

The Arabic script

We ask our students to familiarise themselves with the Arabic script before they come up. The point is precisely familiarity. Arabic presents a strange set of sounds, of squiggles and of vocabulary, and that gives people a huge cognitive load right at the start. Learning the script in advance gives you a head start with this familiarisation process, and unlike during Cambridge term time, you can do it at your own pace and let yourself really absorb it. The more comfortable you are with the script when you start to get to grips with the language itself, the more it eases your learning early on, and this advantage can last through the year.

We're not expecting fluent reading, but an ability to recognise the letters and to work out the pronunciation of words when vowels are written, even if this is slow. You can learn this in whichever way you like, but we have two resources you may find helpful, particularly if you combine both.

A website: <https://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/opensource/arabic/ae/arabic-essentials.html>. Please ignore the guidelines for handwriting in this package. It teaches you to copy the printed form of the letters, which you would have to unlearn later, as we teach you the normal handwritten form from the start of the course. But do listen to the sounds and have a go at pronouncing them. Most of the videos with sounds give the name of the letter rather than the sound of it, but in fact the sound of the letter itself is the first sound of its name (except for the first letter, 'alif). We will of course go over the sounds too at the beginning of the course. However you actually learn the letters, some of the exercises on this site will be useful in reinforcing them. I particularly recommend:

Flashcards

Reading (these are all English words regularly used in Arabic, or Arabic words that we use in English)

Match the halves

Special letters. It is worth learning the meanings of some of these words:

1. ð Reading these words from right to left, the first two are names, and the third you should recognise. The words after that mean, in order: female student, school, university, magazine, room, coffee, car.
2. The words mean (right to left) no, peace, speech, necessary
3. A girl's name, on, he saw.

This worksheet: This has no sound, but does tell you how to properly handwrite the letters. But you don't need to get to grips with that before you start the course unless you'd like to. It also gives you more vocabulary that would help you to get a head start.

The website has the advantage of including sound and some very useful exercises, and this worksheet has more detailed explanations, more vocabulary and some other useful exercises.

If you need more practice on any particular item, a good book to use is Wightwick, J, and Gaafar, M. *Mastering Arabic Script* or *Mastering Arabic*, but any introductory textbook to Standard Arabic will cover this ground. We will have a session at the beginning of the year to go over some of the material from this worksheet and answer any questions you have.

If you use this worksheet, we would strongly recommend working through each exercise once, then go through it again, pronouncing the word aloud. Then perhaps read it through again. There is a lot of repetition, with the aim of helping you to get comfortable with the script and some of the vocabulary and phrasing, to help reduce the cognitive load at the beginning of the year. For the same reason, spacing this out over a period of months will be more useful than cramming it into the last week before you come. The vocabulary in bold below will appear fairly early on in the course. We will go over it as it comes up, but familiarising yourself with some or all of these words beforehand will make things easier for you, giving you less to learn later and allowing some things to settle and be more integrated before the course starts. All of the words here are used in both Standard and Colloquial Egyptian Arabic, the dialect we teach in the first year, except those words marked with an asterisk, which occur only in Standard Arabic.

If you would like anything checked or have any other questions, please feel free to contact Dr Rachael Harris (rmh1001@cam.ac.uk) in the Department. Any suggestions for improving this worksheet would be very much appreciated!

1. The alphabet

Arabic letters are almost always written joined up. So each has a basic shape, a way of connecting it to preceding and subsequent letters, and a tail - a final flourish for when it is written alone or at the end of words. This means that each letter has up to four shapes: at the beginning, middle and end of a word, and in isolation. Writing is right to left.

Handwriting: for most Arabic letters just copying the printed form will give you a good handwritten version, and for these there are no notes on how to do it. Where it's not obvious which order to do the strokes in, there are notes on this at the end of the exercises to help you get into good habits from the start. A few letters have very different handwritten and printed forms, but you can just keep to the printed form for now. As in English, you write a string of letters in one continuous line without lifting the pen off the paper until you get to the end of the word, or to a letter that doesn't join onto the following one. Then you go back and add in the dots, and sometimes extra lines to the shape of the letter itself.

| Transliteration | Final | Medial | Initial | Alone | Name |
|--|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| ā (long 'aa'- only a vowel, not a consonant) | ا | ا | ا | ا | أَلْف |
| b | ب | ب | ب | ب | باء |
| t | ت | ت | ت | ت | تاء |
| th (as in 'thin') | ث | ث | ث | ث | ثاء |
| j | ج | ج | ج | ج | جيم |
| H | ح | ح | ح | ح | حاء |
| kh | خ | خ | خ | خ | خاء |
| d | د | د | د | د | دال |
| dh (like the 'th' in 'the') | ذ | ذ | ذ | ذ | ذال |
| r | ر | ر | ر | ر | راء |
| z | ز | ز | ز | ز | زاي |
| s | س | س | س | س | سين |
| sh | ش | ش | ش | ش | شين |
| S | ص | ص | ص | ص | صاد |
| D | ض | ض | ض | ض | ضاد |
| T | ط | ط | ط | ط | طاء |
| DH | ظ | ظ | ظ | ظ | ظاء |
| ع | ع | ع | ع | ع | عَيْن |
| gh | غ | غ | غ | غ | غَيْن |
| f | ف | ف | ف | ف | فاء |
| q | ق | ق | ق | ق | قاف |
| k | ك | ك | ك | ك | كاف |
| l | ل | ل | ل | ل | لام |
| m | م | م | م | م | ميم |
| n | ن | ن | ن | ن | نون |
| h | ه | ه | ه | ه | هاء |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| w or ū (long 'uu' like the 'oo' in 'too') | و | و | و | و | واو |
| y or ī (long 'ii' like the 'ee' in 'see') | ي | ي | ي | ي | ياء |

*The six letters و، ز، ر، ذ، د، ا never join to following letters.

Note: When ا ('alif) follows ل they are written لا if not joined to a previous letter and لا if joined.

2. Vowels:

Short vowel signs go above or below the consonant they follow. In most texts they are not written, except to clarify ambiguities:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - = a (فَتْحَة 'fatHa'); | - = u (ضَمَّة 'Damma'); |
| - = i (كَسْرَة 'kasra'); | - = no vowel (سُكُون 'sukuun') |

Long vowels are written after the consonant they follow: ل = aa; و = uu; ي = ii.

و and ي can also represent diphthongs: و = aw; ي = ay

Exercises 1, 3, 5 & 7 work through the alphabet gradually introducing all of the letters. Try to remember the words in **bold**, the others are just for reading practice. Work your way through them as far as you find useful. Question marks in place of the meaning mean that you might be able to guess it from English or from what has gone before (answers in the footnotes). Exercises 2, 4, 6 & 9 are to help to reinforce the words in bold, and give some beginnings of putting words together.

Exercise 1. Read the following, starting on the right:

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| girls | بَنَات | girl | بِنْت | pope | بَابَا | door | بَاب |
| our daughter | بِنْتِنَا | my door | بَابِي | between | بَيْن | house | بَيْت |
| between us | بَيْنَنَا | our house | بَيْتِنَا | my daughters | بَنَاتِي | my daughter | بِنْتِي |
| prophet | نَبِيٌّ | he builds * | يَبْنِي | we built | بَنَيْنَا | our daughters | بَنَاتِنَا |

Note: the sign ّ means that the consonant is pronounced double, like the t + t in 'hot tea'. See section 4 below.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|------------|---------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Japanese | يَابَانِيٌّ | she built | بَنَتْ * | we build * | نَبْنِي | she builds * | تَبْنِي |
| | | | | and ... | و... | | بَابِنَا ¹ ? |

Note: و is always written as part of the following word, e.g. بابي وبنتي

1. The footnotes refer to the answers on p.14.

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| day يَوْمٌ | from مِنْ | houses بُيُوتٌ | doorman بَوَّابٌ |
| book كِتَابٌ | he dies *يَمُوتُ | death مَوْتٌ | who *مَنْ |
| offices مَكَاتِبٌ | office مَكْتَبٌ | our books كُتُبُنَا | books كُتُبٌ |
| your (f.) book *كِتَابِكِ | your (m.) book *كِتَابِكَ | she writes *تَكْتُبُ | I wrote كَتَبْتُ |

You use **كِتَابِكَ** for 'your book' to men/boys and **كِتَابِكِ** to women/girls. F. and m. are 'feminine' and 'masculine'.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I slept نَمْتُ | he slept نَامَ | I was كُنْتُ | he was كَانَ |
| what مَا | *how much كَمْ | buildings بِنَايَاتٌ | complete, OK تَمَامٌ |
| Lebanon لُبْنَانٌ | place مَكَانٌ | possible مُمْكِنٌ | Yemeni يَمَنِيٌّ |
| no لَا | money, wealth مَالٌ | dog كَلْبٌ | king مَلِكٌ |

(See the note at the end of the alphabet if you're not sure what this last one is.)

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Libya لِيْبِيَا | kings مُلُوكٌ | speech كَلَامٌ | attention بَالٌ |
| | dogs كِلَابٌ | night لَيْلٌ | Libyans *لِيْبِيَوْنَ |

Notes on writing:

1) Since you don't lift pen from paper until there's a break, the letter 'alif' in a word like **بَابٌ** is written upwards, not downwards. It's written downwards when not joined to anything in front.

2) **و** Start writing at the point where the lines join and form the circle going left first then up, right, down.

3) **م** In isolation: start at the top left.

مـ At the beginning of a word or group of letters: start at the point where the lines join and go either way round.

مـ In the middle: in handwriting the loop goes under the line, not above it as in print.

مـ At the end of a word: do a loop downwards, as with the form in the middle, then carry on a bit left then down for the tail.

4) **ك** At the beginning of a word or group of letters, if you think of the shape as like a leg and foot with the knee pointing left, start at the knee and go down. When you've got to the end of the word or the letter group, go back and add the top diagonal stroke, downwards.

كـ In the middle, start at the bottom right where the line comes in, go up to the 'knee' and down again, then carry on with the line. Add the top diagonal afterwards.

5) **لَا** On its own: do the **ل** as a downstroke finishing on the left side of the letter. Then do the alif as a separate downstroke in a steep diagonal down from the top left of the letter to where it meets the **ل**.

لا Joined to a previous letter: similar but go up into the **ل** first.

Exercise 2. A pause. a) Do you remember what the following mean? (Answers²)

باب، كِتَاب، لِيبيَا، مِنْ، بِنْت، لَا، كِتَابِكِ، بَيْنَ، مِنْ، بَاب، لَا، بِنْت، كِتَاب، مُمَكِّن، بَابِي، بِنْتِي، مَا، كِتَابِكِ، مَكْتَبِ
وَبَاب

b) Given some of the words above, what do the following mean? (Answers³)

كِتَابِي، بِنْتِي، كِتَابِكِ*، مَكْتَبِنَا، بِنْتِنَا، كِتَابِكِ*، بَابِنَا، مَكْتَبِكِ.

Exercise 3. Some more letters:

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| country | بِلَاد | town | بَلَد | religion | دِين | boy | وَلَد |
| dollars | دُولَارَات | dollar | دُولَار | London | لُنْدُن | father | وَالِد |
| Beirut | بَيْرُوت | house | دَار | post | بَرِيد | cold | بَارِد |
| fire | نَار | light | نُور | generous | كُرِيم | big | كَبِير* |
| excellent | مُمْتَاذ | كومبيوتر ⁴ | كُومْبِيُوتَر ⁴ ? | كندا? | كَنْدَا? | نيويورك? | نِيُورِك? |
| Zeinab | زَيْنَب | minister | وَزِير | I visited | زُرْتُ | he visited | زَار |
| Mohamed | مُحَمَّد | sea | بَحْر | beloved | حَبِيب | love | حُب |
| milk | لَبَن | under | تَحْت | my life | حَيَاتِي | Mahmoud | مَحْمُود |
| | | beautiful, handsome | جَمِيل | Mubarak | مُبَارَك | Husni | حُسْنِي |
| pilgrim | حَاج | pilgrimage | حَجَّ | it is necessary | يَجِب* | homework | وَأَجِب |
| marriage | زَوَاج | husband, couple | زَوْج | he needs | يَحْتَاج* | hot | حَار |
| reason | سَبَب | man | رَجُل* | new | جَدِيد* | he marries | يَتَزَوَّج* |
| we study | نُدْرُس* | he studies | يَدْرُس* | Syria | سُورِيَا | peace | سَلَام |
| tea | شَاي | trees | شَجَر | Tunisia | تُونِس | they study | *يَدْرُسُون |
| sun | شَمْس | north | شَمَال | grass | حَشِيش | lesson | دَرْس |
| | | | | | | form, shape | شَكْل |

Notes on writing:

6) Note the difference between د and ر. This shows up in particular when they're joined to the previous letter.

د starts at the level of the line, goes up and comes back down the same way. ر starts on the level of the line and only goes up a little before going down. It's also curved rather than angled like د. Same for ذ and ز.

7) ح، ج، خ These are different in handwriting. For the moment just copy the printed form, which means that

they're the only exception to the rule that you don't lift the pen off the paper until you get to a gap.

Exercise 4. Another pause: what do the following mean? Note that a singular noun on its own generally translates as 'a such-and-such', e.g. **وَلَدٌ** can be translated as 'a boy'.

لا، كَبِيرٌ، نَورٌ، مَكْتَبٌ، واجِبٌ، مِنْ، رَجُلٌ وَوَلَدٌ، كِتَابٌ، بِنْتٌ، واجِبِي، جَدِيدٌ، بابٌ، جَمِيلٌ، وَوَلَدٌ جَمِيلٌ a)
(handsome boy كِتَابٌ جَدِيدٌ، مَكْتَبٌ كَبِيرٌ، مِنْ رَجُلٌ، نَورٌ جَدِيدٌ، كِتَابٌ كَبِيرٌ، وَوَلَدٌ وَبِنْتٌ، شَمْسٌ، بابكٌ، مِنْ،
بَيْنَ بِنْتٍ وَوَلَدٍ. (Answers)⁵)

Exercise 5. More letters:

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| long, tall طَوِيلٌ | airport مَطَارٌ | doctor طَبِيبٌ | student طَالِبٌ |
| | happy سَعِيدٌ | work عَمَلٌ | homeland وَطَنٌ |
| | they work يَعْمَلُونَ* | wide, spacious وَاسِعٌ | he returns يَرْجِعُ* |
| | eye عَيْنٌ | festival عِيدٌ | you (f.) work تَعْمَلِينَ* |
| in فِي | you (m.) have عِنْدَكَ* | I have عِنْدِي | street شَارِعٌ |
| Yasir يَاسِرٌ | France فَرَنْسَا | we know نَعْرِفُ* | he knows يَعْرِفُ* |
| east شَرْقٌ | we returned رَجَعْنَا* | she returns تَرْجِعُ* | far from بَعِيدٌ عَنِ |
| | near to قَرِيبٌ مِنْ | travel سَفَرٌ | pen قَلَمٌ |
| thirsty عَطْشَانٌ | tired تَعْبَانٌ | time وَقْتٌ | with مَعَ |
| | | child طِفْلٌ | hungry جَوْعَانٌ |

Notes on writing:

8) ط (and ظ) Wherever it is in the word, start with the loop. If there's no letter before this, you start at the left of the loop and go rightwards and up, then back down and along the bottom. The 'stick' is added on as a downstroke at the end, after you've got to the end of the line of letters if there is one, or even if you're writing the letter on its own.

ط In the middle of a word the line comes in from the right, continues along the bottom, then loops up and back, then down and round and back to continue the line towards the left.

9) ع (and غ) In the middle of a word, ع starts with the line going up diagonally to the left, then horizontally to the right, then diagonally down to the left, forming a triangular shape.

ع At the end of a word, it's the same, but with the tail coming down from where the two lines cross.

Exercise 6. What do the following mean? (Answers⁶)

مَكْتَبَ جَمِيلٍ، طَالِبِ جَدِيدٍ، بِنْتِ جَمِيلَةٍ، قَلَمَ وَكِتَابٍ، لا، وَوَلَدَ مَعَ طَالِبٍ، قَلَمَ كَبِيرٍ، قَلَمَكَ، رَجُلًا فِي مَكْتَبٍ، قَلَمَ
جَدِيدٍ وَكِتَابَ جَمِيلٍ، طَالِبِنَا وَعَمَلِي، شَمْسٍ

Exercise 7. The last group of letters:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| I've understood فَهَمْتُ | they هُمْ | he هُوَ | she هِيَ |
| face وَجْهٌ *وَجْهٌ | there هُنَا *هُنَا | here هُنَا *هُنَا | we've understood فَهَمْنَا |
| Egypt مِصْرٌ *مِصْرٌ | difficult صَعْبٌ | correct صَحِيحٌ | morning صَبَاحٌ |
| eggs بَيْضٌ | she hit ضَرَبَتْ *ضَرَبَتْ | ill مَرِيضٌ | friend صَدِيقٌ |
| Damascus دِمَشْقٌ | officer ضَابِطٌ | short قَصِيرٌ | zero صَفْرٌ |
| bread خُبْزٌ *خُبْزٌ | he went out خَرَجَ | sheikhs شَيْوُخٌ | sheikh شَيْخٌ |
| exit خُرُوجٌ | mind عَقْلٌ | special خَاصٌّ | person شَخْصٌ |
| strange غَرِيبٌ | small صَغِيرٌ *صَغِيرٌ | Khalid خَالِدٌ | west غَرْبٌ |
| martyr شَهِيدٌ | he watches يُشَاهِدُ *يُشَاهِدُ | بَغْدَادٌ ? | westerners غَرْبِيَّوْنَ * |
| strange غَرِيبٌ | he went ذَهَبَ *ذَهَبَ | he remembers يَذْكُرُ * | delicious لَذِيذٌ |
| price ثَمَنٌ * | third ثَالِثٌ * | we نَحْنُ * | you (f.) go تَذْهَبِينَ * |
| back ظَهْرٌ | noon ظُهْرٌ | second ثَانِيٌ | research بَحْثٌ |
| good luck حَظٌّ سَعِيدٌ | luck حَظٌّ | I thought ظَنَنْتُ * | it appears يَظْهَرُ * |

Notes on writing:

10) هـ (and هـ - see section 3) In isolation, start at the top and go down the right side of the circle and up the left.

هـ At the beginning of a word or letter group, start by doing a backwards 'C'. When you reach the bottom of the letter, on the line, do a smaller loop upwards that tucks under the left-hand end of the 'C'.

هـ In the middle of the word the commonest way to write this is by doing a diagonal leftwards stroke down below the line, then a vertical stroke back up to the line, the two making a sharp point, a 'v' shape a bit like an inverted shark's fin. It goes below the line about the same distance as the هـ and similar letters go above the line.

هـ At the end of a word, start with the line going vertically upwards, then do the semi-circle round and down to the left. There isn't an extra bit sticking up on the vertical line in the handwritten version.

11) ص (and ص - see section 3) In isolation and at the beginning of a word, start at the point where the lines join and go up and rightwards then down and leftwards along the line to complete the loop. Then do a 'tooth', a little sticking up line to finish the letter. At the end of the word, the tail comes straight down from this 'tooth'.

ح and حـ In the middle and at the end of words, the line comes in from the right and continues straight to the point where the lines join. Then go up and back to the right to form the loop, down and back along the same line to complete it. The rest is as above.

Exercise 8. Match these Arabic words with their English meanings: (Answers⁷)

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| a) telephone | g) Arabs | ٧. سَكَّر | ١. سِينَمَا |
| b) Muslim | h) film | ٨. تَلْفُون | ٢. بَنَك |
| c) sugar | i) felafel | ٩. مَسْلَم | ٣. جَمَل |
| d) cat | j) cinema | ١٠. عَرَب | ٤. دَكْتُور |
| e) bank | k) doctor (title) | ١١. فِلْم | ٥. قَطَّ |
| f) camel | | | ٦. فَلَافِل |

Note: you will also find it useful to learn the Arabic way to write numbers. They go **left to right**. Note that ٨ is written in one pen movement, starting at the bottom right.

Exercise 9. Here are some sentences. Note that in this kind of sentence the verb 'to be' is not used, so هُو means 'He is a student'. Note also that هُو and هِيَ mean 'it' for things referred to by masculine and feminine words respectively. (Watch out for names!) (Answers⁸)

١. هُوَ وُلْدٌ. ٨. يَاسِرٌ وُلْدٌ صَغِيرٌ.

٢. مَحْمُودٌ طَالِبٌ. ٩. هُوَ كِتَابٌ صَغِيرٌ مِّنْ لُّبْنَانٍ.

٣. هُوَ عَمَلٌ صَعْبٌ. ١٠. هِيَ بِنْتُ مِّنْ لُّنْدَنِ

٤. هُوَ وَاجِبٌ جَدِيدٌ. ١١. هُمْ مِّنْ لِّيْبِيَا.

٥. هُوَ وُلْدٌ مَعَ قَلَمٍ. ١٢. هُوَ صَبَاحٌ جَمِيلٌ

٦. مُحَمَّدٌ رَجُلٌ جَمِيلٌ. ١٣. طَالِبِنَا جَدِيدٌ.

٧. هِيَ مِّنْ سُورِيَا. ١٤. وَاجِبُكَ صَعْبٌ.

The letter ة as on the end of the word 'فَتْحَة' (the 'a' vowel) is called تاء مَرْبُوطَة (taa' marbuuTa) and is a combination of ه and ت. It is always preceded by فَتْحَة ('a') (occasionally a long 'aa') and the two together are mostly pronounced just 'a', but when in close connection with the following word (to be explained later), or when reading aloud with full vowelling, ة is pronounced 'at'.

Exercise 10. Read the following, pronouncing the ة as 'a':

female doctor دُكْتُورَة school مَدْرَسَة female student طَالِبَة university جَامِعَة

Exercise 11. Using the further vocabulary given here, read and translate the phrases below.

(جامعة كَبِيرَة means 'a big university'.) Note that adding ة to the end of a word generally makes it feminine:

طَالِبَة a female student; جَدِيدَة new (feminine). What are the rules for agreement in gender? (Answers⁹)

| Arab, Arabic | عَرَبِيّ | room | غُرْفَة |
|--------------|------------------------------|------|---------------------|
| ٩ . | طَالِبَة مُسْلِمَة | ١ . | طَالِب عَرَبِيّ |
| ١٠ . | مَدْرَسَة جَدِيدَة | ٢ . | طَالِبَة عَرَبِيَّة |
| ١١ . | كِتَاب عَرَبِيّ | ٣ . | غُرْفَة جَدِيدَة |
| ١٢ . | بِنْت عَرَبِيَّة | ٤ . | طَالِب جَدِيد |
| ١٣ . | جَامِعَة عَرَبِيَّة كَبِيرَة | ٥ . | عَمَل صَعْب |
| ١٤ . | قَلَم صَغِير | ٦ . | جَامِعَة صَغِيرَة |
| ١٥ . | مَدْرَسَة جَمِيلَة | ٧ . | صَبَاح جَدِيد |
| ١٦ . | غُرْفَة صَغِيرَة | ٨ . | غُرْفَة صَغِيرَة |

4. ^س

The sign ^س is called شَدَّة 'shadda', and when written above a consonant makes it double, e.g. سُكَّر 'sukkar' above. Note that a كَسْرَة ('i' vowel) with a شَدَّة may be written under the consonant as usual, or above the consonant but under the شَدَّة, but it is generally clearer to use the first method. شَدَّة is usually not written in unvowelled texts.

Exercise 12.

office worker **مُوظَّف** teacher **مُدَرِّس** he taught **دَرَّسَ** he studied **دَرَسَ**

Exercise 13. Read the following - if you prefer a pictorial presentation, see *Alif Baa* pp.116-8 and 113-4!

طالب **كُرْسِيٍّ** طاوِلة **كِتَابٍ** ساعة **وَرَقَةٍ** صَفٍّ شُبَّانٍ
 chair table watch/clock class window

جَمِيلٍ قَصِيرٍ طَوِيلٍ صَغِيرٍ كَبِيرٍ قَرِيبٍ مِّنْ بَعِيدٍ عَنَ مَدِينَةٍ فِي
 short long small large near to far from city

جامعة **غَرِيبٍ** قَهْوَةٌ عَرَبِيَّةٌ شايٍ قَلَمٍ سَكَّرٍ خُبْزٍ
 strange Turkish coffee tea pen sugar bread

Exercise 14. True or false? (translations¹⁰)

(The ة in مَدِينَةٍ is pronounced '-at' here: 'the city of ...'). **فِي لَنْدَنَ جَامِعَةٍ** means: 'There is a university in London.'

١. مَدِينَةُ بَيْرُوتَ فِي فَرَنْسَا.

٢. مَدِينَةُ لَنْدَنَ قَرِيبَةٌ مِّنْ لِّيْبِيَا.

٣. مَدِينَةُ كَمْبَرِيدَجَ صَغِيرَةٌ.

٤. جَامِعَةُ كَمْبَرِيدَجَ جَدِيدَةٌ.

٥. فِي مَدِينَةِ لَنْدَنَ جَامِعَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ.

٦. فِي جَامِعَةِ كَمْبَرِيدَجَ مَكْتَبٌ كَبِيرٌ.

a) The sign ء is called هَمْزَة 'hamza', and is pronounced as a glottal stop and transliterated here with an apostrophe. It may be written on its own, as in the letter names given above, or above an ا, a و, or a ي without the dots, or it may be written below an ا. These letters are called the seats (كُرْسِيَّ) for the هَمْزَة. There are rules for which كُرْسِيَّ to use when, and the easiest of the rules is given below, but for the moment you mainly need to recognize the هَمْزَة when reading. In careful writing or printing, even of unvowelled texts, the هَمْزَة is always written.

Exercise 15. Read the names of the letters of the alphabet.

b) At the beginning of a word هَمْزَة is written on an اَلِف if the vowel that follows it is فَتْحَة ('a') or ضَمَّة ('u'), and under the اَلِف if the vowel is كَسْرَة ('i').

Exercise 16. Read the following:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| question سُؤَال | food أَكْل | water *مَاء | lecturer أُسْتَاذ |
| presidents رُؤَسَاء | president رَيْس | muezzin مُؤَذِّن | imam إِمَام |
| you (to a female) أَنْتِ | you (to a male) أَنْتَ | أَنَا ا | boys أَوْلَاد |
| white أَبْيَض | black أَسْوَد | أُسْتَاذَة ? ¹¹ | he began بَدَأَ |
| father أَب | mother أُمُّ | Israel إِسْرَائِيل | brother أَخ |

6. Three kinds of long 'aa': a) آ b) اى c) 'ا

Exercise 17.

a) When an اَلِفِ هَمْزَة would be followed by another اَلِفِ هَمْزَة or اَلِفِ هَمْزَة the two together are instead written as a single اَلِفِ with a sign called a مَدَّة 'madda' on top: آ ('aa').

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| mirror مِرَاة | now *الآن | he believed آمَنَ | the Qur'aan الْقُرْآن |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|

b) On some words a final long 'aa' is written as اياء without dots, called اَلِفِ مَقْصُورَة "alif maqSuura". When an ending is added to such a word, so that the اى is no longer final, it changes to an ordinary اَلِفِ (اَلِفِ طَوِيلَة):

| | | |
|------------|---------|----------|
| Mona مَنَى | إلى إلى | on عَلَى |
|------------|---------|----------|

he saw it **رَأَهُ*** he saw **رَأَى*** he bought it **اشْتَرَاهُ** he bought **اشْتَرَى**

c) 'Dagger alif': a miniature **أَلِفٍ** written above a letter in a few words, indicating the long 'aa' vowel:

that **ذَلِكَ*** this (fem.) **هَذِهِ** this (masc.) **هَذَا***

The **مَدَّة** and the dagger alif are not written in unvowelled texts.

Exercise 18. Some revision, and some new words to learn: (translations¹²)

مِصر سُؤال مَدِينَة صَغِير نَعَم لا

*yes

أَنَا أَنْتَ أَنْتِ هُوَ هِيَ

هَذَا هَذِهِ لَكِنْ اللَّهُ [The second laam has a dagger alif as well as a shadda]

Allah

but

Exercise 19. A pause. What do the following sentences mean? All the words are in bold somewhere above.

(Answers¹³)

١. **هَذَا رَجُلٌ صَغِيرٌ**. وَهُوَ مُسْلِمٌ. ('This is a ...')

٢. **هَذِهِ مَدِينَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ**.

٣. **هَذِهِ مَدْرَسَةٌ صَغِيرَةٌ** وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ صَعْبٌ.

٤. **هَذِهِ أَسْتَاذَةٌ عَرَبِيَّةٌ**. وَهِيَ جَدِيدَةٌ.

٥. **هَذِهِ غُرْفَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ** مَعَ مَكْتَبٍ.

٦. **هُوَ أَسْتَاذٌ فِي جَامِعَةٍ لُنْدُنَ** وَهُوَ مِنْ سُورِيَا.

٧. **أَنْتَ طَالِبٌ جَدِيدٌ؟** - لا. **أَنَا طَالِبٌ مِنْ جَامِعَةٍ عَرَبِيَّةٍ**.

٨. **هَذَا سُؤَالٌ صَعْبٌ**.

٩. **هِيَ غُرْفَةٌ جَدِيدَةٌ**.

Grammatical terms:

Our current students have suggested that you will also find it helpful to have some familiarity with grammatical terms in English if you don't already, e.g. adverb, preposition, conjunction, subject, predicate, object, active,

passive, transitive/intransitive verbs, suffix, participle, infinitive, relative clause, conditional sentence.

Answers

1. our door

2. Ex.2 a) door, book, Libya, from, girl/daughter, no, your (f.) book, between, from, door, no, girl/daughter, book, possible, my door, my daughter, what, your (m.) book, an office and a door.

3. Ex.2 b) my book, our house, my daughter, your (m.) book, your house, our office, our daughter, your (f.) book, our door, your (f.) book.

4. نيويورك = New York; كندا = Canada; كومبيوتر = computer.

5. Ex.4 no, big, light, an office, homework, from, a man and a boy, a book, a girl, my homework, new, a door, beautiful/handsome, a handsome boy, a new book, a big office, from a man, a new light, a big book, a boy and a girl, sun, your (m.) door, between a girl and a boy.

6. Ex.6: a beautiful office, a new student, a beautiful girl, a pen and a book, no, a boy with a student, a big pen, your (f.) pen, a man in an office, a new pen and a beautiful book, our student and my work, sun

7. Ex.8 a) 8, b) 9, c) 7, d) 5, e) 2, f) 3, g) 10, h) 11, i) 6, j) 1, k) 4.

8. Ex.9 1. He's a boy. 2. Mahmoud is a student. 3. It is difficult work. 4. It's new homework. 5. He is a boy with a pen. 6. Muhammad is a handsome man. 7. She is from Syria. 8. Yasir is a small boy. 9. It is a small book from Syria. 10. She is a girl from London. 11. They are from Libya. 12. It is a beautiful morning. 13. Our student is new. 14. Your homework is difficult.

9. Ex.11 1. an Arab student (m.) 2. an Arab student (f.) 3. a new room 4. a new student (m.) 5. difficult work 6. a small university 7. a new morning 8. a small room 9. a Muslim student (f.) 10. a new school 11. an Arabic book 12. an Arab girl 13. a big Arabic university 14. a small pen 15. a beautiful school (f.) 16. a small room

10. Ex.14. 1. The city of Beirut is in France. 2. The city of London is near Libya. 3. The city of Cambridge is small. 4. The University of Cambridge is new. 5. In the city of London (there) is a big university. 6. In the University of Cambridge (there) is a big office.

11. Female lecturer

12. Ex.18. Egypt, question, city, small, yes; no

I; you (m.); you (f.); he; she

this (m.); this (f.); but; Allah

13. Ex.19. 1. This is a small/young man. And he is (a) Muslim. 2. This is a small city. 3. This is a small school and this is a difficult book. 4. This is an Arabic lecturer (f.). And she is new. 5. This is a big room with an office/desk. 6. He is a lecturer in the University of London and he is from Syria. 7. Are you a new student? - No. I am a student from an Arab university. 8. This is a difficult question. 9. It is a new room.