هُوَ الأَوَّلُ وَالآخِرُ

First Arabic

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الْبَابُ الأَوَّلُ

Chapter 1

Phrases

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An اسْمٌ (noun) refers to names of persons, places or things.

1.1 Articles of definition

In English 'a' or '*an*' is placed before a noun to make it indefinite. This is called the indefinite article. There is no indefinite article in Arabic. A *house* is simply expressed as,

<div align="center">

بَيْتٌ   A house

(bait^un)

</div>

We can think of a تَنْوِينٌ (tanween^un) or nunation on the final letter of an Arabic اسْمٌ (noun) or صِفَةٌ (adjective) as the indefinite article which usually indicates that it is نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) – *a* house as opposed to *the* house.

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i

The تَنْوِينٌ is written as a doubled vowel:

ضَمَّةٌ	ـٌ (^un)
فَتْحَةٌ	ـً (^an)
كَسْرَةٌ	ـٍ (^in)

We shall learn all our أَسْمَاءٌ (nouns) and صِفَاتٌ (adjectives) as نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) and ending in the ضَمَّةٌ vowel. We can treat the ضَمَّةٌ as the default ending.

In English 'the' is placed before a noun to make it definite. This is called the definite article.

In Arabic, there are seven ways that a noun or adjective can be made definite. The principal method is to use the Arabic definite article الْـ… (al) which is prefixed to an اسْمٌ (noun) or صِفَةٌ (adjective). *The house* is expressed as,

<div align="center">

الْبَيْتُ   The house

(al-bait^u)

</div>

Notice that the ^un sound is replaced by a simple ^u sound. In short, the الْـ at the beginning and the ^u at the end tell us that the word is مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) – *the* house as opposed to *a* house. The remaining six methods of defining a noun or adjective will be introduced in later chapters.

 First Aid   إِسْعَافٌ

الطُّلَّابُ (students) sometimes fail to distinguish between a نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) and مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) word. They say for example:

بَيْتُ (bait^u)   –   Which appears to be neither مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) because of the absence of the الـ , nor نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) because there is no ^un at the end.

الْبَيْتٌ (al-bait^un)   –   Placing the ^un of the نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) on a مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) word beginning with الـ .

Prescription

All أَسْمَاءٌ (nouns) and صِفَاتٌ (adjectives) in Arabic must be either مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) or نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite). الطُّلَّابُ (students) must restrict themselves to saying either:

بَيْتٌ which is نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite), or

الْبَيْتُ which is مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite).

Pronunciation

- The ـْ of the definite article الـ is pronounced when the word begins with one of the following letters:

ء ب ج ح خ ع غ ف ق ك م ه و ي

These are called الْحُرُوفُ الْقَمَرِيَّةُ (al-huruuf[u] al-qamariyyat[u], the 'Moon Letters').

When we make the word جَمِيلٌ (jameel[un]) مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite), we pronounce it الْجَمِيلُ (al-jameel[u]).

- The ـْ of the definite article الـ is *not* pronounced with the rest of the letters of the alphabet:

ت ث د ذ ر ز س ش ص ض ط ظ ل ن

These are called الْحُرُوفُ الشَّمْسِيَّةُ (al-huruuf[u] ash-shamsiyyat[u], the 'Sun Letters').

When we make the word صَغِيرٌ (Sagheer[un]) مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite), we pronounce it الصَّغِيرُ (aS-Sagheer[u]) not الْصَغِيرُ (al-Sagheer[u]).

It is not necessary to memorise these two lists of letters. Instead, notice that all the Sun Letters are pronounced very near the place in the mouth from which the ـْ is pronounced. The ـْ of the definite article الـ is not pronounced when followed by a Sun Letter to avoid the difficulty on the tongue of successively uttering two letters pronounced from the same part of the mouth. This difficulty does not occur with the Moon Letters so the ـْ is pronounced.

1.2 The adjectival phrase

A صِفَةٌ (adjective) is a word that describes an اسْمٌ (noun). In the expression *'the big house'*, the word *'big'* is the صِفَةٌ (adjective).

★ **1.2.1** There are two principles we need to remember about the Arabic صِفَةٌ (adjective):

1. The صِفَةٌ (adjective) always goes after the اسْمٌ (noun) it describes.

2. The صِفَةٌ (adjective) always 'agrees' with the اسْمٌ (noun) it describes in four respects:

   (i)   Definition: مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite) or نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) ?

   (ii) Gender: مُذَكَّرٌ (masculine) or مُؤَنَّثٌ (feminine) ?

   (iii) Word ending: فَتْحَةٌ or كَسْرَةٌ , ضَمَّةٌ ?

   (iv) Number: مُفْرَدٌ (singular), مُثَنَّى (dual) or جَمْعٌ (plural) ?

(a) If the اسْمٌ (noun) is نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite), the صِفَةٌ (adjective) must also be نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite).

$$\text{بَيْتٌ كَبِيرٌ} \qquad \text{A big house}$$

(bait^{um} kabeer^{um})

If the اسْمٌ (noun) is مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite), the صِفَةٌ (adjective) must also be مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite).

$$\text{الْبَيْتُ الْكَبِيرُ} \qquad \text{The big house}$$

(al-bait^{u} al-kabeer^{u})

(b) In Arabic, all nouns and adjectives, like in French, have an associated gender. The gender of the صِفَةٌ (adjective) must agree with the gender of the اسْمٌ (noun) it describes.

$$\text{رَجُلٌ كَبِيرٌ} \qquad \text{A big man}$$

(rajul^{um} kabeer^{um})

$$\text{امْرَأَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ} \qquad \text{A big woman}$$

(imra'at^{um} kabeerat^{um})

Adjectives are given in their masculine and feminine forms in the vocabulary lists. Chapter three expands upon gender in Arabic.

(c) As shown in the examples above, if the اسْمٌ (noun) ends in ضَمَّةٌ the صِفَةٌ (adjective) must also end in ضَمَّةٌ . We will introduce كَسْرَةٌ and فَتْحَةٌ endings in chapters two and three.

(d) All Arabic nouns and adjectives have a singular, dual and plural form. The dual will be introduced in chapter seven.

If the اسْمٌ (noun) is a جَمْعٌ (plural), the صِفَةٌ (adjective) must also be a جَمْعٌ (plural):

رِجَالٌ كِبَارٌ   Big men
(rijaal^un kibaar^un)

نِسَاءٌ كَبِيرَاتٌ   Big women
(nisaa^un kabeeraat^un)

The plurals of nouns and adjectives are given in brackets in the vocabulary lists. The plural of a word should be learned with the singular.

★ Plurals of adjectives, as shown above, are only ever used to describe human beings. We cannot say بُيُوتٌ كِبَارٌ for 'big houses' or كَلِمَاتٌ جَدِيدَاتٌ for 'new words'.

★ If a plural is a non-human being it is treated as grammatically feminine and singular. Adjectives of non-human plurals are therefore feminine and singular.

بُيُوتٌ كَبِيرَةٌ   Big houses
(buyuut^un kabeerat^un)

كَلِمَاتٌ جَدِيدَةٌ   new words
(kalimaat^un jadeedat^un)

الْجُمُوعُ (plurals) will be explained fully in chapter seven.

1.2.2 We may have a number of صِفَاتٌ (adjectives) describing one اسْمٌ (noun). All صِفَاتٌ (adjectives) must agree with the اسْمٌ (noun) in the four respects mentioned in rule 2 above. Generally, multiple صِفَاتٌ (adjectives) need not come in any particular order.

بَيْتٌ كَبِيرٌ جَمِيلٌ جَدِيدٌ   A beautiful new large house
(bait^un kabeer^un jameel^un jadeed^un)

الْبَيْتُ الْكَبِيرُ الْجَمِيلُ الْجَدِيدُ   The beautiful new large house
(al-bait^u al-kabeer^u al-jameel^u al-jadeed^u)

رِجَالٌ كِبَارٌ طِوَالٌ   Big tall men
(rijaal^un kibaar^un Tiwaal^un)

الرِّجَالُ الْكِبَارُ الطِّوَالُ   The big tall men
(ar-rijaal^u al-kibaar^u aT-Tiwaal^u)

نِسَاءٌ كَبِيرَاتٌ طَوِيلَاتٌ   Big tall women
(nisaa'^un kabeeraat^un Taweelaat^un)

النِّسَاءُ الْكَبِيرَاتُ الطَّوِيلَاتُ   The big tall women
(an-nisaa'^u al-kabeeraat^u aT-Taweelaat^u)

كَلِمَةٌ جَدِيدَةٌ طَوِيلَةٌ   A long new word
(kalimat^un jadeedat^un Taweelat^un)

كُتُبٌ جَدِيدَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ   Big new books
(kutub^un jadeedat^un kabeerat^un)

5

Orthography and Pronunciation

- هَمْزَةُ الْقَطْعِ (hamzat[u]-l-qaT[Ci])

  The glottal stop in Arabic is usually represented by the letter ء (hamza). When a word begins with a glottal stop, we assume that we should write an initial hamza to represent this. The initial hamza is written as follows: أُ / أَ / إِ . For example, if we want to say the word 'akhbaar[un]', we write أَخْبَارٌ . The initial hamza must always be written and pronounced. This is called هَمْزَةُ الْقَطْعِ (hamzat[u]-l-qaT[Ci]). When the هَمْزَةُ الْقَطْعِ is preceded by a vowel, it is still pronounced:

  وَأَخْبَارٌ   (wa'akhbaar[un])

- هَمْزَةُ الْوَصْلِ (hamzat[u]-l-waSl[i])

  Sometimes, we appear to pronounce a glottal stop at the beginning of certain words but do not write ء (hamza). Such words are few and can simply be learned. So far we have encountered اسْمٌ , امْرَأَةٌ and the definite article الْــ . We never write ء (hamza) on the initial ا (alif) of such words. To do so is a spelling mistake. This is because there is actually no ء (hamza) there. This is called هَمْزَةُ الْوَصْلِ (hamzat[u]-l-waSl[i]).

  Often the initial ا (alif) in such words is vowelled: اِسْمٌ , اِمْرَأَةٌ and اَلْــ . This vowel is only supplied when such words begin a جُمْلَة (sentence) as a liaison vowel in order to get started. When such words are preceded by a vowelled letter, this vowel need not be supplied and the ا (alif) is overridden:

  وَاسْمٌ   (wasm[un])

  وَامْرَأَةٌ   (wamra'at[un])

  وَالْــ ...   (wal ...)

  وَالْكِتَابُ   (wa-l-kitaab[u])

  وَالصَّغِيرُ   (wa-S-Sagheer[u])

1.3   Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

'Common nouns' refer to *classes* of things, such as the word *city*. 'Proper nouns' refer to *particular* things, such as *Damascus*.

Proper nouns are always مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite), just as in English. We say 'London'. We do not say 'the London'. Even when a proper noun is introduced with the definite article such as 'The Congo' or 'The Levant', it is not the definite article that makes the proper noun definite. Proper nouns are intrinsically definite in and of themselves.

Some words such as مُحَمَّدٌ have two existences, one as an adjective and one as a proper noun.

The word مُحَمَّدٌ started its life, as the تَنْوِينٌ suggests, as an indefinite adjective meaning 'praised'. It was able to describe a نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) noun.

<div align="center">

رَجُلٌ مُحَمَّدٌ   a praised man
(rajul^un muHammad^un)

</div>

Making this definite renders,

<div align="center">

الرَّجُلُ الْمُحَمَّدُ   The praised man
(ar-rajul^u al-muHammad^u)

</div>

Then one day about fourteen hundred years ago, a woman called آمِنَةُ was inspired to name her son مُحَمَّدٌ . No man before him was ever named مُحَمَّدٌ . The moment she named him so, this adjective ossified into a proper noun.

As a *proper noun*, the name مُحَمَّدٌ (Muhammad) is مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite). The تَنْوِينٌ here is not an indefinite article, but merely part of the name. The definite article الـ should not be attached to the name مُحَمَّدٌ (Muhammad) because it is intrinsically مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite). Any adjective describing مُحَمَّدٌ as a proper noun must be مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite).

<div align="center">

مُحَمَّدٌ الْكَبِيرُ   Muhammad the Great
(*lit*. The great Muhammad)
(muHammad^un al-kabeer^u)

</div>

The word مُحَمَّدٌ is no longer used today as an adjective, but there are other words which have undergone a similar experience that are still used as adjectives. The word حَسَنٌ for example, means 'handsome' as an adjective and is also a proper noun meaning 'Hasan'.

1.4 الضَّمَائِرُ (pronouns)

A ضَمِيرٌ (Dameer^un, pronoun) is a word that takes the place of an اسْمٌ (noun) in the noun's absence. In the expression, 'the man is big', we may replace the اسْمٌ (noun) 'man' with the ضَمِيرٌ (pronoun) 'he', rendering 'he is big'.

Arabic ضَمَائِرُ (pronouns) have a singular مُفْرَدٌ (singular), مُثَنَّى (dual) and جَمْعٌ (plural) form. ضَمَائِرُ (pronouns) are all intrinsically مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite).

The third person masculine pronouns are,

هُمْ (they pl.)　　　هُمَا (they two)　　　هُوَ (he/it)

The third person feminine pronouns are

هُنَّ (they pl.)　　　هُمَا (they two)　　　هِيَ (she/it)

The second person masculine pronouns are

أَنْتُمْ (you pl.)　　　أَنْتُمَا (you two)　　　أَنْتَ (you)

The second person feminine pronouns are

أَنْتُنَّ (you pl.)　　　أَنْتُمَا (you two)　　　أَنْتِ (you)

In the first person, the same pronouns are used for masculine and feminine

نَحْنُ (we)　　　　　أَنَا (I)

There is no ضَمِيرٌ (pronoun) in Arabic for 'it'. هُوَ and هِيَ are used to mean 'it'.

When referring to a mixed group, like French, the masculine plural is used.

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**Answers to
Practice Box 1**

كِتَابٌ صَغِيرٌ حَدِيدٌ

الْكَلِمَةُ الْحَدِيدَةُ الطَّوِيلَةُ

</div>

<p align="center">الْمُفْرَدَاتُ</p>

<p align="center">**Vocabulary**</p>

These are Arabic ضَمَائِرُ (pronouns). They are all مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite):

جَمْعٌ Plural	مُثَنَّى Dual	مُفْرَدٌ Singular		
(hum) (3) هُمْ THEY	(huma) (2) هُمَا THEY (two)	(huwa) (1) هُوَ HE	مُذَكَّرٌ Masculine	غَائِبٌ Third person
(hunna) (6) هُنَّ THEY	(huma) (5) هُمَا THEY (two)	(hiya) (4) هِيَ SHE	مُؤَنَّثٌ Feminine	
(antum) (9) أَنْتُمْ YOU	(antuma) (8) أَنْتُمَا YOU (two)	(anta) (7) أَنْتَ YOU	مُذَكَّرٌ Masculine	مُخَاطَبٌ Second person
(antunna) (12) أَنْتُنَّ YOU	(antuma) (11) أَنْتُمَا YOU (two)	(anti) (10) أَنْتِ YOU	مُؤَنَّثٌ Feminine	
(naHnu) (14) نَحْنُ WE		(ana) (13) أَنَا I	Masculine and feminine	مُتَكَلِّمٌ First person

These ضَمَائِرُ (pronouns) should be learned in the numbered order given. All the verb forms introduced in later chapters will be conjugated in this order.

الأَسْمَاءُ (nouns) will be introduced as نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) unless otherwise indicated. الطُّلَّابُ (students) should take care to pronounce the ^{un} at the end of نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite) words. الضَّمَائِرُ (pronouns) are intrinsically مَعْرِفَةٌ (definite).

الجُمُوعُ (plurals) have been provided in brackets. These should be learned together with الْمُفْرَدُ (the singular).

اللهُ	Allah *(def. prop. noun)*	Allah
مُحَمَّدٌ (مُحَمَّدُونَ)	Muhammad *(def. prop. noun)*	muHammad^{un} (muHammaduuna)
كَلِمَةٌ (كَلِمَاتٌ)	word *(feminine)*	kalimat^{un} (kalimaat^{un})
كَلاَمٌ	speech; statement	kalaam^{un}
رَجُلٌ (رِجَالٌ)	man	rajul^{un} (rijaal^{un})
امْرَأَةٌ (نِسَاءٌ ، نِسْوَةٌ ، نِسْوَانٌ) *	woman, wife	imra'at^{un} (nisaa'^{un}, niswat^{un}, niswaan^{un})
الْمَرْأَةُ	the woman	al-mar'at^u
كِتَابٌ (كُتُبٌ)	book	kitaab^{un} (kutub^{un})
حَرْفٌ (حُرُوفٌ)	letter	Harf^{un} (Huruuf^{un})
بَيْتٌ (بُيُوتٌ)	House	bait^{un} (buyuut^{un})
شَمْسٌ (شُمُوسٌ)	sun *(f)*	shams^{un} (shumuus^{un})
قَمَرٌ (أَقْمَارٌ)	Moon; satellite	qamar^{un} (aqmaar^{un})
طَالِبٌ (طُلَّابٌ , طَلَبَةٌ)	student *(masculine)*	Taalib^{un} (Tullaab^{un}, Talabat^{un})
طَالِبَةٌ (طَالِبَاتٌ)	student *(f)*	Taalibat^{un} (Taalibaat^{un})
كَبِيرٌ (كِبَارٌ)	big; old (in age) *(m)*	kabeer^{un} (kibaar^{un})
كَبِيرَةٌ (كَبِيرَاتٌ)	big; old (in age) *(f)*	kabeerat^{un} (kabeeraat^{un})
حَسَنٌ (حِسَانٌ)	handsome; beautiful *(adj.)*	Hasan^{un} (Hisaan^{un})
حَسَنٌ (حَسَنُونَ)	Hasan *(prop. noun)*	Hasan^{un} (Hasanuuna)

* The word امْرَأَةٌ (a woman/wife) is only used as نَكِرَةٌ (indefinite). For 'the woman' we say, الْمَرْأَةُ.

Arabic	English	Transliteration
صَغِيرٌ (صِغَارٌ)	small (m)	Sagheer^{un} (Sighaar^{un})
صَغِيرَةٌ (صَغِيرَاتٌ)	small (f)	Sagheerat^{un} (Sagheeraat^{un})
جَمِيلٌ (جَمِيلُونَ)	beautiful, handsome (m)	jameel^{un} (jameeluuna)
جَمِيلَةٌ (جَمِيلَاتٌ)	beautiful, handsome (f)	jameelat^{un} (jameelaat^{un})
جَدِيدٌ (جُدُدٌ)	new (m)	jadeed^{un} (judud^{un})
جَدِيدَةٌ (جَدِيدَاتٌ)	new (f)	jadeedat^{un} (jadeedaat^{un})
قَدِيمٌ (قُدَمَاءُ) *	old; ancient (m)	qadeem^{un} (qudamaa'^{u})
قَدِيمَةٌ (قَدِيمَاتٌ)	old; ancient (f)	qadeemat^{un} (qadeemaat^{un})
طَوِيلٌ (طِوَالٌ)	tall; long (m)	Taweel^{un} (Tiwaal^{un})
طَوِيلَةٌ (طَوِيلَاتٌ)	tall; long (f)	Taweelat^{un} (Taweelaat^{un})
قَصِيرٌ (قِصَارٌ)	short (m)	qaSeer^{un} (qiSaar^{un})
قَصِيرَةٌ (قَصِيرَاتٌ)	short (f)	qaSeerat^{un} (qaSeeraat^{un})
نَكِرَةٌ	indefinite (gram.)	nakirat^{un}
مَعْرِفَةٌ (مَعَارِفُ)	1. definite (gram.); 2. knowledge (f)	ma⁻rifat^{un} (ma⁻aarif^{u})
اسْمٌ (أَسْمَاءٌ)	1. noun (gram.); 2. name	ism^{un} (asmaa'^{un})
صِفَةٌ (صِفَاتٌ)	1. adjective (gram.); 2. attribute, quality	Sifat^{un} (Sifaat^{un})
ضَمِيرٌ (ضَمَائِرُ)	1. pronoun (gram.); 2. innermost, conscience	Dameer^{un} (Damaa'ir^{u})
مُفْرَدٌ (مُفْرَدَاتٌ)	1. singular (gram.); 2. single (adj.)	mufrad^{un} (mufradaat^{un})
مُفْرَدَاتٌ	vocabulary	mufradaat^{un}
مُثَنَّى (الْمُثَنَّى def.)	dual (gram.)	muthann^{an} (al-muthannaa)
جَمْعٌ (جُمُوعٌ)	1. plural (gram.); 2. gathering	jam⁻^{un} (jumuu⁻^{un})
مُذَكَّرٌ	masculine (gram.)	mudhakkar^{un}
مُؤَنَّثٌ	feminine (gram.)	mu'annath^{un}

Exercise 1.1   Express in English

١.   كِتَابٌ قَدِيمٌ

٢.   الشَّمْسُ الْجَمِيلَةُ

٣.   مَعْرِفَةٌ جَدِيدَةٌ

٤.   رِجَالٌ قُدَمَاءُ

٥.   النِّسَاءُ الْجَمِيلَاتُ

٦.   جَمْعٌ جَدِيدٌ كَبِيرٌ

٧.   كَلِمَةٌ جَدِيدَةٌ جَمِيلَةٌ

٨.   الاِسْمُ الْقَدِيمُ الْجَمِيلُ

٩.   قَمَرٌ جَدِيدٌ جَمِيلٌ

١٠.   بَيْتٌ كَبِيرٌ طَوِيلٌ جَمِيلٌ

١١.   الطُّلَّابُ الْجُدُدُ

١٢.   طَالِبَةٌ جَدِيدَةٌ

١٣.   الْحَرْفُ الْجَدِيدُ

١٤.   صِفَةٌ جَمِيلَةٌ

١٥.   رَجُلٌ كَبِيرٌ جَمِيلٌ

١٦.   كَلِمَاتٌ قَدِيمَةٌ

١٧.   الأَسْمَاءُ الْجَمِيلَةُ الْجَدِيدَةُ

Exercise 1.2   Express in Arabic

1.   A short name

2.   The old woman

3.   The beautiful sun

4.   The new (female) student

5.   A small gathering

6.   Short speech

7.   The beautiful attribute

8.   The new moon

9.   Tall men

10.   Tall women

11.   A new letter

12.   The small old house

13.   New students

14.   The long new book

15.   The long word

16.   The beautiful attributes

17.   Short new books