

Elementary Arabic Morphology 1

(Mabādī Al-‘Arabīyyah)

A study of Arabic Morphology volume 1. Translated by Hamid Hussein Waqar.

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The Alphabet

1. How many letters are in the alphabet?
2. How many shamsīyyah letters are there?
3. How many qamarīyyah letters are there?

1. There are 28 letters in the alphabet. The alphabet starts with the ا (alif) and ends with the ی (yā'). There are two types of letters: shamsīyyah and qamarīyyah.

2. Shamsīyyah letters are letters where one pronounces them instead of the lām when the alif-lām is added to the beginning of the word. There are 14 of these letters:

ت ث د ذ ر ز س ش ص ض ط ظ ل ن

3. Qamarīyyah letters are letters that the lām of ال remains when they are mentioned with it. There are 14 of these letters:

ا ب ج ح خ ع غ ف ق ك م ه و ی

Vowels, Nunation and the Absence of Vowels

4. How many vowels are there?
 5. Where are the vowels written?
 6. What is the absence of vowels?
 7. What is nunation?
4. There are three vowels: the dummahُ , the fathahَ and the kasrahِ .
5. The dummah and the fathah are written on top of the letter and the kasrah is written under it.
6. The absence of vowels is when there is no vowel. The sign of it is a small circle written above the letter.
7. Nunation (tanwīn) is a nūn that does not have a vowel sign, added to the end of a noun verbally; not written. There are three forms of nunation:
- The nominative nunation: كِتَابٌ (a book)
 - The accusative nunation: كِتَابًا (a book)
 - The genitive nunation: كِتَابٍ (a book)

Vocalization, The Glottal Stop and Weak Letters

8. How many vocals are there?
9. Where are the vocals written?
10. What do the vocals denote?
11. How many kinds of glottal stops are there?
12. What is the wasl glottal stop?
13. What is the qat' glottal stop?
14. How many weak and normal letters are there?
8. There are four vocals:

Tashdīd: ّ , al-madd: , the wasl glottal stop and the qad' glottal stop: ء

9. All of the vocals are written above the letter except for the glottal stop if it has a kasrah and is at the beginning of a word.

For example: إِكْرَام (respect)

10. The tashdīd denotes that one letter is actually two letters. For example: قَدَّمَ. (to lead the way) In this example the tashdīd takes the place of a second dāl.

The madd denotes that an alif has been erased after a glottal stop in the form of an alif. For example: آثَر

The wasl glottal stop denotes that the alif should not be pronounced. For example: تَفْتَحْ

الْوَرْدُ (the flower blossomed)

The qat' glottal stop denotes that the alif should be pronounced. For example: أَخَذَ (to take)

The Make Up of Words and The Subject of Morphology

15. What are words made up of?

16. What does morphology teach us?

15. Words are made up of:

- One letter, for example the bā preposition in بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ (with the praise of Allah)

- More than one letter (up to seven letters). For example: اسْتِخْبَار (inquiry)

16. Morphology teaches us the forms of single words and their different states before being joined together with other words.

The Division of Words Into Nouns and Prepositions

17. How many divisions of words are there?

18. What is a verb?

19. What is a noun?

20. What is a preposition?

17. Words are divided into three categories:

- verb: كَتَبَ يَكْتُبُ أَكْتُبُ (write, he writes, he wrote)
- noun: خَالِدٌ عُصْفُورٌ تَفَّاحَةٌ (apple, sparrow, Khalid)
- preposition: هَلْ فِي لَمْ (lam of negation, in, hal question word)

18. A verb is a word that denotes an action or state in the past, present or future. For example: كُنْتُ كَتَبْتُ أَكُونُ أَكْتُبُ كُنْ أَكْتُبُ (write, be, I write, I am, I wrote, I was)

19. A noun is a word that denotes an adjective or noun that can be described.

• A noun that can be described is a noun that denotes a person, animal or thing. For example: مَرِيَمُ فَرَسٌ وَرَقَةٌ (paper, horse, Maryam)

• An adjective is a word that is related to another word describing its condition: for example: شَجَرَةٌ عَالِيَةٌ حَيَوَانٌ بَرِّيٌّ (a wild animal, a tall tree)

20. A preposition is a word that does not have a meaning unless it is related to a verb or noun. For example: the lā of negation for it does not have a meaning unless one says لَا يَضْرِبُ (don't hit).

Regular Verbs and Verbs With Increase Letters

21. What is a regular verb?
22. What are the categories of regular verbs?
23. What is a verb with increase letters?
24. How many forms do trilateral verbs with increase letters have?
25. How many forms do quadrilateral verbs with increase letters have?
21. A regular verb is a verb that is without any extra letters. For example:

كَتَبَ دَحَرَجَ (he rolled, he wrote)

22. There are two categories of regular verbs:

- Trilateral; for example: نَصَرَ كَرَّمَ (he respected, he helped)
- Quadrilateral; for example: دَحَرَجَ زَلَزَلَ (he shook, he rolled)

23. Trilateral verbs with increase letters have one, two or three letters added to the original letters of the verb. For example: اَكْرَمَ اجْتَمَعَ اسْتَغْفَرَ (he asked for forgiveness, he gathered, he respected)

Quadrilateral verbs with increase letters have one or two letters added to the original letters of the verb. For example: تَدَحَرَجَ اقْشَعَرَ (he shuddered, he rolled)

24. There are ten forms for the trilateral verbs with increase letters:

فَعَّلَ فَاعَلَ أَفْعَلَ

تَفَعَّلَ تَفَاعَلَ اِنْفَعَلَ اِنْفَاعَلَ

اِسْتَفْعَلَ اِفْعَوْعَلَ

- 25: There are three forms of quadrilateral verbs with increase letters:

- تَفَعَّلَ اِفْعَنْلَلَ اِفْعَلَّلَ

The Division of Verbs into Perfect, Sound and Unsound

26. What is a perfect verb?

27. What is a sound verb?

28. What is an unsound verb?

26. A perfect verb is a verb that does not have any weak letters, glottal stops or doubled letters in its root. For example: ضَرَبَ قَتَلَ شَقَّ (he hung, he killed, he hit)

27. A sound verb is a verb that either has a glottal stop or a doubled letter in its root. For example: أَكَلَ مَدَّ (he extended, he ate)

28. An unsound verb is a verb that has a weak letter (alif, wāw or yā') in its root. For example: وَثَبَ نَامَ رَضِيَ (he became satisfied, he slept, he jumped)

The Division of Verbs Into The Imperative, Preterite and Aorist Tenses

29. What is the preterite tense?

30. What is the aorist tense?

31. What is the imperative?

29. The preterite tense is a form of the verb that indicates a state or action that happened in the past. For example: كَانَ نَدِمَ (he repented, he was)

30. The aorist tense is a form of the verb that indicates a state or action that is happening in the present or will happen in the future. For example: يَكُونُ يَنْدَمُ (he is repenting, he is)

31. The imperative is a form of the verb that indicates a demand of a state or action in the future. For example: كُنْ اَنْدَمْ (repent, be)

The Conjugation of The Verb With Its Pronouns

32. What do you know about the conjugation of the verb with its pronouns?

32. I understand that verbs are conjugated in the perfect, imperfect and imperative tenses and are joined by personal pronouns in the single, dual and plural forms. The verb is then conjugated into the nominative, subjunctive and jussive cases.

The Aoris and Imperative Tenses

33. How do you form the aorist tense?

34. How do you form the imperative?

33. The aorist tense is formed by adding one of the aorist letters at the beginning of the preterite stem. These are four letters: alif, nūn, tā' and yā'. This letter is given a dummah if the verb has four letters and a fathah if it has anything other than four letters. So نَصَرَ becomes يَنْصُرُ and دَحَرَ becomes

يُدَحِّرُ

34. The imperative is taken from the aorist tense. The aorist letter must be replaced by a glottal stop and the first letter of the verb should not be given a vowel. For example; يَنْصُرُ becomes اَنْصُرْ

The Division of The Verb Into Declinable and Indclinable 1

35. What do you understand about a declinable verb?
36. What verbs are declinable?
37. What kinds of cases does a verb have?
38. What is the nominative sign of verb?
39. What is the subjunctive sign of a verb?
40. What is the jussive sign of a verb?
35. The cases of a verb are determined by the changing of the end of the verb due to its placement in a sentence.

36. The only verb that is declinable is the aorist tense. For example: يَقْرَأُ (he is writing, he is reading)

37. There are three cases for declinable verbs: the nominative case, the subjunctive case and the jussive case.

38. The principle of the nominative case is the verb having a dummah.

The nūn takes the place of the dummah in the aorist verbs, which are every verb in the aorist tense that is connected to:

- the dual alif: يَفْعَلَانِ تَفْعَلَانِ
- the plural wāw: يَفْعَلُونَ تَفْعَلُونَ
- the you feminine pronoun (yā'): تَفْعَلِينَ

39. The principle of the subjunctive case is the verb having a fathah.

The subtraction of the nūn takes the place of the fathah in the aorist verbs. For example: أَنْ يَفْعَلَ

40. The sign of the jussive case in a verb is the sakūn.

The subtraction of the nūn takes the place of the sakūn in the aorist verbs. For example: لَمْ يَفْعَلْ

The subtraction of the weak letter when it is the last root letter of a weak verb takes the place of a sakūn. For example: لَمْ يَرْمِ (he did not throw)

The Division of The Verb Into Declinable and Indeclinable 2

41. What do you understand about a indeclinable verb?
 42. Which verbs are indeclinable?
 43. What are the verbs in the preterite tense static on?
 44. What are imperative verbs static on?
41. Indeclinable verbs are verbs where the end of it does not change due to its placement in a sentence.
42. The preterite and imperative tenses are static.
43. The preterite tense verbs are static on:
- Fath; for example: شَرِبَ (he drank)
 - Dumm, if it is connected to a wāw; for example: شَرِبُوا (they drank)
 - Sakūn, if it is connected to a nūn, nā or tā'; for example: شَرِبْنَا شَرِبْتَ شَرِبَتْ (we drank, she drank, I drank)
44. The imperative tense verbs are static on:
- Sakūn, if it is connected to a feminine nūn; for example: اِصْرِبِي (hit, speaking to a group of women) or if the last letter is not a weak letter and is not connected to anything; for example: اِسْمَعْ (listen)
 - The subtraction of the last root letter if it is weak; for example: اِسْعِ ارْتَقِ (rise, walk, come close)
 - The subtraction of the nūn if it is connected to a dual alif, plural wāw or yā' feminine pronoun; for example: اِسْمَعَا اِسْمَعُوا اِسْمَعِي (listen you single female, listen you all, listen you two)
 - Fath; if it is connected to a nūn of emphasis; for example: اِسْمَعَنَّ (listen!)

The Division of The Verb Into Being Transitive or Intransitive

45. What is an intransitive verb?

46. What is a transitive verb?

45. An intransitive verb is a verb that suffices itself with its actor. For example: جَلَسَ (he sat). So, for example, if one said: جَلَسَ زَيْدٌ (Zayd sat) it would be a complete sentence.

46. A transitive verb is a verb that does not suffice itself with its actor. For example: كَسَرَ (he broke). So, if one said: كَسَرَ الْخَادِمُ (the servant broke) it would be an incomplete sentence unless one mentions the objective compliment afterwards. For example: كَسَرَ الْخَادِمُ إِبْرِيْقاً (the servant broke a pitcher.)

The Division of The Verb Into Passive and Active

47. What is an active verb?

48. What is a passive verb?

49. How is the form of the verb changed when it becomes passive?

47. An active verb is a verb whose actor is mentioned with it. For

example: قَطَفَ الْوَلَدُ تَفَاحَةً (the boy picked an apple)

48. A passive verb is a verb whose actor is erased while its objective compliment takes the actors place. For example: قُطِفَتِ تَفَاحَةٌ (an apple was picked)

49. A. If the passive verb is in the preterite tense - the letter before the last letter should be given a kasrah and all of the letters before it that had a vowel should be given a dummah. So, حَفِظَ would become حُفِظَ (he protected, was protected) and اِسْتَعْلَمَ would become اُسْتُعْلِمَ (he inquired, was inquired)

B. If the passive verb is in the aorist tense - the first letter should be given a dummah and the letter before the last should be given a fathah. So, يَحْفَظُ would become يُحْفَظُ and يَسْتَعْلِمُ would become يُسْتَعْلَمُ

The Division of Nouns Into Single, Dual and Plural

50. What is a single noun?

51. What is a dual?

52. What is a plural?

53. How is a masculine sound plural formed?

54. How is a feminine sound plural formed?

55. How is a broken plural formed?

50. A single noun is a noun that denotes one thing. For example: غلامٌ

حصانٌ (a horse, a male servant)

51. A dual noun is a noun that denotes two things and is formed by adding:

- an alif and a nūn; for example: كِتَابَانِ رَجُلَانِ (two books, two men)

- a yā' and a nūn; for example: كِتَابَيْنِ رَجُلَيْنِ

52. A plural noun is a noun that denotes more than two things and is divided into three categories: a masculine sound plural, a feminine sound plural and a broken plural.

53. A masculine sound plural is formed by adding:

- a wāw and a nūn; for example: مُسْلِمُونَ صَادِقُونَ (Muslims, truthful people)

- a yā' and a nūn; for example: مُسْلِمِينَ صَادِقِينَ

54. A feminine sound plural is formed by adding an alif and tā'; for example: ذَاهِبَاتٌ كَاتِبَاتٌ (female authors, female leavers)

55. A broken plural is formed by changing the form of the single noun; for example: رَجَالٌ أَرْغَفَةٌ (loaves of Syrian bread, men)

The Division of Nouns Into Masculine and Feminine

56. What is a masculine noun?

57. What is a feminine noun?

58. What gender to non-living objects have?

59. What are the signs of feminine nouns?

56. A masculine noun is a noun that denotes a male human or animal. For

example: أَبٌ أَسَدٌ (a lion, a father)

57. A feminine noun is a noun that denotes a female human or animal.

For example: أُمٌ لَيوَةٌ (a lioness, a mother)

58. Non living objects are:

- Always masculine; for example: قَمَرٌ سَيْفٌ (a moon, a sword)

- Always feminine; for example: شَمْسٌ عَيْنٌ (a sun, an eye)

59. There are three signs of a feminine noun:

- The ة ; for example: كَاذِبَةٌ (a female liar)

- The ي ; for example: كُبْرَى (a female name)

- The اء ; for example: حَسَنَاء (a beautiful woman)

The Division of Nouns Into Apalistic Derived

60. What is an apalistic noun?

61. What is a derived noun?

62. How many kinds of derived nouns are there?

60. An apalistic noun is a noun that is not derived from another word. For

example: رَجُلٌ دِرْهَمٌ (dirham, man)

61. A derived noun is a noun that is derived from another word. For

example: عَالِمٌ مَعْلُومٌ (something known, a scholar). Both of these words are

derived from the word عِلْمٌ (knowledge).

62. Derived nouns are: active participles, passive participles, comparatives, superlatives and epithets.

Active and Passive Participles

63. What is an active participle?

64. How is an active participle formed?

65. What is a passive participle?

66. How is a passive participle formed?

63. An active participle is a form that denotes the actor of an action.

64. An active participle is formed:

- from triliteral verbs: using the form فَاعِل , for example: ضَارِب سَامِع

(listener, hitter)

- from other than triliteral verbs: one must take the aorist active verb and replace the aorist letter with a mīm that has a dummah. For example: مُنْطَلِق

مُتَقَدِّم (starting point, well-advanced)

65. The passive participle is a form that denotes what the verb happened on.

66. The passive participle is formed:

- from triliteral verbs: using the form مَفْعُول , for example: مَضْرُوب مَسْمُوع

(what was hit, what was heard)

- from other than triliteral verbs: one must take the aorist passive verb and replace the aorist letter with a mīm that has a dummah. For example:

مُكْرَم مُقَدِّم (honored, put forth)

Comparatives, Superlatives, and Epithets

67. What are comparatives and superlatives?

68. How are comparatives and superlatives formed?

69. What is an epithet?

67. Comparatives and superlatives are a form that denotes something being compared. For example: يُوسُفُ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (Yūsif is bigger than Ibrāhīm)

68. Comparatives and superlatives are only formed from triliteral verbs having the form; أَفْعَلْ. For example: أَكْرَمَ أَصْدَقَ (more truthful, more generous)

69. An epithet is a form taken from intransitive verbs that denote a fixed state. It has many forms, for example: أَسْوَدَ عَطْشَانَ ظَرِيفَ ضَخَمَ بَطَلَ (black, brave, big, elegant, thirsty)

The Division of Nouns Into Definite and Indefinite

70. What is an indefinite noun?

71. What is a definite noun?

72. How many kinds of definite nouns are there?

70. An indefinite noun is a noun that does not denote something specific,

for example: قَلَمٌ إِنْسَانٌ (a pen, a human)

71. A definite noun is a noun that denotes something specific, for example: هَذَا الْقَلَمُ (this pen)

72. There are six types of definite nouns: pronouns, proper nouns, demonstrative pronouns, conjunctions, definite by alif-lām and prefixed nouns.

Pronouns

73. What is a pronoun?
74. How many types of pronouns are there?
75. What is a clear pronoun?
76. What is a hidden pronoun?
77. How many types clear pronouns are there?
78. How many types of pronouns that are not connected to any word are there?
79. How many types of pronouns that are connected to another word are there?
73. A pronoun is a word used to denote a speaker, listener or absent person or thing. For example: أَنَا أَنْتَ هُوَ (I, he, you)
74. There are two types of pronouns: clear and hidden.
75. A clear pronoun is a pronoun that is present in the sentence, for example the tā' in قُمْتُ and ذَهَبْتَ (I stood, you left)
76. A hidden pronoun is a pronoun that is not present in the sentence, for example a pronoun hidden in a verb: التَّلْمِيزُ فَهِمَ الدَّرْسَ (the student understands the lesson)
77. There are two types of clear pronouns: one that is not connected to any other word and one that is connected to another word.
- A pronoun that is not connected to another word is independent in speech, for example: أَنَا نَحْنُ (we, I)
 - A pronoun that is connected to another word is like a part of the word that precedes it. For example: فَهِمْتُ (I understood)
78. There are two types of pronouns that are not connected to another word:
- Those that are in the nominative case:
 1. he - هُوَ
 2. they (two males) - هُمَا
 3. them (male) - هُمْ
 4. she - هِيَ
 5. they (two females) - هُمَا
 6. they (female) - هُنَّ
 7. you (male) - أَنْتَ
 8. you two (male) - أَنْتُمَا
 9. you plural (male) - أَنْتُمْ
 10. you (female) - أَنْتِ

11. you two (female) - أَنْتُمَا

12. you plural (female) - أَنْتُنَّ

13. I - أَنَا

14. we - نَحْنُ

• Those that are in the accusative case:

1. he - إِيَّاهُ

2. they (two males) - إِيَّاهُمَا

3. they (male) - إِيَّاهُمْ

4. she - إِيَّاهَا

5. they (two females) - إِيَّاهُمَا

6. they (female) - إِيَّاهُنَّ

7. you (male) - إِيَّاكَ

8. you two (male) - إِيَّاكُمَا

9. you plural (male) - إِيَّاكُمْ

10. you (female) - إِيَّاكِ

11. you two (female) - إِيَّاكُمَا

12. you plural (female) - إِيَّاكُنَّ

13. I - إِيَّايَ

14. we - إِيَّانَا

79. There are three types of pronouns that are connected to a word:

• Those that are in the nominative case:

ت ا و ن ي

For example: قُفْتُ قَامَا قَامُوا قُفْمَنْ قُومِي (stand female, women stood, men stood, two men stood, I stood)

• Those that can be in either the accusative or genitive case:

1. Ya': رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِي (O' My lord! Be generous to me.)

2. Kāf: وَدَّعَشَكَ صَدِيقُكَ (Your friend bid you farewell)

3. Hā': كَتَبَ إِلَى صَدِيقِهِ يَلُومُهُ (He wrote to his friend rebuking him)

• Those that can be in any case, which is the نَا, for example: رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا (O' Our lord! Verily we hear.)

Proper Nouns and Demonstrative Pronouns

80. What is a proper noun?

81. What is a demonstrative pronoun?

80. A proper noun is a noun that denotes a specific person, animal or thing. For example: إبراهيم (the name of a person) بَرَق (the name of a horse) بيروت (the name of a city)

81. A demonstrative pronoun is a pronoun that denotes something specific that is sensed. The following are demonstrative pronouns:

- For things that are close:

1. هذا (this, m.)
2. هذان (these two, m.)
3. هؤلاء (these, m.)
4. هذه (this, f.)
5. هاتان (these two, f.)
6. هؤلاء (these, f.)

- For things that are medium range:

1. ذاك (that, m.)
2. ذانك (those two, m.)
3. أولئك (those, m.)
4. تلك (that, f.)
5. تانك (those two, f.)
6. أولئك (those, f.)

- For things that are far:

1. ذلِكَ (that, m.)
2. ذانِكَ (those two, m.)
3. أولَئِكَ (those, m.)
4. تِلْكَ (that, f.)
5. تانِكَ (those two, f.)
6. أولَئِكَ (those, f.)

- For places:

1. هُنا (here)
2. هُنَاكَ (there, medium range)

3. هُنَا لِك تَمَّ (there, far)

Conjunctions, Definite Nouns With The Alif-Lam and Prefixed Nouns

82. What is a conjunction?

83. What is a definite noun with the alif-lām?

84. What is a prefixed noun?

82. A conjunction denotes something specified by the sentence that follows it. That sentence is called an attributive conjunctive clause. The following are conjunctions:

• Masculine:

1. الَّذِي (single)

2. اللَّذَانِ (dual)

3. الَّذِينَ (plural)

• Feminine:

1. الَّتِي (single)

2. اللَّتَانِ (dual)

3. اللَّاتِي (plural)

83. A definite noun with the alif-lām is any noun where an alif and lām is added to make it definite. For example: السَّيْفُ (the sword), الْقَلَمُ (the pen)

84. A prefixed noun is a noun that is constructed to a definite noun. For example: كِتَابِي (my book), كِتَابُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (Ibrāhīm's book), كِتَابُ الْمُعَلِّمِ (the teacher's book)

The Division of Nouns Into Declinable And Indclinable

85. What is understood by a declinable noun?

86. How many cases does a noun have?

87. What is the sign of the nominative case?

88. What is the sign of the accusative case?

89. What is the sign of the genitive case?

85. A declinable noun is a noun whose last syllable changes when placed into different parts of a sentence.

86. A noun has three cases: nominative, accusative and genitive.

87. The main sign for the nominative case is a dummah. But, sometimes it is represented by:

- Alif in the dual forms.
- Wāw in the masculine sound plurals and the five nouns which are:

اب اخ حم فم ذو

(possessor, mouth, father-in-law, brother, father)

88. The main sign for the accusative case is the fathah. But, sometimes it is represented by:

- Alif in the five nouns.
- Kasrah in the feminine sound plurals.
- Yā' in the dual forms and the masculine sound plurals.

89. The main sign of the genitive case is the kasrah. But, sometimes it is represented by:

- Yā' in the dual forms, masculine sound plurals and the five nouns.
- Fathah in the unnonated nouns.

Indeclinable Nouns

90. What is understood from an indeclinable noun?

91. What nouns are indeclinable?

92. How many forms of indeclinable nouns are there?

91. An indeclinable noun is a noun whose last syllable does not change when placed into different parts of a sentence.

92. There are so few indeclinable nouns compared to declinable ones. The popular indeclinable nouns are: personal pronouns, conjunctions, demonstrative pronouns, conditional nouns and interrogative pronouns.

93. There are four forms of indeclinable nouns: al-dumm, al-fath, al-kasr and al-sukūn:

حَيْثُ كَيْفَ أَمْسٍ مَنْ

(who, yesterday, how, where)