been for the opera.
Passive and passive-type expressions

1 Introduction
The concept of passive meaning contrasted with active meaning is referred to as voice in Western grammatical terms. That is, a verb is either in the active voice or the passive voice. In general, when in the active voice, the doer of the action is the subject of the verb (‘We studied the problem’ daras-naa l-mushkilat-a؛ درسنا المشكلة); when a verb is in the passive, the entity affected by the action (the direct object of the verb) becomes the subject (‘The problem was studied’ duris-at-i l-mushkilat-u دُرَسَت المشكلة). The voice of a verb therefore conveys information on the topical focus of a sentence.

1.1 Two types of Arabic passive: inflectional and derivational
There are two basic ways to convey a passive meaning in Arabic, the first being an inflectional (or internal) passive, involving a shift of vowel pattern within the verb: e.g., ‘uqid-a عَقِدَ ‘it was held’ from ‘aqad-a أَقَدَ ‘he held,’ and the second a derivational passive, where a derivational verb form (typically V, VII, or VIII) is used to convey a passive, reflexive, or mediopassive sense of the action involved in the verb (e.g., Form VII in‘aqad-a إِنْ أَقَدَ ‘it was held’). The type of action denoted by the derivational passive is referred to in Arabic as muTaawi fiА£e ‘obedience, conformity’ because it reflects a resultative state of the object (fataH-tu l-baab-a fa-nfataH-a فَنَفَتَ الباب فَانفتحَ ‘I opened the door and it opened’).

1 As Wright notes (1967, I:51): “The idea of the passive voice must not be thought to be absolutely identical with that of the fifth, seventh, and eighth forms. These are, strictly speaking effective [or resultative-KCR] . . . whilst the other is purely passive” (Italics in original). In English, however, it is sometimes necessary to render the equivalent meaning of these derived forms in the passive.

2 Terminology for the passive: The passive voice, especially the inflectional passive (fu’îl-a فعل)., is referred to in Arabic as the “unknown” al-majhuul المجهول, indicating that the agent or doer of the action is not known. When a passive-like or mediopassive meaning is conveyed by a derived form of the verb, it is characterized as muTaawi مطاوعة or, literally, ‘obedient’ to an action that has occurred (e.g., infataH-a افتتح ‘it opened’).
1.2 Use of the inflectional passive
Generally speaking, the inflectional passive is used in Arabic only if the agent or doer of the action is non-designated, unknown, or not to be mentioned for some reason. This contrasts with English where one may readily mention the agent in a passive construction through use of the preposition 'by' ("The problem was studied by us").

1.3 Contrast between active and passive voice
When the Arabic passive voice is used the object of the action is the subject of the verb. The object of the action in the passive is therefore in the nominative case. Note that an essential requirement for a verb to take a passive form is that it must be a transitive verb, i.e., one that takes an object.

If active-verb sentences are rephrased as passive constructions, the object of the verb becomes the subject of the sentence, and the verb is marked for passive by virtue of a change in the internal vowels. The doer of the action is normally not mentioned.

Active: Passive:

I opened the door. The door was opened.

I opened it. It was opened.

In the derivational passive, or resultative, a particular form of the verb is used to convey passive meaning. Here, it is Form VII:

The door opened. It opened.

---

3 Wright states: "the passive is especially used in four cases; namely (a) when God or some higher being, is indicated as the author of the act; (b) when the author is unknown, or at least not known for certain; (c) when the speaker or writer does not wish to name him; (d) when the attention of the hearer or reader is directed more to the person affected by the act (patiens, the patient), than to the doer of it (agens, the agent)" 1967, I:50.

4 The term that Arab grammarians use for "transitive verbs" is "'af'āal muta'addiyah" derived from the Form V verb tu'adda 'to go beyond, exceed.' That is, the action of the verb extends beyond the agent and all the way to the object. For intransitive verbs, the Arabic term is either "'af'āal ghayr muta'addiyah" أفعال غير متدلية or "'af'āal laazima" أفعال لازمة, verbs whose action does not extend beyond the subject.
Sometimes Arabic inflectional and derivational passives exist side by side; other times one is preferred. Moreover, they may carry slightly different implications about how the action was accomplished (see below).

1.4 Syntax: Restriction on mention of agent
When a passive verb is used in Arabic, mention of the identity of the agent or doer of the action is usually omitted.\(^5\) It may be unknown or simply unnecessary. For this reason, a term used to refer to the passive in Arabic is *al-majhuul* المجهول 'the unknown.' In fact, if the agent is to be mentioned, the passive is not normally used; the active verb is then the preferred option.\(^6\)

However, *instruments* or other inanimate causative factors (such as the weather) may be mentioned by means of prepositional phrases, e.g.,

\[\text{futuH-a l-baab-u bi-haadhaa l-miftaaH-i.}\]

The door was opened *by/with this key*.

When the subject of the passive verb is mentioned as a separate noun, it is in the nominative case (as in the sentence above, *al-baab-u* الباب ). The technical Arabic term for the subject of a passive verb is *naa’ib al-faa’il* نائب الفاعل 'the deputy doer; the representative of the doer.'\(^7\)

Note that the passive verb may occur in the present or past tense, and in the indicative, jussive or subjunctive moods, depending on context.

2 The internal or inflectional passive
The internal passive is formed by changing the vowel sequence of the verb in the following ways:

2.1 Past tense
In the past or perfect tense, the vowel sequence is /-u ـi/-. That is, within the stem, all vowels previous to the stem vowel are /u/ and the stem vowel itself is /i/. This is true for all verb forms (derivations), and for quadriliteral verbs as well as triliteral verbs. Aside from the internal vowel change, the past tense verb in the passive conjugates as usual, with the normal suffixes:

\(^5\) Another term used to describe the passive verb in Arabic is *maa lam yu-samma faa’il-u-hu* ‘that whose agent is not named.’ See Wright 1967, I:50–51 for more on terminology and section 2.5 in this chapter.

\(^6\) As Cowan notes (1964, 59): “If the agent is mentioned in the sentence one cannot use the passive” (emphasis in original). This rule is occasionally, but only rarely, broken in MSA.

\(^7\) On the syntax of passive verbs in literary Arabic, see Cantarino 1974, I:52–58.
Paradigm: wulid-a ‘was/were born’

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>wulid-tu</td>
<td>wulid-tma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second person:</td>
<td>wulid-ta</td>
<td>wulid-tuma</td>
<td>wulid-tuma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>wulid-ti</td>
<td>wulid-tuma</td>
<td>wulid-tuma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1 Examples of the Form I past tense passive in context

2.1.1.1 STRONG/REGULAR ROOT

- نُقلَ إلى المستشفى. nuqil-a ‘ilaal l-mustashfaa.
  He was transported to the hospital.

- مُنعِوا من دخول المدينة. muni’-uu min duxuul-i l-madiinat-i.
  They were prevented from entering the city.

- كُتِبَ بحروف عبرية. kutib-a bi-Huruuf-in ‘ibriyyat-in.
  It was written in Hebrew characters.

- فُرضُ رسم دخول. furid-a rasm-u dukhuul-in.
  An entry fee was imposed.

2.1.1.2 ASSIMILATED ROOT

- سوريا وُضعتٌ على القائمة. suuriyaa wudi’-at-i ‘alaal l-qaa’immat-i.
  Syria was placed on the list.

- وُجدَ في الإسطبل. wujid-a fii l-isTabil-i.
  It was found in the stable.

2.1.1.3 GEMINATE ROOT

- عُدُت الأصوات. ‘udd-at-i l’aSwaat-u.
  The votes were counted.
2.1.1.4 HAMZATED ROOT

سُئِلَ الوزير عن الجريمة.
su‘il-a l-waziir-u ‘an-i l-jariimat-i.
The minister was asked about the crime.

2.1.1.5 HOLLOW ROOT: In the past tense passive of hollow roots, the long medial vowel is /-ii-/. This applies to Forms I, IV, VII, VIII, and X.

و بيعت لأحد المتاحف
wa-bii‘at li-‘ahad-i l-mataaHif-i
and it was sold to one of the museums
qiil-a la-hu.

2.1.1.6 DEFECTIVE ROOT: In the past tense passive of defective verbs, the final radical is yaa'. This applies to the derived forms as well.

وجدوا برجين بنيا من الحجارة.
wajad-uu burj-ayni buniy-aa min-a l-Hijaarat-i.
They found two towers [which] were built of stone.

وذلك سُمي القرى هناك بأسمائهم.
wā-li-dhaalika summiy-at-i l-qura‘a hanaaka bi-‘asmaa‘-i-him.
Therefore, the villages there were named after them.

2.1.2 The past passive in derived forms of the verb

2.1.2.1 FORM II: fu‘il-a

عُيِّن طبيباً للملك.
‘uyyin-a Tabiib-an li-l-malik-i.
He was appointed physician to the king.

أجلت الاجتماعات.
‘ujjil-at-i l-ijtimaa‘aat-u.
The meetings were delayed.

2.1.2.2 FORM III: fuw‘il-a

فوعد بالانفاق.
buurik-a l-ittifaq-u.
The agreement was blessed.

فوجئت بالانفاق.
fuujii‘-at bi-l-ittifaq-i.
She was surprised at the agreement.
2.1.2.3 FORM IV: حرف الفعّال لا وعلى حرف الفعّال من الأحرف النموذجية: ظاهراً، DEFECTIVE FORM IV حرف الفعّال على حرف الفعّال من الأحرف النموذجية: ظاهراً، HOLLOW FORM IV حرف الفعّال على حرف الفعّال من الأحرف النموذجية: ظاهراً، The letter was sent from America. The airport was closed.

The letter was sent from America. The airport was closed.

أُرسلت الرسالة من أمريكا. أغلقت المطار.

أُدخلت إلى المستشفى. أُغلقت محل خروج طور.

A dinner was given at the hotel.

A dinner was given at the hotel.

خُلال الانتخابات التي أجُريت قبل سنة

She was admitted to the hospital.

She was admitted to the hospital.

اِنْتَشَلْتُ لْمِنْ تَحْتَ لِلْمَكْثَفَةِ. اِنْنَجُرَتْ بْعِدَةَ خْطْرَة.

One of them was afflicted with serious wounds.

A dinner was given at the hotel.

A dinner was given at the hotel.

السَّابِعُ مَنْ أُلْجِرْنَ أَعْلَمْوا. مُنْحَدِرُ "الصُّدُورُ.

Seven persons were arrested.

Seven persons were arrested.

السَّبِعُ أَشْخَاصَ أُعْلَمْوا. عَلِيْمٌ بالجريمة.

Seven persons were arrested.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

وَكَانَ قَدْ أُتَعْلَمْ. عَلِيْمٌ الحضور.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ الحضور. حضورٌ مُنْحَدِرُ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ بالجريمة.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.

He had been assassinated.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He was accused of the crime.

He was accused of the crime.

عَلِيْمٌ "الصُّدُورُ.

He had been assassinated.
2.1.2.8 FORM IX: none.

2.1.2.9 FORM X: ustuf‘il-a, FORM X HOLLOW ustufii-l-a, FORM X DEFECTIVE ustuf‘iy-a

It was used. It was beneficial

('it was benefitted from').

2.1.3 Quadrilateral verbs in the past passive

Quadrilateral verbs have the same vowel sequence (-u-i) as triliteral verbs in the passive.

2.1.3.1 FORM I: fu‘il-l-a

These commentaries were translated into Latin.

2.1.3.2 FORMS II, III, IV: rare.

2.2 Inflectional passive: present tense stem

In the present tense, the vowel sequence in the passive is /u/ on the subject marker and, subsequently, /a/ within the verb stem. Note that the present tense stem is used for the subjunctive and jussive, as well.

| Present tense passive indicative: yu-dhkar-u | يُذَكَرُ he/it is mentioned |

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<td>يُذَكَرُ</td>
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<td>tu-dhkar-u</td>
<td>yu-dhkar-u</td>
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<td>تَذَكَرَينَ</td>
<td>تَذَكَرَانَ</td>
<td>تَذَكَرَانَ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>tu-dhkar-aani</td>
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<td>Second person: m.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>تَذَكَرَانَ</td>
<td>تَذَكَرَانَ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tu-dhkar-u</td>
<td>tu-dhkar-aani</td>
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<td>Third person: m.</td>
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<td>tu-dhkar-u</td>
<td>tu-dhkar-aani</td>
<td>tu-dhkar-aani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.1 Examples of the Form I present tense passive in context

2.2.1.1 STRONG/REGULAR ROOT: yu-f'al-u

It will be held tomorrow morning in Cairo.

It is mentioned that the secretary general

2.2.1.2 ASSIMILATED ROOTS: yuu'al-u

In assimilated verbs, the present tense passive shows a long vowel /-uu-/ after the subject marker because of the merging of the /-u-/ of the passive with the underlying verb-initial semivowel (usually waaw).

There is (‘is found’) an answer to the problem.

2.2.1.3 GEMINATE ROOTS: yu-fa'al-u

She is considered a gifted writer.

2.2.1.4 HAMZATED ROOTS: hamza-INITIAL: yu-zz-al-u; hamza-MEDIAL: yu-f'al-u; hamza-FINAL: yu-f'a'-u

The hors d’oeuvres are being eaten.

He is being asked about the policy.

2.2.1.5 HOLLOW ROOTS: yu-faal-u

Gifts are sold in it.

What has been said and what will be said about it
2.2.1.6 DEFECTIVE ROOTS: $yu^\text{fa}^\text{aa}$

وُكاد الموضوع يُفغِى.
wa-kaad-a l-mawDuu′-u $yu^\text{mHaa}$.
The topic was almost erased.

2.2.2 Derived forms of the verb in the present tense passive

Following are examples of the present passive in derived forms of the verb. Note that certain forms (V, VI, VII, VIII, IX) occur less frequently in the inflectional passive because they are intransitive or have passive or mediopassive meaning.9

2.2.2.1 FORM II: $yu^\text{fa}^\text{aa}^\text{l-u}$; DEFECTIVE: $yu^\text{fa}^\text{aa}$

أُسعارًا لَّ تُصِدَّقَ
اسآًار-ن لا tu-Saddaq-u
unbelievable (′not believed′) prices

لَمْ يُكَلَّل بِالنَجَاحِ.
lam yu-kallal bi-l-najaaHi.

yu-sammaa ʾaHmad-u.
He is named Ahmad.

2.2.2.2 FORM III: $yu^\text{faa}^\text{al-u}$: rare.

2.2.2.3 FORM IV: $yu^\text{f-al-u}$; HOLLOW: $yu^\text{faa}^\text{l-u}$; DEFECTIVE: $yu^\text{faa}$

سَيِّئَن غَدًا.
sa-yu-ʾlan-u ghad-an.
It will be announced tomorrow.

تَجْرِي مَحادَّثاتٌ مَهمَّةً.
tu-jraa muHaadathaat-un muhimmat-un.
Important talks are being conducted.

yu-Daaf-u ʾilay-haa ʾishruuna bi-l-miʿat-i Dariibat-an Hukuumiyyat-an.
Added to it is twenty percent government tax.

2.2.2.4 FORM V: $yu^\text{taa}^\text{al-u}$: rare.

2.2.2.5 FORM VI: $yu^\text{faa}^\text{al-u}$: rare.

2.2.2.6 FORM VII: $yu^\text{nfa}^\text{al-u}$: rare.

9 See section 3.
2.2.2.7 FORM VIII: 你会利用 你会利用 你会利用
\(\text{HOLLOW: } \text{你会利用} \) 你会利用
\(\text{DEFECTIVE: } \text{你会利用} \) 你会利用

你会利用从阿谢尔的图书资源在当今
\(\text{yu-‘tabar-u min ‘ashhar-i l-rassam-iina fii l-‘aSr-i l-Hadiith-i.} \)

He is considered one of the most famous artists of the modern era.

﻿

2.2.2.8 FORM IX:  none.

2.2.2.9 FORM X: 你会利用 你会利用 你会利用
\(\text{HOLLOW: } \text{你会利用} \) 你会利用
\(\text{DEFECTIVE: } \text{你会利用} \) 你会利用

你会利用来使用三毛在三毛
\(\text{yu-staxdam-u li-Sanaa‘i l-‘awraaq-i.} \)

It is used to make papers.

2.2.3 Quadriliteral present tense passive

Form I: 你会利用 你会利用 你会利用

The passive of quadrilaterals occurs most often in Form I.

你会利用哪本书没有译
\(\text{al-kutub-u llatii lam tu-fahras} \)

你会利用哪些书正在被
\(\text{al-kutub-u llatii tu-tarjam-u} \)

the books which have not been the books which are being translated

indexed

2.3 Passive with verb-preposition idioms

When a concept is conveyed by a verb-preposition idiom, the verb remains in the third person masculine singular in the passive. It does not inflect for agreement in number or gender. If a passive participle is used, it also remains in the masculine singular. In the following illustrations, an active sentence using a verb-preposition idiom is changed to passive.
Verb-preposition idiom: \textit{baHath-a} ‘\textit{an} عَنّ ‘to search for, to look for’

**Active:**

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{baHath-naa} ‘\textit{an} l-\textit{awlaad-i}.
\item We looked for the children.
\end{itemize}

**Passive:**

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{buHith-a} ‘\textit{an} l-\textit{awlaad-i}.
\item The children were looked for.
\end{itemize}

Further examples:

\textit{Hukim-a} ‘\textit{alaa} l-rijaal-i bi-l-Habs-i li-muddat-i mi\textquotesingle at-i yawm-in.

The men were sentenced to imprisonment for 100 days.

\textit{min maSaadir-a} mawthuuq-in bi-haa

from trusted sources

\textit{alwaah} ‘\textit{alay-haa} fi l-hilaal-i l-xaSiib-i

clay tablets discovered in the Fertile Crescent

2.4 Passive with doubly transitive verbs

With verbs that are doubly transitive, taking two objects, only one of the objects switches to be the subject of the passive sentence. The other remains in the accusative case:

\textit{li-\textit{anna-hu} yu-\textit{tabar-u} ntiqaal-an naw\textquotesingle iy-an bayn-a l-naSr-i wa-l-haziimat-i}.

Because it is considered a characteristic transition between victory and defeat.

\textit{yu-\textit{tabar-u} aHad-a \textit{arwa}’-i l-aathaar-i l-fanniyyat-i}.

It is considered one of the most splendid artifacts.

\textit{\‘uyyin-a} Tabiib-an li-l-malik-i.

He was appointed physician to the king.

\textit{\‘uddi’-uu} l-sijin-a.

They were thrown [into] prison.
2.5 Mention of agent: ʿalaa yad-i, min qibal-i

Rarely, an agent or doer of the action may be mentioned in an Arabic passive sentence. When this is the case, certain phrases tend to be used, just as English would use the term “by.” These are ʿalaa yad-i + noun ‘by the hand of’ or min qibal-i + noun ‘on the part of.’

لكن هذه المساجد محتلة من قبل المسلمين.

But these mosques are occupied by Muslims.

أُغْتِيلَ عَلَى يَدِ عَلَمانيِنّ.
He was assassinated by laymen.

حَتَّى فَتَحَهَا عَلَى يَدِ المُسْلِمِينّ.
Hattaa fatH-i-haa ʿalaa yad-i l-muslim-iina
until it was conquered (‘its conquering’) by the Muslims

2.5.1 bi-qalam-i

With authors of books, the phrase bi-qalam-i + noun ‘by the pen of’ is often used instead of ‘by’:

بَلَّمَ الْعَالِمِ وَالشَّاعِرِ الْمَعَوْفِ
bi-qalam-i l-fi-aalim-i wa-l-shaa fi-ruuf-i
by the famous scholar and poet

2.6 Passive with potential meaning

The Arabic passive is sometimes used to indicate possibility, worth, or potential. The passive participle in particular may have a meaning equivalent to an English adjective ending in “-able.”

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ لِلْمَعَارِضَةِ وَجَدَأْ يَدْكُرُ
fa-lam ya-kun li-l-muʿaaraDat-i wujuud-un yu-dhkar-u.
The opposition did not have a presence [worth] mentioning.

الـمـأكـوـلـات
al-maʿkuulaat-u
edibles, foods

الـمـشـروـبـات
al-mashruubaat-u
refreshments (‘drinkables’)

3 Passive with derived forms of the verb

Derived forms of the verb, especially V, VII, VIII, and IX may indicate a passive or passive-like meaning, and may sometimes be used in this way. However, this is not always the case. These derivational verbs need to be learned as separate lexical
items in order to know if their meaning is equivalent to a passive expression in English. For more detailed analysis of these verb forms, see the separate chapters on each derivational form.

3.1 The Form V verb: *tafa‘al-a / ya-tafa‘al-u* تَفَكُّكَ / يُتَفَكَّكَ
Form V verbs may function as the reflexive of the Form II verb. This is sometimes referred to by grammarians as “mediopassive.”\(^{10}\) Form V may also be resultative of Form II, showing the result of the Form II action, e.g., *kaṣṣartu-haa fa-takassar-at* كَسَّرَتْهَا فَتَكَسَّرَتْ ‘I broke it (Form II) and it broke (Form V).’\(^{11}\)

- to disintegrate, break apart: *tafakkak-a/ya-tafakkak-u* تَفَكَّكَ / يُتَفَكَّكَ
- be fragmented: *tamazzaq-a/ya-tamazzaq-u* تَمَزَّقَ / يُتَمَزَّقَ

3.2 The Form VII verb: *infa‘al-a/ya-nfa‘il-u* إنْفَعِلَ / ينفَعِلُ
The Form VII verb may be analyzed as ergative, that is, the subject of the Form VII verb is the same as the object of the transitive Form I verb.\(^{12}\) Form VII verbs are also referred to as reflexive, resultative, passive or mediopassive in meaning. In Arabic they are described as *muTaawi* ‘obeying, corresponding with’ – that is, Form VII verbs show the result of Form I action.\(^{13}\)

- *inqaTa‘-a l-tayyar-u l-kahraba‘-iyy-u*. اِنْقَطَعَ الْتَّيَّارُ الْكَحْرَابَا‘-يَيْيُ-<
The electric current was cut off.
- *in‘aqad-a l-ijtimaa‘-u ‘ams-i*. اِنْقَادَ الْجَمْهُورِ اِسْتِحْمَالٌ<
The meeting was held yesterday.
- *ta-nqasim-u l-bilaad-u ‘ila xams-a ‘ashrat-a minTaqat-an*. تَنْقَسِمُ الْبَلَادُ إِلَى خَمْسَ عَشْرَةٌ مَنْطَقَةٍ<
The country is divided into fifteen regions.

3.3 Form VIII
Form VIII may also have mediopassive meaning.\(^{14}\) Some examples include:

- be spread out: *intashar-a/ya-ntashir-u* اِنْتَشَرَ / ينْتَشِرُ
- to be related, linked: *intasab-a/ya-ntasib-u* اِنْتَسَبَ / ينْتَسِبُ

10 “No grammatical distinction is made in Arabic verbs between “reflexive” acts and spontaneous developments – what one does to one’s self and what simply happens to one are equally accommodated by the mediopassive” (Cowell 1964, 238).
11 For more on the Form V verb and its meanings, see Chapter 26.
13 For more on *muTaawi* *مَتْعِبُْ* see section 1.1 in this chapter and also Chapter 26, note 4.
14 One reason for the existence of mediopassive verbs in Form VIII is the phonological restriction in Form VII against lexical roots beginning with the consonants *hamza*, *waaw*, *yaa*, *raa*, *laam*, or *nuun*. Form VIII or Form V take over the mediopassive function for those roots.
to rise, be raised irtaʃə-a/yə-rtafî-u

to be healed iltə′am-a/yə-ltə′im-u

to be completed iktamal-a/yə-ktamil-u

إصلاحيات لم تكتمل منذ عامين
išlaHaat-un lam ta-ktamil mundh-u ′aam-ayni
renovations that haven’t been completed in two years

جروح لم تلتئم بعد
juruulH-un lam ta-lta′im ba′d-u
wounds that have not been healed yet
Conditional propositions are ones in which hypothetical conditions are specified in order for something else to take place. Usually there are two clauses, one that specifies the condition (typically starting with “if . . .”) and one that specifies the consequences or result of those conditions (typically starting with “then . . .”). In traditional English grammar the clause that specifies the conditions (the “if-clause”) is termed the *protasis* and the second clause (the “then-clause”) is termed the *apodosis*. In Arabic the equivalent terms are *shart* شرط (for the condition clause) and *jawaab* جواب (for the consequence clause).

Arabic often uses a past tense verb in the conditional clause or protasis (*shart* شرط). However, the jussive mood of the present tense verb may also be used in the protasis. The apodosis or consequence clause (*jawaab* جواب) may be in the same tense as the previous one, or it may be different. If there is a tense switch between clauses, the particle *fa-* normally precedes the apodosis; in practice in current MSA, however, it is often omitted.¹

Some conditions are reasonably realizable (“If you wait, I’ll go with you”), but others are simply expressions of impossible or “contrary to fact” conditions (“If I were your fairy godmother, I would grant your wish”). Arabic uses different particles to express possible conditions and impossible conditions.²

### 1 Possible conditions: *idhaa* إذا, *and* *in* إنّ

To express possible conditions, Arabic uses two conditional particles: *'idhaa* or *'in* to start the protasis or *shart* conditional clause. In the texts covered for this study, *'idhaa* occurred much more frequently than *'in*.³ The use of *'idhaa* is considered to imply probable conditions.⁴

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¹ See Taha 1995, 180–82 on this topic.
² For a booklength description of conditional structures in Arabic, see Peled 1992, which contains an extensive bibliography on the topic as well. See also Cantarino 1975, III: 311–69, Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1975, 450–68, and Fischer 2002, 227–36 for discussion of conditional structures in classical and literary Arabic.
³ Note that *'idhaa* does not always translate as ‘if.’ Sometimes it is used in the adverbial sense of ‘when.’ See Cantarino 1975, III:297–302.
⁴ *'in* is a straight hypothesis – ‘if, if it is the case that . . ., if it should be that . . .’ while *'idhaa* ‘if’ implies some degree of probability and sometimes implies ‘when, whenever.’ Abboud and McCarus 1983, Part 2:176.
1.1 'idhaa 'إذا 'if’ + past tense

When 'idhaa is used as the conditional particle in the sharT clause, the verb is in the past tense. In the jawaab, a tense switch may or may not happen. This type of conditional is the most frequent in MSA.

إذا كنتَ في الطوابق العلوية، لا تهرب إلى الأسفل. 'idhaa kun-ta fii l-Tawaabiq-i l-‘ulawiyat-i, laa ta-hra ila‘a l-‘asfal-i.

If you are on the upper floors, do not rush to the lower [floors].

إذا كنتَ الشبابيك مفتوحة، سارع إلى إغلاقها. 'idhaa kaan-at-i l-shabaabiik-u maftuuHat-an, saari ila‘a ighlaaq-i-haa.

If the windows are open, do not rush to close them.

إذا رغبتَ في حجز تذكرة، فعليل أن تدفع مسبقاً. 'idhaa raghib-ta fii Hajz-i tadhkarat-in, fa-‘alay-ka an ta-dfa‘a musabbaq-an.

If you want to reserve a ticket, (then) you must pay in advance.

1.1.1 Negative conditional: 'idhaa lam 'إذا لم’

A negative condition may be expressed with lam + jussive verb.

إذا لم يلغ القانون...فانه يتجاهلها. idhaa lam ya-lghi l-qaanuun-a...fa-‘inna-hu ya-tajaahal-u-hu.

[Even] if he hasn’t abolished the law... he ignores it.

1.1.2 Negative conditional wa-‘illa...fa- ‘if not; or else’

Another type of negative condition is expressed through the used of wa-‘illa (a contraction of wa-‘in-laah), which introduces a consequence clause. Sometimes it is accompanied by fa-:

و إلا فستكون فشلت في دورها wa-‘illa, fa-sa-ta-kuun-u fashal-at fii dawr-i-haa

and if not, it will have failed in its role

كل الخضر و إلا قاصصوك. kul-i l-xDar-a wa-‘illa qaaSaS-uu-ka.

Eat the vegetables or else they [will] punish you.

1.1.3 Reversal of clause order

Most of the time, the sharT clause comes first, before the jawaab or apodosis, but sometimes the order is reversed. This is referred to as a “postposed condition,” and the normal rules for the result clause do not apply. The particle fa- is omitted and the verb in the first clause may vary as to tense.
The team would have won if the committee had permitted them to participate.

1.2 Conditional with ُّ in + perfect or ُّ in + jussive

The conditional particle ُّ in may be followed by either verbs in the perfect or verbs in the jussive in both the condition and the result clauses. If the jussive is used in the conditional clause, then the verb in the result clause may also be jussive. For this reason, the particle ُّ in is called in Arabic grammar one of the “particles that require the jussive on two verbs”: اً-ً adawaat-u llatii ta-jzim-u fi l-ayni. If, however, the verb in the result clause is part of a nominal clause (i.e., a clause that starts with a noun), then it is in the imperfect indicative. The verb in the result clause may also be in the past tense.

The use of ُّ in with conditional clauses is less frequent in Modern Standard Arabic than in literary and classical Arabic.

سيمرون إن أكلوا كل هذا الآن.

They will get sick if they eat all that now.

إِنْ زِينْتَهُنَّ أَكْرَمْتُكُمْ.
ُّ in zur-tum-uu-nii ُّ akram-tu-kum.

If you (pl.) visit me I shall honor you.

إِن شَاء اللَّهُ.
ُّ in shaa’a-llaaH-u.

If God wills.

5 See Abboud and McCarus 1983, Part 2:178: “If the verb in the condition clause is jussive, the verb in the result clause must also be jussive.” See also Abd al-Latif et al., 1997, 307ff. for more examples. But note that in Haywood and Nahmad 1962, 291, they list under possibilities for the conditional sentence: “The Jussive is used in the Protasis, the Perfect in the Apodosis:

إِنْ يَهْبَ زِيدَ ذَهِبَتْ مَعِهِ
ُّ in ya-dhhab zayd-un dhahab-tu ma’-a-hu.
‘If Zayd goes I will go.’ (their example)

The condition clause may also be in the imperative, without a conditional particle, and followed immediately by a verb in the jussive in the result clause. Abboud and McCarus 1983 give the following example (Part 2:178):

اً-ً أَدْرَسْ نُجِجْ
u-drus ta-njaH.
Study [and] you [will] succeed.

6 See Ziadeh and Winder 1957, 162.
If a person breaks the tooth of another, (then) his tooth shall be broken.

If you would wait for me at the airport at the time of my arrival, I would consider that a kindness from you.

2 Conditional expressed with -maa مَهْمَا ‘ever’

The adverbial suffix -maa can be suffixed to an adverb or a noun to shift its meaning to ‘ever,’ such as “whenever” or “wherever.” These expressions are considered conditionals in Arabic and follow the rules for conditional sentences. Cowell 1964 refers to clauses using these particles as “quasi-conditional” clauses.10

2.1 mahmaa مَهْمَا ‘whatever’

I don’t think it will stop, whatever the United States says.

2.2 ‘ayn-a-maa ْأَيْنًا مَهْمَا ‘wherever’

Wherever you are, you can listen.

---

8 From Ziadeh and Winder 1957, 160.
9 Ibid., 164.
10 Cowell 1964, 337–38. Cowell is describing types of conditional clauses in Syrian Arabic but deals with similar particles.
2.3 *kull-a-maa* كَلَّا [‘whenever’]
This connective also specifies a condition and therefore requires the use of the past tense verb in the clause that it introduces.

يمكن تكرارها كَلَّا بِجَدَّة الخطر.
yu-mkin-u takraar-u-haa *kull-a-maa* tajaddad-a l-xaTar-u. It can be repeated *whenever* danger recurs.

2.4 *’idhaa + maa* إذا ما [‘if ever’]
Occasionally, even *’idhaa* will be followed by the particle -*maa*. In this sense, -*maa* is not used as a negative particle but implies ‘if ever’ or ‘if and when.’

إذا ما فَتَح باب الحوار
*’idhaa-maa futiH-a* baab-u l-Hiwaari
if the door of discussion is ever opened

2.5 *man* من [‘whoever’]
The pronoun *man*, meaning ‘who’ or ‘whoever’ may be followed by a conditional clause in the jussive. This kind of conditional is often found in proverbs.

من يزرع شوكاً يحصد شوكة.
*man ya-zra* shawk-an ya-HSid shawk-an.¹¹
He who sows thorns [will] reap thorns.

من يقتل يقتل.
*man ya-qtal yu-qtal*.¹²
He who kills, shall be killed.

3. Contrary-to-fact conditionals: *la-* لَو
Some conditional sentences express impossible or unreasonable conditions. The conditional particle used to introduce contrary-to-fact conditions is *law* لَو, followed by either a past tense verb or *lam* plus the jussive for the negative. The contrary-to-fact condition is usually followed by a result clause (*jawaab*) that is preceded by the particle *la-* لَ; there are some exceptions, however. The *la-* لَ is omitted when the result clause precedes the condition clause as in:

عنزة ولو طارت.
*’anzat-un wa-law* Taar-at.
It is [still] a goat even if it flies.¹³

¹¹ Cited in *Abd al-Latif et. al., 1997, 308.
¹² From Ziadeh and Winder 1957, 160.
¹³ This Arabic saying is cited in McLaughlin 1988, 82.
Seek knowledge even if it be in China.

or if the result clause is understood or implied, and therefore not specified:

law samaH-ta.

If you permit.

3.1 'even if' حتّى ولو

The addition of حتّى to law, yields the meaning of 'even if.' It is usually followed by a past tense verb or negated past tense through the use of lam plus the jussive.

4 Optative constructions

Wishes, blessings, and curses are often expressed in the past tense in Arabic, just as the past tense is used in many hypothetical expressions. There is no need for a particular particle, just the expression phrased in the past tense.

May God bless you.

May God have mercy on him.

May you live long.

May God keep you safe.

Peace be upon you.
Using an Arabic dictionary

The organization of Arabic dictionaries is based on word roots and not word spelling. Word roots are listed alphabetically according to the order of letters in the Arabic alphabet. For example, the root k-t-f comes after k-t-b because /f/ comes after /b/ in the Arabic alphabet. Therefore, in order to find the root, one has to know the order of the alphabet. This system applies to genuinely Arabic words or words that have been thoroughly Arabized.

Loanwords, however — words borrowed from other languages — are listed in an Arabic dictionary according to their spelling (e.g., haliikubtar هلیکبتر ‘helicopter’).

Instead of relying on the exact orthography of a word, therefore, Arabic dictionaries are organized by the root or consonant core of a word, providing under that initial entry every word derived from that particular root. The root is therefore often called a “lexical root” because it is the actual foundation for the lexicon, or dictionary. The lexical root provides a semantic field within which actual vocabulary items can be located. In this respect, an Arabic dictionary might be seen as closer to a thesaurus than a dictionary, locating all possible variations of meaning in one referential domain or semantic field under one entry.

Most often, Arabic words can be reduced to three radicals or root consonants (e.g., H-m-l ‘carry’), but some roots have more or less than three. There are a number of biliteral (y-d ‘hand’), quadriliteral (t-r-j-m ‘translate’), and quinquiliteral (b-n-f-s-j ‘violet’) roots in Arabic, and there are even some monoliteral roots (for function words such as the preposition ka- ‘as, like’).

The verb citation form for dictionary use is the third person masculine singular past tense. There is no infinitive form of the verb in Arabic.

For example, all the following words having to do with “studying” are found in the dictionary under the root d-r-s, even though some begin with ma- or mu-, because all of them are located within the semantic field of d-r-s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lesson</td>
<td>dars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lessons</td>
<td>duruus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because of this major difference in dictionary organization, it is necessary for Western learners of Arabic to learn rules of Arabic word structure in order to be able to make sense of an Arabic or Arabic–English dictionary. Learners must be able to identify the root consonants in a word in order to find the main dictionary entry; then they need to know generally how the word pattern fits into the overall system of derivational morphology in order to locate that particular word within the abundant and sometimes extensive subcategories provided within the semantic field of the entry. The root-pattern system is fundamental for Arabic word creation and accounts for about 80–85 percent of Arabic vocabulary.

Using the Wehr Dictionary

In the most widely used Arabic–English dictionary, the *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (DMWA)* by Hans Wehr and edited by J. Milton Cowan, fourth edition (1979), the compilers assume that the users know and understand the system of Arabic derivational verb morphology based on the roman numerals I–X (or sometimes even up to XV). Wehr lists verbs first, in the I–X order, marked only by the roman numeral, not giving the actual verb spelling except for Form I.¹

For example, under the root *q-b-l*, are listed roman numerals II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII, and X, and after each roman numeral are definitions for each of these forms of the verb. Thus, if the user is looking up an inflected verb form, such as *istaqbal-at*, the user needs to know that this is a Form X verb, that the root is *q-b-l*, and that it is inflected for third person feminine singular past tense. In this manner, the user can locate the verb root, find the roman numeral X and see that the listed definitions for this form include ‘to face, to meet, to receive.’ By putting together the lexical meaning from the dictionary information, contextual meaning from the text being read, and the grammatical meaning from the inflectional suffix, the user can deduce that the word *istaqbal-at* means ‘she received.’

Note that the *DMWA* provides the present tense or imperfective stem vowel for Form I because it is not predictable. It does not do this for the derived forms, because they are predictable. It therefore includes, in romanization, after the Arabic script, under the entry for *k-t-b*, for example:

\[kataba \quad u \ (kath, \ kitba, \ kitaaba)\]

¹ Wehr provides a useful summary of the arrangement of entries in his introduction (1979, pp. vii–xvii).
That is, it gives the voweling for the past tense citation form, the present tense stem vowel, and, in parentheses, the most common verbal nouns for the Form I verb, all in romanization. The DMWA does not include short vowels in the Arabic script spelling of the entries; short vowels are indicated only by the romanization that directly follows the dictionary entry.

To look up the word istiqbaal إستقبال, it is helpful to know that it is a verbal noun of Form X, since the DMWA lists nouns (including nouns of place and nouns of instrument, for example), adjectives, adverbs, and verbal nouns immediately after the verb definitions, in the I–X order. After that are listed active participles I–X and then passive participles, also in the I–X order. Note, however, that the DMWA does not identify the nouns or participles by number; it assumes that the user knows the derivational system.

It is also important for users to be able to recognize noun, adjective, and participle plurals because plurals are not listed as separate items in the dictionary, even though their word structure may differ substantially from the singular form, especially with broken plurals. Thus, coming across a word such as mashaakil مشاكل, the reader needs to know how to determine the root, sh-k-l, but also needs to recognize that this is a broken plural pattern, and will not be listed as a separate entry, but as a plural under the entry of mushkila مشكلة, 'problem' (a Form IV active participle).

Particular challenges emerge when lexical roots are weak or irregular in some way, that is, if they are geminate, hamzated, assimilated, hollow, defective, or doubly defective. In these cases, the nature of a root consonant may shift (from a long vowel to a hamza, for example as in the word zaa’ir زائر ‘visitor’ derived from the root z-w-r) or a root consonant may simply disappear (for example, the noun thiqa ‘trust, confidence’ from the root w-th-q). It is therefore crucial for learners to practice using the dictionary and to gain an understanding of the system of Arabic word structure in order to have quick and efficient access to vocabulary items. Having a knowledge of the basic derivational systems and the logic and rules within these systems is key to building vocabulary and to gaining access to the full range of the abundant Arabic lexicon.

Naturally, it is not possible for learners at the early stages to recognize all possible root variants, but understanding the logic of dictionary organization will help right from the beginning. While it is possible to simply scour all the entries under a particular root without knowing the I–X system or the part-of-speech information that tells one where to look, it takes a great deal more time, and can be very frustrating, if not defeating.

This reference grammar includes extensive analysis of the permutations of regular and irregular lexical roots, in the I–X system. Please consult these sections for analysis of word structure, paradigms, and examples of words in context.
Thus, to summarize, the DMWA lists entries for a lexical root in the following order:

1. the root (which resembles the third person masculine singular past tense Form I verb)
2. verbal nouns of Form I (listed directly after the root in romanization)
3. verbs I–X listed numerically by roman numeral only
4. nouns and other parts of speech derived from Form I
5. nouns derived from other forms of the verb (in II–X sequence)
6. active participles from Forms I–X
7. passive participles from Forms I–X

Using an Arabic–Arabic dictionary

Arabic–Arabic dictionaries are likewise organized by lexical roots and the roots are listed in alphabetical order. Note, however, that Arabic lexicons do not use the I–X roman numeral system and make no reference to it.

For example, a standard reference work in Arabic is al-Munjid fī l-Ḥughā wa-l-‘a’laam, a combination of dictionary and concise encyclopedia. In the dictionary part, it lists verb derivations in the I–X order by listing them as they are spelled.

It also introduces verbal nouns, especially of Form I, in context, used in a short sentence, for example:

كَتَبَ كَتِبًا وَكِتَابًا وَكِتَابَةَ وَكَتِبَةَ الْكِتَابَ


Literally: ‘He wrote writing and writing and writing and writing the book.’

It is standard practice in Arabic reference works to use the verbal noun/s in a sentence with the verb in order to illustrate what they are (even though the example might not make logical sense). In the above example, there are four different verbal nouns displayed in boldface type.

This procedure is used with Form I verbs, but the verbal nouns of the derived forms II–X are not separately indicated because they are predictable. The al-Munjid fī l-Ḥughā wa-l-‘a’laam has an excellent introductory section summarizing Arabic derivational and inflectional morphology (pp. ha‘a to faa').

Arabic dictionary structure has evolved over time, and some older dictionaries are organized in different ways. Note also that some modern Arabic dictionaries are referred to as “‘abjadiyy” or ‘alphabetical,’ meaning that their

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2 See Haywood 1965 for a history of Arabic lexicography. See also Shivtiel 1993 for a comparison of Arabic root dictionaries and alphabetical dictionaries.
entries are organized by word spelling (for example, al-Munjid al-‘abjadiyy, 1968). Although this type of organization eases use somewhat for those who do not understand the derivational system of Arabic word structure, it is much less useful in helping the learner grasp semantic fields, word structure patterns, and meaning relationships among lexical items.
Appendix II: Glossary of technical terms

1. Glossary of Arabic grammatical terms
These entries are transliterated and organized in English alphabetical order with ʼayn and hamza discounted as orthographic elements.

ʻaamil  
syntactic governor or ‘operator’

ʼabjad; ʼabjadiyya  
alphabet

ʼafʻaal  
verbs (plural of fiʻl)

ʻafʻaal al-quluub/  
verbs of perception or cognition, in particular, of emotions and intellect

ʻafʻaal qalbiyya  
verbs of transformation (of something from one state to another)

ʻamal  
syntactic government; regime

ʼamr  
imperative; command

ʻasmaaʻ  
nouns (pl. of ism)

ʻasmaaʻ al-ʼishaara  
demonstrative pronouns

ʼaxawaat  
“sisters” – words similar in class and in governing effect

badal  
apposition

Damiir/Damaaʻir  
personal pronoun

Damaaʻir munfaSila  
independent personal pronouns, subject pronouns

Damma  
short vowel /u/

faDla  
‘extra’ or ‘surplus’ parts of the sentence rather than the kernel or core of the predication

faaʻil  
subject of a verbal sentence; agent; doer of the action

fatHa  
short vowel /a/

fiʻl / ʻafʻaal  
verb; action
fi‘l ‘ajwaf  
hollow verb

fi‘l ghayr muta‘addin  
intrinsitive verb

fi‘l laazim  
intransitive verb

fi‘l lafiif mafruuq  
assimilated and defective verb

fi‘l lafiif maqruun  
hollow and defective verb

fi‘l mahmuuz  
hamzated verb

fi‘l mithaal  
assimilated verb

fi‘l muDa‘af  
geminate verb, doubled verb

fi‘l muta‘addin  
transitive verb

fi‘l naaqiS  
defective verb

fi‘l SaHiH saalim  
sound verb; regular verb

fuSHaa  
literary Arabic, classical Arabic

Haal  
circumstantial accusative

hamzat al-qaT  
strong hamza

hamzat al-waSl  
elidable hamza

Haraka/-aat  
short vowel

Harf / Huruuf  
letter (of the alphabet); particle, function word

Huruuf qamariyya  
“moon” letters; word-initial sounds that do not assimilate the laam of the definite article

Huruuf shamsiyya  
“sun” letters; word-initial sounds that assimilate the laam of the definite article

‘iDaafa  
annexation structure, noun construct, genitive construct

‘iDaafa ghayr Haqiqiya  
“unreal” ‘iDaafa, adjective ‘iDaafa

‘i‘raab  
desinential (word-final) inflection

ishtiqaaq  
derivational etymology

ism / ‘asmaa‘  
noun; name

ism al-faa‘il  
active participle

ism al-‘ishaara  
demonstrative pronoun

ism al-maf‘uul  
passive participle

ism maqSuur  
indeclinable noun

ism mawSuul  
relative pronoun

ism al-tafDiil  
elative adjective; comparative or superlative

istithnaa‘  
exception, exceptive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>jam&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code></td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jam&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code> mu’annath saalim</td>
<td>sound feminine plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jam&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code> mudhakkar saalim</td>
<td>sound masculine plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jam&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code> al-taksiir</td>
<td>broken plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jarr</code></td>
<td>genitive case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jazm</code></td>
<td>jussive mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jawaab</code></td>
<td>answer; the apodosis, consequence clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jumla</code></td>
<td>sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jumla fi’liyya</code></td>
<td>verbal sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>jumla ismiyya</code></td>
<td>equational sentence; noun-initial sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>kasra</code></td>
<td>short vowel /i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>laa nafy-i l-jins-i</code></td>
<td>the laa of absolute or categorical negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>laam al-’amr</code></td>
<td>permissive or hortative imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maa l-ta’ajjub</code></td>
<td>the maa of astonishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maaDii</code></td>
<td>past, past tense; perfective aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>madda/’alif madda</code></td>
<td>hamza followed by a long /aa/; the symbol that indicates this sound (ī)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maf’uul bi-hi</code></td>
<td>direct object of transitive verb; the accusative of direct object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maf’uul fii-hi</code></td>
<td>accusative adverb of time, manner, or place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maf’uul li-’ajl-i-hi</code>/<code>maf’uul la-hu</code></td>
<td>accusative of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maf’uul muTlaq</code></td>
<td>cognate accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>mafhuul</code></td>
<td>the passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>mamnuu&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code> min-a l-Sarf</td>
<td>diptote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>majruur</code></td>
<td>genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>manSuub</code></td>
<td>accusative/subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>manquuS</code></td>
<td>defective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>marfuu&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</code></td>
<td>nominative/indicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maSdar</code></td>
<td>verbal noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maSdar miimii</code></td>
<td>a verbal noun whose initial consonant is a prefixed miim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>mustaqbal</code></td>
<td>future tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>maziid</code></td>
<td>“augmented”; extended verb form (II–X)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mu’annath  feminine
mubtada’  subject of equational sentence
muDaaf  the first term of an ‘iDaafa, or annexation structure
         muDaaf ‘ilay-hi  the second term of an ‘iDaafa, or annexation structure
muDaari  present tense; imperfective aspect
mudhakkar  masculine
mufrad  singular
mujarrad  base form verb; Form I; literally ‘stripped’
mu‘rab  triptote; fully inflectable
muTaabaqa  agreement or concord
muTaawa’a  ‘obedience; conformity’; verbal noun referring to verbs that are resultative, reflexive, passive, or semi-passive in meaning
muTaawi  ‘obedient, conforming’ – that is, conforming with a particular, lexically related action; passive, resultative, reflexive, or semi-passive
muthannaa  dual
naaqiS  defective
nafy  negation
naHw  grammar; syntactic theory
naHt  compounding into one word
naa’il al-faa’il  subject of a passive verb
naSb  accusative case (on substantives)/subjunctive mood (on verbs)
na’t  adjective
nawaasix  lexical items that convert substantives to the accusative case
nidaa  vocative
nisba  relative adjective
raf  nominative case (on substantives)/indicative mood (on verbs)
rubaa’iyy  quadriliteral (root)
Appendix II

_Sarf_ derivational morphology and inflectional morphology that does not include case and mood marking

_shadda_ symbol that indicates doubling of a consonant (\(^{\prime}\))

_sharT_ condition; protasis, conditional clause

_Sifa_ adjective

_sukuun_ absence of vowel; quiescence, symbolized by a small circle (\(^{\prime}\))

_tamyiiz_ accusative of specification

_tanwiin_ nunation; pronunciation of an /n/ sound after the case-marking short vowel on a noun, adjective, or adverb

_tarkiib_ compounding

_tashdiid_ doubling of a consonant; the use of _shadda_ (q.v.)

_thulaathiyy_ triliteral (root)

_waaw al-‘aTf_ conjoining _waaw_; conjunction _waaw_

_waSf_ descriptive adjective

_waSla_ symbol used to mark elision of _hamza_

_wazn/ √awzaan_ Form/s of the verb (I–X and XI–XV)

_xabar_ predicate of an equational sentence

_xafD_ genitive case (see also _jarr_)

_Zarf_ adverb generally derived from a triliteral lexical root

_Zarf makaan_ adverb of place

_Zarf zamaan_ adverb of time

2. Glossary of English grammatical terms
Many of these brief definitions are elaborated upon in various parts of this book. See the index for page and section references for more extended explanations and examples.

_ackusative_ one of the three cases in Arabic noun and adjective declensions; it typically marks the object of a transitive verb but also serves to mark a wide range of adverbial functions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>affix</td>
<td>an inflectional or derivational feature added to a word stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement</td>
<td>a relationship between words where one word requires a corresponding form in another (e.g., agreement in gender or in case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allophone</td>
<td>a contextually determined variant of a phoneme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annexation structure</td>
<td>a genitive noun construct; an ‘iDaafa’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assimilated</td>
<td>referring to lexical roots, those whose initial phoneme is waaw or yaa³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assimilation</td>
<td>a phonological process wherein one sound acquires features of another (usually adjacent) sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biliteral</td>
<td>having only two root phonemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>case</td>
<td>a form of word-final inflection on nouns and adjectives that shows their relationship to other words in a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clause</td>
<td>a unit of sentence structure that includes a predication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construct phrase</td>
<td>a structure in which two nouns are juxtaposed in a genitive relationship; an annexation structure; an ‘iDaafa’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cryptofeminine</td>
<td>a feminine noun not overtly marked for feminine gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cryptomasculine</td>
<td>a masculine noun not overtly marked for masculine gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circumfix</td>
<td>a combination of prefix and suffix used with a stem to create a lexical item, such as the English word “enlighten,” or an Arabic verb such as ta-drus-uuna ‘you (m.pl.) study’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defective</td>
<td>a term applied to lexical roots referring to those with a final waaw or yaa³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desinential inflection</td>
<td>word-final marking for syntactically determined case or mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diptote</td>
<td>a term applied to certain indefinite nouns that do not take either kasra or nunation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
elative refers to the comparative and superlative forms of Arabic adjectives

geminate a term applied to lexical roots wherein the second and third root consonants are identical

gemination the process of doubling the length or strength of a consonant

genitive one of the three cases in Arabic noun and adjective declensions; it typically marks the object of a preposition and also the second noun in the construct phrase

government a syntactic principle wherein certain words ("governors") cause others to inflect in particular ways

hamzated including the consonant *hamza* (glottal stop) as part of the root morpheme (e.g., √k-l, √k-l or q-r)

hollow verb a verb whose lexical root contains a semi-vowel in the medial position (e.g., q-w-l or S-y-r)

imperative a mood of the verb expressing command

imperfect as applied to a verb, denoting an incomplete action or referring in a general way to incomplete, ongoing actions or states

(indo-European "imperfective")

indicative a mood of the verb that is ungoverned by a syntactic operator (*aamil*); it is characteristic of statements of fact and of questions

infix an affix inserted into the body of a word stem

intransitive describes verbs whose action or process involves only the doer

jussive a mood of the Arabic verb required by certain governing particles (e.g., *lam*)

morphology the study of word structure and word formation

morphophonemics the study of how word structure interacts with phonological rules

nominative one of the three cases in Arabic noun and adjective declensions; it typically marks the subject of a sentence
nunation  
the pronunciation of an /n/ sound after the
marker of case inflection; typically it denotes
indeffiniteness

object  
a syntactic term that describes the recipient of
an action (the object of a verb, also referred to as
a “direct object”), or the noun or pronoun that
follows a preposition

optative  
expressing wish or desire

participle  
a deverbal adjective that may function as a noun
active participle  
describes the doer of the action
passive participle  
describes the recipient or object of the action

pattern  
the morphological framework into which an
Arabic lexical root fits in order to form a word

perfect  
as applied to a verb, denoting a completed action
(also “perfective”)  
in the past

phoneme  
a distinctive language sound that carries a differential function

phonology  
the study of the sound system of a language

phonotactics  
the study of the rules of sound distribution in a
language

phrase  
a group of words that forms a syntactic unit but
does not include a predication (noun-adjective
phrase, prepositional phrase, demonstrative
phrase, etc.)

prefix  
an affix attached at the beginning of a word stem

quadriliteral  
containing four root consonants
quinquiliteral  
containing five root consonants

radical  
a root consonant
resultative  
referring to a verb form expressing the result of
an action

root  
the most elemental consonant structure of an
Arabic word

semi-consonant  
a waaw or yaa’; also referred to as “semi-vowels”; consonants that have some of the properties
of vowels or which serve as vowels in certain contexts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>sound (adj.)</strong></td>
<td>regular in inflection or structure <em>(see also “strong”)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>stem; word stem</strong></td>
<td>the base form of a word without inflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>stem vowel</strong></td>
<td>the vowel that follows the second root consonant in a verb stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>strong (see also “sound”)</strong></td>
<td>regular in inflection or structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>subjunctive</strong></td>
<td>a mood of the Arabic verb typically used after expressions of wishing, desire, hoping, necessity, or other attitudes expressed toward the action of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>suffix</strong></td>
<td>an affix attached at the end of a word stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>syntax</strong></td>
<td>the relationship among words in a phrase, clause, or sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>triliteral</strong></td>
<td>containing three root consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>triptote</strong></td>
<td>a term applied to nouns meaning that they inflect for all three cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>transitive</strong></td>
<td>describes verbs whose action affects an object (often referred to as “direct object”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>verbal noun</strong></td>
<td>a noun derived from a particular verb that describes the action of that verb *(e.g., acceptance – <em>qubuul</em>; departure – <em>mughaadara</em>; swimming – <em>sibaaHa</em>); Arabic: <em>masdar</em> or <em>ism fi’l</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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