

Nouns and Adjectives (T §3-5)

أَسْمَاءُ وَصِفَاتُ

In this lesson you will learn:

- The grammatical gender (جِنْس) of nouns (أَسْمَاء)
- Adjectives (صِفَات) and adjectival agreement
 - As attributes
 - As predicates
- The sentence head particle إِنَّ
- Predication of existence

Prerequisite: you can read words written in Arabic script and can recognize definite/indefinite states and case endings (الإعراب)

The grammatical gender (جِنْس) of nouns (أَسْمَاء)

- There are two grammatical genders of nouns in Arabic: masculine (المُذَكَّر) and feminine (المُؤَنَّث)
- Generally, nouns are masculine unless they fall into the following categories:
 - Persons identified as female: بنت (daughter), أم (mother)
 - Towns, cities, and countries: بغداد (Baghdad), مصر (Egypt)
 - Parts of the body that occur in pairs: عين (eye), يد (hand)
 - Singular nouns ending in ة: صفة (adjective), سنة (year)
 - Plurals of inanimate objects are treated as **feminine singular** (cf. Greek neuter plurals)

Adjectives (صِفات) and adjectival agreement

Forming adjectives:

- Base form is the masculine singular form; to form the feminine singular, add a ة at the end
 - Example: جَمِيل (beautiful, m.s.) vs. جَمِيلَة (beautiful, f.s.)

Adjectives can be used as **attributes** or **predicates**

Adjectives as attributes

- Adjectives used as attributes agree with nouns they modify in:
 - “case” (مرفوع، مجرور، منصوب)
 - number (singular/plural)
 - gender (masculine/feminine)
 - state (definite/indefinite)
- Attributive adjectives typically follow the nouns they modify
- Adjectives used as attribute of a definite noun **must have the definite article prefixed**

Examples:

مَلِكٌ عَظِيمٌ (a great king)

الْمَلِكُ الْعَظِيمُ (the great king)

مَدِينَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ (a large city)

الْمَدِينَةُ الْكَبِيرَةُ (the large city)

Adjectives as predicates

- Adjectives used as predicates agree with nouns they modify in:
 - number
 - gender
- Predicate adjectives are **always indefinite!** The case is determined by the syntax
- Tip: If a definite noun is followed by an indefinite adjective, the adjective is used as a predicate

Examples:

الْمَلِكُ عَظِيمٌ (the king is great)
إِنَّ الْمَدِينَةَ كَبِيرَةٌ (the city is large)

Note: These are nominal sentences—i.e., they are complete sentences that do not require verbs, only nouns (and adjectives)

The “sentence head” particle إِنَّ

- Usually left untranslated
- Marks the beginning of a sentence
- Must be followed by a noun (not necessarily directly—in “existential predications” there will often be a prepositional phrase first)
- This noun must be منصوب (“accusative”)

Predication of Existence

To indicate the existence of something (“there is/there are”): reverse the normal word order by placing the indefinite subject after the predicate

Examples:

فِي الْمَدِينَةِ الْكَبِيرَةِ مَلِكٌ عَظِيمٌ (there is a great king in the large city)

إِنَّ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ الْكَبِيرَةِ مَلِكاً عَظِيماً (there is a great king in the large city)

Note: فِي = “in” (this, like all prepositions, takes the مَجْرُور / “genitive”)

مع سلامة!