

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Arabic Alphabet Made Easy #1

Alef and Nun

#1

Ahlan bikom, ana Carole! Welcome to Arabicpod101.com's Abjadiyyah Made Easy!

The fastest, easiest, and most fun way to learn the Arabic alphabet: the Abjadiyyah!

Over the next 20 lessons, you'll learn everything there is to know about the reading and writing of the Arabic language. By the end, you'll be ready to dive into the world of Arabic literature, make your way through Arabian cities, and really accelerate your Arabic study! Ready to start? Then let's go!

The Arabic alphabet contains 28 letters and their variations.

Seeing them laid out like this might seem intimidating, but the trick is to take it step by step -- letter by letter. Don't worry about how hard it looks now, just stick with me and in a few short lessons you'll see how easy it actually is.

I have some really good news for you: Arabic is largely phonetic. This means words are pronounced exactly like they're written. Also, most Arabic sounds have counterparts in English.

We'll use this similarity to English to tackle the Arabic writing system. Let's separate the letters into two types. The first type are the Arabic letters that have English counterparts, and the second type are those that don't. In this lesson, we'll learn 2 letters needed to write the pronoun "I" in Arabic. Both of them belong to the first type, so expect them to be really easy to pronounce!

Ready? Let's begin!

We'll start with: "ا"!

So what sound does this letter make? That's easy. It's just like its English counterpart "A" in the word "apple".

"ا"

is very easy to write. It's basically a vertical stick.

Now it's time to take out your pens and pencils! We're going to practice writing. Find some paper and follow along. We'll practice writing them so you can get used to the shapes!

Ok! Here we go.

ا

Nice! Time for the next letter? Not quite... You just saw the isolated version of ل, however, Arabic is a cursive language. That means every letter in a word connects to the letter before or after it. So every time I introduce a new letter in this series, I'll also show you how it's written in all its possible positions.

Let's get to know the different possible positions for a letter in Arabic. It's always one of four: Isolated, initial, medial, or final.

Let's look at each of them.

Isolated means that the letter has no letters before it or after it. It's the standard form we learned just a few minutes ago.

Initial means the the letter lies in the beginning of a word, so it's connected to the letter after it, but has no letters before it. Are you confused because the initial position connects to the letter to the left of it? That's because Arabic is written from right to left!

Medial means that the letter is connected from back and front to other letters.

And final means that the letter is the last letter in a word, so it's only connected to the letter before it.

With the exception of six letters, we must learn the four possible forms for all the letters in the Arabic alphabet. Those six exception letters don't have a distinct medial form and are instead written with their final form without being connected to the next letter. Their initial form is the same as the isolated form.

By the way, the letter we learned today happens to be one of those exceptions! That means we only have to learn two forms, isolated and final. You already learned the isolated version, so you just need to learn the final version.

Let's write it.

ل

Now we will learn the final letter needed to write the word "I" in Arabic. That's "ل".

The "ل" is pronounced just like the English "N". Pretty easy, right?

It basically looks like a semi-circle with a dot on top.

Remember that this is the isolated form.

Let's write it!

ن

You got lucky with your first letter, but ن requires that you learn all four forms. Let's get them all out of the way at once!

So we have the initial form for when ن appears at the beginning of a word, the medial form for when it appears in the middle of a word, and the final form for when it's at the end.

Now try to write all three!

نا

لنا

من

Great! You've already learned two letters of the Arabic alphabet! I think you're ready to learn another Arabic word!

The word you'll learn to write today is a'na.

This word means "I". The first أ is isolated because it's at the beginning of the word. The second and the third letters ن and ا are connected. You may have noticed that the ا at the beginning has a little mark on the top. When alef is at the beginning of the word, we add this mark to it but it is still the alef sound.

There's an exception to this rule, but you can read about it in the lesson notes and we'll talk more about this mark in a later lesson so don't worry too much!

Now try to write it yourself!

أنا

Now it's time for Carole's Tips.

By now you must be overwhelmed by all the different variations and exceptions. And you also might be worried about that weird mark in the word you learned today! Don't worry. You don't need to understand everything 100% by the end of this lesson. I'll present the new concepts slowly over the rest of these lessons and you'll soon find that Arabic writing isn't all that scary!

Have you ever heard the Arabic word "أب؟" In the next Abjadiyyah Made Easy Lesson you'll learn what it means, and most of all, how to write it! See you there! Salam!