## Learn the Arabic Alphabet




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## Introduction to Arabic Alphabet



Look at the two English words below. What one letter is found in both words?

## Trade Community

How did you recognize the same letter? Do the two forms of the letter look alike? Of course not. But you automatically recognized various ways of representing the letter "T". In fact, there are at least four different ways to represent each of the 26 letters of the English alphabet.

- Capital block T
- Lowercase block
- Capital Cursive T
- Lowercase cursive t
- Each of these symbols above represents the English letter "T"


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## Introduction to the Arabic Alphabet



## About the Arabic Alphabet

- There are no capital and small letters in Arabic: words that start a sentence are written the same as words in the middle of a sentence, and no distinction is made for the names of people or places.
- The Arabic alphabet is cursive: there's essentially no difference between the way it is written by hand and the way it is printed.
- Since the letters are almost all joined together (there are just a few that aren't), they take different forms depending on where they appear in a word.
- While this sounds complicated, each letter has a basic (stand alone) form that is modified slightly to make it join the letters around it.


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## Introduction to Arabic Alphabet



Why learn Arabic letter recognition?
One of the most important reasons to learn to recognize Arabic letters is to be able to look up words in an Arabic-English dictionary, and given that Arabic words are listed by their 'roots', this task is not as simple as using a Spanish-English dictionary, for instance.
Words in Arabic are built on a 'root' of three consonants, which contain the basic idea underlying all the words made from that root. An example is the root consisting of the consonants $\mathbf{k} \mathbf{- t - b}$, which has the basic idea of writing. ${ }^{1}$ From this root Arabic makes:

- The verb katab to write
- The noun katib for writer
- maktub for letter
- kitab for book
- maktaba for library or bookshop

[^0]...and so on. The important point is that the three consonants appear in all words in the same order. In an Arabic-English dictionary, you would look up the root, find all the variations and select the meaning that you are looking for.

## Go Back <br> Continue

## Lesson Purpose \& Objectives

- The purpose and design of this lesson is to give you the skill to recognize each letter of the Arabic alphabet in any of the four positions.
- Letter recognition is the foundation of Arabic literacy
- The instructional outline is as follows:
- There are several instructional modules
- Each module allows you to choose the letter you wish to learn
- A presentation of the chosen letter will follow
- The orthography of the letter will be shown in each of its four positions (initial, medial, final, stand alone)
- Then examples and practice items for that letter will help reinforce learning
- Letters will be highlighted in authentic Arabic words
- A special feature of this lesson is the help link on your navigation bar. It offers learning strategies you may find useful for learning how to recognize Arabic letters.
- A mastery test can be taken at any time (but it suggested that you complete all of the modules before taking the mastery test)


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## The Arabic Alphabet



## Learning strategies for recognizing Arabic letters

- Use a mnemonic device for recognizing Arabic letters. for information on mnemonic devices, click here.
http://ahsmail.uwaterloo.ca/kin356/mnemonic/What\ is\ a\ Mnemonic\ Device.htm
- Write down the stand alone form of a letter on one side of an index card, and the initial, final, or medial on the other and study them individually or with a partner. (It is important to remember, however, that the lesson goal is to be able to recognize rather than write the different forms of the letters).
- Don't forget that Arabic is read from right to left: it will help you to recognize the letters if you read the same way. The best way to learn the alphabet is to learn the basic shape of a letter, then learn how to detect that shape in its joined forms.
- You should then try to learn which letters are similar to the one you've chosen, as there are several sets of letters that share a common form. These sets of letters differ in the number and placement of dots above or below the common form.
- The dots are crucial: they are not accent marks like in some languages but are part of the letter. You may see other marks above and below letters when reading Arabic. These marks are made for reasons of grammar or to help with pronunciation.

What are some other learning strategies you or someone you know uses successfully? How can you apply them here?

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## The Arabic Alphabet



## Learning the Arabic Alphabet

- Don't forget that Arabic is read from right to left: it will help you to recognize the letters if you read the same way.
- The best way to learn the alphabet is to learn the basic shape of a letter, then learn how to detect that shape in its joined forms.
- You should then try to learn which letters are similar to the one you've chosen, as there are several sets of letters that share a common form. These sets of letters differ in the number and placement of dots above or below the common form.
- The dots are crucial: they are not accent marks like in some languages but are part of the letter.
- You may see other marks above and below letters when reading Arabic. These marks are made for reasons of grammar or to help with pronunciation.


## Assessments

Your assessment options are (click on your choice):

- Take the pre-test for set 1
- Take the mastery test for set 1
- Exit the program


## Tutorial Modules

The letters in the Arabic alphabet are grouped together by their similar pattern. Click on a module that contains a group of letters you would like to learn.
There are practice items after each module.
There is an assessment for each set of modules and finally a comprehensive assessment for all of the letters.

If necessary, use the help feature in the navigation bar for learning tips and strategies.


## Module 1 Pre-Test



Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

## Module 2 Pre-Test



Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

Module 3 Pre-Test

|  | b | b | ض | $ص$ | ش | u | j | $\checkmark$ | $\pm$ | $\pm$ | $\tau$ | $\tau$ | ج | $\star$ | - | ب | 1 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |


| G | 9 | ه | 0 | ? | J | 5 | ق | - | غ |  | ع |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.


Module 1

- This is the letter "alif" corresponding to the letter "a" in English
- The shape of this letter above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- You will notice that for "alif" the initial and stand alone positions are alike
- The medial and final positions are alike as well
- The next few pages will present the letter in its different forms followed by examples.

The letter has 4 forms, depending on where it appears in a word.


## Final

Medial
Initial

## Examples of the letter in its 4 different positions:

| When you finish reading these examples, continue to the next page to practice letter <br> recognition. <br> Stand Alone | Final | Medial | Initial |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Practice Page

|  | ظ | b | ض | $\sim$ | $\cdots$ | ~ | j | $\checkmark$ | د | $\pm$ | $i$ | $\tau$ | ج | ث | $\because$ | ب |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |


$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

Practice Page

| H | $b$ | ض | $ص$ | ش | س | j | , | j | $\pm$ | $i$ | $\tau$ | c |  | - | ب | - |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |



Correct!
$\square$

Practice Page


Try Again!
$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

> You have now completed module 1. You got ___ out of 12 items correct.

Your options are (click on your choice):

- repeat the module
- take the assessment
- start a new module
- exit the program



## Module 2

- The three letters above, read right to left are "baa", "taa", "thaa" and correspond respectively to the English letters "b", "t", and the "th" sound.
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These three letters share a similar broad middle stroke.
- But these three letters are different in the placement of the dots.
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.

The letter has 4 forms, depending on where it appears in a word.


Stand Alone


## Final

Medial
Initial

## Examples of the letter in its 4 different positions:

| When you finish reading these examples, continue to the next page to practice letter |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| recognition. | Final | Medial | Initial |
| Stand Alone |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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Practice Page

| $\pm$ | $\downarrow$ | ض | ض | $ص$ | - | ش | س | j |  |  | ) | 2 | $\tau$ | $\tau$ | て | $\star$ | - | ب | 1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | ي | ? | 9 | $\Delta$ |  |  | - | 3 | 5 | ق | - | $\dot{\varepsilon}$ | $\varepsilon$ |  |  |

$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

## Practice Page




## Practice Page



Try Again!


Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

# Home Introduction Tutorials-completion Assessment Help Exit <br> <br> You have now completed module 2. <br> <br> You have now completed module 2. You got ___ out of 20 items correct. 

Your options are (click on your choice):

- repeat the module
- take the assessment
- start a new module
- exit the program



## Module 3

- These three letters are from right to left "jin" "Haa" and "kha" corresponding to the English "j", a hard "h" and a guttural "h" respectively.
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These three letters share a similar sweeping middle stroke.
- But these three letters are different in the placement of the dot. Notice that the "Haa" (the middle letter) has no dot.
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.

The letter has 4 forms, depending on where it appears in a word.


Stand Alone


Examples of the letter in its 4 different positions:

| When you finish reading these examples, continue to the next page to practice letter |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | :--- |
| recognition. | Final | Medial | Initial |
| Stand Alone |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Practice Page

| ط | 1 |  | ض | $ص$ | U |  | س | j |  |  |  | $\pm$ | < | $\tau$ | て | $\star$ | ت | ب | 1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | ¢ |  | $ง$ | $\Delta$ |  |  | - | J | S | ق | - | $\dot{\varepsilon}$ | $\varepsilon$ |  |  |

$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

## Practice Page



Practice Page


|  | 9 | $\star$ | 0 | $?$ | J | - | ق | - | $\varepsilon$ |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

Try Again!
$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

```
Home Introduction Tutorials-completion Assessment Help Exit
    You have now completed module 3.
    You got ____ out of 20 items correct.
```

Your options are (click on your choice):

- repeat the module
- take the assessment
- start a new module
- exit the program


Module 4

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "dal" and "thal" and correspond respectively to the English letters "d" and a hard "th" sound
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- You will notice that the initial and stand alone positions are alike
- The medial and final positions are alike as well
- These two letters share a similar broad middle stroke
- They differ in that "thal" has a dot while "dal" does not
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 5

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "raa" and "zaa" and correspond respectively to the English letters " r " and "a"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- You will notice that the initial and stand alone positions are alike
- The medial and final positions are alike as well
- These two letters share a similar broad middle stroke, but they differ in that "zaa" has a dot while "raa" does not
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 6

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "saa" and "shaa" and correspond respectively to the English letters "s" and the sound "sh"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These two letters share a similar middle stroke, but they differ in that "shaa" has three dots while "saa" has none
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 7

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "sod" and "dod" and correspond respectively to the English letters "s" and "d"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These two letters share a similar broad middle stroke, but they differ in that "dod" has a dot while "sod" does not
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 8

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "tod" and "thod" and correspond respectively to the English letters "t" and the sound "th"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These two letters share a similar style, but they differ in that "thod" has a dot while "tod" does not
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 9

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "ayin" and "gayin."
- These letters do not have a clear correspondence to English letters
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These two letters share a similar style, but they differ in that "gayin" has a dot while "ayin" does not
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 10

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "faa" and "qaa"
- These two letters correspond respectively to the English "f" and "q"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- Their distinguishing mark is that "faa" has one dot and the "qaa" has two dots
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.



## Module 11

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "kaa" and "lam"
- These two letters correspond respectively to the English "k" and "L"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- Their only similarity is that they have a vertical line in the orthography
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.


Module 12

- The three letters above, read right to left are "mem", "nun", "hah" and correspond respectively to the English letters "m", " $n$ ", and the soft " $h$ " sound
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- These letters do not share similar orthography
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.


Module 13

- The two letters above, read right to left, are "wow" and "yaa"
- These two letters are correspond respectively to the English "w" or "u/o" and "y" or "i/e"
- The shape of each letter in the boxes above will change depending on its position in a word-initial, medial, final, and stand alone.
- They do not have a similar orthography
- The next few pages will present each letter in its different form followed by examples.
- Use your mouse to select a letter that you want to learn.

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You have now completed module 13.
You got ___ out of 15 items correct.

Your options are (click on your choice):

- repeat the module
- take the assessment
- start a new module
- exit the program

Assessment Module 1


| s | 9 | $\Delta$ | 0 | ? | J | 4 | ق | - | ع | $\varepsilon$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

$\square$

Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

Assessment Module 2



Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.

Assessment Module 3



Instructions: Use your mouse to click on the stand alone letter listed in the alphabet that corresponds to the highlighted letter in the box.


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Mace, J. (1999) Beginner's Arabic Script. London: Teach Yourself Books, p. 1.

