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Keith Massey, PhD

*Foreign language instructor and former linguist
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by Keith Massey, PhD



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About the Author

Keith Massey has been studying languages his whole life, starting with high school Latin and continuing to a PhD in Biblical Hebrew and Arabic at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After 9/11, he went to work at the Top Secret National Security Agency as an Arabic linguist, where he served for more than four years. He now teaches Latin and Arabic in New Jersey, summering with his wife in her native Romania. An avid traveler, Keith has visited 15 different countries, 5 of which have been Arabic-speaking countries.

Dedication

To my father Bill and my late mother Nancy, who taught me the value of hard work.

And to Dustin Cowell, my first Arabic instructor. May this book further the mutual understanding between cultures to which you have devoted your life.

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Introduction

If you've picked up this book, you've likely succeeded in learning the beginning level of Modern Standard Arabic. مَبْرُوك! (**mabruuk!** *Congratulations!*) What you've accomplished is no easy feat. Unlike the Romance languages, such as French and Spanish, your English didn't really help you at all with Arabic. Instead, you were learning a language with completely different ways of expressing everything.

Now you're ready to take your Arabic to the next level and improve your writing skills. You may be a student in an Arabic course looking for something to supplement your course materials and help you get a higher grade. Or perhaps you plan to visit an Arabic-speaking country sometime soon. Or maybe you're conducting business with Arabic speakers and know that being able to write an official letter in Arabic will give you an edge (and it will). Whatever your reason, *Intermediate Arabic For Dummies* can help you achieve your particular needs. You'll even have some fun along the way.

About This Book

Intermediate Arabic For Dummies is primarily a workbook for people who have a basic to beginning knowledge of Arabic and are ready to move to the next level of ability by improving their writing skills. That's why it's important that you not just read this book, but you use it as well! Write notes to yourself in the margin, and highlight things you want to concentrate on.

More importantly, however, you should complete each exercise in your own handwriting in the spaces provided. Then you can easily compare your answers with the correct answers provided in the key at the end of each chapter. You may even want to reinforce each exercise by then writing out the answer again to correct any mistakes you made. Believe it or not, you'll remember things you see in your own handwriting much more efficiently than you would by just looking at the type-written answers.

Each chapter of this book gives you exercises that let you practice your Arabic writing in the topic that's being focused on. I include many different types of exercises. Some are fill-in-the-blanks. Others are more involved, giving you the chance to edit or compose different types of communications, such as business letters and e-mails. This book can help you learn everything you need to confidently compose and read higher-level communications.

Remember that this book is a reference tool that doesn't have to be read from cover to cover. Instead, you can just review the topics that you need to know about — when you need to know about them. Check out the Table of Contents or the Index to find the topic you're interested in. Feel free to bounce around the book and skip any of the chapters that don't pertain to you (such as the chapter on the alphabet if you already know how to read and write it). The beauty of this book is that each chapter is a self-contained unit that doesn't assume knowledge of the others.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you easily digest the information that you see in this book, I use the following conventions:

- ✓ All Arabic words and examples are presented in both Arabic script and English transliteration. The English transliteration is in **bold**. You can find a description of how to pronounce the letters and the system of English transliteration for each letter in Chapter 3. In particular, look for an explanation of one of the most unusual sounds in the Arabic language, the **3ayn**, which is transliterated with the symbol **3**.
- ✓ English translations of Arabic examples, both individual words and sentences, are *italicized*.
- ✓ Arabic doesn't have capital letters like English does. Because the transliteration method makes use of some capital letters to distinguish among Arabic sounds, the transliteration also won't be automatically capitalized.
- ✓ Answer Keys are provided at the end of each chapter. That way you don't lose time searching in the back of the book for specific exercises.
- ✓ I use several abbreviations throughout the book. Most of them are pretty intuitive:
 - F (feminine)
 - M (masculine)
 - S (singular)
 - P (plural)
- ✓ To reduce clutter in the writing, I follow the common convention of not writing redundant vowels in my Arabic. Because there's always a **ˆ** (**fatHa**) preceding a **ˆ** (**taa' marbuuTa**), I don't write out the **ˆ** (**fatHa**). I also don't write the **ˆ** (**fatHa**) or **ˆ** (**sukuun**) of the definite article **ال** (**'alif laam**). After all, those sounds can always be assumed. I do, however, always write a **ˆ** (**shadda**) over a sun letter following the **ال** (**'alif laam**). (To discover more about the vowels, see Chapter 3. For an exploration of the **ال** (**'alif laam**), go to Chapter 2.)
- ✓ I don't always include the formal and final vowels on nouns in the examples and exercises in this book because they usually aren't pronounced in formal media sources. Chapters that focus on learning the formal and final vowels will, of course, comprehensively include them.

Foolish Assumptions

As someone interested in learning an intermediate level of Arabic, I assume that your basic or beginning knowledge includes the following:

- ✓ You have personal motivations for advancing to the next level in your Arabic.
- ✓ You don't want a book that's just a grammar textbook. You know where to find those. You're after something that introduces a few important topics in each chapter and then covers them fully.

- ✓ You have experience with the fundamentals of Arabic grammar. This includes knowing the present, future, and past tenses of the verb. You understand the rules for making a noun definite and for constructing simple **'iDaafas**. You're also familiar with the more common prepositions and particles of Arabic. If you're a bit rusty on any of these topics, don't worry — Chapters 1 and 2 give you the chance to review those things.

However, I don't assume that you know how to read and write in the Arabic alphabet. In fact, if you learned your beginning Arabic from *Arabic For Dummies* by Amine Bouchentouf (Wiley), you know that the alphabet wasn't included there. Not including this information allowed you to concentrate instead on speaking ability. But if you haven't studied the Arabic alphabet yet, you need to master it before you can consider yourself at the intermediate level. In Chapter 3, I help you learn it in a thorough and engaging way. In the meantime, all exercises and lessons include Arabic script and English transliteration for you to get started improving your Arabic right away.

How This Book Is Organized

Intermediate Arabic For Dummies is divided into six parts. The parts begin with the basics of the language and the alphabet and continue through exploration of the nouns, verbs, and particles. Each part has at least two chapters where you can discover the topic of that part in depth. Here's how the various parts break down.

Part I: Polishing Your Arabic Skills

In this part, you review the alphabet, the numbers, and other words necessary to express things like dates and time in Arabic. I also provide you with a grammar review in case it has been a while since you studied to your basic level. I also show you how to use both the dictionaries included in this book as well as the larger ones you may acquire. Finally, I include a chapter on reading and writing the Arabic alphabet.

Part II: Becoming a Master at Using Nouns

The chapters in this part present several topics necessary for an intermediate level command of nouns. You learn the three cases of the noun, and you meet the mystifying types of broken plurals. You also get the info you need to confidently coordinate complicated **'iDaafa** strings and add in adjectives. I round out this part with a chapter that helps you become a master at adding pronouns and relative clauses to your writing.

Part III: Staying Active: Forming Arabic Verbs

In Part III, you discover how to write with every imaginable type of verb. First I introduce all ten forms of the Arabic verb and show you how to produce them when you

throw in the irregular stems. Then you discover how to create commands and put objects on your verbs. The final chapter in this part introduces the various moods of the verb and demonstrates their uses in complicated constructions.

Part IV: Enlivening Your Writing with Particles

If you're looking to make your writing even more sophisticated, this is the part for you. It equips you to use any of the dozens of particles in Arabic to join clauses, form conditional sentences, and enliven your writing with the use of the verbal noun and participles. This part also explains how to negate your sentences.

Part V: The Part of Tens

The chapters in this part give you further hints and help you improve your ability to write in the Arabic language. I show you ten common mistakes to steer clear of, and I provide ten tips to polish your Arabic writing.

Part VI: Appendixes

The last part of this book provides you with valuable references. You get a full chart that shows you how to produce all forms of the Arabic verb. You also get English-Arabic and Arabic-English dictionaries to use in completing the exercises throughout the book.

Icons Used in This Book

To help you navigate the chapters in this book, I use tiny pictures, called icons, in the margins. These icons help you spot particularly important or potentially troublesome concepts. The following icons appear in this book:



I use this icon whenever I introduce something that you should keep in mind while practicing your Arabic.



This icon highlights information that can provide you with another angle when trying to understand a particular point. These tips can save you time and frustration.



This icon points to differences between English and Arabic. The information highlighted with this icon can help you learn, because it lets you compare how your native language is similar to or different from Arabic. Comparing languages can be a powerful way to enhance your memory.



When you see this icon, it means that there's a common error to be found nearby. Trust me, I've made them all. Hopefully, I've made them (and kept track of them) so you won't have to.



This icon highlights the practice exercises, which help to reinforce the text I cover. These exercises are a good opportunity to improve your Arabic. I've even tried to make them fun.

Where to Go from Here

From here on out, dig in and follow your instincts! If you start a chapter and find that it just isn't what you want to concentrate on, skip to something else. In my own language studies, I've had days when I just didn't want to concentrate on verb forms. Instead, I was hungry for some grammatical information. A week later, I couldn't get enough of verbs. I'm giving you a wide variety of things to master. Whatever you do, I urge you to never rush your studies. Working regularly for a little while is better than cramming in hours of study in one sitting once a month.

If I can, I'd like to give you a little advice: Complete all the exercises! There's nothing like committing yourself to putting down an answer on paper to force you to see where you need more study. Don't be afraid of making errors. You've probably already seen that native speakers of Arabic are ever appreciative of your efforts. As you advance to the use of more intermediate concepts, errors are unavoidable, but the rewards are great. **حَظًّا سَعِيدًا! (HaDHDHan sa3iidan! Good luck!)**

Part I

Polishing Your Arabic Skills

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"My wife and I are taking the course together. I figure I only have to learn half as much, since she finishes all of my sentences anyway."

In this part . . .

The chapters in Part I help you refresh your basic knowledge of Arabic and boost your confidence as you work to improve your writing skills. I offer you a quick review of the cardinal and ordinal numbers and how they're used to tell time and express dates. I also give you a quick refresher on the basic Arabic grammatical issues, such as nouns, pronouns, possessive suffixes, verbs, and the main types of Arabic sentences. Also in this part is a chapter on how to read and write the Arabic alphabet. This is essential knowledge if you don't already have it. With the information in this part, you'll be bravely treading into the more advanced parts of the book in no time.

Chapter 1

Looking at Numbers, Times, and Dates

In This Chapter

- Mastering the Arabic cardinal and ordinal numbers
 - Telling time using two methods
 - Expressing dates in Arabic
-

Catullus said, “Give me a thousand kisses.” And Elizabeth Barrett Browning declared, “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.” Obviously, even the language of love can’t get by without numbers! In fact, numbers and all the ways you need to use them are so important that they deserve to start off this brief review of basic Arabic. Besides telling that special someone when you’d like to see them again (for example, at 3 o’clock tomorrow or on Tuesday, March 4th, at 5:17 p.m.), people use numbers in commerce and for making appointments in all matters formal and mundane.

This chapter reviews the basics surrounding numbers and their use in making appointments and telling time. By the end of this chapter, you’ll be using numbers comfortably and confidently. I can’t promise that you’ll be able to avoid setting a lunch date with that boring office mate, but at least you’ll know how much your half of the bill is!

Focusing on Arabic Numbers

Numbers come in two forms in almost every language. The most common form is called the *cardinal* number. You use cardinal numbers when you look at a price tag or do your taxes. In other words, you use these types of numbers for any type of counting. The second type of number is called the *ordinal* number, which allows you to rank something. For example, you may want to tell a client that you work on the fourth floor.

In the following sections, I give you the lowdown on both cardinal and ordinal numbers. I also introduce you to Arabic numerals, which are important because, as in English, you use them as a handy way to refer to numbers without writing out the whole word. I mean, after all, we call it the “War of 1812,” not the “War of Eighteen Twelve.”

Cardinal numbers: The digits you count with

Cardinal numbers are the ones that you use constantly in life, so they deserve to be considered ahead of the ordinals. If you haven't yet mastered the basic forms of cardinal numbers, now would be a great time to do so. In Table 1-1, I show you many of the Arabic cardinal numbers.



Many Arabic numbers have both a masculine and a feminine form (which I discuss later in this section), so I list both forms where necessary in the table. In this chart, I display the words in Arabic and English transliteration without any of the case endings (see Chapter 4 for more on the forms of the cases), with the exception of the numbers 11–19, which invariably have a *fatHa* ending.

Table 1-1 The Arabic Cardinal Numbers		
Masculine	Feminine	Translation
صِفْر (Sifr)		0
وَاحِد (waaHid)	وَاحِدَة (waaHida)	1
إِثْنَان ('ithnaani)	إِثْنَانَة ('ithnataani)	2
ثَلَاثَة (thalaatha)	ثَلَاث (thalaath)	3
أَرْبَعَة ('arba3a)	أَرْبَع ('arba3)	4
خَمْسَة (khamsa)	خَمْس (khams)	5
سِتَّة (sitta)	سِت (sitt)	6
سَبْعَة (sab3a)	سَبْع (sab3)	7
ثَمَانِيَة (thamaaniya)	ثَمَانِي (thamaanii)	8
تِسْعَة (tis3a)	تِسْع (tis3)	9
عَشْرَة (3ashara)	عَشْر (3ashr)	10
أَحَد عَشْر ('aHada 3ashara)	إِحْدَى عَشْرَة ('iHdaa 3ashrata)	11
إِثْنَا عَشْر ('ithnaa 3ashara)	إِثْنَتَا عَشْرَة ('ithnataa 3ashrata)	12
ثَلَاثَة عَشْر (thalaathata 3ashara)	ثَلَاث عَشْرَة (thalaatha 3ashrata)	13
أَرْبَعَة عَشْر ('arba3ata 3ashara)	أَرْبَع عَشْرَة ('arba3a 3ashrata)	14
خَمْسَة عَشْر (khamsata 3ashara)	خَمْس عَشْرَة (khamsa 3ashrata)	15
سِتَّة عَشْر (sittata 3ashara)	سِت عَشْرَة (sitta 3ashrata)	16
سَبْعَة عَشْر (sab3ata 3ashara)	سَبْع عَشْرَة (sab3a 3ashrata)	17
ثَمَانِيَة عَشْر (thamaaniyata 3ashara)	ثَمَانِي عَشْرَة (thamaani 3ashrata)	18

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Translation</i>
تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ (tis3ata 3ashara)	تِسْعَ عَشْرَةَ (tis3a 3ashrata)	19
عِشْرُونَ (3ishruuna)		20
وَاحِدَ وَعِشْرُونَ (waaHid wa-3ishruuna)		21
إِثْنَانِ وَعِشْرُونَ ('ithnaani wa-3ishruuna)		22
ثَلَاثَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (thalaatha wa-3ishruuna)		23
أَرْبَعَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ ('arba3a wa-3ishruuna)		24
خَمْسَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (khamisa wa3-ishruuna)		25
سِتَّةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (sitta wa-3ishruuna)		26
سَبْعَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (sab3a wa-3ishruuna)		27
ثَمَانِيَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (thamaaniya wa3-ishruuna)		28
تِسْعَةَ وَعِشْرُونَ (tis3a wa-3ishruuna)		29
ثَلَاثُونَ (thalaathuuna)		30
أَرْبَعُونَ ('arba3uuna)		40
خَمْسُونَ (khamisuuna)		50
سِتُّونَ (sittuuna)		60
سَبْعُونَ (sab3uuna)		70
ثَمَانُونَ (thamaanuuna)		80
تِسْعُونَ (tis3uuna)		90
مِئَةٌ (mi'a)		100
مِئَةُ وَوَاحِدٍ (mi'a wa-waaHid)		101
مِئَتَانِ (mi'ataani)		200
ثَلَاثُ مِئَةٍ (thalaathumi'a)		300
ثَلَاثُ مِئَةٍ وَخَمْسَةِ وَسِتُّونَ (thalaathumi'a wa-khamisa wa-sittuun)		365
خَمْسُ مِئَةٍ (khamsumi'a)		500
سَبْعُ مِئَةٍ (sab3umi'a)		700
أَلْفٌ ('alf)		1,000
أَلْفَانِ ('alfaani)		2,000
مِئَةُ أَلْفٍ (mi'at 'alf)		100,000
مِليُون (milyuun)		1,000,000



Dealing with gender in cardinal numbers

English has one gender-neutral form for each of the cardinal numbers. Arabic, however, has masculine and feminine forms (refer to Chapter 2 for more on gender of nouns). One of the maddening aspects of Arabic numbers is the strange practice of *reverse gender agreement*. In other words, the numbers that look similar to feminine nouns or adjectives are the ones you use with masculine nouns (and vice versa). Here are two examples of plural nouns with reverse gender agreement:

ثَلَاثَ سَيَّارَاتٍ (thalaath sayyaaraat; *three cars*)

خَمْسَةَ رِجَالٍ (khamisa rijaal; *five men*)

As you can see, سَيَّارَاتٍ (sayyaaraat; *cars*) is feminine, but it takes the masculine-appearing form of the number. Similarly, رِجَالٍ (rijaal; *men*) is masculine but it takes the feminine-appearing form. So you need to know the gender of the noun you want to count. Then all you have to do is select the appropriate number from the list I provide you.



Putting two-digit numbers in the correct order

Another difference between English and Arabic is the order of two-digit numbers. After 20, English puts the second digit after the first, joining them with a hyphen. For example, you would write *twenty-three*. Arabic, on the other hand, puts the second digit first and joins the two numbers with the word وَ (wa; *and*). Here's an example: ثَلَاثَةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ (thalaatha wa-3ishruuna), which translates to *twenty-three*.

Writing about one of something

To say there's one of something, such as one house or one woman, the number must follow the noun and agree in gender and case (see Chapter 2 for more on gender and Chapter 4 for more on case). **Note:** In this section and the others that follow, I underline the numbers themselves to help you explore the examples. The following example shows you a masculine and a feminine noun accompanied by the number one in Arabic:

بَيْتٌ وَاحِدٌ (baytun waaHidun; one house)

إِمْرَأَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ('imra'atun waaHidatun; one woman)

Writing about two of something

If you want to talk about two of something in Arabic (two pens or two letters, perhaps), you have two options. The first option is to use the dual form of the noun. (Chapter 4 explains the dual form.) If you use the dual form of the noun, you won't even be using a separate word for *two*. The ending of the noun itself will indicate that there are two of whatever you're talking about. Here are a masculine and a feminine noun with the dual endings underlined:

قَلَمَانٌ (qalamaani; two pens)

رِسَالَتَانِ (risaalataani; two letters)

Your other option is to use the dual form with the number two following (agreeing in gender and case, of course). You would use this option if you were trying to emphasize the fact that you're talking about two of something. You might need to emphasize the number to dispel a misunderstanding. If someone thought there were three books on the table, you could correct them, saying:

لا. هُنَاكَ كِتَابَانِ إِثْنَانِ عَلَى الطَّاوِلَةِ.

(laa. hunaaka kitaabaani 'ithnaani 3alaa-T-Taawilati. No. There are two books on the table.)

Take a look at these two nouns that have the number two in Arabic added for emphasis:

بَيْتَانِ إِثْنَانِ (baytaani 'ithnataani; two houses)

طَاوِلَتَانِ إِثْنَتَانِ (Taawilataani 'ithnataani; two tables)

Writing about three to ten of something

When you're speaking about three to ten of something, you first write the number using the form that appears to be the opposite gender of the noun that you want to count. (When most folks speak Modern Standard Arabic — and even when they write it — they don't usually use the formal final vowels that can appear with the counted nouns.) Then you write the noun in its indefinite genitive plural form (refer to Chapter 4 for more on this form). Look closely at these examples of genitive plural nouns following numbers:

أَرْبَعَةٌ رِجَالٍ ('arba3at rijaalin; four men)

سَبْعٌ مَجَلَّاتٍ (sab3a majallaatin; seven magazines)



Throughout this section, I tell you what the formal ending after the numbers is. I even show you the formal final vowels in my examples so you can become accustomed to them. But if you drop them from your speech and writing, you'll still be correct. So that you can see what the same examples would be without the formal final vowels, here they are:

أَرْبَعَةٌ رِجَالٍ ('arba3at rijaal; four men)

سَبْعٌ مَجَلَّاتٍ (sab3a majallaat; seven magazines)

Writing about eleven to ninety-nine of something

To count things between eleven and ninety-nine, you have to put the noun that's following the number in the indefinite accusative singular form (see Chapter 4). Here are some examples of indefinite accusative singular nouns following their numbers:

تِسْعَ عَشْرَةَ جَرِيدَةً (tis3a 3asharat jariidatan; nineteen newspapers)

أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا ('arba3uuna yawman; forty days)

Writing about hundreds or thousands of something

When you talk about things occurring in even multitudes of hundreds or thousands, you write your number and use the indefinite genitive singular noun after it (see Chapter 4). Check out these examples:

أَلْفٌ دُولَارٍ ('alf duulaarin; a *thousand* dollars)

ثَلَاثُ مِئَةٍ رَجُلٍ مِنْ إِسْبَارْتَا (thalaathumi'ati rajulin min 'isbaarTa; *three hundred* men from Sparta)

Writing about even multiples of ten

The multitudes of ten have two different forms, depending on whether the number is being used in the nominative or accusative/genitive cases. You can learn more about the cases and when you use them in Chapter 4. To produce the accusative/genitive form of the multiples of ten, you just have to change the **ون** (-uuna) ending into an **ين** (-iina) ending. Here are the nominative and accusative/genitive forms of twenty in Arabic:

عِشْرُونَ (3ishruuna; *twenty*; nom.)

عِشْرِينَ (3ishriina; *twenty*; acc./gen.)

Writing numbers with three or more digits

In Arabic, when stating numbers that have three or more digits, you write the highest digit first and work your way down, adding the word *and* between number sets. Take a look at the following two multiple-digit numbers. This is how the number 5,678 would be rendered in English according to Arabic style: Five thousand, and six hundred, and eight and seventy. As you can see, with the exception of the way Arabic expresses seventy-eight, this is how we state large numbers in English as well.

Here are a few more examples:

ثَلَاثُ مِئَةٍ وَخَمْسَةِ وَسِتِّينَ (thalaathumi'a wa-khamsa wa-sittuuna; 365)

ثَلَاثَةُ آلَافٍ وَخَمْسُ مِئَةٍ وَسِتَّةٍ وَتِسْعُونَ (thalaathat 'aalaaf wa-khamsumi'a wa-sitta wa-tis3uuna; 3,596)



Sometimes you need to write about a counted number in the definite state. For instance, you may need to discuss the set of five questions your boss asked you to answer. To do this in Arabic, just put the number after the noun and add the definite article to both. Reverse gender agreement still applies in this case. Here are two examples for you:

فَكَّرْتُ بِالْأَسْئَلَةِ الْخَمْسَةِ.

(fakkartu bil-'as'ila al-khamsa. *I thought about the five questions.*)

مَرَّتْ الْيَّامُ الْمِئَةُ سَرِيعًا.

(marrat al-'ayyaamu al-mi'atu sarii3an. *The hundred days passed quickly.*)

Ordinal numbers: The numbers you rank things with

Ordinal numbers aren't quite as common in ordinary use (forgive the pun). But you need to use them whenever you express things that occur in an order or series. In a hotel, for instance, you may discover that your room is on the fifth floor. Or you may be considered first in your class. Table 1-2 shows you the ordinal numbers (through 12) in Arabic. I explain what to do with numbers above 12 later in the section.

Table 1-2	Arabic Ordinal Numbers	
Masculine	Feminine	Translation
أَوَّل (ʾawwal)	أُولَى (ʾoola)	1st
ثَانِي (thaani)	ثَانِيَة (thaaniya)	2nd
ثَالِث (thaalith)	ثَالِثَة (thaalitha)	3rd
رَابِع (raabi3)	رَابِعَة (raabi3a)	4th
خَامِس (khaamis)	خَامِسَة (khaamisa)	5th
سَادِس (saadis)	سَادِسَة (saadisa)	6th
سَابِع (saabi3)	سَابِعَة (saabi3a)	7th
ثَامِن (thaamin)	ثَامِنَة (thaamina)	8th
تَاسِع (taasi3)	تَاسِعَة (taasi3a)	9th
عَاشِر (3aashir)	عَاشِرَة (3aashira)	10th
حَادِي عَشَرَ (Haadi 3ashara)	حَادِيَة عَشْرَة (Haadiya 3ashara)	11th
ثَانِي عَشَرَ (thaani 3ashara)	ثَانِيَة عَشْرَة (thaaniya 3ashara)	12th



To properly use ordinals in Arabic, remember that ordinal numbers are adjectives. You have to choose the form that matches the gender of the noun it modifies. The following examples show both masculine and feminine nouns:

الرَّجُلُ العَاشِر (ar-rajul al-3ashir; the tenth man)

السَّاعَة التَّاسِعَة (as-saa3a at-taasi3a; the ninth hour [9 o'clock])



No abbreviation exists in Arabic to turn a cardinal into an ordinal like in English, when you write 1st and 3rd.

In Arabic, for any ordinal above 12, all you have to do is use the cardinal form. Take a look at the following example, which is a big number without a separate ordinal form:

المَرَّة المِليُون (al-marra al-milyuun; the millionth time)



Suppose that you're reading an Arabic newspaper, and you come across a food critic's ratings of some local eating establishments. She lists them in her order of preference, like this:

مَطْعَم لُولُو (maT3am luuluu)

جَوْهَر لُبْنَانَ (jawhar lubnaan)

بَيْت الْكَبَاب (bayt al-kabaab)

نَجْمَة سُورِيَا (najmat suuriya)

فَلَا فِل مَرْوَانَ (falaafil marwaan)

ذِكْرِيَات الْمَغْرِب (dhikrayaat al-maghrib)

As a friend asks you in English how his favorite places fared, you need to find them in the list and write the ranking in ordinal numbers on the line provided.

Q. Memories of Morocco

A. سَادِس (saadis; sixth)

News

Sunday, August 23, 2009

1. The Jewel of Lebanon

2. Marwan's Falafels

3. The Star of Syria

4. Lulu's Restaurant

5. House of Kebab

Arabic numerals: The symbols you write numbers with

In addition to the Arabic cardinal and ordinal numbers themselves (which I discuss earlier in this chapter), you also need to know the forms of the *Arabic numerals* (the symbols used to depict numbers). They're called Arabic numerals because the Europeans borrowed them from the Arabs and acknowledged their source. The Arabs, however, actually borrowed them originally from India. Here are zero through nine in Arabic numerals (notice that a couple of them do resemble their Western counterparts; others, not so much):

✓ ٠ (0)

✓ ١ (1)

✓ ٢ (2)

✓ ٣ (3)

✓ ٤ (4)

✓ ٥ (5)

✓ ٦ (6)

✓ ٧ (7)

✓ ٨ (8)

✓ ٩ (9)

For numbers ten and higher, just combine the Arabic numerals from the chart above and use the same order you would for English. Here you can see a few larger numbers:

١٩٤٢ (1942)

٢٠٠٨ (2008)



Arabic uses a comma where English uses a decimal point. And Arabic doesn't usually separate large numbers the way English does with the comma. Consider these examples:

١٠٠٠٠٠٠ (1,000,000)

٣,٥ (3.5)



As financial officer for your company, you need to fill out checks for several purchases. The amounts are in دينار (dinaars) — the unit of currency used in many Arab countries, such as Bahrain and Iraq — but they have been given to you as English numerals. To do your job properly, first convert them into Arabic numerals and then write the Arabic numeral and the number itself, in Arabic. For the purpose of the exercise, use the masculine forms of the numbers.

Q. 952

A. ٩٥٢ / تِسْعُمَةُ وَإِثْنَانِ وَخَمْسُونَ (tis3umi'a wa-'ithnaani wa-khamsuuna)

6. 460

7. 356

8. 748

9. 1,754

10. 4,238

Discovering How to Tell Time the Arabic Way

Time flies when you're having fun. It drags when you're looking forward to something later. And like money, it seems we never have quite enough of it. Because telling time is such a major part of our lives, knowing how to tell time and write it correctly is another one of those necessary skills in life.



In English you ask, “What time is it?” Someone asking you the time in Arabic will say **كَمْ السَّاعَةِ** (kam as-saa3a). Literally, this translates as “How much is the hour?” Arabic has two methods of telling time, one of which shows a better command of language. I explain both in this section.

Before you can tell time, however, here are a few words that you need to know:

السَّاعَةُ (as-saa3a; the hour [o'clock])

دَقِيقَةٌ (daqiiqa; minute)

دَقَائِقُ (daqaa'iq; minutes)

نِصْفُ (niSf; half [to indicate 30 minutes])

رُبُعُ (rub3; a quarter [to indicate 15 minutes])

ثُلُثُ (thulth; a third [to indicate 20 minutes])

صَبَاحًا (SabaaHan; in the morning)

مَسَاءً (masaa'an; in the evening)

لَيْلًا (laylan; at night)

ظُهْرًا (dhuhran; afternoon)

To tell time in Arabic, you replace the cardinal number with the correct ordinal form. Because السَّاعَة (as-saa3a), the Arabic word for *hour*, is a feminine noun, you select the feminine forms of the ordinal. The only exception is that you use the feminine form of the cardinal واحدة (waaHida) for 1:00.

To express the number of minutes on the hour up to the 30-minute mark, you add وَ (wa), followed by the number of minutes in cardinal form. وَ (wa) translates to *and* in English. You can use رُبْع (rub3) for a quarter hour (15 minutes), ثُلُث (thulth) for 20 minutes, and نِصْف (niSf) for the half hour (30 minutes). The following examples show you how to use these fractions to tell time:

4:30 translates to السَّاعَة الرَّابِعَة وَالنِّصْف (as-saa3a ar-raabi3a wa-n-niSf; literally *the hour the fourth and the half*)

2:15 translates to السَّاعَة الثَّانِيَة وَالرُّبْع (as-saa3a ath-thaaniya wa-r-rub3; literally *the hour the second and the quarter*)



To state more complex times, you write the hour, followed by more specific minutes. For one or two minutes, you can just use the singular and dual forms of the word *minute*, دَقِيقَة (daqiiqa) and دَقِيقَتَان (daqiiqataani). For more than two minutes, you use the cardinal number, followed by the plural form of *minute*, دَقَائِق (daqaa'iq). Here are examples of one, two, and seven minutes past an hour:

9:01 translates to السَّاعَة التَّاسِعَة وَدَقِيقَة (as-saa3a at-taasi3a wa-daqiiqa; literally *the hour the ninth and a minute*)

7:02 translates to السَّاعَة السَّابِعَة وَدَقِيقَتَان (as-saa3a as-saabi3a wa-daqiiqataani; literally *the hour the seventh and two minutes*)

3:07 translates to السَّاعَة الثَّالِثَة وَسَبْع دَقَائِق (as-saa3a ath-thaalitha wa-sab3 daqaa'iq; literally *the hour the third and seven minutes*)



If the time you want to write is after the half hour, you can write that it's half past an hour, and then just add another number as necessary. For example, the time 6:35 translates to السَّاعَة السَّادِسَة وَالنِّصْف وَخَمْس دَقَائِق (as-saa3a as-saadisa wa-n-niSf wa-khamsa daqaa'iq; literally *the hour the sixth and a half and five minutes*).

There comes a point, however, when it becomes easier to talk about how many minutes there are until the next hour. The times 3:55 and 2:45 are both close enough to the next hour that it's convenient to use إِلَّا ('illaa), which in English is *except* (but here it's the equivalent of *to* in the sense of "a quarter to four"). After إِلَّا ('illaa), you use the accusative form of the noun or number. Consider the following examples:

3:55 translates to السَّاعَة الرَّابِعَة إِلَّا خَمْس دَقَائِق (as-saa3a ar-raabi3a 'illaa khamsa daqaa'iq; literally *the hour the fourth except five minutes*)

2:45 translates to السَّاعَة الثَّالِثَة إِلَّا رُبْعًا (as-saa3a ath-thaalitha 'illaa rub3an; literally, *the hour the third except a quarter*)



Now it's time for some practice. Read the time given in English, and then write it in Arabic in the space provided.

Q. 4:15

A. السَّاعَةُ الرَّابِعَةُ وَالرُّبْعُ (as-saa3a ar-raabi3a wa-r-rub3)

11. 3:20

12. 10:13

13. 7:50

14. 2:45

15. 12:30

Making Dates: Getting to Know the Arabic Days and Months

Whether they're dreaded deadlines or anniversaries that you don't want to forget, knowing dates is a critical skill in any language. In this section, I prepare you for writing out some dates in Arabic by presenting some important categories of words: days of the week and months in a year.

Before you begin, however, check out some useful words for talking about dates:

يَوْمٌ (yawm; day)

أُسْبُوعٌ ('usbuu3; week)

شَهْرٌ (shahr; month)

سَنَة (sana; year)

اليَوْم (al-yawm; today)

أَمْس (’amsi; yesterday)

غَدًا (ghadan; tomorrow)

Exploring the days of the week

The days of the week in Arabic are easy to remember because most of them are based on numbers, with Sunday being number one (it’s the first day of the week, after all). When you get to the end, the word for Friday means “Gathering Day,” because it’s the main prayer day for Muslims. Saturday preserves the Hebrew word “Sabbath.”

Here are the days of the week in Arabic:

يَوْمَ الْآحَد (yawm al-’aHad; Sunday)

يَوْمَ الْإِثْنَيْن (yawm al-’ithnayni; Monday)

يَوْمَ الثَّلَاثَاء (yawm ath-thulathaa; Tuesday)

يَوْمَ الْآرْبَعَاء (yawm al-’arba3aa; Wednesday)

يَوْمَ الْخَمِيس (yawm al-khamiis; Thursday)

يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَة (yawm al-jum3a; Friday)

يَوْمَ السَّبْت (yawm as-sabt; Saturday)



Whether you’re speaking or writing, it isn’t uncommon to save time by dropping off the word يَوْم (yawm) and just state the second element. In other words, الْخَمِيس (al-khamiis) can mean Thursday all on its own.

Remembering the months of the year

Most of the Arab world today uses the Gregorian calendar with names for the months borrowed from the Western world. An ancient Semitic system of names, which dates back more than 3,000 years, has also been preserved. In many Arabic language newspapers, you see the Western month, followed by the ancient Semitic months in parentheses. In Table 1-3, I provide you with the Western months in Arabic along with their ancient Semitic equivalents and Western translations.

Table 1-3 The Western Months in Arabic with Their Semitic Equivalents		
<i>Western Months in Arabic</i>	<i>Semitic Months in Arabic</i>	<i>Western Translation</i>
يَنَآيِر (yanaayir)	كَانُونِ الثَّانِي (kaanuun ath-thaani)	January
فَبْرَآيِر (fibraayir)	شُبَّاط (shubaaT)	February
مَارِس (maaris)	آذَار ('aadhaar)	March
أَبْرِيل ('abriil)	نَيْسَان (niisaan)	April
مَآيُو (maayu)	آيَّار / مَآيِس ('ayyaar/maayis)	May
يُونْيُو (yuunyuu)	حَزِيرَان (Haziiraan)	June
يُولْيُو (yuulyuu)	تَمَّوُز (tammuuz)	July
أَغْصُطُس ('aghustus)	آب ('aab)	August
سِبْتِمْبَر (sibtimbar)	أَيْلُول ('ayluul)	September
أُكْتُوبَر (uktuubar)	تَشْرِينِ الْأَوَّل (tishriin al-'awwal)	October
نُوفِيمْبَر (nufiimbar)	تَشْرِينِ الثَّانِي (tishriin ath-thaani)	November
دَيْسَمْبَر (diisambir)	كَانُونِ الْأَوَّل (kaanuun al-'awwal)	December

Writing full dates with the day, month, and year

To find out the date in Arabic, you can ask someone, **مَا التَّارِيخُ (maa at-taariikh?** *What's the date?*). The response, as in English, can be in either cardinal or ordinal numbers. Here are examples of a date with a cardinal number and one with an ordinal:

العِشْرُونَ مِنْ أَبْرِيل (al-*3ishruuna min 'abriil*; *April 20*)

الْأَوَّل مِنْ يَنَآيِر (al-'*awwal min yanaayir*; *January 1st*)



To write a date in Arabic, you reverse the order of the month and day that you use in English. For example, January 14, 2008, in English, becomes 14 January, 2008, in Arabic.

Here's where your knowledge of the Arabic numerals is going to come in handy. To write a date in Arabic numerals, you can do one of two things: You can put the whole thing in numerals and separate them with back slashes, or you can write out the month in Arabic (with the rest in numerals). The following examples show you how to write January 15, 2008, using both options:

٢٠٠٨ ١٥ يَنَآيِر (yanaayir) / ٢٠٠٨ / ١ / ١٥