

Introduction to the Verbal System Dictionaries

In this lesson you will learn:

- Introduction to the two tenses
 - Perfect (الفعل الماضي)
 - Imperfect (الفعل المضارع)
- Introduction to the 10 forms (الأوزان)
- Other verbal aspects: mood, voice
- Introduction to the triliteral root system
- Introduction to Arabic dictionaries
 - Tips for looking up words (incl. verbs)
 - Links to online resources

Prerequisite: you can read Arabic script with ease

Tenses in Arabic

- There are two tenses in Arabic:
 - The “perfect” tense **الفِعْلُ الْمَاضِي**: action presented as occurring at one temporal point (not necessarily in the past)
 - The “imperfect” tense **الفِعْلُ الْمُضَارِع**: action presented as durative, habitual, “ongoing”
- The tenses can be used with various particles and with the verb **كَانَ** (see T Appendix I) for temporal specificity

Moods in Arabic

- **Indicative:** neutral presentation of verbal action, or presented as fact
- **Subjunctive:** only following particles that require it, to express purpose, make negative and purpose statements about the future, hypothetical situations, wishes, hopes, etc.
- **Jussive:** following particles used to express exhortations, negative commands, definite negative statements about the past
- **Imperative:** to issue positive commands
- **Energetic:** to express determination, forceful negative (rare outside of Qur'an)

Voice in Arabic

- **Active:** the subject of the verb is performing the action of the verb
- **Passive:** the subject of the verb has the action of the verb performed on it

The Verbal Forms (الأوزان) (T §57)

- 10 distinct verbal forms allow for a high level of specificity: verbal action can be presented as causative, reciprocal, medial-passive, factitive, etc.
- Formation: prefixes, suffixes, infixes, doubled radicals (indicated with shadda), fixed vocalic patterns (including long and short vowels)
- Forms typically indicated in dictionaries with Roman numerals
- For a handy overview and detailed explanation:
<https://corpus.quran.com/documentation/verbforms.jsp>

The Trilateral Root System

- Most words in Arabic—including verbs—are derived from roots consisting of three letters (**radicals**)

كِتَابٌ – مَكْتَبَةٌ – كَاتِبٌ – كَتَبَ
ك - ت - ب

- In dictionaries, Arabic words are arranged **by root!** You will not typically find, for example, the word مَكْتَبَةٌ under the letter م.
- Usual order: verbs, nouns, adjectives
- Verbs are first displayed in the base form (Form I)

Tips for deriving the root

- Remove any prefixed definite article, attached preposition, or particle
- For nouns: determine base singular form; for verbs: singular masc. perfect
- Remove all short vowels (incl. verbal and case endings)
- Internal or final alif (ا): try replacing with و or ي
- Check the chart of the 10 verbal forms to make sure that one of the consonants is not a part of a prefix, suffix, or infix

Dictionaries

- Hans Wehr
- Lane's Lexicon
- Hava

These (and others) can be consulted on: <https://ejtaal.net/>

Examples

ذَكَرُوا

ذَكَرُوا - ذَكَرَ

ذَكَرَ *ḍakara u (ḍikr, تَذَكَّرَ tadkār)* to remember, hear in mind (▲ s.th.), think (▲ of); to keep in mind (▲ s.th.); to recall, recollect (▲ s.th.); — (*ḍikr*) to speak, talk (▲ of, about); to name, mention, cite, quote (▲ s.th.); to state, designate, indicate (▲ s.th.); to give (▲ e.g., facts, data); to point, refer (▲ to s.th.); to report, relate, tell (▲ s.th. to s.o.) | تَقَدَّمَ يَذْكَرُ *taqaddumun yuḍkaru* notable progress; لَا يَذْكَرُ (*yuḍkaru*) inconsiderable, not worth mentioning; ذَكَرَهُ بِخَيْرٍ (بِالْخَيْرِ) (*kair*) to have pleasant memories of s.o., hold s.o. in fond remembrance; to speak well of s.o.; ذَكَرَهُ بِشَرٍّ (*šarr*) to have unpleasant

Examples

مَلِكًا

مَلِكًا - م ل ك

ملك *malik* pl. ملوك *mulūk*, املاك *amlāk*
king, sovereign, monarch

ملكة *malika* pl. -āt queen | ملكة الجمال *m. al-jamāl*
beauty queen

ملك حارس *malak* (for ملاك) angel | ملك حارس
guardian angel

ملكي *mulkī* possessory, possessive, proprietary; civilian, civil (as opposed to military) | بدلة ملكية *(badla)* civilian

مع سلامة!